

AMERICAN DISCOURSE ON CHINA: A CROSS-TIME COMPARISON OF  
U.S. NEWS FRAMING OF CHINA'S ONE-CHILD POLICY, 1979-2009

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by  
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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School,  
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And hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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## ABSTRACT

This study explored fluctuations in news frames used in U.S. elite media coverage of China's one-child policy from its inception in 1979 until 2009. Framing analysis has been used to examine media attention given to domestic issues and international events, but little research has been done on U.S. news frames of another country's domestic policy. A mix-method approach of content analysis and qualitative framing analysis was used to analyze 83 articles from *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. Each article was broken into individual speech units called utterances, and a total of 1,070 utterances were analyzed. In addition, this paper looked at the speakers who were providing the content in these articles and each speaker groups' frame preference. It was found that in the two time periods before China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, the dominant news frame focused on enforcement methodology. After 2001, the dominant frame dealt with coercive methods. Speakers from the Chinese government were found to have the dominant voice in coverage; over time, however, Chinese civilians increasingly challenged the hegemony of the Chinese government's voice. All U.S. speakers had a preference for framing the policy in terms of either political implications or the issue of coercion. The dominant speaker group, the Chinese government, primarily framed the issue in terms of enforcement methodology.



## Introduction

In 1979, the People's Republic of China instituted a policy called *jihua shenyu*, which became known in the U.S. as the one-child policy. The policy was enacted to control a population growth rate which Western scholars and politicians have regarded as both a practically unsolvable problem and as a factor that has contributed to the demise of all governments that have ruled China throughout the past few centuries (Wang, 1999, p. 6-7). According to Dean Acheson, secretary of state under President Truman, inability to feed China's massive population was one of the major factors that led to the overthrow of the Nationalist government by the Communists. Thus it was essential that the Communist government be able to provide for its citizens. The policy was proclaimed by this government to be a solution to the social and economic problem of overpopulation, but foreign media, the U.S. government, and human rights organizations instead focused on human rights abuses that have occurred in conjunction with the policy (Greenhalgh & Winckler, 2005, p. 307-308).

The central concern of the research reported here was to determine whether and how coverage of the one-child policy in the U.S. media shifted in focus over time. Specifically, the research looked at how elite U.S. newspapers covered the policy from its inception in 1979 until 2009. In addition, the researcher focused on who was cited in the newspaper articles and whether who these sources were affected what aspect of the policy the sources addressed.

Although the policy was implemented by the Chinese government as necessary for “sustainable development” (Greenhalgh & Winckler, 2005, p.134), during the first decade and a half of the policy’s enforcement, the American public associated the one-child policy with “such inhumanities as pregnant women being locked in birth planning jails, unauthorized babies being killed at birth, and peasants feeling pressured to abandon or kill their infant daughters” (p. 301). During the late 1980s, the issue of coercion with regard to the policy kept resurfacing in noisy debates in Washington D.C. (p. 307). Under presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush, and also later under George W. Bush, the United Nations Population Fund was defunded in part because of its “participation in the management of a program of forced abortion and involuntary sterilization” in China (p. 307).

Overall, news coverage of this rapidly changing country has changed drastically in the past few decades, and pivotal events including the Tiananmen Square protest and China's acceptance into the World Trade Organization (WTO) have been linked with profound changes in U.S. coverage of China. Kulma (1991) says that the Tiananmen Square protest and ensuing crackdown “drastically changed the image of China found in the mass media” (p. 84). Lee (2002) found that while human rights abuses occurred in both the 1980s and 1990s in China, intense negative focus in the U.S. media on China's human rights issues occurred in the post-Cold War and post-Tiananmen Square protest 1990s but not in the 1980s (p. 344). By the turn of the century, Lee found that in *The New York Times'* coverage of China, the emphasis was on globalization as a tool to promote democracy (p. 352). At a time when China's entrance into the WTO was being debated, the WTO was “idealized as a key to triggering political democracy” (p. 352), and “global

capitalism instead of trade sanctions [was seen] as the best instrument of promoting human rights in China” (p. 353).

In order to examine what aspects of the one-child policy the U.S. media focused on in each of the periods, framing analysis was utilized. To employ a particular news frame is to highlight a particular aspect of an issue and to promote a distinct evaluation or interpretation of the issue (Entman, 1993). In framing the news, Cappella and Jamieson (1997) say that a journalist determines “what is included and excluded, what is salient and what is unimportant” in order to provide media consumers a way to understand a set of events (p. 38).

The primary question this research addressed was whether framing of the one-child policy in the U.S. media changed during the 30 years of the policy's lifespan and in what ways. In addition, the research looked at who the speakers were in the articles and whether the speakers changed over time. A “speaker” is similar to a “source,” but it extends the definition of source by including as well the authors of the news articles (Ferree et al., 2002). In this way, the researcher was able to code the news content lacking distinct attribution that was provided by the author her/himself. The purpose was to determine who was defining the framing of the one-child policy and to understand which organizations and individuals were given a voice in the articles. The researcher measured “standing,” which refers to the frequency with which specific actors representing specific identifiable organizations are cited in the media. Some speakers that occurred frequently in the data, for example, were Chinese family planning officials, Chinese civilians, U.S. lawyers, and United Nations (U.N.) officials; looking at who these speakers were helped determine which voices contributed most significantly to the framing of the issue.

After identifying the frames used to define the coverage and the speakers providing the material used in the coverage, the interaction between these two variables was examined. Focus was placed on whether speakers or speaker categories emphasized particular frames when they were cited in the news articles.

This research employed quantitative content analysis and qualitative framing methods to determine whether news reports shifted over time in their emphasis of different aspects of the one-child policy; specifically, the research addressed whether the policy was framed in terms of the Chinese government's effectiveness in accomplishing its population and enforcement goals; in terms of alleged coercive measures and its identification as a human rights issue; or in terms of the social, economic, and political implications that have arisen from the policy.

The study examined 83 news stories from three national news sources in the U.S. Content analysis was used to determine which speakers were given a voice in the coverage and what kind of coverage the issue was given in U.S. newspapers; the researcher then employed qualitative framing analysis to discern patterns in emphasis in reporting. The mixed-method approach enabled the researcher to determine whether and how the frames in coverage changed and to determine whether choice of speakers contributed to how the issue was framed.

The researcher hopes this study will help fill a gap in media studies on changes in U.S. foreign news frames over time. Studies have looked at long-term media coverage of U.S. domestic issues (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Ferree, Gamson, Gerhards, & Rucht, 2002); at other countries' long-term coverage of their own domestic issues (Ferree et al., 2002); and at U.S. coverage of international events (Lee & Yang, 1996; Akhavan-Majid

& Ramaprasad, 2000). But little research has been done on how U.S. media frame another country's domestic issue as time progresses. The hope is that this research will add to the current literature in this way.

In addition, my research will point out that news frames can be a historical variable. They are contingent upon the changing international relationships, the occurrence of major events, as well as changing trends in source use by news correspondents. At the same time that news frames may vary over time, there are what Gans (1979) called "enduring values" (p. 42) within the news that were evident in my research. In addition, the focus on speaker analysis will allow nuance to the framing analysis in that it provides insight into who exactly is framing the one-child policy in what ways within media accounts of the issue.

In the following chapters, I will elaborate on the theoretical framework and methodology used in this research and present the findings and an analysis of the findings. Chapter one provides background on framing analysis as the theoretical approach used in the study. In addition, this chapter gives a historical picture on the literature that exists on American international news reporting, and especially on reporting in China. Chapter one also examines the historical background of the one-child policy. Chapter two gives an explanation of the methodology used in the research, including explanations and examples of the variables in this study: utterance, idea element, and speaker. Chapter three presents the results from the frame analysis. Seven major frames with varying degrees of prevalence were identified: Effectiveness in Controlling Population, Effectiveness of Enforcement, Evaluation of Policy, Social Implications, Political Implications, Economic Implications, and Coercion Issues.

Chapter four deals with the results of the speaker analysis, focusing on comparisons between Chinese and U.S. speakers as well as on how the prominence of individual speaker groups changed over the three time periods. Chapter five looks at how the speakers present in the articles affected the frames that were used. Chapter six is a discussion of the findings and suggestions for further research.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Literature Review: Framing, International News, and China's One-Child Policy**

In this chapter, I will go into more depth on the theoretical concepts undergirding the current research, including framing analysis and the use of speakers. I will also look at the existing scholarship on how the U.S. media has framed international media coverage and more specifically coverage of Asia and China. In the final section, the case of China's one-child policy will be further explained and different views on the policy will be discussed.

#### **Theoretical Background: Framing Analysis**

The present study drew on framing theory for its theoretical framework. Framing theory has been applied increasingly to journalistic research because, unlike traditional approaches to content analysis, framing theory does not assume that news texts have "objectively identifiable meanings" (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 58). Framing theory, instead, posits that news texts will interact with the news consumers' latent knowledge to create a unique message received by each consumer (p. 42); according to the theory, the frame on a news text will determine what prior knowledge the consumer will draw from to understand the content.

Entman (1993) provides this oft-cited definition of framing:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation (p. 52).

In a way, news is an application of selected frames to simplify a complex issue.

The one-child policy is such a complex issue: China is concerned with how effective its one-child policy is in controlling its population; but the U.N. is concerned with whether China is using coercive measures to enforce this policy (Greenhalgh & Winckler, 2005, p. 10). According to Cappella and Jamieson (1997), “Framing is a way of drawing attention to certain features of an issue while minimizing attention to others” (p. 45), so simply by choosing a particular aspect of the one-child policy to cover, a journalist is creating a news frame.

In communications research, framing theory has given birth to framing analysis, a content analysis methodology whereby researchers analyze the frames that exist on news texts. Framing analysis is a methodology frequently used to analyze event coverage. Luther and Zhou (2005) used framing analysis to compare U.S. and Chinese media coverage of SARS and found that while newspapers in both countries used the same frames, Chinese newspapers were more likely to take a positive stance within the frames than U.S. newspapers and U.S. newspapers were more likely than Chinese ones to use a conflict frame (p. 866). Framing has also been used to look at coverage of antiwar protests of the U.S.-Iraq War both exclusively in the U.S. media (Klein, Byerly, & McEachern, 2009) and in various countries’ elite newspapers (Peng, 2008). Klein et al. (2009) found that a few years into the war, the media allowed dissenting voices to be



heard and seized upon a counterframe that essentially reframed the war in less positive ways than it had previously been framed in the media. Peng (2008) looked at whether the each protest was framed as a legitimate action, an event with conflict, or as deviant behavior and found that the U.S.'s *New York Times*, Britain's *The Times*, and China's *People's Daily* all echoed their respective governments' stances and policies in their coverage (p. 375).

Frames have also been used to look at issue coverage. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) used framing analysis to study media discourse in the U.S. on nuclear power over four decades. They found that, following both the nuclear disasters at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, the most prominent frame in newsmagazines was the runaway frame, which indicates an attitude of resignation and fatalism toward nuclear power (p. 26). Ferree et al. (2002) used framing analysis to compare German and American media coverage of abortion from 1962 to 1994. The researchers found that the most dominant frame in U.S coverage was the Individual and State frame, which asserts that "the issue is about the intrusion of the state into the private lives of its citizens" (p. 107); the dominant frame in German coverage was the Fetal Life frame, which states that "the fundamental issue is the sacredness of human life" (p. 107).

Lee (2002) used framing analysis to look at *The New York Times'* coverage of U.S. policy toward China from 1990 to 2000. He found three "ideological packages," containment, engagement and globalization, which all "represented different strategic variations on the same ideological theme of peaceful evolution" (p. 343).

Though domestic issue coverage and foreign event coverage have been frequent specimens for framing analysis research, little research has been done examining frames

used in U.S. coverage of foreign issues. Lee's (2002) research examined frames used in coverage of China over an extended period of time, but no research has looked specifically at American coverage over time of another country's domestic policy. Scholars (Gans, 1979; Lee & Yang, 1996) contend that U.S. media coverage of other countries focus on American themes and use an American cultural and political lens to report the news. This study attempts to further the literature by using framing analysis to test the theory that U.S. media follow American themes when covering another country's domestic policy, specifically China's policy of controlling birth nationwide.

In applying framing analysis to issues rather than events, it was critical for the study to be done over a significant period of time. One reason is that the prominence of frames changes with time. The previously mentioned study by Gamson and Modigliani (1989) looked at frames used in nuclear power discourse and found that the prominence of various frames changed with time. In the 1950s and 1960s, nuclear power was portrayed most prominently in terms of a progress frame, which framed the issue "in terms of the society's commitment to technological development and economic growth" (p. 4). By the 1970s and 1980s, although the progress frame was still prominent, it had been surpassed in prominence by the runaway frame, which has a position of resignation rather than opposition toward nuclear power (p. 20). Similarly, the researcher posited that the prominence of frames used to discuss the one-child policy would change over time.

The other reason that the researcher looked at coverage over a significant period of time is that even when a frame is consistently used over time, it does not necessarily remain static. In fact, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) talk about framing in terms of "interpretive packages" and say that in order for these framing packages to remain viable,

they “have the task of constructing meaning over time, incorporating new events into their interpretive frames” (p. 4). So, as new events occur and are incorporated into a frame, the frame will continue to exist, but it will have been altered to incorporate new information.

## **U.S. International News Coverage**

In looking at the framing of China’s one-child policy, it is useful to first look at how framing has been used in international news coverage. Scholars (Gans, 1979; Rachlin, 1988; Lee & Yang, 1996) argue that international news is framed in light of the interests and themes of the country doing the reporting. Rachlin (1988) maintains that international events are interpreted more in light of political and cultural understandings originating in the host country than by the actual event itself. This shared understanding by a country’s citizens allows international news to often transcend domestic politics. Lee and Yang (1996) argue that in international affairs, national interests transcend partisan politics, creating an effect where the media “rally around the flag” by imitating the language and agenda of the government and business world in their own country (p. 2). And Gans (1979) specifically points out that in the U.S., international happenings are presented in the media as following American themes; they are stories “relevant to Americans or American interests; with the same themes and topics as domestic news; or when the topics are distinctive, with interpretations that apply American values” (p. 37). A few of the frames that have been used in U.S. international reporting that strongly reflect American values are the Cold War frame, the post-Cold War frame, and the Orientalism frame.

## **Cold War Frame in U.S. International News**

One way that the U.S. media followed American themes and the U.S. government's foreign policy was by applying the Cold War frame to international news coverage. According to Lee and Yang (1996), during the Cold War, the U.S. media embraced using the Cold War frame, which "favored the U.S. as the guardian of the 'free world'" (p. 4). This Cold War news frame once "organized virtually all foreign affairs coverage into a coherent ideological picture supportive of American world hegemony" (Huang & McAdams, 2000, p. 59). Kobland, Du, & Kwan (1992) point out that one of the manifestations of the Cold War frame is that U.S. media coverage of the Communist states focused almost exclusively on the problems of Marxist governments (p. 66). This focus on Communist failures is evidenced in Entman's (1991a) study comparing the American media coverage of the KAL and Iran Air incidents (passenger planes shot down by a Soviet fighter plane and a U.S. Navy ship in 1983 and 1988, respectively). Entman found that coverage of the Soviets downing the Korean passenger plane focused on the Soviets' guilt and the moral reprehensibility of the act; in contrast, coverage of the U.S. downing the Iranian plane focused not on guilt but on the challenges inherent in operating military technology. The Communist Soviets were portrayed as immoral failures while the U.S., when perpetrating a similar act, were given the benefit of the doubt.

## **Post-Cold War Frame in U.S. International News**

The Cold War frame served to control and define the domain of foreign affairs, and "the demise of the Cold War created a void, an absence of associative links to threats

against the United States that communism automatically provided” (Entman, 1991b, p. 14). In the absence of this frame that synthesized all foreign events into one interpretive schema, post-Cold War foreign news coverage was very hodgepodge in nature (Entman, 1991b). After the Cold War, the themes in foreign news coverage were human suffering, lack of democracy, terrorism, and refugee-related issues, in contrast to the Cold War coverage that was “a tightly knit core of interrelated problems whose diagnosis and labeling symbolized the moral evaluation of evil communism and the standing remedy of U.S. vigilance” (Entman, 1991b, p. 13).

### **Orientalism Frame in U.S. International News**

Another frame found in U.S. news coverage of foreign affairs is the Orientalism frame. “Orientalism” as a theory was articulated by Edward Said (1978) and says that “critical distinctions within [Asian regions], separating victors from the defeated in military conquests, wealthy, multilingual and mobile global elites from poverty and disease-stricken masses, men with unquestioned power from women in various stages of resistance, and more, are glossed over in favor of composite images of the Orient” by the media and other societal institutions (p. 3). This oversimplified explanation of the world views the “West” as a “dynamic, complex, and ever changing society” and the “Orient” as a “static, barbaric, and despotic, and therefore in need of Western intervention to bring about progressive change” (Kumar, 2008, p. 2). Park & Wilkins (2005) further state that this frame that ignores the nuances of the cultural, political and economic landscape of Asian countries results in a simplistic, flattened plotline.

Orientalism can be found as a frame in dealing with coverage of any Asian nation. In particular, we will discuss coverage of the Middle East here and later discuss coverage of the Far East. In *Islamic Peril*, Karim (2003) looked at how Western media sustained a global narrative on Islam that pits the Muslim East against the West and found a recurrence of Orientalist images of Islam in the Western media. Kumar (2008) argues that Orientalism frames the conflict between the U.S. and the Middle East as a “clash of civilizations.” An example of this clash being portrayed in the media is Bernard Lewis’ essay on the rise of Islamic “fundamentalism” titled “The Roots of Muslim Rage” that was published in the *Atlantic Monthly*; Lewis’ essay was accompanied by a cover featuring an “angry, bearded, turbaned man” (Kumar, 2008, p. 3). Izadi and Saghaye-Biria (2007) found Orientalism themes in their discourse analysis of elite American newspaper editorials about Iran’s nuclear program. All the editorials focused on the U.S.’s responsibility to fight against Iran’s possession of nuclear weapons, focusing on the theme of “Oriental untrustworthiness” (p. 160), which says that “Orientals are by nature untruthful and therefore should not be trusted” (p. 149).

## **U.S. Media Coverage of Asia**

Within international news discourse from the U.S., Asia does not receive news coverage of Asia does not have a very prominent placement. Tai (2000) did a cross-national study on the top events in the news from 1988 to 1998 and found that, within U.S. news, the Asia Pacific region received a very small percentage of the coverage. North America, Europe, the Middle East, the former Soviet republics, and, in some cases, Africa all had a higher percentage of the coverage than the Asia Pacific region (p. 345).

However, when the Far East is brought up in the U.S. media, often it is discussed using an Orientalism frame.

As mentioned earlier, the U.S. media tend to present events as following American themes and tend to interpret events by applying American values. This can be seen in U.S. media coverage of Asia. Dorogi (2001) points out that Western reporting on China and Vietnam are highly critical of domestic activities that are in conflict with American values of individuals' freedom, democracy, and human rights. The focus on U.S. interests and values can also be seen in coverage of North Korea. Dai and Hyun (2010) found that in U.S. media coverage of the North Korean nuclear test, the *Associated Press* tended to "inflate the nuclear threat in order to rationalize US interests in punishing and transforming the authoritarian region" (p. 39). The media made moral judgments in regard to how North Korea had ignored its commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and labeled North Korea and "rogue" and "criminal" (p. 39).

Another trend evident in coverage of Asia is a use of the Orientalism frame in U.S. media discourse. Brooten's (2005) case study analysis of American news coverage of Burmese opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi found Orientalism framing that pictured the East as an "antiquity characterized by underdevelopment, lack of democracy, and restriction of women's rights" (p. 144). Brooten (2005) said that *U.S. News & World Report* used the following descriptions of Burma: It "retains the exotic flavors of old Asia" and the area on the shores of Burma's famous Inle Lake is described as "tribal territory, as far east as a traveler can go" (p. 144). In addition to these backward descriptions of Burma, there is a theme of paternalism, framing the U.S. as in a position

to chastise the wayward child: “We have lost our patience with Burma,” the U.S. assistant secretary of state is quoted as saying in a *Newsweek* brief in regard to the Burmese government’s “continued refusal to release pro-democracy opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi despite international pressure” (p. 144).

In addition to the Orientalism frame, the Cold War frame can be found in coverage of Asia. In the Western media, North Korea has been viewed through the Cold War frame for more than four decades (Carragee & Roefs, 2004). Vietnam and China have also often been viewed in the Western media through the Cold War frame and the “communist other” (Huang & Leung, 2005, p. 305).

## **U.S. Media Coverage of China**

China has been a large focus of Asia coverage in Western media. Some of the major frames that have been used in coverage on China have been the Orientalism frame, the Cold War frame, and the human rights frame. The Orientalism frame can be seen in coverage that frames Chinese behavior in terms of bowing to American values or American superiority. The Cold War frame is evident in news articles that frame the Chinese government as oppressive and domineering. And the human rights frame is observed in coverage that frames China’s interaction with the rest of the world in terms of how it chooses to handle its human rights issues.

### **Orientalism Frame in U.S. Coverage of China**

Reporters have consistently portrayed China through an Orientalism frame, which focuses on China as the antithesis of everything that is American. Storylines of distrust



and support have depended largely on whether China was perceived, at the time of coverage, as accepting of American ideals or not. This portrayal of China as the antithesis of the U.S. leads news stories to be reported from the frame “How can China become more like the U.S.?” In Orientalism, the people of the region are not viewed as individuals or even as a group of people, but rather as “problems to be solved or confined” (Said, 1978). The problem, as Americans see it, is that China has refused to adopt American cultural ideals. As Farmer (1990) says, “Over the years Americans pushed all of their fondest values at the Chinese – Christianity, representative democracy, individualism, private enterprise, consumerism – in the firm belief that these ways were superior. It was always a profound shock when the Chinese flatly rejected the gifts offered” (p. 250).

Carolyn Wakeman (1999) in her article “Beyond the Square” argues that the complicated nature of the Tiananmen Square protest was flattened in American reporting to a single plotline—that of American-styled democracy vs. its detractors. Wang (1998) added support to this argument through the discourse and ideological analysis she did on *The New York Times*’ coverage of the Tiananmen incident. In her results, she found, “The distinction between good (the students) and evil (the communist regime) resulted from ideological proximity of either group to the Western values. The students, who actually did not denounce communism, were seen as closer to being the prototype of ‘the good,’ because their appeals sounded more agreeable to the Western ear, while the government, seen as the embodiment of values opposite to those of capitalism was identified as ‘the evil’” (p. 81). Again, the nuance of Chinese politics is lost in the dichotomy between

American-style democracy and Communism, where China, as represented by its government, refuses to accept America's gift of democracy.

