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Part I

China In The U.S. Media

Introduction

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, the Chinese economy surpassed Japan's to become the world's second largest. At that point, China and the United States arguably became the world's most important bilateral relationship. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 1979, the relationship between United States and China has generally remained stable, despite Beijing's Tiananmen Square crackdown of 1989. However, although China and United States are increasingly interdependent both economically and therefore politically (as China remains the largest foreign creditor to the United States), each nation not only regards the other as a strategic partner, but also as a potential adversary. Despite their mutual political, economic, and security interests, there are unresolved concerns from the United States' perspective relating to the role of democracy and the violation of human rights under the Chinese government. China, on the other hand, remains wary of the United States' potential desire to intervene in its internal affairs, which may threaten the rule of the Communist Party. As Broomfield (2003) pointed out, there are real differences between China and United States in terms of culture, ideology and political systems. Thus, a fast-growing China can be viewed as a potential challenge to the United States, not only economically, but also ideologically and strategically.

Realism would explain this mistrust between Beijing and Washington, as both are eager to maximize power. As pointed out by Yang and Liu (2012), "states forecast these

power comparisons, and they begin to perceive security threats not only when a state possesses the power capabilities to initiate a credible challenge but also when a competing state appears likely to reach that power scenario in the relatively near future” (p. 707). U.S. policy makers have argued that the competition and tension between China and the United States can be transformed into cooperation and peace if both nations remain embedded in an international civil society where their survival and prosperity depend on each other. However, their political differences can be exacerbated by negative images and perceptions that fuel mistrust between the two rivals. This constructivist perspective introduces mass media as an important actor in international relations and the foreign policymaking process as media help construct reality for both the public and policymakers.

According to Lippmann (1922), the social and political reality of a society is often constructed by the news media, especially in a setting that is “out of reach, out of sight, out of mind” (p. 21). As the majority of the public possesses limited knowledge of a foreign country, their comprehension of another nation is largely shaped by the narrative constructed in the media. However, media itself do not determine how the reality is constructed; instead, as Hallin (1994) put it, “it is naïve to imagine that journalists are free of social location” (p.7). In other words, “before the content is even created, there are political, economic, and social realities that set the stage for the nature of media content” (Ball-Rokeach & Cantor, 1986, p. 14). The interaction between the objective reality (if there is such a thing) and a society’s own pragmatic and social needs drive social reality construction by news media. Thus, social reality is constructed only when it “fits in with people’s images of themselves and others” (Lazarsfeld, 1976, p. 489). As the distinct

social structures in American and China created different media models, American and Chinese public share inconsistent perceptions of reality and images of their own countries and their rivals. These differing perceptions can lead to misunderstandings in international relations. This paper adopts a framework that acknowledges media's role of constructing social reality under the influence of the boarder political and ideological power. Using frame analysis, it examines the way China was portrayed in the U.S. media before, during and after the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Literature Review

China in the U.S. Media

The contemporary history of China-U.S. relationship begins with the Xinhai Revolution in 1911 when the United States government recognized the Republic of China (ROC) led by Kuomintang (KMT) Party as the sole and legitimate government of China. When the Second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937, reports from U.S. foreign correspondents in China documented Japanese brutality, including the Nanking Massacre, also known as the "Rape of Nanking." These reports aroused public sympathy in the United States. (Dell'Orto, 2013). Although they often implied a need for U.S. intervention, the United States government offered moral support rather than military involvement.

After the Second World War, the hostility between the Republic of China and the Communist Party of China exploded into open civil war, and the KMT lost effective control of Mainland China in 1949. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) established the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Mainland China while the ROC moved its regime to the island of Taiwan. "The defeat of the U.S.-supported Nationalist government and the

takeover of China by the Soviet backed Chinese Communist in 1949 stirred a wide and bitter debate in the United States over the responsibility for the failure of U.S. China policy” (Chang, 1989, p. 487). The United States refused to recognize the PRC, worked to prevent the PRC from taking China's seat in the United Nations, and encouraged its allies not to deal with the PRC. The United States placed an embargo on trading with the PRC and persuaded allies to follow it (United States Foreign Claims Settlement Commission, 1966).

