

EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF BEIJING 2008 OLYMPIC GAMES ON FOREIGN
NEWS COVERAGE ON CHINA: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

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YI-CHIEH LIAO

Dr. Tim Vos, Thesis Supervisor

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

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presented by Yi-Chieh Liao,

a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts, and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

Professor Tim Vos

Professor Stephanie Craft

Professor Glenn Leshner

Professor Victoria Johnson

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Yi-Chieh Liao

Dr. Tim Vos, Thesis Committee Chair

ABSTRACT

Hosting the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games prompted the Chinese government to employ a relaxed foreign media policy, which signaled a temporary change in the rigorous media control practice in China. This study examined the effectiveness of the relaxed policy by analyzing news content regarding China from the *International Herald Tribune* in 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 the Chinese government's change in foreign media censorship led to more news coverage of controversial issues on China. The findings suggest an improvement in the Chinese government's treatment of foreign media in the relaxed 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.

INTRODUCTION

In 2008, a major international event – the Olympic Games took place in China, a far-from-westernized nation that is undergoing a grand socioeconomic transformation. As the Chinese government grappled with worldwide concerns over the legitimacy of hosting the event, the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games provides a rich social context for the study of the changing media system in Mainland China. This research applies media gatekeeping theory and content analysis to examine the effects of a relaxed media censorship during the Games by studying the news stories on China from the *International Herald Tribune*.

In addition to the coverage on the Olympic Games, one of the most widely covered international news stories from Mainland China in 2008 was the tainted milk scandal. According to *BBC News*¹, the company that produced the contaminated ingredients received customers' complaints in March 2008. Its New Zealand-based owner later requested a recall in early August but was denied by the local authorities. The news eventually broke out in early September – days after the Beijing Olympic Games ended.

On September 29, 2008, the *New York Times*² revealed a discrepancy between the account of the Chinese officials and that of the witnesses on an incident in China before the Beijing Olympic Games started. According to the Chinese officials, two Uighur

¹ "Toxic Milk Toll Rockets in China," *BBC News*, September 15, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7616346.stm> (accessed January 30, 2010).

² Edward Wong, "Doubt Arises in Account of an Attack in China," *New York Times*, September 28, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/29/world/asia/29kashgar.html?_r=1 (accessed January 30, 2010).

separatists initiated a terrorist attack, running over a large group of paramilitary officers jogging in western China. However, three foreign tourists, who were on the scene, doubted that the incident might have been a conflict between police officials because the attackers were wearing police uniforms.

Why do these delayed reports and discrepancies exist, given the fact that Chinese officials proclaimed to relax its restrictions on media censorship, a regulation that was specifically set for Beijing Olympic Games? To what extent has the Chinese government loosened or tightened its foreign media control? Above all, have the Beijing Olympic Games changed newsgathering and reporting in Mainland China?

As indicated in its slogan “One World, One Dream,” the Beijing Olympic Games gave Mainland China an opportunity to foster its international image; on the flip side, it challenged the country’s rigorous regulation on newsgathering while the world anticipated a media environment with fewer restraints. Therefore, by studying news outlets from the foreign press during the Beijing Olympic Games, one can examine the media censorship practice in Mainland China.

The nature of the Olympic Games encompasses various human rights issues, among which press freedom would not be neglected. China being a growing world power, its commitment to a free reporting environment during the Games opened a new page in the country’s history of media control. Whether or not the promise to change the media environment affected the country on political, cultural and economic levels is also worth exploring.

There have been few scholarly articles on China's media censorship after the Beijing Olympics due to the current time frame. Meanwhile, China has since announced new or adjusted regulations on the media. On Oct. 17, 2008, Chinese officials proclaimed to extend the period of its relaxation on media freedom, a regulation that was specifically initiated for the hosting of the Beijing Olympic Games. A large amount of foreign news coverage highlighted and questioned China's intention to announce the extension at the 11th hour. In early November of the same year, *the Associated Press* published an article on a local reporter's unhelpful suit against a Chinese official after the government shut down a newspaper company for the content of the reporter's article. The incident suggests that the relaxed state policy might not have affected the media censorship in China.

Although this research does not involve the domestic media in China because the relaxed media policy applied only to the foreign press, studying the extent to which the Chinese government loosened its foreign media control under the influence of Beijing Olympic Games would help bring forth the current or changing status of China's media censorship.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Media Gatekeeping

Control of the media involves the role of a gatekeeper. Although the Chinese government's forceful measures of controlling the press might have turned the concept of gate "keeping" into gate "blocking," the media gatekeeping theory should nonetheless be the primary framework for the study. As a process by which messages are reduced to the few we see in the mainstream media, gatekeeping theory originates from Kurt Lewin (1947), who used a food analogy to create the term and idea. At the entrance to each media channel, there is a gate surrounded by positive and/or negative social forces, and a gatekeeper determines the movement of one item traveling through channels. Information reaches the public through channels, as the way in which food is passed through the markets and eventually to the dining table. And just like the person who purchased food influenced the family's eating habits, Lewin suggested that a media gatekeeper greatly affected how news was shaped and in turn, how the society viewed the world.

As one of the subsequent studies on media gatekeeping and on the importance of the selection decision process, research conducted by David Manning White (1950) looked at stories that were accepted or rejected by a wire editor at a small-city newspaper. White compared the stories that were published with those discarded, using both qualitative analysis (an in-depth research on the editor's daily works) and quantitative analysis (measurements of categorizations of the news stories) detailing how the wire

editor selected news that reached a population of about 30,000. The conclusion drawn from the project suggested that news stories presented in the newspapers were selected on the basis of the gatekeepers' own perspectives and experiences, thus were highly subjective.

Although White's study stresses the gatekeeper's personal preference on news selection, the gatekeeping theory reaches above the individual bases. Pamela J. Shoemaker (1996) rendered five levels of gatekeeping analysis: individual, routines of communication work, organizational, social & institutional (extramedia), and societal. As opposed to the individual level, in which the selection process of news is personal, in routines of communication work the decisions are made according to a more general, pre-established set of practices.

For this particular study, however, the organizational, extramedia, and societal level would come into play to showcase how the Chinese government influenced the angles of its news outlet during the Games.

In the organizational level, it is the position where the gatekeeper stands in the organization that determines the extent to which the selection decisions are made. Since news publishers or managers are placed higher in the administrative hierarchy, reporters often hold little, if any, power in the selection of news. Consequently, the importance of keeping the reputation of a news organization might override the necessity of publishing news stories that are beneficial to the public good yet detrimental to the organization's status. Furthermore, not all media networks operate news in the same way. Reporters, who are often on the bottom of news corporate hierarchy, have little say in an

organization that employs a strict hierarchical system. On the contrary, organizations with a flowing managing structure tend to be more lenient with the reporters intervening in the decision-making process (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 64).