In Yin's (2007) study of the U.S. news coverage of negotiations on China's possible entrance into the WTO, the narrative the American media gave was of China desperately wanting, almost begging, to join the WTO (p. 37). In Jing's combined critical discourse analysis and narrative analysis, she contrasted this narrative with the one the Chinese media gave of the situation being mutually beneficial to all parties involved. As Yin says, "By defining the trade issue as China's request, the U.S. press positioned the United States superior to China, which has the right to grant or deny the favor that China was asking" (p. 37). Jing's study suggests that, again, China is being portrayed through the Orientalism frame, where the U.S. is found to have superiority over the "other."

Liss (2003) did a study on how China was portrayed from 2000 to 2002 in four major American newspapers: the *Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. Besides the *Wall Street Journal*, which portrayed China positively, presumably because it was focusing on China's economic promise, these newspapers portrayed China as a country that challenges "those principles and values that compose the American way of life" (p. 301), a country with "irrational and confrontational" diplomacy and a country that "aims to challenge US power abroad" (p. 317). Thus, China is seen through the Orientalism frame as the threatening "other."

The Orientalism frame is also responsible for the instances when China is portrayed positively in the American media. In Liss' (2003) study, of the four major American newspapers he performed discourse analysis on, only the *Wall Street Journal* portrayed China in a positive light. Liss found that this paper "tended to give its coverage of the

[People's Republic of China] both a positive subject matter as well as a positive tone" (p. 301). Liss states that this is likely due to the fact that *Wall Street Journal* readers are business people who are excited by China's economic reforms (p. 301), indicating that China is most likely to be covered positively if it moves toward an American-style economic system. Other positive coverage that Liss found centered on China's accession into the WTO and the liberalization of the media. Articles on the WTO accession "point to the long term potential for economic liberalization and greater political freedom" (p. 313). An article from *The New York Times* states that "commercialization of the formerly state-owned media yields important promise in democratizing Chinese society" (p. 313). The more China embraces the American ideals of political and economic freedom, the more positively the American media portrays it.

Wang's (1998) discourse and ideological analysis on *The New York Times*' coverage of Nixon's 1972 visit to China reveals that coverage of this event was not only positive but also provided readers with a more informed, nuanced picture of China. News articles used such language as Beijing city "overwhelmed" the visitors and, regarding the Chinese people, everybody "does his share of marching, of chanting political slogans and of studying the Little Red Book." The effect of such language was to give meaning to a remote event and to provide "a sharper focus of an originally nebulous concept" (p. 80). Journalists were trying to get beyond the image of China as the incomprehensible other. As a result of more nuanced coverage of the Chinese, American popular opinion regarding China experienced a dramatic shift. As Kulma (1999) says, "The mass media covered the slowly unfolding drama in such a positive way that public opinion shifted from the view of China as an enemy image to something approaching an ally" (p. 78).

## **Cold War Frame in U.S. Coverage of China**

Since Mao Zedong's Communist takeover of China in 1949, coverage of China has been strongly influenced by the anti-communism Cold War frame. From 1949 to 1973, *Time* magazine provided more print and image coverage of China than any other American news platform and, since American reporters had been thrown out of China in 1949, the news consisted primarily of material provided by the Chinese government that was fitted to the anti-Communist frame by adding captions that mocked or questions the visual content (Perlmutter, 2007, p. 111).

Both Lee and Yang (1996) and Wang (1991) found the Cold War frame in U.S. media coverage of the Tiananmen Square protests. In Lee and Yang's (1996) content analysis of coverage of the Tiananmen Square protest, they found that "in 1989 the AP defined the Tiananmen movement as a struggle by students for the realization of a universalized democracy and a pursuit of human rights against a repressive Communist regime" (p. 14). Wang (1991) compared *The New York Times'* coverage of China during Nixon's trip with that during the Tiananmen Square protests. The study found that during Nixon's visit, China was portrayed as a "good socialist country that was vested with cultural heritage and historical sites" (p. 61), and the Tiananmen Square protests were covered with an anti-communist frame, "emphasizing the confrontation between pro-democratic, pro-change college students and the corrupt, incompetent and unyielding communist regime" (p. 59).

The anti-communism Cold War frame was present in U.S. media coverage of China beyond the end of the Cold War. Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad's (2000) combined content analysis and qualitative analysis found that U.S. newspaper coverage

of the UN Women's Conference and NGO Forum in China that revealed an "underlying emphasis on the familiar themes of 'oppression' and 'deceitfulness' that have long been associated with the coverage of China as a communist country" (p. 53).

### **Human Rights Frame in U.S. Coverage of China**

Numerous researchers (Goodman, 1999; Lee, 2002; Yin, 2007; Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad, 2000) have found a human rights frame in U.S. media coverage of China. Goodman's (1999) content analysis of *New York Times* and *Washington Post* articles from 1985 until 1993 shows that coverage emphasized human rights issues including the Tiananmen Square protest, allegations of forced abortions, and the mistreatment of political prisoners (p. 404). This discussion of human right was often in context of their threat to "substantially threatened China's ability to maintain its [Most Favored Nation] status" (p. 406). In Yin's (2007) narrative analysis of *The New York Times*' portrayal of the U.S.-China trade relationship, she found that the narrative being told in the media was that WTO membership was a reward that the U.S. would give if China changed its human rights policies and that although China made trade concessions, the U.S. didn't support China's effort to join the WTO as a "means to punish China for human rights abuses" (p. 38). Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad (2000) found in their qualitative frames assessment of press coverage of the Fourth UN Conference on Women and the NGO Forum that occurred in Beijing that "the coverage was replete with dramatic references to China as a nation with a 'loathsome human rights record'" (p. 54). The researchers found that the focus on China's human rights record was so strong in the media that it obscured the global application of Hillary Clinton's speech "Women's Rights are Human Rights" to

the point that Clinton's words were interpreted as directed at China's human rights issues "without mentioning any names" (p. 54).

## **The One-Child Policy and the United States**

China's one-child policy is one of the main Western concerns regarding human rights, and thus has become the key issue in media coverage. The policy was instituted in China due to concerns regarding overpopulation and its effect on economic growth, and according to Greenhalgh and Winckler (2005), the Chinese government has long tied population planning to economic development (p. 91). Despite the intentions of the Chinese government, Peng's (2004) across time content analysis of China coverage in *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* found that the U.S. media was more likely to frame birth control as a human rights issue "despite the fact there are other related issues such as population pressure versus economic development" (p. 64).

Despite its status as a domestic issue in China, the one-child policy became a contentious issue for the U.S. The Chinese government started implementing the one-child policy at the same time that there was great debate and tension in the U.S. over the abortion issue (Farmer, 1999, p. 248). Those opposed to abortion latched onto the issue, making it a "cause célèbre" for the prolife camp (Greenhalgh & Winckler, 2005, p. 307). The policy started to affect foreign policy when in 1985, President Reagan defunded the U.N. Population Fund because of its "participation in the management of a program of forced abortion and involuntary sterilization" in China (Crane & Finkle, 1989). For six years after the defunding, the one-child policy arose repeatedly in rowdy debates in U.S. national politics, bringing negative attention to China again and again (Greenhalgh &

Winckler, 2005, p. 307). The one-child policy is a high-profile issue in the U.S. that is often linked with human rights issues. But let's put aside questions of fairness, jurisdiction, and ethics for a moment and take a closer look at the policy itself, its history, and how it is enforced.

## **History of the One-Child Policy**

In the early 1980s, the term "one-child policy" made its way into the vocabulary of the American media and the American public. Although the official term for the policy translates to "planned birth policy" (jihua shengyu zhengce) and does not explicitly refer to a single child, this term was coined because, though there are a number of exceptions, the policy limits each couple in China to bearing one child (Ming, 1999, p. 233).

With the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the social and economic conditions improved, leading to a significant drop in the death rate (Ming, 1999, p. 224). At the same time, a post-war baby boom occurred, and so China's population grew rapidly (p. 224). Attitudes toward family planning were primarily negative, as evidenced by Mao Zedong's statement in 1949:

It is a very good thing that China has a big population. Even if China's population multiplies many times, she is fully capable of finding a solution; the solution is production ... We believe that revolution can change everything and that before long there will arise a new China with a big population and a great wealth of products, where life will be abundant and culture will flourish (p. 224).

Throughout the 1950s, the total fertility rate hovered around six children per woman (Greenhalgh & Winckler, 2005, p. 17). The first census, conducted in 1953, put the Chinese population about 100 million larger than the official figure used previously

(Ming, 1999, p. 225). In addition, the failure of Mao Zedong's Great Leap Forward, a campaign begun in 1958 with the intention of using China's vast population to promote rapid industrialization, and the resulting nationwide famine led many government leaders to support birth control (Greenhalgh & Winckler, 2005, p. 34). A family-planning policy was begun in the mid-1960s with the slogan "one is enough, two is just good, three is too many" (p. 228). Although the fertility rate dropped in many cities during the 1964-1967 period, family planning was not carried out earnestly in the countryside where a large percentage of the population lived and so the fertility rate nationwide remained very high (p. 228).

Population control endeavors remained half-hearted until 1971, when the government began asking unmarried people nationwide to wait until they were older to get married and have children (Wang, 1999, p. 91). In addition, married couples were asked to space out their children more and to have fewer (p. 91).

A more stringent policy, commonly referred to as the "one-child policy" by Western scholars, was introduced in 1979 (Ming, 1999, p. 230) with the purpose of keeping China's population, which was estimated at 542 million in 1949, under 1.2 billion by the year 2000 (Wang, 1999, p. 92).

Since the early 1980s, married couples have been monitored regularly by village, neighborhood or workplace family-planning personnel to ensure compliance with the regulations (Wang, 1999, p. 95). Before conceiving a baby, couples are expected to secure official permission. In 1988, the proportion of births pre-approved was 94 percent in cities, 57 percent in towns, and 52 percent in the countryside (p. 95). The total fertility rate decreased in the 1980s to between two and three children per woman, and



projections predicted that value to be below two children per woman in the 1990s (Greenhalgh & Winckler, 2005, p. 18).

In order to ensure that couples adhere to the one-child policy, China has continuously offered free, effective birth control to most married couples at reproductive age (Xie, 2000, p. 57). The intrauterine device (IUD), for example, is suggested to couples with only one child, and sterilization is recommended to those who have had two or more children and do not want any more births (p. 57).

International concerns have been raised regarding what some see as couples' lack of rights to make their own reproductive decisions. International fury peaked with reports that sterilization campaigns were being used to enforce the policy. In 1983, a commission undertook one such propaganda and sterilization campaign that became a political disaster and provoked *People's Daily* to devote "a commentary to infanticide, child-abandonment, and infant sex-ratio imbalance, calling them 'a big problem that deserves serious attention'" (Greenhalgh & Winckler, 2005, p. 111). Ming (1999) says that at this time "numerous stories of female infanticide and mistreatment of mothers who bore female babies were reported in both local and national newspapers" (p. 231). Although the 1983 campaign was such a disaster that there was there was a relaxation of enforcement during the mid-1980s, campaigns also occurred in later years (Greenhalgh & Winckler, 2005, p. 116). In late 1988, 1989, 1990 and 1991, winter "propaganda months" resulted in major campaigns to abort all pregnancies for couples who had already reached their allowed limit and to sterilize those who had reached their childbearing limit" (p. 125).

Despite concerns about human rights issues, the policy has proven effective in decreasing fertility and population levels. From 1970 to 1995, the total fertility rate declined from 5.81 to 2.00 (Xie, 2000, p. 51). And, by the early 2000s, China had received international praise for singlehandedly decreasing the global population growth rate from 30 to 38 percent (Greenhalgh & Winckler, 2005, p. 308).

Social implications within Chinese culture have arisen in conjunction with the one-child policy. The rising sex ratio at birth, resulting in a population that is male-dominated, has been stubbornly resistant to measures by the government to combat it (Greenhalgh & Winckler, 2005, p. 309). Another issue is the effect of the one-child policy on an increasingly aging population; the PRC does not have a old-age support system (e.g., Social Security in the United States), and in a culture that respects and cares for elderly within the family, the social infrastructure of a single child providing for two parents is, at best, problematic (p. 309).

Now that I have given some theoretical background on framing analysis and looked at the frames used in international news coverage, coverage of Asia, and specifically coverage of China, this next chapter will now turn its focus on the frames used in U.S. coverage of China's one-child policy and examine which frames were most dominant in each time period and how the frames changed over time.

## Chapter 2

### Methods and Data

To address the research questions of whether and why U.S. media coverage of the one-child policy has changed during the 30 years of the policy's lifespan, a framing analysis methodology was employed that was modeled after Ferree et al.'s (2002) analysis of abortion discourse in the U.S. and German media. Their study involved both a quantitative content analysis and a qualitative framing analysis of German and U.S. news articles and documents about the abortion conflict during the 1962 to 1994 time period; in the study, follow-up interviews were conducted with some of the speakers in the news articles and documents.

The research conducted on the one-child policy closely followed Ferree et al.'s (2002) coding procedure but was not quite as extensive and did not include follow-up interviews: A content analysis followed by a framing analysis was done, and the information obtained from the content analysis, including the speakers within the articles and the date of publication, served to further inform the results of the framing analysis.

#### Selection of News Articles

The articles in this study are from *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. These papers were selected for the study because each is highly regarded for its international coverage, and in a way they set the agenda for other newspapers and broadcasting in international reporting. The *Christian Science Monitor*

has received three Pulitzer Prizes for “international reporting” and in 1997, the *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* praised the newspaper for its objective and informative coverage of Islam and the Middle East (Curtiss, 1997), which suggests that the paper provides quality coverage of other international issues as well. The *Washington Post* is generally regarded among the leading daily U.S. newspapers and has been awarded seven Pulitzer Prizes in “international reporting.” *The New York Times* has been awarded 19 Pulitzer Prizes in “international reporting” including the award in 1973 for coverage of Nixon’s visit to China, in 1990 for coverage of the Tiananmen Square protests, and in 2006 for coverage of China’s evolving legal system.

All three papers target a national audience and have foreign news bureaus and thus were more likely than regional papers to include nonwire international coverage. Both the *Washington Post* and *The New York Times* enjoy wide print circulations: In 2010, daily circulation for the *Washington Post* was 545,345 and for *The New York Times* was 876,638 (Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2010). The *Christian Science Monitor* experienced a peak circulation of 223,000 in 1970; recently, however, print circulation has been low: In 2008, the daily print circulation was 56,000, and in 2009, the *Monitor* stopped publishing in print to focus on online content and reduce costs (“The *Christian Science Monitor* to become a weekly”, 2008). Despite its small print circulation, the *Monitor*, as a nonprofit venture, has been able to provide “nonhysterical journalism” since 1908 (Akst, 2005). In addition, in 2005, it was enjoying large popularity online, where it had 1.8 individual users per month (Akst, 2005). In sampling from more than one newspaper for this study, the intent is to create one cohesive data set devoid of the idiosyncrasies that might occur if a single source were used.

The articles were acquired using the Lexis-Nexis database. This database not only provides the best available comprehensive data set, but it has also been used in numerous journalism research projects (Klein, Byerly, & McEachern, 2009; Luther & Zhou, 2005; Peng, 2004). A power search was done on the Lexis-Nexis database using “one-child policy” OR “family planning” OR “only child” AND “China” for the time period 1979 to 2009; multiple search terms were used to provide a comprehensive sample, because “one-child policy” is not the official Chinese term and only fossilized in the American lexicon over time after the policy’s inception. A total of 165 articles, 75 from *The New York Times* articles, 56 from the *Washington Post*, and 34 from the *Christian Science Monitor*, were located. The sample was then arranged chronologically and halved by pulling every other article, resulting in 83 articles that were used in this study.

Each article was given an index number and was coded according to its date and type (news, editorial, feature, etc.), and the author. Then, each article was broken into individual utterances (as defined in the following section), which are the units of analysis, and each utterance was given an index number and coded as containing one or more idea elements. Each article was also coded according to all the speakers represented. A code sheet was developed from a preliminary study of a small, random sample of the pulled articles. Initially, the researcher identified almost 60 idea elements, almost 20 speakers, and five frames. During the coding process more idea elements and speakers were identified, and by the end of the coding process, hundreds of unique idea elements and about 90 speakers had been identified. In addition, as the coding process continued, it became apparent that the preliminary study had neglected to identify two frames, the Evaluation of Policy and Economic Implications frames, which were added at that time.

## Defining Utterance, Speaker, and Idea Element

### The Utterance

The articles were coded with a single utterance as the unit of analysis. Ferree et al. (2002) define an utterance as “a speech act or statement by a single speaker” (p. 50). An utterance may be a direct quote, but it could also be an indirect quote or paraphrased information that is attributed to a given speaker; sometimes the speaker is not directly identified and must be discovered from context. If one speaker continued for a while, each paragraph was considered one utterance. Often, “utterance” translates into “paragraph.” However, a single paragraph sometimes contained more than one utterance. Sometimes separate speakers (with separate messages) occur in the same paragraph, in which case that paragraph was broken down into multiple utterances. For example, a 1993 *Christian Science Monitor* article contains the following paragraph, which contains more than one speaker and thus more than one utterance:

Such strong-arm practices have not only hurt China's international reputation, they also have not worked in the countryside where the population is exploding, state statistics show (“Chinese to ease strict family-planning policy”, 1993).

The utterance “Such strong-arm practices have not only hurt China’s international reputation” is attributed to “author” because the authoring journalist does not provide any attribution for the assertion and is thus considered the speaker; and the utterance “they also have not worked in the countryside where the population is exploding, state statistics show” is attributed to “Chinese government statistics.” Thus, one paragraph of information comes from two different speakers.

This same article contains an example of what happens when the same speaker continues speaking for a number of paragraphs. The article starts with the following three paragraphs:

Xin Shi's desire for a grandson cost him the precious family sewing machine. When Mr. Xin's daughter-in-law got pregnant shortly after bearing a daughter, the local village chief confiscated the sewing machine as a penalty for bucking China's one-child policy.

Xin was told he could redeem the machine, which provides a crucial income supplement, for an exorbitant \$25 payment to the village leadership. But lacking the money, the farmer says his family will just have to do without.

"We will be very happy if they have a boy," he says, breaking into a wide smile. "We would rather pay the price than not have another child" ("Chinese to ease strict family-planning policy", 1993).

This entire section of the article was attributed to Xin Shi, because he provided the information to the journalist. And each paragraph was considered a single utterance, so that these paragraphs constitute three individual utterances by the same speaker.

Analyzing individual utterances allowed for increased nuance in analysis over the traditional use of the article as the unit of analysis. Some example utterances from a 1988 *Washington Post* article demonstrate how different speakers within the same article sometimes frame the one-child policy in different ways. The article begins with an utterance attributed to an official report by the Chinese government that views the one-child policy through the Effectiveness of Enforcement frame: "China's restrictive birth control program is faltering because of ineffective implementation and strong resistance from farmers, said an official report obtained today" ("Chinese population drive falters; government report describes resistance in countryside", 1988). Later in the article, the newspaper *People's Daily* frames the policy in regard to Social Implications:

[The People's Daily, the leading Communist Party newspaper,] said economic reforms in the countryside that abolished communes and returned the control of farmland to families have heightened the need for male labor. "A family must have at least one boy . . . and the more and earlier the better," it said ("Chinese population drive falters; government report describes resistance in countryside", 1988).

Toward the end of the article, the U.S. government was attributed with framing the policy in terms of Coercion Issues and Political Implications: "In 1985, the United States, reacting to reports that the Chinese were resorting to coercive birth control methods, such as forced abortions and forced sterilizations, began withholding contributions to the United Nations' Fund for Population Activities" ("Chinese population drive falters; government report describes resistance in countryside", 1988).

Thus, using the utterance instead of the article as the unit of analysis allows this nuance to show up in the data. In addition, because any article that fit the key-word search was included in the research, the articles had varying levels of focus regarding the one-child policy. Some articles were completely focused on the policy, while others mentioned it in an ancillary way. All speech acts devoid of codeable information, meaning that the content was not relevant to the one-child policy, were thrown out and omitted from the research; thus, an article completely about the policy is represented more strongly in the research than an article that only has a few utterances. For example, a 2000 *New York Times* article about the college-entrance exam contains only one utterance when it briefly mentions the one-child policy ("Beijing journal; for Chinese students, fate is a single exam", 2000), while another *New York Times* article specifically focused on the one-child policy and an official announcement that the policy would not



change in the next decade contained 21 utterances (“China says one-child policy will stay for at least another decade”, 2008).

Because each article was broken down into numerous utterances, a single article sometimes contained multiples utterances by the same person or organization. There were 1,070 total utterances analyzed by the researcher.

### **The Speaker**

This study also looked at who was being given the opportunity to speak through the media and what groups and organizations these sources represented. The purpose was to determine who was defining the framing of the one-child policy and to understand which organizations and individuals were given a voice in the articles. The researcher measured “standing,” which refers to the frequency with which specific actors representing specific identifiable organizations are cited in the media.

Much research has been done examining the role of sources in coverage and framing within the media. “Speaker” is a term that is more inclusive than “source” and includes not only sources but the authors of the articles as well. Authors were included as speakers so that the content within these utterances would also be included in the research.

Ferree et al. (2002) define speakers as “units constructed from all utterances in a single article that can be attributed to a single source” (p. 50). In other words, a single “speaker” in an article may actually be made up of more than one individual or be referred to with varying terminology (e.g., the U.S. president and the U.S. presidential

administration were coded as the same speaker). To be counted as the same speaker, different individuals had to represent the same organization.

Speakers were coded as using an idea even if they were not endorsing it, because they were nevertheless giving the issue more prominence in the discourse. Whenever there was a direct quotation or an indirect quotation or paraphrase, the speaker was the actor being quoted or paraphrased.

Often the journalist who wrote the article provided attribution, but sometimes the “speaker” in a given utterance was the journalist herself/himself. When this happened, a null value was coded for the “speaker,” but the utterance was still analyzed for idea elements.

Some examples of speakers include “Chinese family planning official,” “U.S. lawyer,” and the “United Nations.”