As indicated by Chang (1989), for a short time in the 1950s, the American media worked along with the U.S. government to block contacts with the PRC while recognizing the government in Taiwan as the legitimate Chinese government. Yan’s (1998) study also showed that from 1949 to 1968, the most prominent news coverage about China was about Taiwan and the diplomatic and military support from the U.S. to KMT. Astarita’s (2009) analysis of articles about PRC published by *Time Magazine*, *National Geographic* and *Reader’s Digest* from 1949 to 1972 also showed that media coverage favored Taiwan and delivered a negative picture of China until the end of 1960s, when U.S. policy towards China began to shift. Lu (2011), who studied media coverage during the Cold-War era, found that media rhetoric during this particular period of time divided the world between the free world (western democracy led by the United States) and the communist camps (communist autocracy led by the Soviet Union). This rhetoric was persuasive and powerful to the American public as it presented the United States as the moral leader combating the evil influence of the Soviet Union. The limited media presentation of PRC at this time has always paralleled the fragile US-China relationship (Lee, 2010) as PRC was often referred as the “fanatical Asian Communist” (Parenti,

1986, p. 131). As Astarita concluded, “From the early 1950s, the only picture of China presented on Americans readers was strongly linked to the image of the communist nightmare. Because of the lack of direct connections between the two countries, at the beginning of the Cold War, the PRC had always been identified as an aggressive and arrogant nation. Although it is human to exaggerate a threat that cannot be truly understood, in the case of China, it is evident that the media played a significant role in further strengthening its negative image” (p. 31).

After the Sino-Soviet border clashes of 1969, the Nixon administration decided that an improved relationship with the PRC would be a useful counterbalance to the Soviet threat. Therefore, the United States initiated measures to relax trade restrictions and other impediments to bilateral contact, to which China responded. However, this rapprochement process was stalled by the Vietnam War, as China was supporting the enemies of the United States (MacMillan, 2008). Yan (1998) noticed a significant shift in the tone of news coverage in the *New York Times* after this strategic change in foreign policy. The newspaper began to “tone down the coverage of U.S. support to KMT after 1969 by treating it as a prominent topic only among the least prominent stories” (p. 60).

On July 15, 1971, President Richard Nixon revealed that he had accepted an invitation to visit the PRC, which caused immediate shock around the world. In the United States, some of the most hardline anti-communists denounced the decision, but public opinion polls showed support for the move. Nixon was particularly eager for supportive news coverage of the trip that emphasized the bold initiative and offered dramatic imagery (Richard, 2011). And the media did not let him down. Chang (1988) studied media coverage when President Nixon announced that he would visit China. The

finding shows that the use of ideological symbols (e.g., "Red China") when describing China in the *New York Times* decreased dramatically after the President's announcement. Instead, the *New York Times* started to attach the image of China with geographical symbols (e.g., People's Republic of China). As Chang (1989) illustrated, this trip "not only represented a significant shift of U.S. China policy but also opened the China door to the American mass media, which had for years tried to enter the Chinese mainland without much success...After an absence of nearly three decades, the American news media were finally back to the China Scene" (p. 488). The mass media seized this opportunity and more positive and diverse images of China were formed as the media coverage of China from the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* peaked in this year (Chang, 1989).

The increasingly positive coverage of China in the U.S. media since 1972 included suggestions that the new U.S.-China relationship had weakened the Soviet Union's global power. Accordingly, as the new Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping initiated pro-market reform in the late 1970s, mainland China's nearly one billion consumers grew more appealing to the U.S. business community. In 1979, the United States changed its diplomatic recognition of the Chinese government from Taiwan to Beijing. The U.S.-PRC Joint Communiqué announcing this change also stated that the people of the United States will maintain cultural, commercial, and other unofficial relations with the people on Taiwan (Foreign Relations of the United States, 1977-1980). Wang and Shoemaker's (2011) study of China's images in the U.S. media pointed out that the most positive news coverage of China in the United States was found during this period of time when "the newly-established formal relationship between the countries resulted in a honeymoon

