

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

Naomi Weisbrook Hauser

Dr. Yong Volz, Thesis Supervisor

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.