### **The Idea Element**

An idea element is an individual, codeable idea contained within an utterance. A single utterance may contain more than one idea element. Each idea element corresponded to a frame and a direction (*pro*, *neutral*, or *anti*) that the speaker used to discuss the one-child policy.

Each idea element was coded with a four-digit code, where the first digit denoted which of the seven frames the idea element fell under, the second digit denoted the direction of the idea element, and the other two digits specifically identified the particular idea element under this frame-direction combination.

The researcher was interested in the total number of idea elements occurrences within all the utterances in the sample and the proportion of the total number of idea elements that each idea element represented. The total number of idea elements occurrences identified was 1,441.

### **Examples of Idea Elements**

The idea elements were coded into seven different frames, which were further grouped into three overall frames: Effectiveness frames (Effectiveness in Controlling Population, Effectiveness of Enforcement, and Evaluation of Policy), Implications frames (Social Implications, Political Implications, and Economic Implications) and Conflict frames (Coercion Issues).

According to Gamson and Modigliani (1989), a frame “typically implies a range of positions, rather than any single one, allowing for a degree of controversy among those who share a common frame” (p. 3). In this research, the direction of a frame further categorizes the position the speaker is taking within the frame; the directions are: *pro*, *neutral*, and *anti* and the direction reflects what the utterance/speaker is saying about the policy implications. A coding of *pro* indicates a positive attitude toward the policy. A coding of *anti* indicates a negative attitude toward the policy. A *neutral* coding indicates that a stance is not taken on the issue. In other words, a pro idea element under the Social Implications frame would indicate that the policy is benefiting society; a neutral Effectiveness of Enforcement idea element would not take a position on whether enforcement has worked, but would rather discuss how or why the policy is being enforced; and a negative Coercion Issues idea element would indicate that

implementation of the policy was negatively impacting citizens by not allowing them to make their own family planning decisions.

What follows is a brief description of each frame and an example of an idea element for each frame-direction combination:

***Effectiveness in Controlling Population:*** This frame deals with whether, looking at the numbers, the policy has successfully decreased population or population growth.

*Pro direction:* Women are having fewer children than in the past/population growth is being curbed./The policy has successfully prevented births from occurring.

Example from *The New York Times*: “Without population control, 240 million more Chinese babies would have been born over the last two decades, official reports say” (“With its population still on rise, Beijing pushes one-child family”, 1991).

*Neutral direction:* “The purpose of the one-child policy is to curb population growth/counter overpopulation.”

Example from the *Christian Science Monitor*: “China - with a population of 1.034 billion, according to figures just released by the State Family Planning Commission - has adopted the policy in a dramatic effort to slow down population growth for the next two generations. The aim is to hold the population figure to 1.2 billion until at least the year 2000” (“Chinese appear confident: only children won’t be spoiled children”, 1985).

*Anti direction:* “Population estimates are still higher than hoped for.”

Example from the *Washington Post*: “Experts said that at its current rate of growth, China's population will reach 1.287 billion by the end of this

century – 84 million more people than the government had planned”  
 (“Chinese population drive falters; government report describes resistance  
 in countryside”, 1988).

***Effectiveness of Enforcement:*** This frame deals with whether various enforcement  
 methods have been effective in reducing the number of babies born. A neutral direction  
 within this frame indicates the utterance discusses how or why the policy is enforced.

*Pro direction:* “Obligatory sterilization/IUD insertion/abortion measures have been  
 successful.”

Example from the *Washington Post*: “Official statistics show a high level  
 of success: 31 million women and 9.3 million men were sterilized between  
 1979 and 1984, totaling almost one-third of all married, productive  
 couples in China” (“One couple, one child: Abortion policy tears at  
 China’s society”, 1985).

*Neutral direction:* “The policy is enforced through sterilization and the use of IUDs.”

Example from *The New York Times*: “A vast majority of Chinese women  
 still have an IUD inserted after the birth of a first child and are sterilized  
 after the second, although in the cities that is changing” (“For one-child  
 policy, China rethinks iron hand”, 1998).

*Anti direction:* “Chinese citizens are defying/resisting/ignoring the policy.”

Example from the *Washington Post*: “In a front-page article, the English-  
 language China Daily newspaper quoted Zheng Jiaheng, director of the  
 state statistical bureau, as saying that in rural areas, couples increasingly

are violating China's 'one couple, one-child' policy" ("China's population growth soars as couples skirt 'one-child policy'", 1987).

***Evaluation of Policy:*** This frame deals with whether the policy is considered to be good or bad. A neutral direction within this frame indicates mixed evidence or that the policy is tolerated, but not supported.

*Pro direction:* "Support for the policy has been increasing over time."

Example from *The New York Times*: "Many Chinese intellectuals endorse the policy and believe it has given new hope for their country's long-term development" ("With its population still on rise, Beijing pushes one-child family", 1991).

*Neutral direction:* "Implementing the policy was the only choice the Chinese government had to deal with China's population situation."

Example from *The New York Times*: "'The one-child policy was the only choice we had, given the conditions when we initiated the policy,' [Wu Jianmin, spokesman for the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference] said" ("China says one-child policy will stay for at least another decade", 2008).

*Anti direction:* "The policy causes grumbling, bitterness, and tension with Chinese citizens."

Example from the *Christian Science Monitor*: "But faced with the prospect of 78 million newlyweds in the next three years, and their potential offspring, the Chinese government has been forced to take

increasingly unpopular measures to ensure the widespread practice of its one-child-per-couple policy” (“China finds it is not easy to enforce policy of one child per family”, 1983).

***Social Implications:*** This frame deals with whether society has benefited from or been harmed by the one-child policy. A neutral direction either indicates that the social implications are unknown or it indicates that the idea element discusses how possible social implications are being dealt with.

*Pro direction:* “There are benefits to having only children/to the one-child policy.”

Example from a *Washington Post* editorial: “Single children receive many benefits that have nothing to do with government incentives. In the 50 countries in which I have worked, I have never seen as great a focus on child welfare as in China. The reason seems to be family concerns about the one child. Parents say that if they can have only one child, they want to make it perfect” (“Family planning in China; The program is being run differently now”, 1987).

*Neutral direction:* “Parents of only children have high expectations and/or make great sacrifices for them.”

Example from *The New York Times*: “Lang Lang's story, like that of many athletic and artistic prodigies, is emblematic of an entire generation of Chinese parents and their only children, and their high expectations and extreme sacrifices for those children” (“A prodigy, a piano, hardship, stardom; dreams come true for Lang Lang”, 2003).

*Anti direction:* “The one-child policy is contributing to imbalance in the age demographics.”

Example from the *Washington Post*: “The number of residents 60 and older is predicted to explode from 16.7 percent of the population in 2020 to 31.1 percent by 2050. That is far above the global average of about 20 percent” (“In aging China, a change of course; Looming population crisis forces officials to rethink one-child policy, but couples hesitate”, 2009).

***Political Implications:*** This frame deals with the political effects of the policy, both in China’s dealings internationally and in internal politics.

*Pro direction:* “China is receiving international praise for its family-planning program/the one-child policy.”

Example from *The New York Times*: “China's family-planning program of recent years is a world-celebrated success” (“China’s people problem”, 1980).

*Neutral direction:* “Chinese immigrants are applying for political asylum by claiming political persecution due to the one-child policy.”

Example from *The New York Times*: “Lawyers for the men said yesterday that they believed their clients were the first of about 285 immigrants who straggled ashore from the Golden Venture on June 6 to be released after being granted asylum by an immigration judge because they feared



persecution under China's policy of limiting families to one child” (“Three smuggled refugees are granted asylum”, 1994).

*Anti direction:* “The U.S. is withholding/should withhold aid money b/c of the one-child policy/coercion issues.”

Example from the *Christian Science Monitor*: “Reports of forced abortions in China led the United States in 1985 to limit and then halt its sizeable funding for the UNFPA, which runs a multimillion dollar aid program in China” (“China, UN join forces to reshape population policy”, 1989).

***Economic Implications:*** This frame deals with whether the one-child policy has contributed to an improvement in China’s economic situation.

*Pro direction:* “The policy has helped prevent a strain on China's resources.”

Example from the *Washington Post*: “Chinese officials have credited the policy with helping the country avoid critical strain on its natural resources” (“In aging China, a change of course; Looming population crisis forces officials to rethink one-child policy, but couples hesitate”, 2009).

*Neutral direction:* “The one-child policy is vital for China's economic development/modernization/to protect China's future.”

Example from the *Christian Science Monitor*: “If the population grows too fast, it will hinder the modernization drive, since a baby boom is

approaching,' Premier Zhao Ziyang said last December" ("China, UN join forces to reshape population policy", 1989).

\* *There are no idea elements in the anti direction.*

***Coercion Issues:*** This frame deals with whether the implementation of the one-child policy has been coercive in nature and whether it has resulted in human rights violations.

*Pro direction:* "Education, improved health services, and/or accessible family planning services are effective methods of limiting population growth and are being used instead of coercion to enforce the policy."

Example from the *Christian Science Monitor*: "Chinese authorities have clearly and frequently stated that physical coercion is an 'intolerable crime' and that overzealous local officials who resort to it must be punished" ("China's population", 1985).

*Neutral direction:* "Officials' attitudes need to be changed in order to make the policy less coercive and to focus more on offering family planning services."

Example from *The New York Times*: "Although local officials were judged in part by how well they adhered to family-planning goals, residents say the way they instilled fear and respect was at least as much about exerting personal authority as about enforcing national policies" ("Chinese happily break the 'one child' rule", 1997).

*Anti direction:* "Population targets result in forced abortions and/or infanticide to meet the quotas."

Example from *The New York Times*: “‘It's clear these fines are not intended to reflect the cost of raising children as they are to bankrupt families into doing what the state wants them to do: not have children,’ said Steven Mosher, president of the Population Research Institute” (“China’s one-child policy now a double standard; limits and penalties applied unevenly”, 2002).

## **The Time Periods**

The articles were divided into three time periods that were each roughly a decade in length: those written after the one-child policy was enacted and before the Tiananmen Square protests (Aug. 29, 1980 – June 4, 1989), those written in the wake of the Tiananmen Square protests but before China's membership in the WTO (June 5, 1989 – Dec. 11, 2001), and those written after China became a member of the WTO (Dec. 12, 2001 – Dec. 13, 2009).

As mentioned earlier, Lee (2002) found that despite human rights abuses in China during both the 1980s and 1990s, media coverage focused negatively on this issue primarily during the 1990s after the Tiananmen Square protest. Also as mentioned earlier, Lee (2002) found that following China's acceptance into the WTO in 2001, capitalism rather than trade sanctions was seen as a more effective tool to combat human rights issues in China. This research, highly influenced by the findings of Lee (2002), sought to extend those findings. Lee (2002) looked at *The New York Times*' overall coverage of China, focusing on the decade from 1990 to 2000; this research looked specifically at coverage of a single policy but focused on a broader coverage period.

Both the Tiananmen Square protests and China's acceptance into the WTO were critical events in China's history; Staggenborg (1991) defines critical events as large-scale dramatic happenings which receive great attention and possibly alter individuals' perceptions of reality. Sewell (2005) argues that critical events in history cause significant shifts in cultural attitudes: "When [structural] changes do take place, they are rarely smooth and linear in character; instead, changes tend to be clustered into relatively intense bursts" (p. 226). Thus, the researcher expected to find that the Tiananmen Square protests and China's acceptance into the WTO contributed to an altered cultural attitude toward China in the U.S., which would then be reflected in media coverage on China. This hypothesis predicted that the Tiananmen Square protests would contribute to increased use of the Coercion Issues frame in news coverage, and China's acceptance into the WTO would contribute to a decrease in the use of this news frame. In other words, the researcher expected the Coercion Issues frame to be most prevalent during the coverage period June 4, 1989 to Dec. 11, 2001.

### **Intercoder Reliability**

Two coders coded the same 109 utterances to test for intercoder reliability. Since the researcher intended to test 10 percent of the total utterances, the utterances were chosen for reliability testing by taking every tenth utterance when going through the articles from the first to the last. Holsti's reliability was calculated for both the speaker and idea elements in each of these utterances.

The second coder (the researcher being the first coder) was given an initial training and then a second training when the trial run did not produce adequate results.

Because some utterances were coded with more than one idea element and this decision was made on a conceptual basis, not on a grammatical basis, the second coder was told how many idea elements she was supposed to find for each utterance.

For the frame-direction combination of the idea element and for the speaker, Holsti's reliability was .78 and .80, respectively.

## Chapter 3

### Frames: Effectiveness, Implications, Conflict

A frame draws attention to a particular aspect of an issue, thereby drawing away focus from other aspects of that same issue (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997, p. 45). The one-child policy is a multi-faceted issue, a fact that is reflected in the news coverage: News articles discuss whether the policy is actually working to reducing the birthrate; they also often discuss repercussions the policy has had on society; at other times, articles discuss whether coercive measures have been used to enforce the policy. Journalists often bring up more than one facet of the issue in a single news article. In this study, framing analysis was used to analyze the salience of various aspects of the one-child policy in coverage by the elite American media.

There were a total of seven frames divided up into three main categories: Effectiveness, Implications, and Conflict. In the Effectiveness category there were the three following frames: Effectiveness in Controlling Population, Effectiveness of Enforcement, and Evaluation of Policy frames. In the Implications category there were the three following frames: Social Implications, Political Implications, and Economic Implications. In the final category, the Conflict category, there was the single Coercion Issues frame. Each of the idea elements found in the news articles fell under one of these seven frames. Further, within each frame there were the three directions of *pro*, *neutral*, *anti*, and each idea element fell under one of these directions (see Table 3.1). The Effectiveness category contained 47.6 percent of the idea elements over the entire period;

the percentage of idea elements in this category peaked at 59.0 percent in the second time period and then fell to 32.2 percent in the last time period. The Implications category contained 22.7 percent of the total idea elements, and this value remained relatively consistent over the time periods. The Conflict category contained 29.7 percent of the total idea elements, but this category gained salience in the last time period when the percentage of idea elements rose to 46.6 percent.

In the following chapter, the researcher will examine the three frame categories and then look at each of the seven frames individually. Attention will be paid to which frames and directions were most prevalent. In addition, changes in frame usage over time will be examined.

## **Effectiveness Frames**

Idea elements in the Effectiveness frames account for 47.6 percent of the overall number of idea elements, making it the frame category with the highest prevalence. Within the Effectiveness frame category, 23.2 percent of the idea elements are under Effectiveness in Controlling Population frame, 58.8 percent are under Effectiveness of Enforcement, and 18.0 percent are under Evaluation of Policy. In other words, the American media framed the effectiveness of the policy more in terms of whether enforcement methods were effective, not in terms of whether numerical goals were met or in terms of what people were saying about the policy.

**Table 3.1: Frames Present in Idea Element Occurrences**

<b>Frame</b>	<b>Aug. 29, 1980 – June 4, 1989</b>	<b>June 5, 1989 – Dec. 11, 2001</b>	<b>Dec. 11, 2001– Dec. 13, 2009</b>	<b>Overall</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>1441</b>
<b>Effectiveness Frames</b>	<b>263 (49.5%)</b>	<b>285 (59.0%)</b>	<b>137 (32.2%)</b>	<b>685 (47.6%)</b>
<b>Effectiveness in Controlling Population</b>	<b>57 (10.7%)</b>	<b>69 (14.3%)</b>	<b>33 (7.7%)</b>	<b>159 (11.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	<b>14 (24.6%)</b>	<b>43 (62.3%)</b>	<b>29 (87.9%)</b>	<b>86 (54.1%)</b>
<i>Neutral</i>	<b>11 (19.3%)</b>	<b>10 (14.5%)</b>	<b>3 (9.1%)</b>	<b>24 (15.1%)</b>
<i>Anti</i>	<b>32 (56.1%)</b>	<b>16 (23.2%)</b>	<b>1 (3.0%)</b>	<b>49 (30.8%)</b>
<b>Effectiveness of Enforcement</b>	<b>176 (33.1%)</b>	<b>164 (34.0%)</b>	<b>63 (14.8%)</b>	<b>403 (28.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	<b>8 (4.5%)</b>	<b>3 (1.8%)</b>	<b>1 (1.6%)</b>	<b>12 (3.0%)</b>
<i>Neutral</i>	<b>144 (81.8%)</b>	<b>133 (81.1%)</b>	<b>55 (87.3%)</b>	<b>332 (82.4%)</b>
<i>Anti</i>	<b>24 (13.6%)</b>	<b>28 (17.1%)</b>	<b>7 (11.1%)</b>	<b>59 (14.6%)</b>
<b>Evaluation of Policy</b>	<b>30 (5.7%)</b>	<b>52 (10.7%)</b>	<b>41 (9.7%)</b>	<b>123 (8.6%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	<b>2 (6.7%)</b>	<b>7 (13.5%)</b>	<b>2 (4.9%)</b>	<b>11 (8.9%)</b>
<i>Neutral</i>	<b>14 (46.7%)</b>	<b>19 (36.5%)</b>	<b>13 (31.7%)</b>	<b>46 (37.4%)</b>
<i>Anti</i>	<b>14 (46.7%)</b>	<b>26 (50.0%)</b>	<b>26 (63.4%)</b>	<b>66 (53.7%)</b>
<b>Implications Frames</b>	<b>139 (26.2%)</b>	<b>98 (20.3%)</b>	<b>91 (21.2%)</b>	<b>328 (22.7%)</b>
<b>Social Implications</b>	<b>58 (10.9%)</b>	<b>51 (10.6%)</b>	<b>54 (12.6%)</b>	<b>163 (11.3%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	<b>6 (10.3%)</b>	<b>2 (3.9%)</b>	<b>3 (5.6/5%)</b>	<b>11 (6.7%)</b>
<i>Neutral</i>	<b>11 (19.0%)</b>	<b>4 (7.8%)</b>	<b>13 (24.1%)</b>	<b>28 (17.2%)</b>
<i>Anti</i>	<b>41 (70.7%)</b>	<b>45 (88.2%)</b>	<b>38 (70.4%)</b>	<b>124 (76.1%)</b>
<b>Political Implications</b>	<b>59 (11.1%)</b>	<b>41 (8.5%)</b>	<b>30 (7.0%)</b>	<b>130 (9.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	<b>1 (1.7%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>1 (0.8%)</b>
<i>Neutral</i>	<b>35 (59.3%)</b>	<b>23 (56.1%)</b>	<b>17 (56.7%)</b>	<b>75 (57.7%)</b>
<i>Anti</i>	<b>23 (39.0%)</b>	<b>18 (43.9%)</b>	<b>13 (43.3%)</b>	<b>54 (41.5%)</b>
<b>Economic Implications</b>	<b>22 (4.2%)</b>	<b>6 (1.2%)</b>	<b>7 (1.6%)</b>	<b>35 (2.4%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	<b>2 (9.1%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>1 (14.3%)</b>	<b>3 (8.6%)</b>
<i>Neutral</i>	<b>20 (90.9%)</b>	<b>6 (100.0%)</b>	<b>6 (85.7%)</b>	<b>32 (91.4%)</b>
<i>Anti</i>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>
<b>Conflict Frame</b>	<b>129 (24.3%)</b>	<b>100 (20.7%)</b>	<b>199 (46.6%)</b>	<b>428 (29.7%)</b>
<b>Coercion Issues</b>	<b>129 (24.3%)</b>	<b>100 (20.7%)</b>	<b>199 (46.6%)</b>	<b>428 (29.7%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	<b>40 (31.0%)</b>	<b>24 (24.0%)</b>	<b>43 (21.6%)</b>	<b>108 (25.2%)</b>
<i>Neutral</i>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>10 (10.0%)</b>	<b>3 (1.5%)</b>	<b>13 (3.0%)</b>
<i>Anti</i>	<b>89 (69.0%)</b>	<b>66 (66.0%)</b>	<b>153 (76.9%)</b>	<b>307 (71.7%)</b>

**Note:** The percentages given for the three main categories and seven frames are taken from the total idea element occurrences count. The percentage given for each direction (*pro*, *neutral*, *anti*) is taken out of the idea element count for the frame it falls under.



## **Effectiveness in Controlling Population Frame**

The Effectiveness in Controlling Population frame focused on the ability of the policy to meet its population goals. Within this frame, the *pro* direction was more prevalent than the *anti* direction, representing 6.0 percent and 3.4 percent of the idea elements over the entire 30-year coverage period, respectively. Despite this overall dominance of the *pro* direction, the *anti* direction was initially dominant and then a shift occurred: During the first time period in the 1980s, *anti* represented 6.0 percent of the total utterances, and *pro* represented 2.6 percent; by the final time period, *anti* only represented 0.2 percent and *pro* represented 6.8 percent.

During the first time period when the *anti* direction idea elements were most prominent, utterances focused on how population numbers were higher than planned and how the number of childbearing women was increasing. A *Christian Science Monitor* article quotes Peng Peiyun, China's family planning minister, as stating that the goal of holding China's population to 1.2 billion in 2000 was "unrealistic" ("China, UN join forces to reshape population policy", 1989). A *Washington Post* article attributes population increases to the fact that those born in the baby boom of the early 1960s had reached child-bearing age ("China's population growth soars as couples skirt 'one-child' policy", 1987).

During the second and third time periods in the 1990s and 2000s when *pro* direction idea elements were most prominent, utterances focused on the effectiveness of the one-child policy, particularly in the big cities; the birth rate had decreased and individuals were deciding for themselves to only have one child. A *New York Times* article states that there are "indications of a revolution in attitudes, with more and more

Chinese couples falling in line with the nation's one-child policy as a matter of choice rather than compulsion" ("More in China willingly rear just one child", 1990). Another *New York Times* article states that after two decades of "iron-fisted family planning," the birth rate had dropped from almost six to about two per woman of child-bearing age ("For one-child policy, China rethinks iron hand", 1998). Statistics indicate that the birth rate did, in fact, decrease over the 30-year period, a likely explanation for the shift in prominence from *anti* to *pro* direction idea elements: By the 2000s, fertility in China had fallen to somewhere around 1.6 children per woman (Greenhalgh & Winckler, 2005, p. 3). Greenhalgh and Winckler (2005) indicate that self-regulation of reproduction became increasingly common during in the 1990s and early 2000s due to economic advancements and "profound changes in rural family life and child economics" (p. 297). In other words, the preference for sons was waning, ideals about family size were shrinking, and people were choosing for themselves to have fewer children than in the past.