period of sorts.” When President Reagan returned from China in the mid-1980s, he used rhetoric, which suggested China was the “good communist” and the Soviet Union was the “bad communist. In this sense, Harding (1991, p. 201) said the U.S. government as well as the mass media “maintained a double standard, refraining from criticizing China for the same human rights abuse for which it attacked Soviet Union. Public opinion at this time was also consistent with this prevailing frame. As De Boer (1980) reported, the diplomatic recognition of China was supported by an ample majority of the American public. In addition, De Boer found that the public’s general attitude toward China had changed from empathically negative to positive, with high hopes for expected trade growth fueling for this shift of opinion. As Womack (1990) concluded, between 1979 and 1989, Americans viewed this change in U.S.-China relations as a victory for capitalism and a loss for communism.

China's violent suppression of the Tiananmen Square protest in 1989, however, prompted the U.S. government and media to reconsider their views of China. In some ways, the scholarship shows, the United States was forced to confront ideological and political differences that it had ignored during the thaw it had in relations with China. The relationship returned to the deep freeze as U.S. public opinion pressured the government to denounce China's human rights violations. Washington suspended high-level official exchanges with Beijing and halted weapons exports to China. The United States also imposed a number of economic sanctions, causing U.S. investors’ interest in China to decline. Wang (1991), who compared the *New York Times's* coverage of China during Nixon's trip with that during the Tiananmen Square demonstrations, captured the drastic change in media tone. While China had been depicted as a "good socialist country that

was vested with cultural heritage and historical sites" (p. 61) during the early 1970s, the times' news frame of China after Tiananmen returned to a dominant anticommunist theme, "emphasizing the confrontation between pro-democratic, pro-change college students and the corrupt, incompetent, and unyielding communist regime" (p. 59). Similarly, Lee and Yang (1995) studied news coverage of the Tiananmen Square protest by the U.S. and Japanese media and found while the Japanese media focused on the impact of the protest on Japan's economy, the U.S. media strongly promoted the students' grievance against the Chinese government (Lee & Yang, 1995).

In the post-Cold War and post Tiananmen era, most U.S. media discourse focused on negatively on China's human rights issues (Lee, 2010), including allegations of forced abortions under the Chinese government's one-child policy (Goodman, 1999). According to Wang and Shoemaker (2011), it is during this period that the most negative coverage of China was found in the U.S. media. Moreover, Goodman (1999) suggested that "the press portrayed US-China relations in a negative fashion substantially more than the government" during the post-Tiananmen years (p. 403).

In their study of U.S. media coverage of the Hong Kong handover, Lee, Pan and Chan (2001) found that the *New York Times* framed the transfer of Hong Kong from British to Chinese sovereignty as a power struggle between the West and China. The U.S. media predicted that Hong Kong would suffer from the deprivation of freedom and democracy under Chinese governance. According to Lee, Pan and Chan (2001), "since 1989, the U.S. media have continued to portray the PRC as an invariant dictatorship; in fact, the last Communist giant to be struggled against, whose promises regarding Hong Kong are not to be trusted" (p.347). Akhavan-Majid and Ramaprasad (1998) studied the

U.S. news coverage of the Fourth UN Women's Conference and NGO Forum in Beijing. Instead of focusing on the conference itself and the women's issues discussed, the dominant frames found in the U.S. media criticized China as a communist nation, and "depicted China as an oppressive communist nation, characterized by clumsiness and ineptitude" (p.145).

The tension between China and the United States was eased when President Clinton visited the PRC in June 1998. More positive media coverage was generated as the business relationship was restored between the two nations (Wang & Shoemaker, 2011). By 1998, an image of China as a rising power started to emerge in mainstream U.S. media coverage (Zhang, 2010). It is also during this period of time that the discourse of "China Threat" became salient in the U.S. media (Yang & Liu, 2012). However, a significant change of U.S. foreign policy did not come until the September 11, 2001 attacks. The United States shifted its attention from China to the Middle East and the War on Terror after 9/11. Shortly after the attack, the United States and PRC commenced a counterterrorism dialogue where China publicly supported the coalition campaign in Afghanistan, and contributed \$150 million of bilateral assistance to Afghan reconstruction following the defeat of the Taliban (U.S. Department of State). In the United States, the terrorist attacks greatly changed the nature of the discourse, as the PRC was no longer viewed as the primary security threat to the United States, and instead became an ally in the anti-terror campaign.