Also influential in the selection process are extramedia forces. Sources, audiences, advertisers, markets, government, interest groups, and other media can serve as “front-line gatekeepers” (Shoemaker, 1996) that direct the angles of the news media. Originating from the ideological influences on media content, Shoemaker and Reese’s (1996) hierarchical model illustrates how governments in the extramedia level shape the content journalists produce. The media in all countries are somewhat controlled by the governments, depending on the political, economic and cultural significance one country has on another. In this study, one could examine the way in which the various extramedia factors intervene in the process of producing news on China by analyzing media contents from a U.S. based news organization.

On the other hand, culture, the societal level of gatekeeping analysis, can also be a determining factor in the gatekeeping process. Some events that are commonly reported in one culture may not necessarily be acceptable or newsworthy in another. Accordingly, while addressing similar issues, news content from Mainland China might be interpreted differently from that of the United States, or the western culture. Furthermore, changes in a social structure will also lead to changes in news content, which in turn shapes the world the audience perceives (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009, p. 100). Therefore, applying the media gatekeeping theory from various levels allows one to examine how the Chinese government censored and limited its news outlets.

Censorship

The idea of censorship has permeated human history since ancient Rome in 443 B.C. Originally a legitimate method of regulating the society by controlling flow of information, censorship has now become “a tool for repression” and “a means of retaining power” (Caso, 2008, p. 3). Individuals or interest groups, such as government, religious groups, mass media and corporations, are all agents of censorship.

While different groups implement different forms of censorship, Peleg (1993) argued that the essence of censorship lies in politics. He defined censorship as “the systematic control of the contents of communication by a government through the use of various means” (Peleg, p. 206). The three motives of censorship identified by Caso (2008) also indicate the involvement of government: retention of political power, upholding theological dogma, and maintaining community standards (Caso, p. 11).

A human rights organization, Article 19: International Centre on Censorship, conducted a survey in 77 countries and spelled out justifications for censorship. Some of the justifications are permissible under the international law, such as public health, while others may not be morally justified, like propaganda (Article 19: International Centre on Censorship, 1991, pp. 411 - 420). The survey indicates that among the various justifications, public order and corruption are major factors for which a government initiates censorship. Public order refers to an absence of disorder, in which riots, civil disturbances, peaceful demonstrations and political opinions are strictly prohibited in order to maintain stability (Article 19: International Centre on Censorship, p. 414). Corruption, on the other hand, involves preventing exposures of wrongdoings of officials

or influential persons. Journalists often receive severe measures of censorship, including death threats, for investigating issues that reveal corruptions (Article 19: International Centre on Censorship, p. 419). A review of literature on the Chinese media system suggests that these two justifications – public order and corruption – are key components in the Chinese government censorship.

Media censorship in China

Man Chan and Linchuan Qiu (2002) noted that the role of information in Chinese history, like the essence of the Chinese culture, revolves around Confucianism, in which filial relationships are substantially emphasized: from ruler to subject, from parent to child, from teacher to student, from husband to wife, from elder to younger sibling. It is, therefore, not surprising to see that, when the newspapers were introduced from the West, the then Chinese emperor regarded the idea of publishing disagreeing opinions as subversive and kept the gate of news dissemination tightly shut (Chan & Qiu, p. 28). Since the Communist Party gained power over China in 1949, the doctrines of Marxism and press theories in communism have dictated the Chinese media hierarchy by controlling news content and outlets (Zhao, 1998).

Yuezhi Zhao (1998) also pointed out that under the domination of the Party, China has established a firm structure and control of news media. Red China News Agency was initiated in 1931 to not only distribute domestic news outward but also collect outside news by using army radios. In January of 1936³, the name was changed to

³ Zhao noted in “Media, Market, and Democracy in China” that the name was change in January of 1936, but Xinhua’s official site stated it was in 1937.

“New China (or Xinhua) News Agency” when the Communist Party united with the Nationalists to fight against Japan during the anti-Japanese war (1937-45). Since then, Xinhua has become the Party’s major news medium, and several leaders of the Party have given instructions to improve the Xinhua News Agency as a gesture to narrow the media gate in China (Zhao, 1998).

China’s censorship on foreign media

In addition to the control of its domestic media, the Chinese leaders often used the media to enforce social order and manipulate foreign news coverage in China. So far as enforcing social order is concerned, Marlowe Hood (1994) noted that the government broadcasted the execution of criminals and used the foreign news reports to “bolster policy positions on domestic issues through the use of positive and negative example” (Hood, p. 45).

Working as a foreign correspondent in China, Martin Fackler (2007) illustrated how the Chinese officials restricted the foreign media and offered anecdotes of his career life in China. Fackler (2007) argued that the crooked relationship between the foreign press and the Chinese government resulted from a lack of understanding and proper communication:

Whatever its origins, the mutual distrust between the Chinese government and the foreign press has been self-perpetuating, a sort of negative feedback loop. The government saw foreign journalists as overly critical and as slandering a country they didn’t fully understand, while the reporters in turn saw the government as keeping them from fulfilling the task they had, as agents of the truth, come to China to do (Fackler, p. 48).

Another approach to discussing the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)'s steadfast control over the foreign media centers on the core concept of the Party's monopolized ideology. By detailing the mechanism of Chinese governmental organization, Su Shaozhi (1994) noted that CCP used every means to advocating its own interests and united values while keeping the dissident behind the media gate; hence, "in China, ideological spheres – whether on a theoretical plane or in the context of cultural activities – are not only controlled but downright monopolized" (Su, p. 75). Su further called for a promotion of democratization in China and emphasized that an information revolution would help overthrow the Party's ideological control, which "subjects one-fifth of the world's population to a state of perpetual ignorance" (Su, p. 86). In a similar fashion, media liberalization such as commercialization, globalization, and evolving technology would contribute to the transformation of China's media (Chan & Qiu, 2002).

On the other hand, the interplay between journalism and political economy provides a guideline for a comprehensive understanding of Mainland China's media control transformation. Chin-chuan Lee (1994) conducted a comparative study on American journalism and the history of the interactions between the foreign press and Chinese government, stating that the former leader Den Xiaoping's economically driven open-door policy gradually yielded the "dual functions" in Chinese media, which acted as "an instrument of ideological control over the masses and a site of struggle among power elites" (Lee, p. 8). Lee further suggested that the "growing diversity in overall media structure and content coverage is gradually stripping away the ideological straitjacket imposed by the CCP," and that the reliance on international trade may "blur the boundary between domestic politics and global agenda" (Lee, p. 15).

However, Judy Polumbaum (1990) suggested that the Communist Party's concept in gate "blocking" – as opposed to gate "keeping" – and its powerful means of controlling the press could still worsen the tensions between the Chinese government and the press corps worldwide.