There are also a number of *pro* direction utterances from the second and third time periods that indicate the policy had been so effective in large cities that it was distorting the population demographics. In some cases, officials were encouraging couples to have more than one child. A *New York Times* article quotes Judith Banister, a former U.S. Bureau of the Census worker, as saying that "urban areas can afford some relaxation of the one-child policy precisely because they have been so successful since 1980 that the population has become distorted, with many more people in their 20's than in their teens" ("Chinese happily break the 'one child' rule", 1997). By quoting a U.S. professional's positive evaluation of the policy's ability to control population growth, the author tries to stress that not only has the policy met its goals, but also that enforcement

no longer needs to be as strict. The tacit message sent by the American media by framing the policy as being overly effective is that coercion is no longer necessary and therefore no longer occurring.

### **Effectiveness of Enforcement Frame**

The Effectiveness of Enforcement frame dealt with the practical aspect of whether the enforcement methods being employed actually resulted in fewer children being born. This is the most prominent frame in the first and second periods, but is surpassed in salience by the Coercion Issues frame in the third period. In all three time periods, *neutral* is the dominant direction (see Table 3.1). Since most utterances coded *Effectiveness of Enforcement-neutral* describe how the policy is enforced, this indicates that enforcement methodology was a common topic in the first two time periods, but not in the last one. In fact, during both the first and second time periods, more than one fourth (27.1 and 27.6 percent, respectively) of the total utterances were coded *Effectiveness of Enforcement-neutral*; in contrast, only 12.9 percent of the total idea element occurrences were *Effectiveness of Enforcement-neutral* in the third time period.

In addition to how the policy is enforced, *neutral* direction Effectiveness of Enforcement idea elements also deal with difficulties in enforcement and how strictly the policy is being enforced. Here are some examples of utterances from each of these three categories:

**Difficulties in enforcement:** A major theme in the discussion of problems that arise for enforcers of the policy is women fleeing from local officials or going into hiding to avoid abortion or sterilization. A 1989 article in the *Christian Science Monitor* states:

Greater social mobility arising from market-driven economic reforms has hindered official monitoring of pregnancy and birth. China's transient population, negligible during Maoist times, has mushroomed to 50 million as a vast surplus farming population quits the land. Labeled 'birth guerrillas,' the transients shift from place to place evading population controls ("China, UN join forces to reshape population policy", 1989).

This utterance connects problems with enforcement with vast social changes as economic growth has drawn migrant workers to the cities. One of the primary enforcement tools was tight surveillance and control of women's reproductive lives at both the neighborhood level and within the workplace (Greenhalgh & Winckler, 2005, p. 233), but keeping track of pregnant women became more difficult as they gained the ability to disappear within China's vast migrant population. So, while economic reform has encouraged women to have fewer children (p. 297), it has also created an environment that more easily allows women to have children outside the policy.

**How the policy is enforced:** A major component of enforcement methodology is the levying fines on those who don't adhere to the policy. For example, a 1990 *Christian Science Monitor* article reports that in the Chinese province of Hunan:

An official handbook on family planning ... gives local officials wide discretion in punishing couples that defy the one-child policy. Among its 46 guidelines, the book outlines a minimum fine of 2,000 yuan (\$424) for families who have a child without official approval. Families with an annual income exceeding 2,000 yuan must pay a fine equivalent to one-and-a-half times their annual income ("Harsh family planning policies persist in China's villages", 1990).

This utterance illustrates how serious the financial repercussions are for those defying the one-child policy. Other utterances speak of pay cuts, dismissals from jobs, and loss of property as other potential consequences for defying the policy. Clearly, those who decided to defy the policy faced life-altering financial disincentives.

**How strictly the policy is being enforced:** One of the main themes in discussing the stringency with which the policy is enforced is the exceptions made to the one-child-per-family rule. A 2009 *New York Times* article states:

Ethnic minorities are allowed to have more than one child, and many rural residents can have a second child if the first child is a girl, because many families still follow tradition and favor male heirs (“1 plus 1: Shanghai tweaks child rules”, 2009).

This utterance not only discusses exceptions to the one-child rule, but it also connects some of these exceptions to the traditional desire for boys. As discussed later, sex-selective abortions and gender imbalance are social problems suspected to be at least partly caused by the interaction of this desire for male children and the one-child rule. Exceptions to the policy were made partly to appease the peasants and partly to ameliorate the gender imbalance.

All these themes were used by the elite American media to illustrate how enforcement of the policy permeated Chinese society. Fines equaling more than a year’s salary, women fleeing, and fighting gender imbalance, an issue with potentially disastrous consequences, illustrate a great tug-of-war game played between the government and the people.

### **Evaluation of Policy Frame**

Evaluation of Policy idea elements deal with overall opinions on the policy; this frame includes, for example, idea elements dealing with Chinese civilians’ reactions to the policy, adjectives used to describe the policy, and content speaking to whether the policy will or has experienced changes. Idea elements from the Evaluation of Policy

frame are mostly conceptual, and it is not sources, but the journalists themselves who are doing the majority of the evaluation: “Author” is the speaker in 58.5 percent of the idea element occurrences under the Evaluation of Policy frame.

The percentage of utterances in the Evaluation of Policy frame stayed consistently low throughout, comprising 5.7 percent, 10.7 percent, and 9.7 percent of the utterances in the first, second, and third time periods, respectively. Overall, Evaluation of Policy idea elements made up 8.6 percent of the total idea elements, as compared to Effectiveness of Enforcement idea elements at 28.0 percent and Effectiveness in Controlling Population at 11.0 percent (see Table 3.1).

In every time period, *anti* was the prevalent direction, and *pro* was the least prevalent. Some of the most dominant themes among *Evaluation of Policy-anti* idea elements are that the policy is controversial and that the policy is enforced in a harsh and brutal way. An utterance from a 1988 *Washington Post* article says:

The Chinese government argued that a “one-couple, one-child” policy is necessary because of China's already huge population, lack of arable land and backward economy. But the policy has been controversial in recent years (“Chinese population drive falters; government report describes resistance in countryside”, 1988).

The topic of the article is an official Chinese government report that the policy was faltering due to implementation issues. In this utterance, the author explains why the Chinese government thinks the policy is important, but then frames the policy as being controversial in order to remind the reader how the U.S., not China, views the policy.

A 1998 *New York Times* article discusses the harshness of the policy:

China's family-planning system, notorious for the harsh rules and punishments it employs in its quest to limit births, has quietly started urging its workers to soften their approach, hoping to improve its often

tense relationship with Chinese women (“For one-child policy, China rethinks iron hand”, 1998).

This utterance pointedly contrasts how the one-child policy has been stereotyped in American culture with how it now looks. After this utterance, the article offers evidence that education and a fee structure for those who choose to have more than one child have become the typical methods of enforcement. The author is purposely calling the policy harsh in order to highlight the idea that it no longer is.

The most prevalent theme among *Evaluation of Policy-neutral* idea elements is that the policy is powerful and aggressive. For example, a 2005 *New York Times* article called the one-child policy “one of the most ambitious social engineering measures ever attempted” (“As girls ‘vanish,’ Chinese city battles tide of abortions”, 2005). This article discusses difficulties in enforcing the ban on sex-selective abortions and explains this difficulty in light of the sheer ambitiousness of the project. The author is using the idea that the policy is ambitious to explain why enforcement is so difficult.

A major theme among the *Evaluation of Policy-pro* idea elements is the idea that the Chinese people themselves support the policy as necessary for the good of society. A 1996 *New York Times* article says:

Family planning and population control are concepts that a large number of Chinese willingly support. Of course there is opposition to the one-child policy and even hatred of it, but a large portion of China's 1.2 billion people profess a willingness to sacrifice their desire to have a boy or a second or third child to the greater goal of population control (“In China’s orphanages, a war of perception”, 1996).

Despite the strong desire for more children and male children, many Chinese recognize that there is a genuine population problem in China. By reporting that the Chinese are content to sacrifice for the greater good, the elite American media is

providing a contrasting message to the one that speaks of discontent and rebellion against an authoritarian policy.

## **Implications Frames**

Idea elements in the Implications frames account for 22.8 percent of the total idea elements. This frame category has the least salience when compared with the 47.6 percent of idea elements in Effectiveness frames and the 29.7 percent of idea elements in the Conflict frame. It appears that the American media focused more on the effectiveness of the policy than on the implications it had.

Within the Implications frames category, 49.7 percent of the idea elements are from the Social Implications frame, 39.6 percent are from Political Implications, and 10.7 percent are from Economic Implications. In other words, the American media framed the one-child policy as more of a social and political issue for China than an economic one. This coverage focus contrasts with the policy's *raison d'être*: the Chinese government has long tied population planning to economic development and according the Greenhalgh and Winckler (2005), when Deng Xiaoping came to power in the 1980s, birth planning was moved more from the health sector and reoriented toward economic planning (p. 91). The elite American media mostly neglected covering the realm in which the policy was expected to produce favorable results in favor of framing the policy as having negative political and social effects.



## Social Implications Frame

The Social Implications frame deals with how the policy affects society: the benefits it brings, the problems it causes, and how those problems are being combated. Of all seven frames, the Social Implications frame has the largest percentage of idea element occurrences in the *anti* direction: 76.1 percent. *Pro* direction idea elements accounted for 6.7 percent of the idea element occurrences and *neutral* direction idea elements accounted for 17.2 percent of idea element occurrences.

The most prevalent *Social Implications-anti* idea elements are “The one-child policy is in conflict with Chinese culture and traditions and traditional family structure/desire for boys”; “The one-child policy is causing/contributing to a gender imbalance”; and “Children are being harmed by the one-child policy (being spoiled, learning bad habits) and becoming unmanageable./The policy is creating spoiled brats.”

A 1995 *Washington Post* article discusses the Chinese desire for male children:

The concept of ‘raising kids to prepare for one's old age’ and ‘the more children the more bliss’ are demographic concepts established on traditional rural society where the family was the basis for supporting the old,” said a commentator in *China Environment Daily*. “If a social system for supporting the elderly is not developed, it will be hard to make people really accept birth control policies, especially in rural areas (“China’s ‘raging silver wave’; rapidly aging population strains society”, 1995).

This article discusses the social predicament of having an aging population; improved health care and living standards have caused Chinese to live longer and have fewer children, and this shifting age demographic has been exacerbated by the one-child policy. The entire article frames the one-child policy as a liability for Chinese society.

Utterances that discuss the one-child policy’s contribution to a gender imbalance often present hard data, but they vary in how extreme their assertions are: a 1983

*Christian Science Monitor* article states that according to a recent survey done in the countryside, “the imbalance between the sexes in some districts is as high as five male children to every one female child” (“China finds it is not easy to enforce policy of one child per family”, 1983). A more conservative estimate on the imbalance says that, according to the 1990 census, for every 100 girls under the age of 1 there were 113.8 boys (“China lowers birth rate to levels in West; 6.5 million sterilized in ’92, official says”, 1993).

Utterances dealing with only children becoming spoiled brats discuss how only children not only have more familial attention focused on them, but they are also sometimes given preference by, for example, the government and their teachers. A 1982 *New York Times* article contains an utterance to this effect:

A letter written to the newspaper *Worker’s Daily* from Sichuan Province complained that children without siblings went to the head of the line for inoculations at some hospitals. In kindergarten, such children sometimes were given more candy than their classmates and were allowed to go home while the others had to perform chores. The letter said such practices “sow dissension among children and add to the sense of superiority of only children” (“One side effect of birth control in China: the brat”, 1982).

The article then quotes a physician who says that she is encountering a higher rate of obesity because “many mothers were giving their babies candy and too much food” (“One side effect of birth control in China: the brat”, 1982). The whole article is used to frame the one-child policy as a social problem; it calls spoiled brats an “unintended side effect” of the one-child policy (“One side effect of birth control in China: the brat”, 1982).

The American media is using the ideas of the traditional desire for boys and the gender imbalance to point to the fact that the one-child policy’s interaction with

traditional Chinese culture is causing social problems. And the idea of spoiled brats is used to highlight a social problem that was naturally born out of putting unnatural pressure on the societal system. Overall, the American media is framing the one-child policy in terms of the vast unintended side effects that have been thrust on Chinese society.

### **Political Implications Frame**

The Political Implications frame deals with the political effects that resulted from the one-child policy, primarily internationally, but also within China's internal political system. Utterances from the Political Implications frame make up 9.0 percent of the total idea elements. Of the 130 total idea elements occurrences, only one was *pro* direction: "China is receiving international praise for its family-planning program/the one-child policy." Overall, 57.7 percent of the utterances were in the *neutral* direction and 41.5 percent of the utterances were in the *anti* direction, and these percentages remained relatively consistent throughout the three time periods.

One of the most prevalent *Political Issues-neutral* idea elements is "The U.S. is denying/has denied Chinese immigrants political asylum based on the opposition to the one-child policy./Courts ruled that one-child policy does not count as political persecution." All of the idea element occurrences discussing denial of political asylum occurred in the second time period during the 1990s. According to a 1995 *New York Times* article:

The United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit ruled that China's one-child policy ... does not constitute political persecution. The appellate decision effectively ends the long and contentious legal battle

that has been waged in this country over China's one-child policy, which over the last five years had been used by thousands of Chinese to win political asylum (“Court backs government in detention of immigrants”, 1995).

Notably, the five-year period referred to in this article would have started around the time the Tiananmen Square Incident occurred in 1989; it appears that courts were much more receptive to requests for political asylum after the Tiananmen Square protests. The researcher posited that this incident would lead to an increase in the use of the Coercion Issues frame; while this utterance does not speak to that issue, it does indicate that the Tiananmen Square protests led to an increased sympathy in the U.S. toward the plight of the Chinese people.

Another prevalent *Political Issues-neutral* idea element is “The U.S. government's assertion that aid money is being used to support the one-child policy/fund forced abortions is false./The withdrawal of funding was due to false beliefs.” This idea element occurred during both the first and last time periods, presumably because these are the decades during which funding was withdrawn (funding was reasserted during Clinton's administration in the 1990s). An utterance from a 1985 *New York Times* article says, “Peking's direct response to this aid cutback was limited to a statement expressing ‘deep regret’ from the family planning minister, Wang Wei, who blamed the United States action on ‘distorted reports and rumors in the American press.’” (“In China these days, an only child is the only way”, 1985). The minister's words likely refer to Michael Weisskopf's *Washington Post* articles that prompted Reagan to send an investigative team to check out allegations regarding the one-child policy (“US investigates abortion practice in China before funding UN population program”, 1985). Other speakers,

including UNFPA officials and a *New York Times* columnist (Nicholas Kristof), also have this idea element attributed to them. The American media is using the idea that withdrawal of UNFPA funding was a mistake to emphasize that the decision was not seen universally as taking a stand for human rights, but was rather seen by some parties as evidencing a lack of trust in China and in the U.N.

Two of the most prevalent *Political Issues-anti* idea elements are “The U.S. is providing political asylum/should provide asylum to a Chinese refugee based on one-child policy issues/persecution/forced abortions/sterilization,” and “The U.S. is withholding/should withhold aid money because of the one-child policy/coercion issues.” These idea elements show a focus on human rights issues in the coverage of China; an American democracy vs. evil Communist regime paradigm is set up, where the U.S. fights what it sees as autocratic, evil policies. These battles are fought with political embargos: withdrawals of financial aid and possible asylum for political dissidents.

### **Economic Implications frame**

The Economic Implications frame deals with how the policy has impacted or could impact the economic situation in China, mostly at a macro level. The Economic Implications frame has the smallest percentage of idea elements of any of the seven frames, accounting for only 2.4 percent of the total idea elements. *Neutral* is the most prevalent direction in this frame at 91.4 percent of the total idea elements, a deviation from the pattern of *anti*-direction dominance seen in the Social and Political Implications frames. The remaining 8.6 percent of Economic Implications idea elements are *pro*, and none are coded *anti*. As stated earlier, the one-child policy was primarily enacted because

the Chinese government considered it necessary for "sustainable development" (Greenhalgh & Winckler, 2005, p.134). In a country with so many mouths to feed, it is not surprising that no negative economic implications of the policy were reported. The two most prevalent *Economic Implications-neutral* idea elements are "The one-child policy is vital for China's economic development/modernization/to protect China's future" and "Not cracking down/enforcing the one-child policy will lead to a strain on the country's resources/horrifying effects/famine." While American media acknowledge the economic benefit of the one-child policy, they still focus more on the negative social and political impacts the policy has had for China.

## **Conflict Frame**

Idea elements in the Conflict frame account for 29.7 percent of the total idea elements. This makes it the second-most prevalent frame category overall, and it surged to become the most prevalent frame in the third time period when it accounted for 46.6 percent of the total idea elements.

Coercion Issues is the only frame in this category, so the rest of the discussion of the Conflict frame will occur below.

## **Coercion Issues Frame**

The Coercion Issues frame focuses on coercive measures associated with the one-child policy and whether or not they are used; it also deals with any discussion of abuses of the policy or allegations of human rights violations. The percentage of utterances under the Coercion Issues frame jumped in the last time period to 46.6 percent from the

previous figures of 24.3 percent in the first time period and 20.7 percent in the second time period. In addition, *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements jumped to 35.8 percent of the total utterances in the third time period, from 16.8 percent in the first time period and 13.7 percent in the second time period.

Two specific issues receiving considerable news coverage contributed largely to this increase in the last time period. The issue that caused the greatest amount of *Coercion Issues-anti* coverage is the case of Chen Guangcheng, a blind, rural activist who brought a class-action lawsuit on behalf of women who were forced to undergo sterilization or abortion in Linyi Prefecture, Shandong Province. The other issue contributing to *Coercion Issues-anti* coverage in the last time period was the U.S.'s decision to withdraw funding to the U.N. Population Fund based on allegations that UNFPA funds facilitated forced abortions and sterilizations in China.

Chen Guangcheng used a tape recorder to record abuses of the one-child policy in his village and surrounding villages, located 400 miles southeast of Beijing. Chen filed suit and talked with n filed suit and talked with *Time* magazine journalists about the case. Such actions brought the ire of officials in his area and led to his arrest and eventually jail time ("Chinese to prosecute peasant who resisted one-child policy; decision reveals growing clout of Beijing hard-liners", 2006). In April 2006, *Time* magazine named Chen to its annual list of the world's 100 most influential people ("China: China: First person: Blind justice", 2006). Until Chen's case, reports by American journalists of the use of coercive methods had been done on a case by case basis: Individual people were interviewed and asked about their personal experience with the one-child policy. Chen represented a windfall to the American media collective: a Chinese local hero who had

compiled a collection of stories of abuse and was willing to speak openly about them. In addition to the stories Chen told of coercion, Chen himself was imprisoned for “damaging property and organising a mob to disturb traffic” (“China abortion activist sentenced”, 2006), clearly trumped-up charges. The American media used this case to frame China as not only guilty of using coercive measures, but also as guilty of unjustly imprisoning citizens and thus a human rights violator.

An utterance in a 2006 *Christian Science Monitor* article indicates that coercion was still an issue in China, but only in isolated instances:

Chen's crusade to halt the forced detention and sterilization of women in order to meet local quotas – a practice that has largely stopped in most of China – did not go over well in Linyi, where bonds are tight between officials, police, and hired thugs, much like the rural segregated US South of 50 years ago (“Chinese rule-of-law activist becomes a case in point”, 2006).

As with many things in China, enforcement of the one-child policy varied from locale to locale, in what Greenhalgh and Winckler (2005) describe as “widely varying enforcement environments” (p. 216).

The articles that deal with funding of the U.N. Population Fund contain numerous *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements because both sides of the argument, those saying the UNFPA is complicit with the Chinese government in facilitating coercive measures and those who argue this is not true, admit coercion is a problem in China. Those who oppose the UNFPA state that coercion is occurring and the U.N. is complicit; those who argue that the UNFPA is not complicit first acknowledge that coercive measures are occurring, but then state that the UNFPA is only involved in programs that promote voluntary family planning.



For example, a 2002 editorial in the *Washington Post* says:

The United Nations is on record all over the place as opposing the forced sterilizations and abortions that have too often accompanied China's one-child policy. It spends only \$ 3.5 million of a \$ 270 million budget in the People's Republic of China, but it is spent in 32 Chinese counties in a deliberate effort to show the Chinese government that voluntary family planning works (“Birth-control boggler”, 2002).

The UNFPA’s work in reproductive health is worldwide; China’s population plan became a global issue when the UNFPA was accused of using aid money to support Chinese programs that practiced coercive population control methods. In these cases, *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements are not actually being used to speak negatively about the one-child policy as much as to highlight a positive perspective on UNFPA funding.

An utterance from a 2004 *New York Times* article quotes U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher as saying, in reference to UNFPA funding, “We feel by funding these programs we would be indirectly helping the Chinese to improve the management of programs that result in coercive abortion, and that's prohibited by law.” (“U.S. cuts off financing of U.N. unit for 3<sup>rd</sup> year”, 2004). (The law Boucher is referring to is the Kemp-Kasten law, which, according to the article, “mandates a cut in financing if the president determines that an agency ‘supports or participates in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization’” (“U.S. cuts off financing of U.N. unit for 3<sup>rd</sup> year”, 2004).) The one-child policy is being framed by the American media as something in which the U.S. could be complicit in both illegal and unethical behavior. The one-child policy is a domestic policy, and as such, a response to it is rarely required of the U.S. However, with the issue of UNFPA, a number of U.S. politicians claimed that the U.S. had a responsibility to have an opinion and to take a stand.

The increased occurrence of *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements in the third time period was unexpected by the researcher; the hypothesis was that as China increased in economic force, the American media would focus more on economic issues and less on social and human rights issues.

A number of factors have been instrumental in this “late-blooming” *Coercion Issues-anti* coverage. For one thing, as mentioned earlier, journalists’ access to private Chinese sources increased after the end of the Cold War, starting in the early 1990s (Goodman, 1999, p. 407). Thus, there is more accessibility to civilians like Chen Guangcheng. Also, according to a *Time* magazine article about Chen Guangcheng, the activist had traveled from Shandong Province to Shanghai “to publicize the plight of women who had been forced to undergo abortions or sterilizations as part of the nation’s family-planning campaign” (“China: China: First person: Blind justice”, 2006). A few days later, the *Time* journalist, Hannah Beech, met with Chen again in Beijing. These events illustrate major shifts occurring in Chinese society: an increasing freedom, though perhaps artificial, to legally express grievances and an advancing communication structure. The lawsuit Chen filed brought to bear a 2002 law that guaranteed Chinese citizens the right to make an “informed choice” in family planning, and according to Beijing law professor Zhang Zongle, how the lawsuit that Chen filed was handled was a “test of China’s justice system and of whether China can govern according to law” (“Who controls the family?; Blind activist lead peasants in legal challenge to abuses of China’s population-growth policy”, 2005). Although it’s not clear how the *Time* journalists connected with Chen, according to Human Rights Watch, the results of Chen’s investigation were posted on the Internet (<http://www.hrw.org>), so much of the publicity

Chen's investigations received was likely due to online discussion and dispersion of information. The case of Chen Guangcheng illustrates vast changes in Chinese culture and infrastructure.