Moving into the 21st century, China has been officially acknowledged as a rising superpower and major player in the international community as it became a significant member in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and won its bid for the 2008 Olympics.

In December 2001, China joined the WTO with the help from Washington. Since then China and the United States have developed one of the most important trade relationships in the global economy. The United States supported China's integration into the world economy in part to promote capitalism and capture a larger share of the booming Chinese market. By doing so, Washington also hoped to nurture democratic reform in China. However, as Beijing incorporated free trade and an open market with only limited moves towards democracy, the United States expressed disappointment, and tensions over bilateral trade issues increased (Luther & Zhou, 2005). In their study of U.S. news media frames of the SARS health crisis, Luther and Zhou (2005) found that "while concern with China's economic stability is expressed in U.S. news coverage of SARS, it is accompanied by criticisms of China's political system" (p.895).

In 2008, China was put under the international spotlight as the host of the Beijing Olympics, which made it not only a hot topic for news media, but also a target of interest for scholars. Therefore, studies on news coverage of China in U.S. media in the 21st century predominantly focused on China's image during the 2008 Olympics. According to Syed (2010), there are three reasons why nations like China compete to host the Olympics. First, sports can create "diplomatic breakthroughs"(P. 2863), such as the ping - pong diplomacy that marked the 1970 rapprochement between Washington and Beijing. Second, Olympic games are global events that allow nations to project their images to the world as well as their citizens. Third, during the Olympic year, when international media attention intensifies, the hosting country can shape its public image before the world community. Therefore, as Syed (2010) argued, although the original Olympic Charter condemns nations who use the event to advance their political goals, the political

implication of the Olympics cannot be neglected or avoided. During the Beijing Olympics, the international news coverage of China became politically significant (Jarvie et al., 2008) and many studies have attempted to reveal China's image in the foreign media. Nicholas Cull (2008) argued that although China tried to promote an image of a friendly and modern country, this frame would only be accepted when the foreign media were impressed, which was rarely the case. Xin Xu (2006) went further and predicted that news coverage on Beijing Olympics by foreign media could break the Chinese Communist Party's legitimacy by leading a negative international perception.

Sonja Foss and Barbara Walkosz (2008) analyzed American media coverage on China during the 2008 Olympics and identified frames of China as "China as Unique; China as Western; China as a Violator of Human Rights; China as an Upholder of Human Rights; China as Abundant Resources; China as Limited Resources; China as a Powerful Economic Partner; and China as an Unreliable Economic Partner." However, they contended that the U.S. media presented these contradictory images of China without making frames more salient than others. Therefore, this study is not helpful in terms of detecting a consistent image (if any) of China in the U.S. media. Syed (2010) made a hypothesis in his research that the U.S. media coverage on China during the 2008 Olympics would portray an image of a modern country, which, would lead to more positive perception of China from the American public. His hypothesis was not fully supported by the results, but no plausible explanation was provided.

Although plenty of studies have been done on China's image in the U.S. media during the 2008 Olympics, they only looked at news coverage during the Olympic weeks, and failed to capture the change in China's image in the U.S. media in the years

immediately before and after the game. It is crucial to understand the U.S. political dialogue and media discourse towards China in a larger scale as they may reflect the conflicting national interests of the United States under the new global structure. On one hand, the goal of the U.S. is to capture a large share of the rapidly growing Chinese market; on the other hand, the political impulse to change the Middle Kingdom or the Communist regime still impact policy-making. In Lee's (2010) words, "At the center of policy and media dispute was, in sum, how to manage the essential tension between capitalism (trade) and democracy (human rights) in Washington's quest to disseminate capitalist democracy to China" (p. 344).