Impact of Beijing Olympics

After winning the bid for hosting the Olympics, Beijing promised the International Olympic Committee (IOC) a free reporting environment for the foreign media and temporarily removed restrictions on foreign reporters in China from January 1, 2007, until October 17, 2008 (Smith, 2008). The commitment subsequently turned a new page in the history of media control in China.

Based on the past controversies surrounding the International Olympics Committee (IOC), historical background of Beijing's bid for hosting the Olympics, and perspectives on the motivations as well as the impact of this global event, Polumbaum (2003) suggested several dimensions that led to Beijing as the city to host the Olympics.

Polumbaum's study shows that the IOC picked Beijing for economic purposes, and that

Beijing holds out hope for an IOC in search of a financing structure that is both fiscally effective and symbolically acceptable. More broadly, for an international institution such as the IOC, whose survival rests on interlocked ideological and material concerns, Beijing offers a unique set of advantages (Polumbaum, p. 63).

So far as the U.S. media are concerned, Polumbaum's research stated that the U.S. considered the decision of the Beijing Olympics an encouragement for the coverage and concern of human rights issues in China. The essay also regarded the economic boost as the most substantial factor from China's point of view. Nonetheless, Polumbaum contended that whichever city was hosting the Olympics, the pay-offs afterwards should never be underrated.

It is also worth noting that both Smith's (2008) and Polumbaum's (2003) studies on the impact of Beijing Olympics suggested that China only "ostensibly" relaxed its restriction on media control. In spite of the response to an urge for press freedom by the IOC, the development concerning China's journalistic practice as well as freedom of speech still appeared problematic. To illustrate, Joseph Kahn, Beijing Bureau chief of *The New York Times*, and *International Herald Tribune's* Roger Cohen were detained and forced to write confessions after interviewing a businessman in Hubei province the day after the relaxed media regulation took effect (Smith, 2008).

Press Freedom after the Beijing Olympics

In addition to the history of China's media control, transitions of its media regulations, and the Party's struggle to compromise the relaxed media restrictions as a result of the Beijing Olympics, one frequently asked question involves how China will cope with the idea of an unrestricted press after the games. While discussing China's conduct toward its foreign and domestic media, some literature suggests that it is troublesome for the Chinese government to adapt to the new regulation due to "China's vast and decentralized bureaucracy" (Smith, 2008, p. 221).

With regard to the foreign media, an analysis on foreign media reports compared the coverage of the Olympics in Beijing with those in Atlanta, Sydney, and Athens. The study found that news coverage on the Beijing Olympics contained more sensitive issues, such as politics, than sports. However, a report from Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) in 2007⁴ suggests that journalists in China often face harassment, detentions and ambiguous charges for their coverage on sensitive topics. Furthermore, Xinhua News Agency, the only official news outlet from China as well as the only news service in China that is given the authority to receive and collect foreign news, played the role of a “de facto gatekeeper’ for foreign news reports, photographs, and economic data leaving China to act as the middleman between foreign news providers and their clients” (Smith, 2008, p. 216). Therefore, both domestic and foreign news editors and journalists often retained self-censorship to avoid offenses of the Chinese government’s media policy (Smith, p. 222).

In terms of the treatment of the domestic media, Smith’s (2008) study suggested that China still kept an “archaic systems of media control” and that the agreement to relax media restrictions was a “violent retribution meted out by local officials angered by critical reporting while urging the IOC to insist that China extend the new press freedoms to domestic journalists” (Smith, p. 219).

Therefore, although the Beijing Olympics might represent China as a growing world power, a review of the literature shows that China still employs strict media censorship, and the subject of press freedom remains unsettled, leaving room for China to

⁴ CPJ. 2007. “Falling short: As the 2008 Olympic approach, China falters on press freedom.” http://cpj.org/Briefings/2007/Falling_Short/China/china.pdf (accessed April 19, 2010)

“revert to its previous policies and behavior if it chooses, eschewing the permanently transformative element of liminality” (Smith, p. 222).

Media globalization

While focusing on the foreign news coverage about China and discussing the country’s media censorship, this study is also applicable to related studies on media globalization. The hosting of Beijing Olympic Games reflects that the diversity of information, whether in print or with images, has become more accessible to the Chinese audience. The Western media have heavily influenced China, while the latter struggles to resist cultural imperialism from the West. An observation on the transformation of the Chinese media industry also indicated China’s attempt to balance between globalization and media control (McCormick & Liu, 2003). However, expanding the scope of study and weighing in the factor of globalization might obscure a close examination on China’s foreign media control practice due to the Games. Therefore, this research focuses on the foreign media operation in China and accentuates Chinese government’s media censorship.

Studying media censorship in China

Although there are numerous ways to examine media censorship by a government, Caso (2008) contended that politics and religion are the major controversial issues surrounding the research on censorship (Caso, p. 249). Given that religious conflicts in China often carry a heavy political involvement and that both religious and political conflicts indicate threats to the status quo of the Chinese government, one can

study China's media censorship from two approaches: social change deviance and politically sensitive conflicts.

Social change deviance

From a social constructionist perspective, deviance indicates aberrance from a norm, a "turning from the right course," or "an obliquity of conduct" (Shoham, 1976, p. 3). In a similar fashion, the behavior that does not conform to the norm or rules of a society constitutes social deviance (Shoham, p. 4). The deviant agents can be events, persons, groups, or the news content in this research. Although sociologists often use deviance to describe aberrant behaviors of a person or group (Rock & McIntosh, 1974; Davis & Stivers, 1975; Traub, 1975; Pfuhl & Henry, 1993), this study emphasizes the indication of deviance in the news items rather than the deviant individuals.

In a discussion on the politics of deviance, Schur (1980) argued that social deviance and the use of power are inextricable. "Since the attempt to designate and treat behavior as deviant must be backed up by social power if it is to have any real effect, the distribution of power among persons and groups crucially shapes deviance outcomes" (Schur, p. 66). The action, in which the participants in the designated society fail to respond to the expected outcomes, but rather rebel against them, then becomes a form of social change.

Hence, social change deviance is a type of deviance that challenges those who enforce social power and, as Howard Becker (1999) described it, a "crusade" against the existing rules of a social system (Becker, p. 2). Media censorship in China implies the

blockage of the crusades – news stories or items that violate the regulation enforced by the state government. These deviances from the state policy suggest “a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an ‘offender’” (Becker, 1963, p. 9).

Despite the myriad explications for social deviance, some sociologists pointed out the importance of precisely defining what deviance means:

Until we can describe how members typify some acts as deviant and how sociologists jump from members’ typifications to their own constructions, then we have no means of choosing between alternative descriptions of the same phenomenon (Phillipson & Roche, 1974, p. 144).