The increase during the last time period in *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements in connection with coverage of the UNFPA funding issue likely reflects a terminology issue mentioned earlier in the Speaker chapter: Although UNFPA funding first became an issue in the 1980s, the term "one-child policy" had not yet fossilized in reference to China's population program, so coverage of the UNFPA funding issue did not turn up in the data. So, coverage from the first time period did not show up and, in the second time period, UNFPA funding was reinstated, so it was not until the last time period that the controversy surrounding the funding and hence the *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements showed up in large quantity.

## **Frame Dominance**

Implications was the least dominant frame category in all three time periods, but stayed relatively consistent in representation throughout the time periods. In the first two time periods, the Effectiveness frames category was most prevalent, but this shifted in the last period, when Conflict frames became the most dominant frame category. Related to this, in the first two time periods, the most dominant frame was the Effectiveness of Enforcement frame, and in the third time period, the most dominant frame was the Coercion Issues frame.

All the Effectiveness frames experienced an increase in representation from the first to the second period and a decrease from the second period to the third period. The

dominant theme within the Effectiveness frames was enforcement methodology; these idea elements were prevalent in the first two time periods and experienced a decrease in the third time period as interest shifted from explaining the policy to discussing controversial issues surrounding the policy. This increased interest in controversial issues explains the jumped in Conflict frames coverage in the third time period. The increase in the Effectiveness frames category in the second time period reflects the increase in idea elements that evaluated how this then-new policy was doing, both numerically and in people's opinions.

Now that we have looked at the frames used by the elite American media to discuss the one-child policy during the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, we will turn to look at the speakers responsible for these frames having salience throughout these periods.

## Chapter 4

### **Speakers and Voices: Activists, Government, Media, Professionals, and Civilians**

This study looked at who was being given the opportunity to speak through the media and what groups and organizations these sources represented. Each utterance had its own “speaker,” so most articles contained a number of different speakers. By coding for the speaker, the researcher was able to determine who is defining the framing of the one-child policy in the elite American media and to understand which organizations and individuals were given standing in the articles. “Standing” refers to “the ability to have one’s views transmitted through the media” (Ferree et al., 2002, p. 59). Standing was measured by looking at the frequency with which specific actors representing specific identifiable organizations are cited in the media.

Although the journalists who authored the articles were counted as speakers in the research, they were not included in the analysis. It was necessary to count them as speakers so that the utterances attributed to them would be included in the frames analysis. However, looking at how the authoring journalists affected the framing was beyond the scope of this paper.

Consistently through the three time periods researched, the majority of the speakers were located in China (see Table 4.1). Speakers from China accounted for 74.5 percent of all speakers; speakers from the U.S. accounted for 10.8 percent; and “other” speakers whose locations were not identified within the news articles or who were explicitly identified as being from locations other than China or the U.S. accounted for

**Table 4.1: Frequency of Speaker Locations**

<b>Speaker Location</b>	<b>Aug. 29, 1980 – June 4, 1989</b>	<b>June 5, 1989 – Dec. 11, 2001</b>	<b>Dec. 11, 2001 – Dec. 13, 2009</b>	<b>Overall</b>
<b>China</b>	223 (75.6%)	208 (75.6%)	167 (71.6%)	598 (74.5%)
<b>U.S.</b>	22 (7.5%)	32 (11.7%)	33 (14.2%)	87 (10.8%)
<b>Other</b>	50 (16.9%)	35 (12.7%)	33 (14.2%)	118 (14.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>803</b>

14.7 percent. Some of the most prevalent “other” speakers include “the U.N.,” “the United Nations Population Fund,” “foreign diplomats,” “Western broadcast/documentary,” and “foreign experts.”

Over the three time periods, there was a slight increase in occurrence of U.S. speakers. This increase coincided with a diversification in U.S. speakers; in the first time period, the only U.S. speakers cited were from the U.S. government or U.S. media. In the two later time periods, there were citations from all five speaker categories: government, media, professionals, activists, and civilians. During the first time period, most of the media speaker citations were basically the authoring journalist referencing a previously written article. Thus, the preference in the first time period is for government speakers, a preference that concurs with Goodman’s (1999) finding that during the Cold War, press coverage of U.S.-China relations “tended to merely echo, support and legitimize official US policy” (p. 406). This is in contrast with the much more independent coverage of U.S.-China affairs that occurred after the Cold War ended in 1989. With the Cold War paradigm crumbling, journalists started seeking sources not just from within the government (p. 407). Hence, the overall U.S. voice became more diverse as well as louder.

**Table 4.2: Frequency of Speaker Types in News Articles**

<b>Speaker</b>	<b>Aug. 29, 1980 – June 4, 1989</b>	<b>June 5, 1989 – Dec. 11, 2001</b>	<b>Dec. 11, 2001 – Dec. 13, 2009</b>	<b>Overall</b>
<b>Government</b>	<b>184 (62.3%)</b>	<b>126 (45.9%)</b>	<b>115 (49.4%)</b>	<b>425 (52.9%)</b>
U.S.	16 (8.7%)	11 (8.7%)	24 (20.9%)	51 (12.0%)
Chinese	147 (79.9%)	109 (86.5%)	73 (63.5%)	329 (77.4%)
Other	21 (11.4%)	6 (4.8%)	18 (15.7%)	45 (10.6%)
<b>Media</b>	<b>42 (14.3%)</b>	<b>20 (7.3%)</b>	<b>9 (3.8%)</b>	<b>71 (8.9%)</b>
U.S.	6 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (11.1%)	7 (9.9%)
Chinese	27 (64.3%)	15 (75.0%)	7 (77.8%)	49 (69.0%)
Other	9 (21.4%)	5 (25.0%)	1 (11.1%)	15 (21.1%)
<b>Professionals*</b>	<b>31 (10.5%)</b>	<b>60 (21.8%)</b>	<b>29 (12.4%)</b>	<b>120 (14.9%)</b>
U.S.	0 (0.0%)	19 (31.7%)	1 (3.4%)	20 (16.7%)
Chinese	22 (71.0%)	24 (40.0%)	27 (93.2%)	73 (60.8%)
Other	9 (29.0%)	17 (28.3%)	1 (3.4%)	27 (22.5%)
<b>Activists</b>	<b>3 (1.4%)</b>	<b>3 (1.4%)</b>	<b>19 (8.2%)</b>	<b>25 (4.0%)</b>
U.S.	0 (0.0%)	2 (66.7%)	5 (26.3%)	7 (28.0%)
Chinese	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (26.3%)	5 (20.0%)
Other	3 (100.0%)	1 (33.3%)	9 (47.4%)	13 (52.0%)
<b>Civilians</b>	<b>35 (11.5%)</b>	<b>66 (23.6%)</b>	<b>61 (26.2%)</b>	<b>162 (19.3%)</b>
U.S.	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.3%)	2 (1.2%)
Chinese	27 (77.1%)	60 (90.9%)	55 (90.2%)	142 (87.7%)
Other	8 (22.9%)	6 (9.1%)	4 (6.6%)	18 (11.1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>295</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>233</b>	<b>803</b>

\*Professionals are people identified by expertise, activity, or profession.

**Note:** The percentages given for the five main categories are of the total speaker count. The percentage given for an individual subcategory is of the speaker count for the main category it falls under.

## Speakers Overview

Through the three time periods, the majority of speakers (52.9 percent) were in the Government category (see Table 4.2). However, the percentage of speakers in the Government category fell throughout the three time periods from 62.3 percent in the earliest time period to 49.4 percent in the latest time period. The percentage of government speakers from the U.S. increased from 8.7 percent in the first time period to

20.9 percent in the last time period; in contrast, the percentage of government speakers from China decreased from 79.9 percent in the first time period to 63.5 percent in the last time period.

Throughout the time periods, media speakers made up a decreasing percentage of the total speakers; in the first time period, media speakers made up 14.3 percent of all the speakers, and by the third time period, they made up only 3.8 percent of all speakers. Chinese speakers consistently made up the majority of media speakers: 64.3 percent in the first time period, 75.0 percent in the second, and 77.8 percent in the third time period (see Table 4.2).

Professionals speakers were most prevalent in the second time period, when they made up 21.8 percent of the total speakers. They made up 10.5 percent of the total speakers in the third time period, and 12.4 percent in the third time period (see Table 4.2).

Activist speakers were not very prevalent in the first two time periods, during which they made up 1.4 percent of the total speakers; in the third time period, the percentage increased to 8.2 percent, which resulted from an increase in activist speakers from all three locations (see Table 4.2).

Civilian speakers increased from 11.5 percent of the speakers in the first time period to 23.6 percent in the second time period and 26.2 percent in the third time period. This increase resulted from an increase in Chinese Civilians speakers in the last two periods (see Table 4.2).

In the chapter that follows, I will analyze all activists as a combined speaker group. I will then analyze the rest of the speakers individually by speaker location-category combination. Professionals and civilian speakers for each location were grouped



together, due to their similarity as the speaker categories least likely to have knowledge of or a vested interest in the one-child policy.

## **Activist Speakers**

A very small percentage of the total number of speakers were in the activist category in the first two time periods, though the percentage increases to 8.2 percent in the last time period (see Table 4.2). This is rather surprising as, according to Berkowitz and Beach (1993), “typically, more than half of all news stories originate from sources’ efforts to have their voices heard in the mass media” (p. 4). This issue will be addressed later in the paper.

In the third time period, two major issues contributed largely to increasing the standing of the activist category. One issue is that of Chen Guangcheng, a blind, rural activist who brought a class-action lawsuit on behalf of women who were forced to undergo sterilization or late-term abortion in Linyi Prefecture, Shandong Province. Chen agreed to do an interview with *Time* magazine about his investigations, and the resulting international attention provoked the ire of Chinese officials in Chen’s area, who arrested him and put him in prison (“Chinese to prosecute peasant who resisted one-child policy; decision reveals growing clout of Beijing hard-liners”, 2006; “Chinese abortion activist sentenced”, 2006). The other issue that involved activists was the U.S.’s controversial decision to withdraw funding to the U.N. Population Fund based on allegations that UNFPA funds facilitated forced abortions and sterilizations in China.

Although activists by their very nature attempt to get media coverage, there were very few activists cited as speakers in the articles researched. In fact, the articles revealed

that the activists did very little agenda-setting. The one major exception was Chen Guangcheng. After Chen spoke with *Time* magazine, he was placed under house arrest and later spent more than four years in prison for “damaging property and organising a mob to disturb traffic” (“China abortion activist sentenced”, 2006). Chen had investigated and brought accusations regarding the one-child policy, which was a politically sensitive thing to do. Lum and Fischer (2009) indicate that Chinese law is often wielded arbitrarily against political dissidents and that “Chinese law firms and lawyers who have pursued politically sensitive cases have faced a range of troubles, including closure of offices, intimidation, beatings, disbarment, house arrest, kidnappings, and prison sentences” (p. 24).

The majority of the activist speakers were from China, which is consistent with the fact that speakers from China were the most prevalent. However, the total number of activist speaker occurrences was relatively few at 25 occurrences out of an overall total of 803 speaker occurrences (see Table 4.2). Such serious repercussions for Chinese activists who speak with the Western media offer a possible explanation for why so few Chinese are willing to speak up.

## **Chinese Government Speakers**

Almost half of the total utterances from the first time period were from Chinese Government speakers, an official source of news with subcategories including “Chinese family planning official” and “Chinese president/premier.” In an utterance attributed to a “Chinese president/premier” from a *Christian Science Monitor* article, Zhao Ziyang says that the one-child policy would need to stay in place for at least a dozen more years to

**Table 4.3 Frequency of Types of Chinese Speakers**

<b>Chinese Speakers</b>	<b>Aug. 29, 1980 – June 4, 1989</b>	<b>June 5, 1989 – Dec. 11, 2001</b>	<b>Dec. 11, 2001 – Dec. 13, 2009</b>	<b>Overall</b>
<b>Government</b>	<b>147</b> (65.9%)	<b>109</b> (52.4%)	<b>73</b> (43.7%)	<b>329</b> (55.0%)
<b>Media</b>	<b>27</b> (12.1%)	<b>15</b> (7.2%)	<b>7</b> (4.2%)	<b>49</b> (8.2%)
<b>Professionals</b>	<b>22</b> (9.9%)	<b>24</b> (11.5%)	<b>27</b> (16.2%)	<b>73</b> (12.2%)
<b>Activists</b>	<b>0</b> (0.0%)	<b>0</b> (0.0%)	<b>5</b> (3.0%)	<b>5</b> (0.8%)
<b>Civilians</b>	<b>27</b> (12.1%)	<b>60</b> (28.9%)	<b>55</b> (32.9%)	<b>142</b> (23.8%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>598</b>

prevent modernization from being hindered (“China’s baby boomers spawn a new boom”, 1987). A *New York Times* article addressing the U.S. government’s proposed withholding of UNFPA funding quotes a Family Planning Commission chief, Shen Guoxiang, who defends abortions in China as “only a method to make up” for the failure of contraception. In the article, the chief also states that abortions in China are supposed to be “purely voluntary” (“China defends abortion in birth control efforts”, 1984).

This prolific use of Chinese Government speakers is consistent with Chang’s (1989a) finding that during the years from 1950 to 1984, both *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* “depended largely on official news channels for China policy statements. The higher modes of access – news conferences and speeches – were the major means through which the *Times* and the *Post* gathered China policy news. The lower modes, such as interviews, were less often used” (p. 42).

However, the percentage of utterances by Chinese Government speakers decreased over time from 65.9 percent in the first time period to 43.7 percent in the third time period (see Table 4.3), indicating that U.S. elite media became less reliant on official government sources in China over the years. Coinciding with this lessening reliance on

government sources was the increasing access journalists had to a variety of Chinese sources following the Cold War break up in 1989 (Goodman, 1999, p. 407). This access is reflected in the increasing percentage of Chinese Professionals and Civilians speakers that were cited in later time periods: The percentage of utterances by Chinese Professionals speakers increased from 9.9 percent in the first time period to 16.2 percent in the third time period, and the percentage of utterances by Chinese Civilians speakers increased from 12.1 percent in the first time period to 32.9 percent in the third time period. A shift occurred from the 1980s to the 2000s from a reliance on Chinese government sources to a reliance on a diversity of sources.

### **Chinese Professionals and Civilians Speakers**

During the 30-year period, the percentage of utterances by Chinese Professionals and Civilians speakers steadily increased. Chinese Professionals includes speakers such as “Chinese population expert” and “Chinese medical doctor.” Chinese Civilians are everyday people that journalists interviewed, often discussing the personal impact that the one-child policy had on them. The fact that idea elements attributed to these speaker categories increased is consistent with the findings of Goodman (1999) in her study of prestige press coverage of U.S.-China policy around the collapse of the Cold War, which Goodman states occurred sometime in 1989. Goodman says that “during the Cold War’s breakup, as U.S. trade, Chinese attendance in U.S. universities and Chinese immigration to America began to substantially increase, so did journalists’ access to a multitude of sources, including Chinese and U.S. politicians, business people, intellectuals and everyday citizens” (p. 407). After both the Cold War breakup and the Tiananmen Square

Incident in 1989, journalists began to have greater access to Chinese Professionals and Chinese Civilians. Also, according to Berkowitz and Beach (1993), when dealing with news issues that are controversial, a “diverse range of voices makes an attempt to be heard. Journalistic concerns for objectivity then lead journalists to try to provide information from each side of an issue” (p. 6). Thus, since the one-child policy was controversial in the U.S., as soon as journalists had access to those likely to portray the policy in a more negative light than the Chinese government did, they took advantage of that resource. Thus the percentage of utterances by Chinese Professionals and Chinese Citizens increased after 1989.

### **Chinese Professionals Speakers**

Frequently cited speakers within the Chinese Professionals category are “Chinese medical doctor,” “Chinese health worker,” “Chinese demographer/population expert,” and “Chinese legal scholar/lawyer.” The other Chinese Professionals speakers all had speakers cited in five or fewer instances over the entire 30-year time period: “Chinese researcher/scholar,” “Chinese family planning expert/educator,” “Chinese educator/principal (pre-college),” “Chinese professor,” “Chinese police,” and “Chinese person working in the U.S.”

The subcategory “Chinese lawyer/legal scholar,” which was cited for 15 idea element occurrences in the last time period, contributing 6.4 percent of the total speakers in that time period. These speakers were all lawyers representing or commenting on Chen Guangcheng, the civil rights activist discussed in the activist speaker section.

In the first time period, the speaker “Chinese medical doctor” accounted for 5.4 percent of the total Chinese Professionals speakers. These medical doctors are integral to enforcement of the one-child policy; they are responsible for performing the abortions that account for part of the enforcement of the policy. Medical doctors are cited as speakers for two primary purposes: to bear witness to what the journalist frames as atrocities caused by the one-child policy and to explain the situation with sex-selective abortions, which allegedly have contributed to a gender imbalance in China. In an article from *The New York Times*, two doctors who performed both ultrasounds and abortions denied performing sonogram gender tests or sex-selective abortions, both of which were outlawed in China. One gave the reason that “Our equipment can’t detect the sex before six months. The machine is too small” (“As girls ‘vanish,’ Chinese city battles tide of abortions”, 2005). Another doctor, while denying that he himself performed sex-selective abortions, admitted that there are some who do: “It’s impossible for regulations to stop abortion. Most Chinese people are law abiding, but there are doctors who will be willing to do this, although very few” (“As girls ‘vanish,’ Chinese city battles tide of abortions”, 2005).

Many of the utterances by Chinese medical doctors are from a *Washington Post* article in which journalist Michael Weisskopf attempted to expose the one-child policy as responsible for forced sterilizations and infanticide. Weisskopf talked to physicians who were involved in a sterilization campaign. A doctor who participated in the campaign said:

Officials from every commune in the county searched their records for women under the age of 45 who had two or more children. Then they broadcast their names over public loudspeakers and set dates by which

each had to report to the clinic for surgery (“One couple, one child: Abortion policy tears at China’s society”, 1985).

The couples who initially defied the warning had valuables confiscated until they submitted to the operation. According to the same doctor, the campaign lasted from November 1983 to January 1984, and the surgical team left after completing its goal of 16,000 sterilizations in two months.

Medical doctors are cited by American elite media to give readers a sense of reality about the one-child policy. For example, there really are doctors who deal with the issue of whether to inform the parents of the fetus’s gender; and sometimes a doctor is under governmental orders to prevent a pregnant woman from taking home a live child. The Chinese government spouts rhetoric and throws around numbers, but medical doctors can inform the public of how the policy is actually affecting people. They can also lend a rather gruesome aura to the whole thing: It’s one thing to hear that “forced abortions” and “infanticide” occur, but it’s another thing to read that a physician who talked to Weiskopf said doctors “routinely smash the baby's skull with forceps as it emerges from the womb” (“One couple, one child: Abortion policy tears at China’s society”, 1985). Medical doctors were used by the media to explain enforcement of the policy and to frame the one-child policy in terms of disturbing abuses.

Another Chinese Professionals speaker is “Chinese demographer,” which accounts for 2.5 percent of the total utterances in the second time period. Most of these utterances come from an editorial submitted to *The New York Times* by four Chinese population scientists. These population scientists said in the editorial that they were “seriously concerned by pressure to withdraw international assistance to China's family

planning and research programs” (“China’s population concerns the world”, 1993). (It was around this time that U.S. President Bill Clinton reversed President George H. Bush’s policy of withholding funding to the U.N. Population Fund.) The Chinese scientists said “Family planning workers, who were brought up on values that emphasize collectivism and condemn individualism can act in a way that is not acceptable by international standards. But it is premature and unfair to condemn the entire program for some cases of human rights violation” (“China’s population concerns the world”, 1993).

### **Chinese Civilians Speaker Examples**

Throughout the 30-year period, the percentage of utterances attributed to Chinese Civilians increased (see Table 4.3). Two of the major subcategories within Chinese Civilians are “Chinese man” and “Chinese woman,” which comprise 26.1 and 35.2 percent, respectively, of the total number of Chinese Civilians speakers. Speakers were put in these categories if, besides their name and location, their gender was the only descriptive given. “Chinese person,” a speaker with an unidentified gender, accounted for another 36.6 percent of the Chinese Civilians speakers. In addition to these more prevalent speakers, there are also a few attributions to the speakers “survey done in China” and “Chinese person living in U.S.”

### **Chinese Media Speakers**

Across the three time periods, the percentage of total utterances that are attributed to the media decreases from 14.3 percent in the first time period to 3.8 percent in the third



time period (see Table 4.2); this is primarily because there is a decrease in utterances attributed to the Chinese media.

Many of the attributions to the Chinese media are to official national news sources, such as the *China Daily*, a state-run, English-language newspaper, and Xinhua News Agency, the official press agency of the Chinese government. Local newspapers such as the *Nanfang Daily* in Guangdong Province, the *Shanxi Daily* in Shanxi Province, and the *Worker's Daily* in Sichuan Province were also cited. In the first time period, a number of articles relied heavily on Chinese media sources, including a 1987 *Washington Post* article with 36 percent of its utterances attributed to a Chinese media source (“China’s population growth soars as couples skirt ‘one-child’ policy”, 1987) and a 1982 *New York Times* article with 21 percent of its utterances attributed to Chinese media sources, many of them official (“One side effect of birth control in China: the brat”, 1982). In these utterances, the information is mostly taken without any editorializing (e.g., “According to the *China Daily* ...” or “*Shanxi Daily* reported ...”) (“China’s population growth soars as couples skirt ‘one-child’ policy”, 1987; “One side effect of birth control in China: the brat”, 1982); however, in the third time period, such uneditorialized copy rarely happened. Editorializing is more common in the third time period, as evidenced by the following utterance from a 2008 *New York Times* article: “A day later, a strong denial was issued in the state-run Beijing News under the headline, ‘News of abandoning the one-child policy is inconsistent with the facts’” (“China says one-child policy will stay for at least another decade”, 2008). Not only are official news sources now labeled as “state-run” (as never occurred in the first time period), but the verb “denial” was used, much stronger than “reported” or “according to.”