As illustrated above, researchers studying China's image in the U.S. media have used similar methodologies. First, the majority of existing studies on the U.S. media coverage of China chose to include the *New York Times* as a source for data, "therefore, the themes extracted by researchers from media coverage are more likely to come from the same professional culture" (Pan, 2010, p. 88). Second, previous research predominantly focused on case studies of specific events (Tiananmen Square Protest, Hong Kong handover, SARS etc.), which looked at framing during brief a moment in time instead of examining the change in frames over an extended time period. Although focusing on an incident provides a specific context for study, the impact of the overhanging political environment may be overlooked. In addition, although most studies suggested a correlation between U.S. foreign policy goals and U.S. media framing of key issues, the assumption cannot be generalized because of the limited nature of the case study approach. Moreover, as previous studies focused on the U.S. news coverage of China

prior or during the Beijing Olympic, there is limited data on the image of China in the U.S. media after 2008. This study seeks to address these gaps in the literature.

U.S. Public Opinion on China in the 21st Century

Despite the lack of literature that identifies the image of China in the US media in the 21st century, several public opinion polls were conducted in an attempt to understand the image of China perceived by the American public. Although designed by different research and media organizations, a consistent pattern is observed by analyzing the responses. A Gallup Poll that questioned American public's overall opinion on foreign countries asked the question "what is your overall opinion of China? Is it very favorable, mostly favorable, mostly unfavorable, or very unfavorable?" (Gallup Organization, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009) every year since 2000. While the results fluctuated, the trend between 2000 and 2006 featured an increasingly favorable opinion towards China. However, there was a sharp reverse beginning in 2007, and the percentage of Americans who had an unfavorable view towards China peaked in 2008. The percentage started to drop steadily after that year. Another public opinion poll initiated by Gallup, CNN and *USA Today* asked whether or not the public considered China as an economic threat to the U.S in 2005 and 2008 (Cable News Network, *USA Today* and Gallup Organization, 2005, 2008). The response showed that in 2005, 64 percent respondents believed that China was a threat and 33 percent believed it was not. In 2008, however, a much larger 70 percent regarded China as an economic threat as opposed to 30 percent who did not. Also, a Pew Global Attitude Project named "Global Unease with Major Power" found that while in 2005, 49 percent Americans believed China's economic development was a "good" thing, the number dropped in 2007 to 41

(Pew Global Attitudes Project, 2005, 2007). In addition, an annual survey by Pew Research Center asked, “All things considered, which of these descriptions comes close to your view of China today. Do you think China is an adversary; a serious problem but not an adversary; or not much of a problem?” (The Pew Research Center, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2008) From 2000 to 2004, there was a steady decrease of both the percentages of people who viewed China as an adversary and serious problem and an increase of people who saw China as not a big problem. However, 2005 was a turning point when increasing number of respondents started to view China as an adversary or serious problem and fewer people believed that China was not a problem at all. The trend continued till 2008, after which it fluctuated.

Most public opinion polls analyzed indicated an increasingly negative public opinion toward China that peaked in 2008 and dropped afterward. Therefore, 2008 became the primary interest of this study. In order to understand the public opinion trend before, during and after 2008, this paper introduces media as the major factor that shaped public opinion. A Pew Research Center Political Knowledge Update Survey for the People and Press Opinion Research Corporation tested Americans’ knowledge of foreign affairs based on what they’ve seen in the media. According to the Survey, 73 percent of Americans got their knowledge about China from English-language TV, and 50 percent got their knowledge from English-language newspapers (Pew Research Center, 2008). Media, therefore, is suggested as the major source of knowledge for American public when it comes to a foreign nation as China. With an assumption that news coverage contributes to the change of public opinion, the target of analysis in this paper focuses on U.S. media coverage on China before, during and after the year of 2008. Since 2008 is

also the year when China hosted the Beijing Olympics, this paper follows a timeline that identifies a pre Olympic era (2005 to 2007), Olympic year (2008) and a post Olympic era (2009-2011).