In an attempt to clarify this ambiguity, Shoemaker (2006) provided three theoretically distinct deviance dimensions: statistical deviance, normative deviance, and social change deviance. Statistical deviance describes the quantitative difference of the deviant compared to the average, and normative deviance denotes the commonsensical knowledge of deviance, such as violation of laws. Social change deviance, on the other hand, refers to an event’s potential to threaten the status quo of a social system, and is therefore the most applicable of the three constituents in examining media censorship of the Chinese government in the selected news items.

The use of social change deviance as a theoretical component of deviance is buttressed by the concept that news media can serve as a potential threat to the current status of a society. Park (1975) argued that anything that causes changes of a society could be considered dangerous to the social order:

Any form of change that brings any measurable alteration in the routine of social life tends to break up habits; and in breaking up the habits upon which the existing social organization rests, destroys that organization itself...even news has become at times so dangerous that governments have felt it wise to suppress its publication (Park, 1975, p. 38).

Consequently, analyzing the extent to which the deviant agents pose a threat to the society could be a determinant of the intensity of social change deviance in the selected news items.

In their study of news content from around the world, Shoemaker and Cohen (2006) measured social change deviance by categorizing news stories in China into four values, each representing the level of threats to the status quo of a social system, to determine newsworthiness of a story (Shoemaker & Cohen, p. 49). This measurement of threat levels can also be applicable to the examination of media censorship the Chinese government had during the Games.

Politically sensitive conflicts

In addition to social change deviance, which is used in this study to assess the intensity of threats to the status quo of the Chinese government, detecting the existence of politically sensitive conflicts can also help determine the extent to which the Chinese government censored its foreign media during the Games.

Generally speaking, conflicts refer to “difference in culture (values and beliefs), power inequalities, resource distribution, a lack of communication and a sense of collective identity” (Woehrle & Coy, 2000, p. 2). These components of conflicts, especially difference in values and beliefs, reflect the types of media content censored by the Chinese government and are often inseparable from sensitive issues, which lead to a study on sensitive conflicts.

One of the definitions for sensitivity involves “highly classified government information” or “discretionary authority over important policy matters.”⁵ Similarly, Raymond Lee and Claire Renzetti (1993) contend that research related to an “investigation of deviant activities,” or a topic “sacred to those being studied that they do not wish profaned,” have sensitive characteristics (Lee & Renzetti, p. 6). Hence, the research on media censorship in China should include sensitive conflicts not only in that such conflicts indicate deviant activities, but also because they are threatening to the one being studied – the Chinese government.

Studying sensitive issues, or conflicts, of a government yields a study of political sensitivity. Defining political sensitivity, however, appears to be a difficult task. Few studies were found to explicate the term “sensitive,” much less “political sensitivity”; instead, researchers often treat it as a self-explanatory, commonsensical expression with little attempt of definition (Lee & Renzetti, 1993).

Nonetheless, politically sensitive conflicts are crucial to the discussion on the Chinese government’s media censorship. Based on the abovementioned explications of

⁵ *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11th Edition*. (2004). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

conflicts and sensitivity, politically sensitive conflicts indicate disagreements in political perspectives. From an individual viewpoint, politically sensitive conflicts involve expressions that question one's political view. On an organizational level, such as state governments, politically sensitive conflicts can be referred to as inferences of offenses on the officials' beliefs, which correspond to the rationale behind the media censorship in China.

A review of literature shows that the Chinese government restricts news stories that aim to challenge the authorities. To maintain public order (Article 19: International Centre on Censorship, p. 414), as mentioned in an earlier chapter on censorship, the Party organ forbids topics that are at odds with the state's ideology. Furthermore, the Chinese government has established the Central Propaganda Department to monitor the contents involving "the nation's leaders, significant political issues, and policies relating to foreign diplomacy, nationalities, or religion."⁶

Although the broad and varied scope of politically sensitive conflicts make it difficult to identify and categorize every news topic censored by the Chinese government, Zissis and Bhattacharji (2008) rendered four instances of politically sensitive conflicts in China: protests, environmental disasters, Tibet, and Taiwan. Additionally, a review of literature suggests that coverage on two other local groups is also frequently under the radar of media censorship by the Chinese government: Uighur, a Muslim minority group in western China where separatist violence frequently occurs (Chung, 2002), and Falun Gong, a group of spiritual practitioners whose popularity in Mainland China threatens the

⁶ Freedom of Expression – China's censors. *Congressional – Executive Commission on China*: <http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/exp/expcensors.php> (accessed May 27, 2010).

Communist Party (Chang, 2004). These topics demonstrate the types of news coverage that the Chinese government attempts to suppress in the foreign media, and are thus fitting measures for the difference in news coverage on the politically sensitive conflicts between the time before and during a relaxed media censorship period in China.

In sum, the topics of politically sensitive conflicts as well as the levels of social change deviance are effective measures in examining the extent of media censorship in China due to the hosting of Beijing Olympic Games.

METHOD

Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were tested to examine the effect of the Chinese governmental policy, which aims to relax censorship on the foreign press in light of the hosting of Beijing Olympic Games, on a U.S. news outlet.

H1: A relaxed media censorship policy in China will lead to greater levels of social change deviance in news stories about China published by the *International Herald Tribune*.

H2: A relaxed media censorship policy in China will lead to a greater percentage of news stories about China's politically sensitive conflicts published by the *International Herald Tribune*.

International Herald Tribune

The rationale for choosing *International Herald Tribune* as the study subject stems from the target audience the news organization aims to reach. As an international news agency, the *International Herald Tribune*, the global edition of *The New York Times*, delivers its news content to readers of more than 180 countries⁷. Therefore, examining news coverage on China through the lens of a news organization that has a

⁷ "About the International Herald Tribune": <http://www.ihtinfo.com/about/about.html> (Accessed April 30, 2010).

wide distribution around the globe is an efficient approach to understanding the way in which China attempts to build its image to the international readers.

Content Analysis

This study uses content analysis as the primary research method. As a “research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 21), content analysis allows one to detect the existence of, or lack thereof, a data-context relationship between variables. While processing the context of the targeted data and making inferences from them, one justifies these findings with verifiable factors to test the hypotheses that the Chinese government’s change in media censorship policy in advance of the Beijing Olympic Games will lead to subsequent changes in the content of the *International Herald Tribune*.

Of primary importance in the content analysis employed in this study is the measurement of news content, which conforms to the definition of a quantitative content analysis:

Quantitative content analysis is the systematic and replicable examination of symbols of communication, which have been assigned numeric values according to valid measurement rules and the analysis of relationships involving those values using statistical methods, to describe the communication to its context, both of production and consumption (Riffe et al., 2005, p. 25).

Therefore, a quantitative method is utilized to effectively measure the content of selected news production during the Games.