As discussed earlier, Chang (1989a) found that until 1984, journalists relied heavily on official news sources, and Goodman (1999) found that after 1989, journalists had more access to a variety of news sources on China. This lack of access before 1989 could explain why, prior to that time, journalists relied heavily, almost gratuitously, on Chinese media. For example, one of *The New York Times* article cited above also takes this direct quote from the *China Daily*, “They have no brothers and sisters, some only children never learn to care for others. When in kindergarten, they quarrel with their friends and refuse to share their toys” (“One side effect of birth control in China: the brat”, 1982). It goes on to say that the *China Daily* “cited a case in which a 5-year-old in Shanghai refused to go to kindergarten until her mother left work to buy her a new scarf” (“One side effect of birth control in China: the brat”, 1982). Anecdotal content such as this, when included in articles from later time periods, more often resulted from first-person reporting, not from lifting from other media sources.

## **U.S. Government Speakers**

The most frequently cited U.S. Government speakers are “U.S. president/administration” and “U.S. legislative body.” Other subcategories are “U.S. government,” “U.S. official,” “U.S. State Department,” “U.S. court/judge,” “U.S. investigative team,” “U.S. attorney general,” “U.S. embassy,” “INS” (a former U.S. agency called Immigration and Naturalization Service, that is now part of several agencies within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security), and “U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).”

**Table 4.4 Frequency of Types of U.S. Speakers**

<b>U.S. Speakers</b>	<b>Aug. 29, 1980 – June 4, 1989</b>	<b>June 5, 1989 – Dec. 11, 2001</b>	<b>Dec. 11, 2001 – Dec. 13, 2009</b>	<b>Overall</b>
<b>Government</b>	<b>16 (72.7%)</b>	<b>11 (34.4%)</b>	<b>24 (72.8%)</b>	<b>51 (58.6%)</b>
<b>Media</b>	<b>6 (27.3%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>1 (3.0%)</b>	<b>7 (8.0%)</b>
<b>Professionals</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>19 (59.4%)</b>	<b>1 (3.0%)</b>	<b>20 (23.0%)</b>
<b>Activists</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>2 (6.2%)</b>	<b>6 (18.2%)</b>	<b>8 (9.2%)</b>
<b>Civilians</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>1 (3.0%)</b>	<b>1 (1.2%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>87</b>

One speaker within U.S. Government that shows a unique standing pattern is the “U.S. Department of State.” The State Department does not occur as a speaker in the first two time periods, but occurs in the third and represents 3.4 percent of the total utterances in that period. Most of those utterances come from a single *New York Times* article in which the State Department announced that President George W. Bush would withhold funding to the U.N. Population Fund (“U.S. cuts off financing of U.N. unit for 3<sup>rd</sup> year”, 2004). According to a *New York Times* article (not part of this study), funds were originally withheld under presidents Reagan and George H. Bush and then reinstated under President Clinton (“Clinton seeks to restore aid for family planning abroad”, 1993). The research indicates that the term “one-child policy” has fossilized in the American lexicon in recent years. Although earlier *New York Times* articles about UNFPA funding mentioned concerns about “China’s birth control policy” and “forced abortions” (“China assails U.S. on population funds”, 1985) and talked about enforcement of a “one-child-per-family policy” (“Senate passes foreign aid authorization bill”, 1991) and a “one-child family planning program” (“A U.N. agency may leave China over coercive population control”, 1993), no mention was made specifically of the “one-child policy.” This

discrepancy in terminology explains why articles about the UNFPA funding issue showed up more often in the later part of the research period. The articles in the research are not an exhaustive representation, but rather a random sample, of the articles published during the time period. In addition, though the term “one-child policy” is now fossilized in the American lexicon, it was used less broadly in the past to refer to China’s population control policies.

### **U.S. Professionals and Civilians Speakers**

U.S. Professionals is a category that has very high standing in the second time period, but not very high in the other two time periods (see Table 4.4); Professionals speakers comprised 0.0 percent of the total U.S. speakers in the first time period and 3.0 percent in the last time period, but 59.4 percent in the second time period. There are nine attributions to “U.S. lawyer/legal scholar” in the second time period, contributing 47.4 percent of the total U.S. Professionals speaker attributions in that period. The other U.S. Professionals cited in utterances throughout all time periods are “U.S. demographer,” “U.S. professor/researcher,” and “U.S. scholar on China/Sinologist.” The “U.S. lawyer/legal scholar” speakers in the second time period are all lawyers representing Chinese who smuggled themselves into the U.S. and claimed political asylum; their claim was based on the assertion that refusal to submit to one-child-policy regulations was political dissent.

In contrast with Chinese Professionals, no medical workers were cited for the U.S. Professionals speaker category, indicating that U.S. speakers were not sought to

comment on the medical aspect of the issue. This frames the issue as being one of political import, not of medical import, at least in the eyes of U.S. speakers.

Of all the speakers, U.S. Civilian speakers were only cited twice. One citation is in a *New York Times* autobiographical editorial by a journalist who had come over from China to study in the U.S.; the journalist recalls a conversation she had with a random American about the one-child policy (“Destination: college, U.S.A.; coming to America”, 2002). The second reference is from a *Christian Science Monitor* article and refers to a man from New York University who is “assisting Chen (Guangcheng)” (“Chinese rule-of-law activist becomes a case in point”, 2006); the attribution does not specify how this man is helping Chen. In general, U.S. Civilians were not sought as speakers in articles about the one-child policy, indicating that U.S. elite media saw this speaker category as having little to contribute to dialogue on the one-child policy.

## **U.S. Media Speakers**

All except one of the idea elements attributed to U.S. Media speakers are from a *Christian Science Monitor* article from 1985, which references a series of *Washington Post* articles by Michael Weisskopf about alleged government-coerced abortions occurring in China (“U.S. investigates abortion practice in China before funding U.N. population program”, 1985). The *Christian Science Monitor* says that the U.S. foreign aid agency USAID decided to send a team of U.S. experts to China to “check out allegations of government-coerced abortion made by the Washington Post” (“U.S. investigates abortion practice in China before funding U.N. population program”, 1985). The article outlines a difficult decision facing the Reagan administration: Were “diplomatic ties to

China that serve basic U.S. interests” or “continued support of antiabortion groups and policies in the U.S.” more important? The issue “jumped to the forefront” with the publication of the *Washington Post* allegations (“U.S. investigates abortion practice in China before funding U.N. population program”, 1985). Citing another newspaper’s successful bid to convince the U.S. government to investigate China’s birth control activities serves as self-validation of the media’s effectiveness as a watchdog for society.

### **Other Government Speakers**

Two of the most significant Other Government speakers are the “United Nations” and the “U.N. Population Fund” (UNFPA). The UNFPA is an agency operating within the United Nations that supports programs internationally that promote reproductive health, gender equality, and population and development strategies (*Population Issues: overview*, 2008). The UNFPA came under fire for allegations that its funding supports programs in China that promote coercive abortion (“A U.N. agency may leave China over coercive population control”, 1993). In fact, when the Clinton administration was deliberating over whether to restore funding to the UNFPA, the agency considered withdrawing from China to end the controversy (“A U.N. agency may leave China over coercive population control”, 1993).

Together, these two speakers make up 24.6 percent of all the Other Government speakers. Most of these utterances have to do with U.S presidential administrations’ decisions on whether or not to fund the UNFPA. Reagan, George H. Bush and George W. Bush all defunded it, and Bill Clinton resumed funding under his administration. The U.S. media cited U.N. or UNFPA officials to provide a voice that countered presidential

**Table 4.5 Frequency of Types of Other Speakers**

<b>Other Speakers*</b>	<b>Aug. 29, 1980 – June 4, 1989</b>	<b>June 5, 1989 – Dec. 11, 2001</b>	<b>Dec. 11, 2001 – Dec. 13, 2009</b>	<b>Overall</b>
<b>Governments</b>	<b>21 (42.0%)</b>	<b>6 (17.1%)</b>	<b>18 (54.6%)</b>	<b>45 (38.1%)</b>
<b>Media</b>	<b>9 (18.0%)</b>	<b>5 (14.3%)</b>	<b>1 (3.0%)</b>	<b>15 (12.7%)</b>
<b>Professionals</b>	<b>9 (18.0%)</b>	<b>17 (48.6%)</b>	<b>1 (3.0%)</b>	<b>27 (22.9%)</b>
<b>Activists</b>	<b>3 (6.0%)</b>	<b>1 (2.9%)</b>	<b>9 (27.3%)</b>	<b>13 (11.0%)</b>
<b>Civilians</b>	<b>8 (16.0%)</b>	<b>6 (17.1%)</b>	<b>4 (12.1%)</b>	<b>18 (15.3%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>118</b>

\*Not from China and not from the U.S.

administrations’ assertions that the UNFPA was involved in coercive practices. More than half of the idea element occurrences attributed to U.N.-related speakers were assertions that the UNFPA was not involved in coercive practices in China and that the money funneled to family planning in China from the UNFPA went to training and education, not to abortion. A 2004 *New York Times* article quotes UNFPA official Sarah Craven as saying that the Bush administration’s “contention that the agency indirectly supported China’s coercive policies was ‘false and absolutely baseless’” (“U.S. cuts off financing of U.N. unit for 3<sup>rd</sup> year”, 2004). A 1987 *Washington Post* article quotes U.N. officials as saying UNFPA funding is not “used to support coercive practices,” but is rather “devoted to voluntary activities related to family planning, such as education, training, and provision of contraceptives” (“China’s population growth soars as couples skirt ‘one-child’ policy”, 1987).

## **Other Professionals and Civilians Speakers**

The majority of Other Professionals speakers are labeled either “expert” or “Western expert.” Every speaker with one of these labels is anonymous. For example, there are utterances attributed to “a Western health expert based in Beijing” or to “foreign experts.” There is also one attribution in the Other Professionals category to “investigative team” and one to “demographer (from unspecified country).”

The majority of the Other Civilians speakers are “foreigners.” Other speakers include the extremely generic “observers” and “reports” and one attribution for “travelers in China.” All the Other Civilians speakers are also anonymous, referred to as “Western observers” or “Westerners in Beijing,” or simply “observers.”

This use of seemingly gratuitous sourcing occurs exclusively in the first two time periods. The discontinuation of anonymous sourcing coincides with China’s acceptance into the WTO and the international acceptance of China within the non-Communist sphere of the world. As China opened up, the need to provide anonymity and protection to foreigners workers with potentially negative things to say about the one-child policy decreased.

## **Other Media Speakers**

Other Media speakers include “journalist” and “Western broadcast/documentary.” “Journalist” is used as an attribution when the article’s author cited information retold to her/him by other journalists. Journalists pick up information from other journalists; Citations of “journalist” were used by authoring journalists simply to provide attribution



to information they had picked up from other journalists and wanted to include in their articles.

Most of the utterances attributed to “Western broadcast/documentary” discuss documentaries exposing abuses of the one-child policy. For example, here is an utterance from a 1985 *New York Times* article:

Last year, a British television crew filmed the process of ‘persuasion’ endured by one woman. First, the elderly women of the ‘granny police,’ deputized as voluntary enforcers, discovered that the woman was pregnant for a second time. When their entreaties failed to persuade her to have an abortion, the local authorities stepped in. Only after her family's livelihood was threatened did the woman and her husband cave in. The story ended with her tearful entry into a clinic, where she had an abortion at seven months (“In China these days, an only child is the only way”, 1985).

Citing a documentary lends a sort of credibility to an assertion; by definition, documentaries’ purpose is to expose people to true and real things. The journalists are purposely citing documentaries to lend validity to the assertion that the one-child policy is coercive.

Now that we have looked at the various speakers that were used as sources in the U.S. elite media coverage of the one-child policy from the 1980s to 2000s, we will turn to look at the interaction of these speakers with the frames on the one-child policy discussed in chapter two. Speakers sometimes chose themselves how to frame the one-child policy, and sometimes the frame was chosen by the authoring journalist to fit a specific speaker.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Frames and Speakers**

The previous two chapters discussed the speakers that the U.S. elite media used to source their information about the one-child and the frames that were used by this media to discuss the one-child policy. This chapter brings those two ideas together and looks at which frames are associated with specific speaker categories (see Table 5.1). I will first discuss frames associated with government speakers, followed by those associated with media speakers, professional speakers, civilian speakers, and finally activist speakers.

#### **Government Speakers and Frames**

Government speakers differed greatly in their frame usage. Chinese Government speakers dealt primarily with evaluating the effectiveness of the policy, with 59.8 percent of idea elements occurrences attributed to them coming from Effectiveness frames; U.S Government speakers dealt primarily with political implications and coercion issues, with 47.1 percent of idea elements occurrences coming from Implications frames and 47.1 percent of idea element occurrences coming from the Conflict frame; Other Government speakers dealt primarily with coercion issues, with 66.6 percent of utterances coming from the Conflict frame. Extrapolating from this, it seems that in this study there is a strong correlation between the frame used and who is using it.

**Table 5.1 Frames Linked with Government Speakers**

<b>Frames</b>	<b>Chinese Government</b>	<b>U.S. Government</b>	<b>Other Governments</b>
<b>Total</b>	329	51	45
<b><i>Effectiveness Frames</i></b>	<b>197 (59.8%)</b>	<b>3 (5.8%)</b>	<b>6 (13.4%)</b>
<b>Effectiveness in Controlling Population</b>	<b>55 (16.7%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>4 (9.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	27 (49.1%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (50.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	8 (14.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	20 (36.4%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (50.0%)
<b>Effectiveness of Enforcement</b>	<b>120 (36.4%)</b>	<b>1 (1.9%)</b>	<b>1 (2.2%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	5 (4.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	100 (83.3%)	1 (100.0%)	1 (100.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	15 (12.5%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Evaluation of the Policy</b>	<b>22 (6.7%)</b>	<b>2 (3.9%)</b>	<b>1 (2.2%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	12 (54.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	10 (45.5%)	2 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b><i>Implications Frames</i></b>	<b>62 (18.9%)</b>	<b>24 (47.1%)</b>	<b>9 (20.0%)</b>
<b>Social Implications</b>	<b>34 (10.3%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>1 (2.2%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	4 (11.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	12 (35.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	18 (52.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)
<b>Political Implications</b>	<b>14 (4.3%)</b>	<b>24 (47.1%)</b>	<b>8 (17.8%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	13 (92.9%)	6 (25.0%)	4 (50.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	1 (7.1%)	18 (75.0%)	4 (50.0%)
<b>Economic Implications</b>	<b>14 (4.3%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	1 (7.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	13 (92.9%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b><i>Conflict Frame</i></b>	<b>70 (21.3%)</b>	<b>24 (47.1%)</b>	<b>30 (66.6%)</b>
<b>Coercion Issues</b>	<b>70 (21.3%)</b>	<b>24 (47.1%)</b>	<b>30 (66.6%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	30 (42.9%)	9 (37.5%)	19 (63.3%)
<i>Neutral</i>	2 (2.9%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.3%)
<i>Anti</i>	38 (54.3%)	15 (62.5%)	10 (33.3%)

**Note:** The percentages given for the seven frames are taken from the total speaker occurrence count. The percentage given for each direction is taken out of the speaker count for the frame it falls under.

## Frames Linked with Chinese Government Speakers

Chinese Government speakers are often used to frame the issue in terms of logistic issues, frequently spelling out the details of what exactly this massive social engineering project looks like. Idea elements dealing with logistics issues are coded *Effectiveness of Enforcement-neutral*, since they discuss enforcement of the policy but make no comment on how effective the enforcement has been. The Effectiveness of Enforcement frame accounts for 36.4 percent of idea element occurrences by Chinese Government speakers, and of these, 83.5 percent were in the *neutral* direction. The category *Effectiveness of Enforcement-neutral* is further divided into three main categories: difficulties/problems in enforcement, how the policy is enforced, and how strictly the policy is enforced. For Chinese Government speakers, 19 idea elements are from the category of difficulties in enforcement, 37 from the category of how the policy is enforced, and 44 idea elements are from the category of how strictly the policy was enforced. One frequently occurring idea element from the difficulties in enforcement category is “Couples who want to get around the one-child policy flee/go into hiding.” From the category about how the policy is enforced, 11 idea elements discuss enforcement through persuasion, propaganda, and education; twelve idea elements discuss how the policy is enforced through fees/fines/disciplinary measures. In the category of how strictly the policy is enforced, two of the more prevalent idea elements are “The policy is going to remain basically the same in the (near) future (for an unspecified amount of time)./The policy has remained basically the same throughout its lifespan,” and “Exceptions in the policy are made for minorities/two parents who are only children./Ethnic minorities have higher birthrates than Han Chinese.”

The Coercion Issues frame accounts for another 21.3 percent of the idea element occurrences attributed to Chinese Government speakers, and these are relatively evenly divided between *pro* direction (42.7 percent) and *anti* direction (54.5 percent). Despite the relatively even break down on *pro* and *anti* directions, an examination of the tone within these idea elements suggests that the media are using Chinese Government speakers to frame the one-child policy as an issue where the government is trying to hide coercion that is occurring. The single-most prevalent *Coercion Issues-anti* idea element from Chinese Government speakers is “The policy encourages/results in forced abortion.” The language in utterances containing this idea element is rife with the implication that, though these statements are made by government officials, they were spoken under duress. Consider the following excerpts from two *New York Times* and one *Christian Science Monitor* article: “Abortions are supposed to be purely voluntary, Mr. Shen said, though he conceded that some women had been forced to undergo them” (“China defends abortion in birth control efforts”, 1984); “Even Government officials acknowledge that some women are probably still forced to have abortions” (“More in China willingly rear just one child”, 1990); and “Chinese officials have admitted in the past that some zealous local cadres have forced women to have abortions, even in the last trimester of pregnancy” (“China adopts tough measures to curb population boom”, 1988).

The two most prevalent Coercion Issues idea element clusters for Chinese Government speakers are “The policy encourages/results in infanticide, forced sterilization, and/or forced abortion” and “Abuses of the policy are occurring.” Initially, it seems surprising that so many idea elements discussing abuse of the policy would be attributed to Chinese Government speakers, but then we realize that one of the dynamics

largely responsible for coercive measures is the division of power. Regulations come from the top and the only way to enforce them at the local level is through coercive measures; then, the Central Government denies responsibility for the coercion. According to Greenhalgh and Winkler (2005), during at least one policy crackdown, “local cadres were assigned impossible targets and quietly authorized to use any means necessary, including force and late-term abortions, to achieve them” (p. 223). Some of the idea elements from the “Abuses of the policy are occurring” cluster that were attributed to Chinese Government speakers are “Abuses occur at a local level because meeting population quotas results in rewards and raises for officials and not meeting them can compromise an official's job,” and “Local governments are abusing the one-child policy and trying to keep the central government from finding out about it.”

Although, as mentioned earlier, when cornered, Chinese officials acknowledge abuse, when they make official statements, they emphasize that the government is cracking down on abuse. The most prevalent *Coercion Issues-pro* idea element attributed to Chinese Government speakers is “Coercive practices at the local level are illegal and will not be tolerated at the national level.” The two most prevalent *Coercion Issues-pro* idea element clusters for Chinese Government speakers are “The one-child policy is not coercive/is voluntary/involves choice,” and “The government will not tolerate/is cracking down on abuse of the policy/the use of coercion/problems.” Again, these idea elements are emphasizing the dichotomy between the central government and family planning officials at the local level who are directly responsible for the abuses. For many of these utterances, the verbage suggests that the content was transmitted in official statements/proclamations; for example, consider the following: in one utterance, the State

Family Planning Commission “issued regulations prohibiting grass-roots family-planning workers from forcing women to undergo abortions or sterilization” (“For one-child policy, China rethinks iron hand”, 1998); in another utterance, Family Planning Minister Peng Peiyun announced in a press conference that “the government ‘strongly opposes’ coercive measures and added that a small number of family planning officials have been removed from their jobs for engaging in such tactics” (“China lowers birth rate to levels in West; 6.5 million sterilized in ’92, official says”, 1993).

### **“Chinese Government” vs. “Chinese Officials” Speakers**

“Chinese government” and “Chinese officials” are both speakers that represent rather generic attributions within the news articles. “Peking,” “Beijing,” “the Chinese,” “the Chinese government,” and “China” are all attributions that were coded as Chinese Government speakers. Such phrasing to identify the speaker indicates that most of these utterances were officials announcements made to indicate the government’s official stance on the issue. A speaker was coded “Chinese official” when the article generically attributed the utterance to “a Chinese official.” When the official’s department was mentioned, the official was coded as a different speaker; for example, “Chinese family planning official” is a separate speaker from “Chinese official.” Thus, both “Chinese government” and “Chinese officials” are generic speakers; the difference between the two is that “Chinese government” represents a generic entity whereas the code “Chinese officials” is used to indicate that specific – sometimes named, sometimes unnamed – officials have made the statement.

The most significant difference in the utterances by these two speakers is the direction of utterances under the Coercion Issues frame. 17.5 percent of utterances attributed to “Chinese government” are under the Coercion Issues frame, as compared to 27.9 percent of the utterances attributed to Chinese officials. Of these utterances, the majority by “Chinese government” were in the *pro* direction, but the majority of the utterances by “Chinese officials” are in the *anti* direction: Of all the utterances by “Chinese government,” 12.5 percent are *pro* and 5.0 percent are *anti* and of all the utterances by “Chinese officials,” 9.3 percent are *pro* and 17.3 percent are *anti*.

This contrast in direction when discussing Coercion Issues likely indicates a discrepancy between the official party line and the reality that individual officials were seeing played out in their localities. According to Greenhalgh and Winkler (2005), “Despite possibly sincere protestations of dedication to voluntary compliance, in the early 1990s PRC leaders had in effect institutionalized strong incentives for community implementers to apply coercion, even though birth workers might not wish to do so” (p. 139-140).

Two examples would illustrate this contrast. A *Coercion Issues-pro* idea element occurrence by “Chinese government” from a 1985 *Christian Science Monitor* indicates a toeing of the party line: “Peking says the policy is voluntary, and a number of exceptions are allowed where the need for a second child is particularly great.” A *Coercion Issues-anti* idea element occurrence by “Chinese officials” from a 1990 *New York Times* article points to the reality of the situation: “Even Government officials acknowledge that some women are probably still forced to have abortions, and that many parents would like



more children than they are allowed” (“More in China willingly rear just one child”, 1990).