Part II

Media, Politics & Public Opinions

Media Agenda vs. Policy Agenda

As summarized by Yan (1998), when American media cover news on international relations, they often conceal a political agenda and reflect the prevalent Western ideology (Dijk, 1984 and 1988), reinforce the existing superstructure in American society (Herman & Chomsky, 1988), and support American interests in the world (Shoemaker et al., 1991). However, other scholars who found significant media impact on foreign policies, such as the CNN effect, contend that media can set the agenda for policy making on international affairs directly or indirectly (by shifting public opinion to pressure policy makers) (e.g., Gilboa, 2007; Robinson, 2000). Many policy makers also acknowledged this effect. For example, former Secretary of State James Baker III (1995) observed, “In Iraq, Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda, and Chechnya, among others, the real-time coverage of conflict by the electronic media has served to create a powerful new imperative for prompt action, that was not present in less frenetic times” (p. 103). Colin Powell, the former secretary of the state, on the other hand, suggested that media coverage “doesn’t change the policy, but it does create the environment in which the policy is made” (McNulty, 1993, p. 80). Thus, existing findings all indicated a close relationship between media agenda and policy agenda while the direction of this relationship remains unclear.

Many existing studies have proved that although media can impact foreign policy-makers’ agendas, more often, policy makers, especially the president and state department, set the media’s agenda rather than vice versa (i.e. Chang, 1993; Nimmo,

1978; Lin, 1985). As Bennett (1980) suggested, “the chain of political causality runs from elites through the media to the public rather than from the media to elites and the public” (p. 305). The structural constraints on the press in the foreign policy environment was attributed as the reason why news media are at a disadvantage when competing with policymakers in setting the agenda for foreign affairs. There are three components of structural constraints including “presidential control of foreign policy initiative, reliance of the press on government information, and secrecy in foreign policymaking” (Chang, 1989, p. 489). “Presidential control of foreign policy initiative” refers to the power of the president over national defense and foreign relations. The president, as the ultimate decision maker on international affairs, “almost always has the initiative over both the press and the Congress if he chooses to use the instruments at his command” (Reston, 1966a, p. 555). Since the president has the power and resources to create some of the events journalists cover, Reston (1966b) described the relationship between the news media and the presidency as the press “may report the news, but the President makes it” (p. 186).

In addition, when it comes to international relations, policymakers possess “a constitutional and inside-knowledge advantage. As a result, journalists tend to rely heavily on government sources for foreign policy news” (Goodman, 1999, p. 396). As Lim and Seo (2009) pointed out, as political officials are often the major source for news media when it comes to foreign policy, journalists would pick up frames and agendas set by the government instead of challenging them, because they are afraid to lose their information sources. Also, political officials control the information flow and decide if a policy statement can be made public or not. It is extremely hard, if not impossible, for

journalists to challenge the government's right to withhold information in the name of national interests and security (Hohenberg, 1968). Therefore, as argued by Chang (1989), "use of secrecy in the foreign policy is more intriguing than other devices employed by the government to manipulate or control the flow and interpretation of information" (p. 491).

According to Chang (1989), although some scholars did not find clear evidence of media support of official foreign policies, others indicated that "the news media were supportive of U.S. policy toward the countries involved or were reflective of the views of political actors on foreign policy issues and that U.S. foreign policy goals influenced the presentations and interpretations of the issue concerned" (p.489). Goodman (1999) explained this "lapdog" role the press took with manufacturing consent theory, which states that since there are institutional links between journalists and political elites, journalists tend to share the interests, views and values of those in power. The theory of manufacturing consent was first introduced by Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky in 1988 in their book *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. The authors argued that the mass media of the United States "are effective and powerful ideological institutions that carry out a system-supportive propaganda function by reliance on market forces, internalized assumptions, and self-censorship, and without overt coercion" (p.26). Herman and Chomsky's claimed that the features of American media model determined that it would inevitably fall into this propaganda model.