Sampling Design

This study examined the non-Olympic related news stories on China from the *International Herald Tribune* in two time periods: from February 13, 2005 to November 30, 2006 and from January 1, 2007 to October 17, 2008. The first time frame includes the 656 days before the Chinese government announced its relaxed media censorship policy. The second time frame covers the 656 days on which the relaxed censorship policy applied.

The data were obtained through the *International Herald Tribune* Web site archives, and the unit of analysis for this sample is news story. In this study, news stories were selected based on their content. A story was selected when the content involved any incidents happening in China, China's influence overseas, or any discussions about the Chinese government. The sports coverage of the Beijing Olympics as well as stories that did not happen in China and were not related to the country were not included in the study sample.

Excluding the Beijing Olympic Games sports coverage, there were 7,620 news stories about China during the time on which the policy applies, and 6,560 in the same period before the policy announcement. In this study, ten percent of the selected news items in each time frame and, altogether, 1,418 news stories were randomly selected as the study sample based on a sample distribution, an allocation of items measured on the units of analysis that are part of the sample (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 271).

Variables

Independent variable:

The announcement of China's relaxed censorship policy, the Regulations on Reporting Activities in China by Foreign Journalists during the Beijing Olympic Games and the Preparatory Period (See *Appendix: Official Statement of the Relaxed Media Policy*), is the basis for this study. This independent variable, i.e. Chinese government's relaxed media censorship policy, has two values: the period of media censorship before the announcement was made, and the period of relaxed media censorship during the time the policy took effect.

Dependent variables:

Social change deviance is the measurement used to test the first hypothesis. The operational definition for the study is the level of intensity of threat to the status quo of the Chinese government (Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006, p. 364). Each news item (unit of analysis) was coded according to the intensity of threat presented in the content. What follows are the four values for this variable:

1. Not threatening to the status quo
2. Minimal threat to status quo
3. Moderate threat to status quo
4. Major threat to status quo

To illustrate, a story published on September 3, 2008 about Coca-Cola's business deal with a beverage company was regarded as a minimal threat level, for the information might raise international concerns but it would not affect the state regulations. Another story, which was published on August 27, 2007 about China agreeing to "strengthen product standards and safety" yet condemning "foreign media for playing up the safety problems," was considered a moderate threat to the status quo for its influence on the Chinese government's image abroad.

A story about the accelerating number of protests in China, which was published on January 20, 2006, was categorized as a major threat to the status quo, because its discussion on the social disorder leading to a "major challenge to the Communist Party" could immediately threaten China's legal and social system.

The four-threat-level measurement was used by Shoemaker and Cohen (2006) in their content analysis of news in ten countries, including China. These four values of social change deviance rated the news stories according to their levels of intensity, ranging from extremely intense to not at all intense (Shoemaker & Cohen, p. 28).

The second hypothesis uses politically sensitive conflicts to detect the coverage of controversial issues during the two selected time frames. The operational definition for the second hypothesis is a calculation of the percentage of news stories about politically sensitive conflicts. There are two values for this dependent variable: yes (1) and no (0). If any of the six conflicts (protests, environmental disasters, Tibet, Taiwan, Uighur, and Falun Gong) in the news item were not only mentioned but also the central topics of the story, value (1) was assigned. If none of the above conflicts was detected, or was merely

mentioned yet did not constitute the focus of the story, value (0) was assigned.

For instance, a story regarding an anti-Japanese protest in China, which was published on April 10, 2005, was coded “1” because it involved one of the abovementioned politically sensitive conflicts: protests. A story published on August 28, 2008 about Iraq’s oil deal with China was coded “0,” for it did not discuss any of the six politically sensitive conflicts in this study.

Coding Procedures

Two trained coders were used for this content analysis. The author acted as the primary coder, while the secondary coder, who speaks fluent English and Chinese and understands the Chinese media system, was trained to familiarize himself with the variables and process of the coding sheet (See *Appendix: Coding Instruction Guide*).

Inter-coder Reliability:

The primary coder coded ten percent of all non-Olympic related news items in the selected time periods: 656 items in the time frame before the announcement of the relaxed policy, and 762 items during the relaxed-policy period. The secondary coder coded ten percent of the data collected by the primary coder, i.e. 66 items in the first time period and 76 items in the second one, to ensure inter-coder reliability. Inter-coder reliability was measured using Cohen’s Kappa as the calculation formula to determine consistency between the two coders. Cohen’s Kappa considers the extent of agreement that might be expected by chance, correcting for the probability of agreement and the number of categories used (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 150).

In the data drawn from the first time frame (the 656 days before the relaxed policy was announced), the inter-coder reliability for the two coders was found to be Kappa = 0.77 ($r = .78, p < .001$) for social change deviance; for politically sensitive conflicts, the inter-coder reliability was Kappa = 0.78 ($r = .78, p < .001$). In the data drawn from the time period on which the relaxed policy applies, the inter-coder reliability was found to be Kappa = 0.80 ($r = .81, p < .001$) for social change deviance; for politically sensitive conflicts, inter-coder reliability was Kappa = 0.86 ($r = .86, p < .001$). Because the values of Kappa from 0.40 to 0.59 are considered moderate, 0.60 to 0.79 substantial and 0.80 outstanding, one could claim that the two coders reached a good level of agreement for all variables (Landis & Koch, 1977).

Coding Analysis:

The data collected from the coding procedure were calculated using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). The means for social change deviance and percentages of politically sensitive conflicts were compared based on the two values from the independent variable. Here, independent-samples t-test was used to determine the level of variability of social change deviance as well as politically sensitive conflicts between the two censorship policy periods.

RESULTS

Two dependent variables were coded in this study. The levels of social change deviance in each news item were based on the item's intensity of threat to the status quo of the Chinese government. The other variable was based on the existence of politically sensitive conflicts in the news item. Table 1 shows the means for both variables, and the results of the statistical tests will be approached later.

Table 1 Means and standard deviations for social change deviance and politically sensitive conflicts in two time frames

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Social change deviance* (1 st time frame)	2.63	1.013	656
Social change deviance* (2 nd time frame)	2.85	.987	762
Politically sensitive conflicts** (1 st time frame)	.14	.343	656
Politically sensitive conflicts** (2 nd time frame)	.27	.445	762

*Levels of social change deviance were coded: 1 = no threat, 2 = minimal threat, 3 = moderate threat, 4 = major threat.

**Existence of politically sensitive conflicts were coded: 1 = yes, 0 = no.

Table 2 details the percentage of each value in the two variables between the two time frames. The statistical tests for both variables will also be approached later.