### **Frames Linked with U.S. Government Speakers**

One of the primary purposes in citing U.S. Government speakers seemed to be to use them to frame the one-child policy as an issue that caused political tension between the U.S. and China due to concerns by the U.S. of coercion. U.S. Government speakers almost exclusively discussed Political Implications (47.1 percent) and Coercion Issues (47.1 percent). Of the utterances that fell under the Political Implications frame, 74.9 percent of them were in the *anti* direction. The *Political Implications-anti* idea elements that have the most occurrences for U.S. Government speakers are “The U.S. is withholding/should withhold aid money because of the one-child policy/coercion issues,” “The U.S. is providing political asylum/should provide asylum to a Chinese refugee based on one-child policy issues/persecution/forced abortions/sterilization,” “The U.S./Americans/a U.S. judge disagree(s) with the policy on the basis of human rights issues/it's brutal,” and “The U.S./some in the U.S. disagree(s) with the policy because of coercive measures.”

Of the utterances that fell under the Coercion Issues frame, 62.4 percent of them were in the *anti* direction. The *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements that have the most occurrences for U.S. Government speakers are “The U.N. is involved in coercive measures in China,” “The one-child policy encourages/results in forced sterilizations,” and “The one-child policy encourages/results in forced abortion.” In comparison to many other idea elements, these are not very nuanced and sometimes even

occur together in the same utterance: Another primary purpose of using U.S. Government speakers is to funnel simple mantras through sources that civilians respect: “Forced abortion and sterilization occur in China” and “the U.N. is involved in China’s coercive policies.” In addition, U.S. Government speakers reinforced the image of the U.S. as the global hero and protector of human rights who watches for abuses in other countries.

### **Frames Linked with Other Government Speakers**

Coercion Issues idea elements account for 66.6 percent of the idea element occurrences attributed to Other Government speakers. Of these, 63.4 percent are *pro* direction, 3.3 percent are *neutral* direction and 33.3 percent are *anti* direction. Most of the speakers in this category are affiliated with the U.N.; the second-most common speaker in this category is the anonymous “Western diplomat.” Most speakers from this category, though they are from “other” governments, are intimately connected to China and/or live there. For example, one speaker in this category is identified as “Stirling Scruggs, who heads the Beijing office of the United Nations Population Fund.” The following *Christian Science Monitor* utterance, attributed to a “Western diplomat,” demonstrates an intimate knowledge of Chinese political affairs: “China's assurances that it will take sterner, public action against reported abuses came during meetings between Chinese family-planning officials and Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) last week” (“China, UN join forces to reshape population policy”, 1989). Other Government speakers are used by the media to comment on the coercion aspect of the one-child policy in an informed and reliable way. Many of the utterances by Other Government speakers point out discrepancies regarding the one-child policy. For

example, this utterance from a 2002 *Washington Post* article points out a discrepancy between how the policy is currently enforced and how it could be enforced: “As a condition for its presence, the United Nations has persuaded the Chinese to drop the one-child policy in the counties where it has programs; and the United Nation's goal is to show the Chinese that family planning can work without coercion” (“A test for Mr. Bush”, 2002). A 1985 *New York Times* article points out a discrepancy between what the Chinese government considers voluntary adherence to the one-child policy and what actually voluntary adherence would look like; the article says that Western diplomats “Consider the Chinese statements (that family planning is strictly voluntary) true only by an Orwellian definition of voluntarism.” This statement continues: “If a decision made in the face of relentless pressure and threats can be said to be "voluntary," they say, the women of China have a choice” (“In China these days, an only child is the only way”, 1985).

For most speaker categories, the number of *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements outnumbered the *Coercion Issues-pro* idea elements. However, this is not true for Other Government speakers. The primary reason is because a number of utterances attributed to Other Government speakers address improvements that have occurred in China as a result of the UNFPA’s influence on family planning programs. For example, in a 2004 *New York Times* article from July 17, 2004, in an utterance coded *Coercion Issues-pro*, UNFPA leaders state that their “work in China has greatly reduced coercive family planning” (“U.S. cuts off financing of U.N. unit for 3<sup>rd</sup> year”, 2004). This utterance and others like it are coded *Coercion Issues-pro* because they cite improvements with regard to coercion. Speakers from other countries were used to present a more objective and

**Table 5.2 Frames Linked with Media Speakers**

<b>Frames</b>	<b>Chinese Media</b>	<b>U.S. Media</b>	<b>Other Media</b>
<b>Total</b>	49	7	15
<b><i>Effectiveness Frames</i></b>	<b>31 (63.2%)</b>	<b>1 (14.3%)</b>	<b>7 (46.7%)</b>
<b>Effectiveness in Controlling Population</b>	<b>8 (16.3%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	2 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	6 (75.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Effectiveness of Enforcement</b>	<b>21 (42.9%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>6 (40.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	16 (76.2%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (100.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	5 (23.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Evaluation of the Policy</b>	<b>2 (4.0%)</b>	<b>1 (14.3%)</b>	<b>1 (6.7%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	1 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	1 (50.0%)	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b><i>Implications Frames</i></b>	<b>17 (34.7%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>3 (20.0%)</b>
<b>Social Implications</b>	<b>11 (22.5%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>2 (13.3%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	1 (9.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	10 (90.9%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (100.0%)
<b>Political Implications</b>	<b>3 (6.1%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	3 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Economic Implications</b>	<b>3 (6.1%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>1 (6.7%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	3 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b><i>Conflict Frame</i></b>	<b>1 (2.0%)</b>	<b>6 (85.7%)</b>	<b>5 (33.3%)</b>
<b>Coercion Issues</b>	<b>1 (2.0%)</b>	<b>6 (85.7%)</b>	<b>5 (33.3%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	1 (2.0%)	6 (85.7%)	5 (100.0%)

**Note:** The percentages given for the seven frames are taken from the total speaker occurrence count. The percentage given for each direction is taken out of the speaker count for the frame it falls under.

neutral stand on China's one-child policy. So, speakers are used in such a way that China plays the role of villain, the U.S. acts as the hero, and subsidiary speakers provide the conflict.

## **Media Speakers and Frames**

Chinese Media speakers were associated with a diversity of frames, with the exception of the Coercion Issues frame, which accounts for a single idea element. The most prevalent frame for Chinese Media speakers is the Effectiveness of Enforcement frame. The U.S. Media, on the other hand, primarily was used for the Coercion Issues frame. Other Media speakers also use a variety of frames, with the most prevalent frames being Effectiveness of Enforcement and Coercion Issues (see Table 5.2).

## **Frames Linked with Chinese Media Speakers**

A majority of the Chinese Media speakers are from official Communist Party papers, including the *People's Daily* and *China Youth Daily*. However, there are also some speakers from more independent media outlets, such as the *Southern Metropolitan Daily*. Interestingly, the Chinese Media speaker category has only one idea element under the Coercion Issues frame, and this one idea element is attributed to the *Southern Metropolitan Daily*, a paper that operates with comparative independence from the government. There seem to be two major explanations for the relative silence regarding coercion in the Chinese media, and both of them ultimately boil down to government control. One explanation is that, according to Lum and Fischer (2009), the central government "directly controls the largest media outlets (and) pressures other media

regarding major or sensitive stories” (p. 11). Even though an increasingly independent media industry that often pushes the envelope has bloomed in China over the past two decades, the central government remains watchful of reportage and, Lum and Fischer (2009) report that at the end of 2007, “29 journalists and 51 cyber-dissidents reportedly remained in detention for political reasons” (p. 11). The second possible explanation is financial: “Many profitable media enterprises may be reluctant to take risks, fearing government sanctions and the loss of advertising revenue” (p. 11). In other words, even if an individual Chinese journalist wanted to report on one-child policy abuses, she/he could be risking jail time and the media outlet she/he works for likely wouldn’t even want to print the story.

Almost half of the Chinese Media utterances are under the Effectiveness of Enforcement frame (42.9 percent). Of these utterances, 76.2 percent are *neutral* direction. The most prevalent *Effectiveness of Enforcement-neutral* idea elements are “Party members/celebrities/rich people are violating the policy,” “The existence of migrant workers is making the family planning policies difficult to enforce,” and “The government is cracking down on party members/rich people/celebrities who are violating the policy.”

The next most prevalent frame associated with Chinese Media speakers is Social Implications (22.5 percent). Of these utterances, 90.7 percent are *anti* direction. The most prevalent *Social Implications-anti* idea elements from Chinese Media speakers are “Children are being harmed by the one-child policy (being spoiled, learning bad habits) and becoming unmanageable./The policy is creating spoiled brats,” and “The one-child policy is in conflict with Chinese culture and traditions and traditional family

structure/desire for boys./People still wants boys, despite the policy.” The media inherently are quick to highlight the conflict in an issue, but state-run outlets have restrictions to not criticize the government regarding coercion issues. So instead, Chinese media outlets focused their critical eye on social implications, an arena that the government deemed acceptable for critique because it wouldn’t question their governance.

Overall, only 4.1 percent of idea element occurrences attributed to Chinese Media speakers are *pro* direction, whereas 46.9 percent are *anti* direction. So, while the Chinese Media are relatively critical of the policy, this criticism is confined to looking at the effectiveness of the policy and the repercussions on society; the criticism does not extend to discussing abuses in the policy. Chinese Media speakers are used to frame the one-child policy in terms of how it is harming Chinese society and the difficulties the government is having in enforcing the policy.

### **Frames Linked with U.S. Media Speakers**

The most prevalent U.S. Media speakers were not actual people, but rather references to previously written newspaper articles that discussed abuses of the one-child policy. *Time* magazine and the *Washington Post* were the most cited speakers in this category. *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements make up 85.7 percent of all the idea elements occurrences attributed to U.S. Media speakers. Every one of these *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements either refer to the *Time* article of the interview Chen Guangcheng gave about the forced-abortion cases he had investigated or they referred to the *Washington Post* articles by Michael Weisskopf that alleged serious one-child policy

abuses in eight Chinese provinces. U.S. Media speakers were used by journalists to frame the one-child policy as an issue of well-documented coercion. In addition, journalists were able to recycle and reinforce the American media discourses among themselves by citing other elite American media outlets.

### **Frames Linked with Other Media Speakers**

Other Media speakers were used to provide evidence that, at a practical level, the one-child policy was enforced using coercive techniques (see Table 5.3). *Effectiveness of Enforcement-neutral* idea elements make up 40.0 percent of all idea element occurrences attributed to Other Media speakers. *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements make up another 33.3 percent of the idea element occurrences. The two main speakers in the Other Media category are “journalists” and “Western broadcast/documentary.” The following utterance by an Other Media speaker from a 1985 *New York Times* article includes both *Effectiveness of Enforcement-neutral* and *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements:

Last year, a British television crew filmed the process of ‘persuasion’ endured by one woman. First, the elderly women of the ‘granny police,’ deputized as voluntary enforcers, discovered that the woman was pregnant for a second time. When their entreaties failed to persuade her to have an abortion, the local authorities stepped in. Only after her family's livelihood was threatened did the woman and her husband cave in. The story ended with her tearful entry into a clinic, where she had an abortion at seven months (“In China these days, an only child is the only way”, 1985).

Other Media speakers are used to provide evidence that, at a practical level, the one-child policy is enforced using coercive techniques.



## **Professionals Speakers and Frames**

The three professionals speakers categories have little in common with regard to which frames they use. More than half (52.1 percent) of the idea element occurrences attributed to Chinese Professionals speakers are under the Coercion Issues frame. Almost half (45 percent) of the idea element occurrences attributed to U.S. Professionals deal with political implications. There is no clear frame preference for Other Professionals speakers.

### **Frames Linked with Chinese Professionals Speakers**

Chinese Professionals speakers are those who are identified in articles by their expertise, position, or profession. The primary Chinese Professionals speaker subcategories were medical workers and lawyers, but this category also includes, for example, demographers, police, professors, and other educators. More than half of the idea elements attributed to Chinese Professionals are in the Coercion Issues frame (52.1 percent). Of these Coercion Issues idea elements, 10.6 percent are in the *pro* direction and 89.4 percent are in the *anti* direction. Some of the *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements are attributed to doctors or to individuals in the medical community; almost every one of these medical workers who provide information coded *Coercion Issues-anti* were anonymous sources. (The only exception to this pattern of anonymity is a hospital director who defended the hospital's refusal to pay damages to a woman whose late-term abortion was ordered by family planning officials and was botched.) Here are a few example attributions: "a Hohhot surgeon who would not allow his name to be used for fear of reprisal," "a doctor participating in the (sterilization) campaign," and "a Peking

**Table 5.3 Frames Linked with Professionals Speakers**

<b>Frames</b>	<b>Chinese Professionals</b>	<b>U.S. Professionals</b>	<b>Other Professionals</b>
<b>Total</b>	73	20	27
<b><i>Effectiveness Frames</i></b>	<b>18 (24.6%)</b>	<b>7 (35.0%)</b>	<b>14 (51.8%)</b>
<b>Effectiveness in Controlling Population</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>5 (25.0%)</b>	<b>7 (25.9%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	3 (60.0%)	2 (28.6%)
<i>Neutral</i>	0 (0.0%)	2 (40.0%)	1 (14.3%)
<i>Anti</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (57.1%)
<b>Effectiveness of Enforcement</b>	<b>10 (13.7%)</b>	<b>1 (5.0%)</b>	<b>7 (25.9%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	2 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	7 (70.0%)	1 (100.0%)	6 (85.7%)
<i>Anti</i>	1 (10.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (14.3%)
<b>Evaluation of the Policy</b>	<b>8 (10.9%)</b>	<b>1 (5.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	2 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	4 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	2 (25.0%)	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b><i>Implications Frames</i></b>	<b>17 (23.3%)</b>	<b>9 (45.0%)</b>	<b>7 (26.0%)</b>
<b>Social Implications</b>	<b>11 (15.1%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>6 (22.2%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	2 (18.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	4 (36.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	5 (45.5%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (100.0%)
<b>Political Implications</b>	<b>6 (8.2%)</b>	<b>9 (45.0%)</b>	<b>1 (3.8%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	6 (100.0%)	8 (88.9%)	1 (100.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	0 (0.0%)	1 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Economic Implications</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b><i>Conflict Frame</i></b>	<b>38 (52.1%)</b>	<b>4 (20.0%)</b>	<b>6 (22.2%)</b>
<b>Coercion Issues</b>	<b>38 (52.1%)</b>	<b>4 (20.0%)</b>	<b>6 (22.2%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	4 (10.5%)	2 (50.0%)	2 (33.3%)
<i>Neutral</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (33.3%)
<i>Anti</i>	34 (89.5%)	2 (50.0%)	2 (33.3%)

**Note:** The percentages given for the seven frames are taken from the total speaker occurrence count. The percentage given for each direction is taken out of the speaker count for the frame it falls under.

gynecologist.” Such prolific use of anonymity and these speakers’ identification as medical workers together indicate that these sources were likely being sought after specifically by U.S. journalists to provide incriminating information regarding the one-child policy. They were being used to frame the one-child policy as an issue of coercion and abuse.

This is best illustrated by excerpts from information provided by these anonymous sources include this statement by a “Peking gynecologist” in a 1985 *Washington Post* article: “In some city hospitals, doctors automatically implant the devices immediately after a woman gives birth, often without informing the woman or seeking prior consent, according to a Peking gynecologist” (“One couple, one child: Abortion policy tears at China’s society”, 1985). Also, there is this statement in a 1998 *New York Times* article by “a 29-year-old Communist Party member and hospital administrator from southern China, who spoke on condition that she be identified only by her surname, Zhang”: “Family-planning officials at her work site stripped her of her job, stopped her paychecks and held her down for a pelvic exam to check her fetus's age when they asserted that she had become pregnant before obtaining her permit to have her one and only child” (“For one-child policy, China rethinks iron hand”, 1998).

The other major subcategory of Chinese Professionals speakers is lawyers/legal scholars who are either Chen Guangcheng’s lawyers or a lawyer involved in drafting individuals’ rights legislation; none of these speakers are anonymous. These speakers and their stances are already well-known, so anonymity is not nearly so important to them as to the other Chinese Professionals speakers. Xu Zhiyong is described in a 2006 *Christian Science Monitor* article as “a well-known lawyer who was beaten last year in Linyi when

he tried to visit Cheng” and says “Forced abortions take place regularly, but no one dares to litigate but a few barefoot lawyers” (“Chinese rule-of-law activist becomes a case in point”, 2006).

### **Frames Linked with U.S. Professionals**

U.S. Professionals speakers include lawyers, professors, demographers, and Sinologists. Of the utterances spoken by U.S. Professionals, almost half (45 percent) deal with political implications. Of these, 88.9 percent are *neutral* direction and 11.1 percent are *anti* direction. Most of these *Political Implications-neutral* idea elements are attributed to American lawyers who are trying to obtain political asylum for Chinese immigrants who claim they are dissidents because of their refusal to adhere to the one-child policy. A *New York Times* article from May 29, 1994, attributed the following *Political Implications-neutral* utterance to one of these immigration lawyers:

The basis for these (political asylum) denials was a precedent-setting 1989 case, known as the Matter of Chang, in which an immigration court held that China's one-child policy did not necessarily constitute political persecution. Since that case ... no asylum claim citing the population-control policy that has been approved (“Three smuggled refugees are granted asylum”, 1994).

Idea elements dealing with this asylum issue are often *neutral* direction because they merely discuss a situation that affects the political relationship between the U.S. and China; they do not comment on how this affects the U.S.-China relationship. U.S. Professionals speakers are used to frame the one-child policy in terms of the effects on U.S.-China political dynamics.

## **Frames Linked with Other Professionals**

Other Professionals speakers use a variety of frames, with most of the idea element occurrences relatively evenly distributed among the Effectiveness in Controlling Population, Effectiveness of Enforcement, Social Implications, and Coercion Issues frames. Other Professionals speakers were often anonymous and given generic labels like “foreign expert” or “specialists.” Often, Other Professionals speakers do not frame the one-child policy themselves; rather, they are brought in by the authoring journalist to comment once the journalist herself/himself has already framed it. For example, consider the following utterance from a 1993 *Washington Post* article attributed to Other Professionals: “While the reason for the (gender) imbalance is not known, specialists believe that three factors are probably at work: unreported births of baby girls, infanticide in poor and backward areas, and abortions of unwanted girls. Ultrasound testing to determine the sex of fetuses is common here” (“China lowers birth rate to levels in West; 6.5 million sterilized in ’92, official says”, 1993). Previous utterances in the article used data to support the assertion that there is a gender imbalance in China, and then the authoring journalist turned to a “specialist” to offer comments on the pre-framed issue.

## **Civilian Speakers and Frames**

By far, the majority of civilian speakers are Chinese. This category includes all speakers who neither have a specific relationship with the one-child policy nor have technical knowledge pertaining to the policy. The main reason to use civilian speakers is if they have personal experience with the policy and only Chinese Civilians, not U.S. Civilians nor Other Civilians, may have been personally affected by the policy.

**Table 5.4 Frames Linked with Civilian Speakers**

<b>Frame</b>	<b>Chinese Civilians</b>	<b>U.S. Civilians</b>	<b>Other Civilians</b>
<b>Total</b>	142	2	21
<b><i>Effectiveness Frames</i></b>	<b>65 (45.8%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>4 (19.1%)</b>
<b>Effectiveness in Controlling Population</b>	<b>20 (14.1%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>1 (4.8%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	19 (95.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	1 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Effectiveness of Enforcement</b>	<b>36 (25.4%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>1 (4.8%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	1 (2.8%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	27 (75.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	8 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Evaluation of the Policy</b>	<b>9 (6.3%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>2 (9.5%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	2 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	2 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (50.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	5 (55.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (50.0%)
<b><i>Implications Frames</i></b>	<b>28 (19.7%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>9 (42.8%)</b>
<b>Social Implications</b>	<b>23 (16.2%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>5 (23.8%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	2 (8.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	1 (4.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	20 (87.0%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (100.0%)
<b>Political Implications</b>	<b>4 (2.8%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>4 (19.1%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	4 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (75.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (100.0%)	1 (25.0%)
<b>Economic Implications</b>	<b>1 (0.7%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b><i>Conflict Frame</i></b>	<b>49 (34.5%)</b>	<b>2 (100.0%)</b>	<b>8 (38.1%)</b>
<b>Coercion Issues</b>	<b>49 (34.5%)</b>	<b>2 (100.0%)</b>	<b>8 (38.1%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	1 (2.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (25.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	4 (8.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	44 (89.8%)	2 (100.0%)	6 (75.0%)

**Note:** The percentages given for the seven frames are taken from the total speaker occurrence count. The percentage given for each direction is taken out of the speaker count for the frame it falls under.

For Chinese Civilians, by far the most prevalent frame-direction combination is *Coercion Issues-anti*. However, the most interesting aspect of this is that “Chinese women” frequently use *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements, while “Chinese men” are more likely to use *Social Implications-anti* idea elements. Most of the Chinese Civilians speakers are direct victims of the policy. A woman who was forced to abort and a man who paid high fees and faced reduced pay to have a second child are examples of individuals in the Chinese Civilians speaker category.

### **Frames Linked with Chinese Civilians Speakers**

Throughout the 30-year period, the number of utterances attributed to Chinese Civilians increased. This research indicates that on the topic of family planning, gender plays a significant role in determining the speaker’s topic. Two of the major subcategories within Chinese Civilians are “Chinese man” and “Chinese woman,” which comprise 26.1 and 35.2 percent, respectively, of the total number of Chinese Civilians speakers. Speakers were put in these categories if, besides their name and location, their gender was the only descriptive given. (“Chinese person,” a speaker with an unidentified gender, accounted for another 36.6 percent of the Chinese Civilians speakers.) The research indicates that on the topic of family planning, gender plays a significant role in determining the speaker’s topic.

More than one third (34.5 percent) of idea elements attributed to Chinese Civilians speakers are under the *Coercion Issues* frame, and 89.9 percent of these idea elements are in the *anti* direction. “Chinese women” were responsible for many of these idea elements: 33.3 percent of all idea elements attributed to “Chinese women” are coded

*Coercion Issues-anti*; in contrast, only 16.7 percent of the utterances attributed to “Chinese man” are coded *Coercion Issues-anti*. However, “Chinese men” are more likely to discuss social implications: For “Chinese man,” *Social Implications-anti* is the frame-direction combination with the highest percentage of utterances at 30.6 percent; in contrast, only 11.8 percent of the utterances attributed to “Chinese woman” are coded *Social Implications-anti*. In other words, when men were interviewed, the conversation most often dealt with social implications, but when women were interviewed, the discussion was most likely about coercion issues.