First, as the dominant mass-media outlets in the U.S. are large firms, which are run for profit, they must cater to the financial interest of their owners, which are corporations or particular controlling investors. Second, since the majority of the revenue of major

media outlets in the U.S. derives from advertising, news media must therefore cater to the political prejudices and economic desires of their advertisers. Third, Herman and Chomsky (1988) argued, “the large bureaucracies of the powerful subsidize the mass media, and gain special access, by their contribution to reducing the media’s costs of acquiring...and producing, news. The large entities that provide this subsidy become 'routine' news sources and have privileged access to the gates. Non-routine sources must struggle for access, and may be ignored by the arbitrary decision of the gatekeepers” (p.5). The last but not the least, the media in the U.S. internalized certain political agenda. It was anti-communism during the Cold War, which was replaced by the War on Terror, as the major social control mechanism (Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

Therefore, according to this theory, American media “serve mainly as a supportive arm of the state and dominant elites, focusing heavily on themes serviceable to them, and debating and exposing within accepted frames of reference” (Herman, 1993, p. 25). “As a result, the press tends to support government agendas, including foreign policy agendas, by passively covering and thus legitimizing government policies and actions” (Goodman, 1999, p. 395). Furthermore, as Strobel (1997) described, even when media exert influence on the policy making process, the influence is always restricted by the larger political environment, which is “almost always set by foreign policy makers themselves or by the growing number of policy actors on the international stage” (p. 5).

Although policymakers were proved to be powerful in terms of setting the agenda on foreign affairs, some scholars believe that media can resist the impact of policy agenda and remain independent. This school of thought is based on the adversarial press model, which emphasizes on the press’s role as watchdog. According to Hachten (1996), the

press perceives a constitutional responsibility to check and balance government actions and policies for the public good. Therefore, journalists, acting in their role as the Fourth Estate, tend to cover foreign policy actions in an adversarial fashion. Studies by Cohen (1963), Batscha (1975), Nimmo (1964) and Chittick (1970) interviewed journalists in an attempt to examine their daily interactions with policy officials. Results from these studies support the adversarial press model in that reporters interviewed considered themselves as independent participants in the foreign policymaking process.

Analyzing from the opposite direction, many scholars documented how media agenda influences policy agenda. After the World War I, early media scholars believed that media had powerful and direct impact on people's minds (Dennis and Merrill, 1991:82) as well as foreign policy decision-making (Lippmann, 1922; Douglass & Bomer, 1932; Stowe, 1936; Coggeshall, 1934). Lippmann (1922), taking an approach that would later be called the "social construction of reality," argued that by constructing the reality of issues in individuals' minds, media influenced views and actions of foreign policy makers. Chang et al. (2009) adopted the theory of the social construction of reality as the framework to study the constructed image of China in American media in the post-Cold War era. The concept of social construction of reality maintains that mass media actually represent the public knowledge of an event, and in some degree, suggests that individuals are unable to distinguish between real and mediated events (Shapiro & Lang, 1991). Contrary with manufacturing consent theory, this theory points to a powerful view of the media role and argues that the media can shape political culture by constructing the perceived social reality. The public then experience and make sense of the reality either via media coverage or via media dictation.

Based on the understanding of social construction of reality, Beer and Hariman (1996a) proposed a post-realist approach to study international relations that emphasizes “diplomacy and discourse, communication and persuasion” (p. 408). It recognizes how “different languages offer different realities, different meanings, and different means for motivating reactions” (Beer & Hariman, 1998, p. 187). This approach also considers culture as the base for negotiation of meanings and “determinants of state action” (p. 23). As Lu (2011) concluded, “The post-realist approach allows disciplinary intersection and collaboration between rhetorical and intercultural/international communication studies on foreign relations. It opens up intellectual space for exploring and understanding human motivations and actions in a more complex and interrelated world” (p. 339).

Other scholars also found increasing evidence that media have demonstrated their ability to influence government’s foreign policy agenda (i.e. Lippmann, 1992; Paletz and Entman, 1981). By attracting government’s attention on foreign policy shortcomings, media challenges a government’s approach to a foreign policy issue (Coho, 1963). Moreover, media can conduct independent assessments of government’s foreign policy, which may challenge the success of government’s foreign policy initiatives (Cohen, 1963). Therefore, as Goodman (1991) claimed, some scholars started to believe that “the powerful press paradigm is once again the most accurate portrayal of the news media’s impact on government and society” (p. 394).