Table 2 Percentages for social change deviance and politically sensitive conflicts in two time frames

<i>Variables</i>	<i>%</i>
Levels of social change deviance – 1 st time frame	
Not threatening	9.6
Minimal threat	47.6
Moderate threat	12.8
Major threat	30.0
	100.0%
	(N = 656)
Levels of social change deviance – 2 nd time frame	
Not threatening	7.6
Minimal threat	34.8
Moderate threat	23.1
Major threat	34.5
	100.0%
	(N = 762)
Existence of politically sensitive conflicts – 1 st time frame	
Yes	13.6
No	86.4
	100.0%
	(N = 656)
Existence of politically sensitive conflicts – 2 nd time frame	
Yes	27.2
No	72.8
	100.0%
	(N = 762)

Figure 1 shows that the means of social change deviance is higher in the time period on which the policy applied.

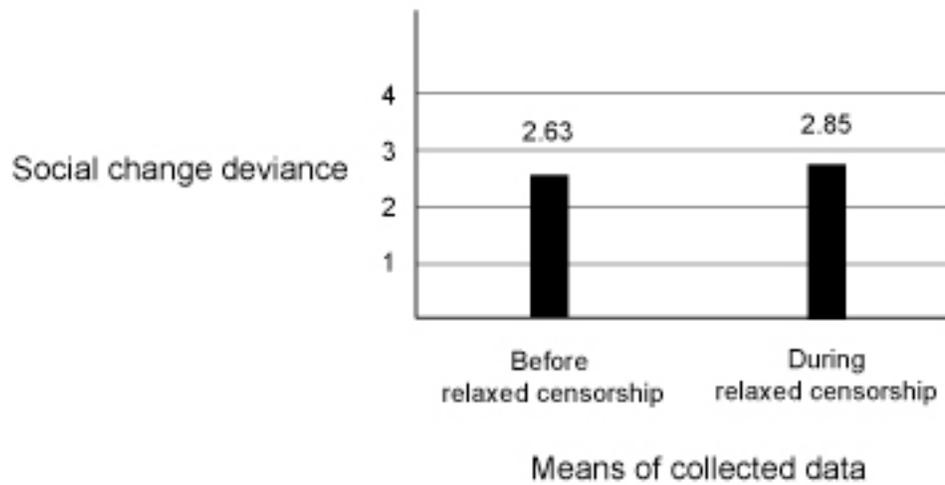


Figure 1 Difference in means of social change deviance

The means of the politically sensitive conflicts also showed a greater percentage in the second time frame, i.e. during the time period on which the state policy applied (See Figure 2).

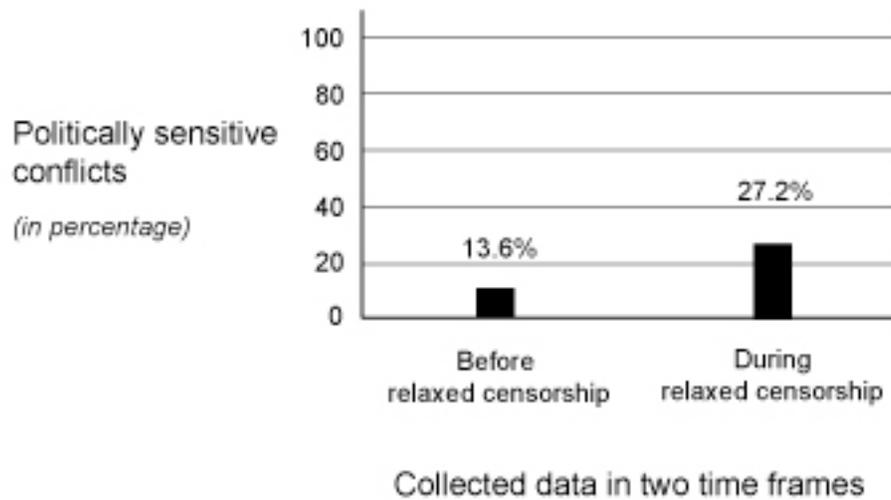


Figure 2 Difference in percentage of politically sensitive conflicts in two time frames

Based on the figures above, the means of social change deviance in both time frames were between level two and level three, which represent news items posing minimal threat and those with moderate threat to the Chinese government. In addition, the mean of the social change deviance in the relaxed censorship period almost reach the moderate threat level. In terms of the politically sensitive conflicts, over a quarter of news stories involving politically sensitive conflicts were found during the relaxed censorship period, which were precisely twice as much as the percentage of such stories in the first time frame.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) predicted that a relaxed censorship policy would lead to a greater level of social change deviance in news stories about China from the *International Herald Tribune*. The results of a two-tailed independent samples t-test

showed that the means in the two time frames are significantly different from each other. That is, there was a significantly higher level of social change deviance ($t(1416) = 3.99$, $p < .001$) in the second time frame, i.e. during the time on which the policy applied. Therefore, the hypothesis was supported (See Table 3).

Hypothesis 2 (H2) expected a greater percentage of politically sensitive conflicts during the time on which the relaxed censorship policy applied. The results of a two-tailed independent samples t-test showed a significantly greater percentage of politically sensitive conflicts ($t(1416) = 6.37$, $p < .001$) in the relaxed policy period. Hence, the hypothesis was also supported (See Table 3).

Table 3 Independent *t* tests for social change deviance and politically sensitive conflicts in two time frames

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Time frames</i>		<i>t value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Significance</i>
	<i>1st frame</i> <i>mean</i> <i>(& SD)</i> <i>(N = 656)</i>	<i>2nd frame</i> <i>mean</i> <i>(& SD)</i> <i>(N = 762)</i>			
Social change deviance*	2.63 (1.01)	2.85 (.99)	3.99	1416	$p < .001$
Politically sensitive conflicts**	.14 (.34)	.27 (.45)	6.37	1416	$p < .001$

*Levels of social change deviance were coded: 1 = no threat, 2 = minimal threat, 3 = moderate threat, 4 = major threat.

**Existence of politically sensitive conflicts were coded: 1 = yes, 0 = no.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which the Chinese government relaxed its foreign media policy due to the hosting of the 2008 Beijing Olympics. The study was accomplished with a content analysis on the news stories about China from the *International Herald Tribune*. The results showed a higher level of social change deviance as well as a greater percentage of politically sensitive conflicts in stories reported during the time period on which a relaxed media censorship policy applied.

Media Gatekeeping

The findings of this study signal a temporary change in China's media gatekeeping practice. Prior to the relaxed media policy announcement, China was often criticized for "blocking" – instead of "keeping" – its media gate, making Xinhua News Agency the only news outlet from China and granting foreign correspondents limited access to dissidents of the Chinese government (Chan & Qiu, 2002; Zhao, 1998). As a result of the relaxed media policy, the coverage of controversial stories on China increased, and the audience was consequently able to view a part of China that could have been otherwise blocked behind the media gate. This suggests that the Chinese government was a key gatekeeper in the study.