Many of the utterances attributed to “Chinese man” as speaker that are coded *Social Implications-anti* are fathers whose desires to have male children are hindered by the one-child policy. An utterance from a 1985 *Washington Post* article says that to pass on the family name, “Jiang Fugui was determined to keep trying for a son despite the state's one-child policy. Jiang, an only son himself, said he felt parental pressure to keep alive his lineage.” (“‘Little treasure’ exacts a price; couple faces pressures after adding a son”, 1985).

*Coercion Issues-anti* statements made by Chinese women often highlight the women’s helplessness in their situations. For example, some statements by Chinese women discuss the persecution their families endured because they refused to get abortions. A 2005 *Washington Post* article discusses the persecution Feng Zhongxia underwent under the one-child policy:

[Feng] recounted that she was seven months pregnant and on the run when she learned that local officials had detained more than a dozen of her relatives and wouldn't release them unless she returned for an abortion. “My aunts, uncles, cousins, my pregnant younger sister, my in-laws, they were all taken to the family planning office,” she said. “Many of them



didn't get food or water, and all of them were severely beaten” (“Who controls the family?; blind activist leads peasants in legal challenge to abuses of China’s population-growth policy”, 2005).

By highlighting these women’s helplessness, journalists are able to paint Chinese women as victims of the one-child policy. In his study on fear and victimization in the media, Altheide (2002) says a journalist “anticipates and fits the proper frame around the report in order to elicit a predictable emotional response ... The more innocent and helpless victims are, the worse the audience feels for them and the more deserving they become of the victim status” (p. 97).

By portraying Chinese women as victims of the one-child policy, journalists are able to provide a perspective that is in line with the U.S. policy position: With the exception of the Clinton administration, all U.S. presidents from the policy’s inception until the end of George W. Bush’s administration in 2008 defunded the U.N. Population Fund because they opposed what they believed was a “program of forced abortion and involuntary sterilization in China” (Greenhalgh & Winckler, 2005, p. 307). U.S. policy was that women were being victimized in China and according to Chang (1988, 1989a), U.S. journalists’ coverage of China has been consistent with U.S. foreign policy, even as policy shifts. So, U.S. journalists portrayed Chinese women as victims in order to be consistent with U.S. policy toward China.

### **Frames Linked with U.S. Civilians Speakers**

There are only two idea elements attributed to U.S. Civilians speakers. Both idea elements are *Coercion Issues-anti*. Frankly, this seems to be no more than coincidence. U.S. Civilians is not a speaker category utilized much in the researched articles. The two

speakers in this category were essentially put into this category because there was a lack of identifying information. This is in comparison with Chinese Civilians speakers, who were sought after by journalists to share their personal experiences with the one-child policy. In contrast, U.S. Civilians have little to offer journalists on this subject: In general, they are neither knowledgeable on this topic, nor do they have much experience with it. This speaker category was largely ignored by journalists as not being able to contribute much to the topic.

### **Frames Linked with Other Civilians Speakers**

The Other Civilians speaker category contains a variety of speakers, often with generic, anonymous descriptions such as “one recent survey,” “Western observers,” “travelers in several provinces,” and “other reports.” With such random attributions, it is not surprising that there is no particular pattern in frame usage. The break down of frames used by Other Civilians speakers is relatively spread out; and even though *Social Implications-anti* make up 23.8 percent and *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements make up 28.6 percent of all Other Civilians idea elements, there is no consistency in which specific idea elements are discussed. In other words, Other Civilians speakers are used to provide content as needed by journalists who are looking for more supporting evidence for however they have already framed the issue.

### **Activist Speakers and Frames**

Activists in all three locations categories overwhelmingly use idea elements from the Coercion Issues frame. The concerns of these activists have to do with human rights

and abuses that have resulted surrounding the one-child policy. Chinese and Other Activists are mostly human rights activists, while U.S. Activists mostly come from organizations that take strong stances on the abortion issue (see Table 5.5).

### **Frames Linked with Chinese Activists Speakers**

As stated in an earlier chapter, not many Chinese activists were cited in the researched articles. In fact, Chen Guangcheng, who brought a class-action suit of one-child policy abuses, is the only speaker in the Chinese Activists category. Since his relationship to the one-child policy is to fight against abuses of it, it makes sense that 80 percent of the Chinese Activists idea elements are *Coercion Issues-anti*. A *Coercion Issues-anti* utterance attributed to Chen Guangcheng from a 2006 *Christian Science Monitor* article says: “In one case examined by Chen, Xing Aixia, targeted for sterilization, left with her migrant husband. The police detained the couple's mothers until Ms. Xing returned” (“Chinese rule-of-law activist becomes a case in point”, 2006).

### **Frames Linked with U.S. Activist Speakers**

71.4 percent of the idea elements attributed to U.S. Activists are under from the Coercion Issues frame. Most of the U.S. Activists speakers (and all of the speakers responsible for utterances in the Coercion Issues frames) are from activist groups identified with the abortion issue. The speakers for all three of the *Coercion Issues-anti* idea elements are from anti-abortion groups: the Population Research Institute, a non-profit organization that opposes population control and that refers to itself as “pro-life” (<http://www.pop.org>) and the National Right to Life Committee. The one *Coercion Issues-pro* idea element is

**Table 5.5 Frames Linked with Activist Speakers**

<b>Frames</b>	<b>Chinese Activists</b>	<b>U.S. Activists</b>	<b>Other Activists</b>
<b>Total</b>	5	7	10
<b>Effectiveness Frames</b>	<b>1 (20.0%)</b>	<b>1 (14.3%)</b>	<b>2 (20.0%)</b>
<b>Effectiveness in Controlling Population</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Effectiveness of Enforcement</b>	<b>1 (20.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>1 (10.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Evaluation of the Policy</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>1 (14.3%)</b>	<b>1 (10.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)	1 (100.0%)
<b>Implications Frames</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>1 (14.3%)</b>	<b>1 (10.0%)</b>
<b>Social Implications</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>1 (10.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)
<b>Political Implications</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>1 (14.3%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	0 (0.0%)	1 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Economic Implications</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>	<b>0 (0.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Conflict Frame</b>	<b>4 (80.0%)</b>	<b>5 (71.4%)</b>	<b>7 (70.0%)</b>
<b>Coercion Issues</b>	<b>4 (80.0%)</b>	<b>5 (71.4%)</b>	<b>7 (70.0%)</b>
<i>Pro</i>	0 (0.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Neutral</i>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<i>Anti</i>	4 (100.0%)	4 (80.0%)	7 (100.0%)

**Note:** The percentages given for the seven frames are taken from the total speaker occurrence count. The percentage given for each direction is taken out of the speaker count for the frame it falls under.

attributed to a pro-choice organization, the Planned Parenthood Federation of America. That speakers with a vested interest in abortion-related issues are referenced reflects how the one-child policy has often been interpreted in the U.S. According to Greenhalgh and Winckler (2005), “The issue of coercion in the PRC program got caught up in the abortion debates in the United States, becoming the cause célèbre of social conservatives with antiabortion agendas” (p. 307).

### **Frames Linked with Other Activists Speakers**

All the speakers in the Other Activists category are human rights activists. Amnesty International, ChinaAid, and Women’s Rights Without Frontiers are the primary speakers. According to their website, ChinaAid exists to provide support to “Christian families across China who are harassed, arrested, beaten, and tortured for their faith.” (Although not widely published, according to <http://www.persecutionblog.com>, Chen Guangcheng is a Christian.) Women’s Rights Without Frontiers describes itself as “a diverse, international coalition of individuals and organizations united in our belief that forced abortion and sexual slavery in China must be stopped.” These groups’ interest in human rights makes it no surprise that 70.0 percent of idea elements attributed to Other Activists are *Coercion Issues-anti*. Regina Littlejohn, the president and founder of Women’s Rights Without Frontiers is the most prevalent speaker. In a 2009 *Washington Post* article Littlejohn says about the one-child policy that “A woman pregnant without permission has to surrender her unborn child to government enforcers, no matter what the stage of fetal development” (“When abortion isn’t a choice”, 2009).

## **Evaluation of Speakers' Frame Preference**

The frame preference for Chinese Government and Media speakers, the two speaker groups most likely to have official constraints on what topics they are allowed to discuss, was Effectiveness of Enforcement. The frame preference for Chinese Professionals, Chinese Civilians, and Chinese Activists, the Chinese speaker groups most likely to not be toeing the party line, was Coercion Issues. The frame preferences for U.S. speakers were all either Political Implications or Coercion Issues: for U.S. Professionals it was Political Implications; for U.S. Government it was both Political Implications and Coercion Issues; and for the rest of the U.S. speakers, U.S. Media, U.S. Civilians, and U.S. Activists, it was Coercion Issues. The frame preference for Other Government, Other Civilians, and Other Activists was Coercion Issues. The frame preference for Other Media was Effectiveness of Enforcement. And the frame preference for Other Professionals was both Effectiveness in Controlling Population and Effectiveness of Enforcement. So it seems that Coercion Issues was the most prevalent frame. However, this only takes into account percentages, not sheer numbers. By far Chinese Government has the largest speaker count, and that speaker category was most likely to discuss Effectiveness of Enforcement issues.

In the next chapter, we will discuss overall implications of the research and offer suggestions for further research.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion and Discussion: American Voices of China

This study set out to investigate whether the frames used by the U.S. elite media to cover the one-child policy changed over time. In addition to looking at the frames, the aim was to discover whether the speakers in the articles affected what frames were being used. In this chapter, I will first summarize the findings in terms of frame usage in the three time periods, the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s; in terms of which speakers were most dominant; and in terms of the frame preferences for various speaker groups. Then, I will discuss how this study fits with previous studies as well as how it advances the current literature. At the end of this chapter, I will offer suggestions for further research related to the current study.

#### Findings

A total of 83 articles published in *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Christian Science Monitor* were examined for this study. The research revealed that in the first two time periods, during the 1980s and 1990s, the dominant frame was Effectiveness of Enforcement, which dealt with the Chinese government's ability to implement the policy in an effectual way. However, in the third time period, during the 2000s, the dominant frame switched to Coercion Issues, a frame that focuses on human rights and on the use of coercive methods to enforce the one-child policy.

Each article was broken into utterances, which are individual units of speech, typically a paragraph each. A total of 1,070 idea elements were identified in the articles researched. Each idea element not only belongs to one of the seven frames, but also has a direction, which reflects the attitude toward the policy taken in the idea element. Overall, 45.8 percent of the idea elements were *anti* direction, 16.0 percent were *pro* direction, and the rest were *neutral* direction. Of the three speaker locations, China had the lowest percentage of *anti* direction idea elements (41.5 percent), and the U.S. had the highest percentage (62.1 percent). While little research has been done comparing the tone taken by U.S. and Chinese sources in coverage of China, the existing literature suggests that not only is information coming out of the U.S. likely to be negative, it is likely to be more negative than information coming out of China. Peng (2004) found that coverage of China from 1992 to 2001 by elite U.S. newspapers was consistently negative (p. 64). In addition, in their comparison of how Chinese and U.S. newspapers framed the SARS incident in China, Luther and Zhou (2005) found that the framing in U.S. newspapers was more negative than the framing in Chinese newspapers. Thus, the current findings are in line with the findings of other researchers.

In this study, speakers were divided into five categories: government, media, professionals, activists, and civilians; in addition, the speakers were divided by their originating location: China, the U.S., or “other,” which included all locations besides China and the U.S. The dominant speaker location was China, the dominant speaker category was government, and the dominant speaker group was Chinese Government speakers. Although Chinese Government speakers were dominant throughout all three time periods, their dominance decreased over time. At the same time, Chinese Civilians



speakers were increasing in dominance, indicating that as time progressed, the usage of official Chinese government sources decreased as the usage of Chinese civilians as sources increased.

Most speaker groups had a frame preference for either Effectiveness of Enforcement or Coercion Issues. The most interesting deviation from this rule was U.S. Government and U.S. Professionals, which both had a preference for Political Implications. Of the speaker groups, Chinese Government and Chinese Media speakers had a frame preference for Effectiveness of Enforcement. These were also the two speaker groups most likely to be toeing the party line, since most of the media speakers were from state-run media outlets. The frame preference for all civilians and activists was Coercion Issues.

The findings regarding the use of the Coercion Issues frame were unexpected. The researcher had predicted that the Coercion Issues frame would be most dominant in the second time period, in the period following the Tiananmen Square incident. What happened in Tiananmen brought a renewed focus within the U.S. on human rights issues in China. The 1980s was a time of massive economic growth for China, and hopes about China's modernization remained high. The Tiananmen Square incident was a wake-up call that China still had an authoritarian government. However, Lee (2002) found that by 2001, the attitude of American media opinion makers was that the most effective method of bringing about human rights reform in China was for China to become a WTO member and experience globalization (p. 352). Thus, the researcher expected a media focus on the one-child policy as a human rights issue in the 1990s and that this would be manifested by an increased prevalence in the use of the Coercion Issues frame. However,

the Coercion Issues frame was most dominant in the last time period during the 2000s, due to the controversy over U.S. defunding of the U.N. Population Fund by President George W. Bush in 2002 (the UNFPA had also previously been defunded by President Ronald Reagan in 1985) and an incident involving the imprisonment of a Chinese human rights advocate in 2005.

The amount of coverage dedicated to the issue of defunding the UNFPA speaks to the fact that, from the early years of its enactment, the one-child policy became inseparably entwined in many Americans' minds with the abortion issue. Abortion had just been legalized nationwide in the 1970s and continued to be a hot-button issue in the U.S in the 1980s. As stated earlier, in the early 1980s, social conservatives in the U.S. latched onto the one-child policy as, what they viewed to be, a perfect example of the plight that the practice of abortion can put people in.

The prolific coverage concentrated on Chen Guangcheng's plight highlights the media's eagerness to humanize issues. The human rights frame has been used by the U.S media to discuss China's affairs (Yin, 2007). In addition, there have been many allegations of abuses by the Chinese government in enforcing the one-child policy. Then, this blind Chinese peasant comes along and gives an interview to *Time* magazine and subsequently becomes imprisoned on trumped up charges. Suddenly, Chen Guangcheng had become the perfect face of human rights abuses in China.

## **Discussion**

This study used framing analysis to do a cross-time analysis of U.S. media coverage of another country's domestic issue. This is territory that framing analysis has

barely touched. Framing analysis research has been done on international events (Carpenter, 2007; Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad, 2000; Hook & Pu, 2006) and on U.S. media coverage over time of American domestic issues (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Ferree et al., 2002). However, very little research has looked at how U.S. frames on a specific domestic issue in another country have varied over time, and this study attempted to fill this gap.

The methodology employed in this research was first used by Ferree et al. (2002) in their framing analysis studies of U.S. and German media discourse on abortion. The methodology differs from most content analysis studies in its use of utterances, which are no longer than a paragraph in length, as the unit of analysis instead of the more standard use of the article as the unit of analysis. The current research suggests that this methodology allows a level of precision unattainable by the standard content analysis method: 86 percent of all coded articles containing contained idea elements from more than one frame. In other words, if this research had employed standard methods, those 86 percent of the articles would have lost the nuance in coding that this method allowed. In many cases, there was a dominant frame, but using this methodology allowed speakers and ideas to show up in the data that would not have appeared in the data if a standard method had been used.

This research identified seven frames that are specific to the one-child policy. However, taking a more global perspective, Gans (1979) argued that there are “enduring values” in U.S. news reporting that are seen most explicitly in foreign news, which often evaluates countries by how well they conform to American values (p. 42). These enduring values manifest in ideological frames, which form a philosophical framework

under which the seven frames specific to the one-child policy operate. Three major ideological frames were present in this research: the Orientalism frame, the Cold War frame, and the human rights frame. The Orientalism frame views the people of a region not as individuals or groups of people but rather as problems to be solved (Said, 1978). The Cold War frame views happenings in Communist nations in terms of oppression by a repressive regime (Lee & Yang, 1996; Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad, 2000). The human rights frame focuses on whether countries' behavior reflects the American value that every individual has basic human rights (Yin, 2007).

### **Cold War Frame**

Numerous media researchers (Lee & Yang, 1996; Wang, 1991; Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad, 2000; Perlmutter, 2007) have found the Cold War frame at work in coverage of China. Lee and Yang (1996) found that coverage of the Tiananmen Square protest through the Cold War frame viewed the movement as a struggle for human rights against a "repressive Communist regime" (p. 14). According to Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad (2000), an underlying emphasis on the theme of oppression has long been part of coverage of China as a Communist country (p. 53).

In the current research, coverage framing the one-child policy as a coercion issue increased in prominence over time: The percentage of idea elements from the Coercion Issues frame increased from 24.3 percent in the first time period to 46.6 percent in the third time period. Overall, 71.7 percent of the Coercion Issues idea elements were *anti* direction, indicating a strong leaning in the frame toward belief that the government was, in fact, using coercive measures. In other words, the policy was progressively framed

more and more in terms of human rights that were being taken away by an oppressive, authoritarian government. Thus, the data indicate that the Cold War frame was present in the current study.

(It should be noted that though the Cold War ended with the dissolution of the USSR in 1989 (Goodman, 1999), because China's government continues to be Communist to the present day, the Cold War frame is still used to frame news about China.)

### **Human Rights Frame**

In addition to the Cold War frame, the human rights frame is another frame that appears regularly in U.S. international news coverage. Historically, studies (Jing Yin, 2007; Goodman, 1999; Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad, 2000) have found that the human rights frame has been used by the U.S. media to frame coverage of China. Goodman (1999) showed that U.S. coverage of China from 1985 until 1993 emphasized the human rights issue. Yin (2007) showed that coverage of China's entrance into the WTO, which occurred in 2001, was framed as being contingent on China dealing with its human rights abuses. The current research supports and extends both of these studies. Coercion Issues was the dominant frame in the third time period, which extends both Goodman and Yin's findings by indicating that the human rights frame continued to have a dominant presence in U.S. news coverage of China after 2001. In addition, Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad (2000) found that U.S. media coverage of the U.N. Conference on Women interpreted Hillary Clinton's speech entitled "Women's Rights are Human Rights" as directed at China instead of having a global application, framing this international event in terms of

China's human rights abuses. In a similar manner, the current research found that when the U.S. defunded the U.N. Population Fund, the U.S. media, by producing such prolific coverage of the issue, framed the UNFPA in Americans' minds as being inherently linked to China's coercion issues, framing what was intended to be a humanitarian effort in terms of a human rights frame.

### **Orientalism Frame**

Numerous studies support the idea that U.S. coverage views China as the "other," an incomprehensible, threatening entity that would benefit from conforming with American values. This Orientalism frame can be seen at work in studies by Liss (2003), Wang (1998), and Yin (2007). The idea of the government making family-planning decisions for individuals and telling people they are only allowed to have a single child is in direct conflict with the American value of individuals' rights. The Orientalism frame on China focuses on how China is backward and how it could and should conform with American values. A comparison of Chinese Government speakers with U.S. Government speakers shows that the U.S. government frames the policy in Orientalism terms. Idea elements from Chinese Government speakers are 59.8 percent from effectiveness frames, meaning that the government's primary concern is not with problems inherent to the policy, but rather with whether it's achieving its stated goals. In contrast, only 5.8 percent of U.S. Government speakers deal with effectiveness frames. Instead of focusing on the policy's effectiveness, U.S. Government speakers devote 47.1 percent of idea elements to Political Implications and 47.1 percent of idea elements to Coercion Issues. Of the Political Implications idea elements, 75 percent are *anti* direction, many of which deal

with the issue of Chinese claiming to have left China to escape from the one-child policy and requesting political asylum or the issue of the U.S. defunding the UNFPA. Of the Coercion Issues idea elements, 62.5 percent are *anti* direction, which assert that coercive methods are being used by the government. In other words, U.S. Government speakers are not interested in discussing how effective the policy has been; instead, they are interested in discussing how the Chinese government is taking away individuals' freedom and how the U.S. government can work to conform China more to the American value of giving individuals freedom.

### **Further Research**

Although this study looked at coverage of 30 years of the one-child policy, the specifics of the policy are changing. According to a 2009 *New York Times* article in the research pool, in order to “tackle growing worries about the country's shrinking work force and aging population,” Shanghai offered incentives to select residents to have more than one child (“1 Plus 1: Shanghai tweaks child rules”, 2009). While this is not true for all of China but rather applied specifically to Shanghai, it indicates that the rules might be changing. Follow-up research on this issue as it evolves would be interesting. In addition, as more independent media outlets challenge the party organs, a comparison of Chinese and U.S. media coverage of the one-child policy, similar to Hook and Pu's (2006) would be interesting. Hook and Pu (2006) provided an example of a study comparing Chinese and U.S. media coverage of an issue that brought conflict between the two countries with their study on the spy plane crisis, when a U.S. surveillance plane collided with and brought down a Chinese fighter jet.

Another area for further research would be a comparison of U.S. media coverage with another country's regarding the one-child policy. As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons the one-child policy became so controversial in the U.S. was because it became entwined with the already controversial abortion issue. Looking at, for example, a European newspaper's coverage of the one-child policy would provide an interesting comparison. In fact, according to unfpa.org, in 2008 when the U.S. was not financially supporting the UNFPA, the top ten country donors were mostly European and also Japan and Canada.

The literature could also be advanced by integrating framing analysis research with interviews of the journalists who wrote the researched articles. The interviews could speak to the relationship between news bias and news frames. According to Scheufele (2006), news frames can be seen as a form of media bias in that journalists prefer information that is consistent with their schemata or frames (p.68). In other words, the more a potentially newsworthy event fits a frame through which the journalist views a given issue, the more likely she/he will be to report on the event. Thus, an interview with a journalist could bring to light a bias toward a particular frame/frames, and framing analysis could examine whether that bias was reflected in the frequency with which the journalist used the preferred frames.

Going beyond the case of the one-child policy, further research could look at U.S. coverage of other countries' domestic policies, particularly policies that don't necessarily involve human rights issues. This kind of research can contribute to a better understanding of how the America media, by framing another country's domestic policy,



reaffirms the enduring values that Gans (1979) asserted to be present in all U.S. news, especially international news.

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