On a social and institutional level of media gatekeeping hierarchy, markets and governments are among the extramedia forces that influence the process of news production (Shoemaker, 1996). One cannot determine from the results of this study if

market force drove the increase of the controversial stories on China, since the market may or may not be a constant that did not change with the relaxed media policy.

However, the findings support the theory that government, which announced the relaxed media policy, intervened in the process of news production. By granting foreign reporters access to the otherwise restricted areas, the Chinese government loosened its media gate and indirectly allowed stories that challenged the authorities to be published overseas.

Therefore, one can infer that the government's adjustment of foreign media policy was the factor that led to the significant difference in the news stories on China.

In their discussions on the social institution level of media gatekeeping, Shoemaker and Vos (2009) pointed out that governments influence gatekeeping through various means, including public relations, laws, policies and regulations. The results of the study confirmed that policy – the relaxed media policy in this case – was one of the measures with which the government control the media and in turn, affected how news was shaped and how the international readers viewed China.

Censorship

The results of the research revealed that the relaxed media policy granted foreign correspondents access to the otherwise restricted areas in China, leading to more news sources that used to be off limits. This finding reflects a relatively effective censorship in China prior to the implementation of the relaxed media policy. The Xinhua News Agency being the only and official media outlet from China, the Chinese government successfully controlled the dissemination of sensitive information before the relaxed policy period, keeping the foreign press from obtaining contents that might threaten the authorities.

Hence, the contention that censorship could be formed through a “systematic control of the contents of communication by a government” (Peleg, 1993, p. 206) was supported in this study.

A review of literature also suggests that public order and corruptions, i.e. information that threatens the government’s status quo, are the rationales of censorship (Article 19: International Centre on Censorship; Caso, 2008). The results of this study showed that the relaxed media policy allowed journalists to collect and therefore publish information that challenge the authorities, including public order and corruptions. Consequently, the Chinese government appeared to have risked the effectiveness of its media censorship by implementing the relaxed media policy.

However, the fact that the relaxed media policy led to an increase of stories with high levels of social change deviance as well as politically sensitive conflicts does not necessarily mean that the Chinese government relinquished its foreign media censorship. One of the measures of censorship involves journalists receiving death threats for publishing stories that challenge the authorities (Article 19: International Centre on Censorship). The results of the study revealed an increase of news coverage that threatened the government’s status quo, which might lead to questioning or arrests of journalists, although the validity of this speculation is beyond the scope of the study.

On the other hand, the relaxed policy being restricted to a short period of time also suggests that the Chinese government still held tight control of its foreign media censorship. Based on the duration of the relaxed media censorship, one can infer that the 656 days of the relaxed media censorship policy was a temporary promise of a friendly

international media environment in response to the request by the International Olympics Committee.

In terms of the media censorship in China, although the study only looks at news stories by the foreign media, the findings indicate temporary change in the Chinese media control practice: from withholding every piece of information that disapprove of the government (Chan & Qiu, 2002) to granting more press freedom to foreign journalists, who were then able to produce stories that challenged the Chinese authorities.

The findings in this study also suggest an adjustment in the relationship between the Chinese government and the foreign press. A review of literature stated that the Chinese government regarded foreign journalists as “overly critical and as slandering a country they didn’t fully understand,” while the foreign press often considered the government as a deterrent from fulfilling their tasks (Fackler, 2007). The relaxed media policy allowed the foreign journalists to accomplish the tasks that were otherwise impeded by the government, i.e. obtaining information that challenges the authorities. Therefore, the effectiveness of the relaxed media policy, which resulted in an emergence of more controversial stories, might lessen the tension between the Chinese government and the foreign media.

Impact of Beijing Olympics

The results of this study revealed that the Beijing Olympics did affect China’s media censorship practice in that more stories, which challenged the Chinese authorities, were published due to the relaxed media policy. But the relaxation of foreign media

control appeared to be limited because of the short period of the policy.

Smith (2008) remarked that the Chinese government's commitment to a freer reporting environment during the Beijing Olympics represented a significant change in the history of media control. The results showed that the relaxed media policy took effect, bringing about more stories with higher levels of social change deviance and a higher percentage of politically sensitive conflicts. These findings might indicate an improvement in the Chinese government's treatment of foreign media, hence supporting the statement that Beijing Olympics influenced media control in China. But future research is required to verify the viewpoint.

In addition, because human rights issues constitute topics that contain politically sensitive conflicts as well as high levels of social change deviance, the findings corroborate Polunbaum's (2003) essay on Beijing Olympics, supporting her assertion that the U.S. considered the Beijing Olympics as an opportunity for the coverage of human rights issues in China.

The findings of the study are also similar to Smith's (2008) research on news coverage of Olympics in different countries. Whereas Smith compared news coverage on Beijing Olympics with those on the Olympics from the past years, this study examined the news stories surrounding the Beijing Olympics. Smith's analysis suggested that news articles on Beijing Olympics contain more controversial issues than those on Olympics held in other nations. The results of this study found that more controversial stories were published because of the relaxed media policy during the Beijing Olympics. Both studies indicate a loosened media control in China due to the hosting of the Beijing Olympics.

However, the short period of the relaxed policy showed that the Chinese government did not loosen its foreign media control to a full extent, thereby signifying a limited media transformation in China. This finding reflects Smith's (2008) and Polunbaum's (2003) contention that China only "ostensibly" relaxed its media control due to the hosting of the Beijing Olympics.

In short, the Beijing Olympics represents an important symbol of China being a rising world power, and, as the concept of media globalization suggests, China has been struggling between globalization and media control due to its increasing reliance on international trade (McCormick & Liu, 2003; Lee, 1994). The results of the study showed an improved foreign media environment in China because of the Beijing Olympics, but the limited time span of the relaxed media policy is evidence that press freedom in China remains an unsettled issue (Hood, 1994; Su, 1994; Smith, 2008). To examine how China copes with the idea of unrestricted press after the Games, future research on subsequent time frames should be conducted for a comprehensive study on China's foreign media control.

Limitations and directions for future research

The study looks at levels of social change deviance as well as existence of politically sensitive conflicts in the selected news items in order to understand the effect of the state censorship policy on China's foreign media control. However, other factors, such as the foreign media environment and the way in which the selected stories were produced, could also influence the result of the study. Therefore, the various perspectives and news selection processes among different news organizations and countries should be

taken into account as variables for a multi-dimensional analysis.

In addition, this study only looked at news stories in two time periods. The content analysis revealed a difference between the time before the Chinese government announced the relaxed media censorship policy and the time during which the policy applied. The same content analysis in the time frame after the policy period should also be conducted to examine the effectiveness of the current state of the Chinese government's foreign media control.

Furthermore, this study uses the *International Herald Tribune* as the sole subject of research due to time constraints. But using only one foreign news outlet for the sample is insufficient to justify the projected media transformation in China. To illustrate, comparing the Beijing Olympics coverage between the Asian news organizations and those from Western nations might lead to different results, because both represent contrasting cultures that would bring about news stories with divergent social contexts. Therefore, analyzing news stories from organizations of multiple countries would yield a more thorough examination on Chinese government's foreign media control under the influence of the Beijing Olympics.

In the final analysis, the results of the study showed a significantly larger number of controversial stories on China from the *International Herald Tribune* in the relaxed media censorship period. The findings implied that the Chinese government loosened its otherwise tightly-shut media gate as well as its foreign media censorship, and that it was the hosting of the Beijing Olympics, which led to the announcement of a relaxed foreign media control, that facilitated the difference in foreign media coverage between the two

time frames. However, the limited time period of the policy suggests that the Chinese government did not fully relax its foreign media control. Further research is required to investigate the relations between the Chinese government and the foreign press, thereby examining how China copes with the idea of press freedom and a media-friendly environment after the Beijing Olympics.

Appendix

Coding Instruction Guide

- Use the attached coding sheet to assign each news item for the variables.
- The assigned news items are divided into two time periods:
 - **February 13, 2005 to November 30, 2006** (the 656 days before the Chinese government announced its relaxed media censorship)
 - **January 1, 2007 to October 17, 2008** (the 656 days on which the relaxed censorship policy applies)
- For each news item, look for the following two content elements:
 - Social change deviance
 - News items that suggest any **potential to threaten or change the status quo of a social system** are considered depictions of social change deviance.
 - In each news item, look for **the most deviant word, statement, or sentence** you can find. This is the case even if deviance appears as background information in the news item.
 - Please indicate each news item's social change deviance by using the following categories:
 - (1) The item presents **no threat** to the status quo (i.e. the news content provides information that does not affect or challenge

the Chinese government and its state regulations)

Examples:

- Portrait of a former athlete not competing for 2008 Beijing Olympics
- Passenger trains collide in Eastern China
- Hong Kong's new luxury hotel opens

(2) The item presents a **minimal threat** to the status quo (i.e. the news content announces state policies, or provides information concerning **health, technology, business** and/or **economy**, which might raise international concerns but does not affect the state regulations)

Examples:

- Staples and U.P.S. in joint venture in China
- China to let market forces weigh on value of Yuan
- China moves to tighten the money supply

(3) The item presents a **moderate threat** to the status quo (i.e. the news content is related to **the media, product safety** and/or **natural environment**, which might subsequently affect the Chinese government's image)

Examples:

- An eased access of news media from Mainland China to Taiwan
- China offers plan to clean up its polluted lakes
- Toothpaste warning is rejected by China

(4) The item presents a **major threat** to the status quo (i.e. the news content is related to **military, diplomacy** and/or **human**

rights, which could immediately affect the country's current social system)

Examples:

- Tough questions for China on schools and Japan aid for Sichuan earthquake
 - U.S. Congress honors Dalai Lama despite objection by China
 - U.S. officials criticized the rising tensions between Taiwan and Mainland China
- You can stop analyzing the news content once you found any indication of deviance that fits into “category 4” because the item cannot receive a higher deviance score than 4 in this study.
- Politically sensitive conflicts
 - For this particular study, politically sensitive conflicts refer to news content that includes at least one of the following six topics:
 - Protests
 - Environmental disasters, such as earthquakes and pollutions
 - Tibet
 - Taiwan
 - Uighur
 - Falun Gung
 - Please look for the “content” that contains the six politically sensitive conflicts, not “words” that merely mention the phrases above.

- To determine the existence of politically sensitive conflicts, please identify news items that discuss any of the abovementioned topics by using the following two categories:

(1) The item presents **at least one of the six politically sensitive conflicts**

(0) The item presents **none of the six politically sensitive conflicts**

Official Statement of the Relaxed Media Policy⁸

Article 1: These Regulations are formulated to facilitate reporting activities carried out in accordance with the laws of the People's Republic of China by foreign journalists in China to advance and promote the Olympic Spirit during the Beijing Olympic Games and the preparatory period.

Article 2: These Regulations apply to reporting activities carried out by foreign journalists covering the Beijing Olympic Games and related matters in China during the Beijing Olympic Games and the preparatory period.

The Beijing Olympic Games mentioned in the Regulations refer to the 29th Olympic Games and the 13th Paralympic Games.

Article 3: Foreign journalists who intend to come to China for reporting should apply for visas at Chinese embassies, consulates or other visa-issuing institutions authorized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China. Foreign journalists who hold valid Olympic Identity and Accreditation Cards and Paralympic Identity and Accreditation Cards are entitled to multiple entries into the territory of the People's Republic of China with visa exemption by presenting Olympic Identity and Accreditation Cards, together with valid passports or other travel documents.

Article 4: Foreign journalists may bring a reasonable quantity of reporting equipments into China duty free for their own use. The aforementioned equipments should be shipped out of China's territory at the end of their reporting activities. To bring into China reporting equipment duty free for their own use, foreign journalists should apply for the Equipment Confirmation Letter at Chinese embassies or consulates and present the Equipment Confirmation Letter together with a J-2 visa when going through customs inspection. Foreign journalists who hold Olympic Identity and Accreditation Cards and

⁸The official statement released by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China: <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw/jzfw/t326215.htm> (accessed April 14, 2010).

Paralympic Identity and Accreditation Cards may present the Equipment Confirmation Letter issued by the Organizing Committee of the 29th Olympic Games when going through customs inspection.

Article 5: For reporting needs, foreign journalists may, on a temporary basis, bring in, install and use radio communication equipment after completing the required application and approval procedures.

Article 6: To interview organizations or individuals in China, foreign journalists need only to obtain their prior consent.

Article 7: Foreign journalists may, through organizations providing services to foreign nationals, hire Chinese citizens to assist them in their reporting activities.

Article 8: The media guide for foreign journalists of the Beijing Olympic Games shall be formulated by the Organizing Committee of the 29th Olympic Games in accordance with these Regulations.

Article 9: These Regulations shall come into force as of 1 January 2007 and expire on 17 October 2008.

(The Regulations Concerning Foreign Journalists and Permanent Offices of Foreign Media organizations issued in 1990 remain valid after the implementation of the Regulations on Reporting Activities in China by Foreign Journalists during the Beijing Olympic Games and the Preparatory Period. In case of any discrepancies between the two, the Regulations on Reporting Activities in China by Foreign Journalists during the Beijing Olympic Games and the Preparatory Period shall prevail. With respect to matters not covered in the Regulations on Reporting Activities in China by Foreign Journalists during the Beijing Olympic Games and the Preparatory Period, the Regulations Concerning Foreign Journalists and Permanent Offices of Foreign Media organizations shall apply.)

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