While some scholars argue media have powerful influence on foreign policy making process, others believe it is the foreign policy makers who take the lead. From the perspective of middle-of-the-road theories such as those based on interdependent information exchange models, “media and government are engaged in a symbiotic

relationship in which they must cooperatively exchange information in order to successfully carry out their duty” (Goodman, 1991, p. 395). On one hand, the economic wellbeing of the media depends on journalists’ ability to relate with government sources and get information from them on a regular basis. On the other hand, the government relies on media to deliver its foreign policy objectives to the public. In other words, instead of interpreting the relationship between media agenda and policy agenda with unidirectional causality, one can perceive this relationship as an interdependent one.

Media Agenda Vs. Public Agenda

As discussed earlier, media can influence the public and policymakers by constructing images of reality in people’s minds. When it comes to foreign affairs, media is expected to have a greater impact on the public than on policymakers because the public is less likely to have direct experience with foreign nations as policymakers do, thus, they rely more on the media to construct images of the outside world. Many researchers found strong media effect on the public in forming opinion towards a foreign country. Perry (1985), for example, demonstrated that instead of relying on their own knowledge of foreign countries, people largely depended on news stories they read to make inference about those nations.

As Wang and Shoemaker (2011) pointed out, when analyzing the effect of media agenda on public agenda, both visibility and valence should be taken into consideration. As they noted, “visibility refers to the amount and prominence of media coverage a given country receives, whereas valence is the affective attribute of media content about the country, either positive or negative” (p. 3). This, as Goodman acknowledged, refers to the idea of the two levels of agenda setting, as outlined by McCombs and Reynolds

(2002). While the first level concerns setting agenda of objects, and suggests which issues are important to think about, the second level focuses on setting agenda of certain attributes of the object, and make certain characteristics of a topic salient. Public opinion, which is a key concept of agenda-setting theory, can also be analyzed in both levels. In response to the first level agenda-setting theory, public opinion refers to the salience of topics perceived by the public. When examined at a second level, public opinion represents the most salient aspect or attribute of an issue from the public's perspective.

Looking from the first level agenda setting, also known as visibility, scholars found a strong correlation between salience of foreign affairs in the news media and salience of foreign affairs for the public (Soroka, 2003; Wanta & Hu, 1993). Moreover, Wanta et al. (2004) found that the more media coverage a nation receives, the more likely people would regard it as strategically important to the United States' interests. From the perspective of the second-level agenda setting, which examines valence, Shoemaker et al. (1991) found that since journalists tend to attach certain attributes to newsworthy stories such as conflict or crisis, when such attributes were shown in coverage of foreign affairs, audiences would be more likely to consider this foreign nation as important.

Brewer, Graf and Willnat (2003) investigated media influence on attitudes towards foreign countries in their experimental study. They found explicit attributes attached to a country in news could shape people's opinion towards that country. Boulding (1959) regarded people's perception of national images as one type of public opinion under the context of international systems; in other words, the image of a nation in the public's mind helps them form opinions towards the country. Therefore, media can also affect public opinion by changing the perceived image of a nation. For example, Wanta et al.

(2004) discovered that people's perception of foreign nations changed as the media coverage altered. That is, when media portrayed a negative image of a country using negative cues, negative opinions towards that nation would be formed among the public.

Few studies have examined the impact of public agenda on media coverage of foreign policy, since most scholars agree that the path should be the other way around. Although existing scholarship studied the relationship between media agenda and policy agenda as well as media agenda and public agenda under the topic of foreign policy, there has been no research that looks at the interaction among the three actors together in the context of the China-United States relationship. This study will help address that gap and further illustrate the dynamics among media agenda, policy agenda and public agenda.

Theoretical Framework

Previous studies that found significant media impact on foreign policy making validated their findings with media effect theories such as agenda setting. The other school of thought -- the manufacturing consent theory -- maintains that media effect on foreign policy is limited due to the structure and position of mass media in the society. While those theories have different beliefs in terms of the power dynamics between media coverage and foreign-policy making, they all regarded media and the political system as separated institutions with one having more power than the other. This paper does not seek to detect the causality between media agenda and policy agenda, but it does argue that mass media and political institutions are none-separable social components that both function under an ideological state that is constructed, sustained and reinforced by cultural practices. This idea came from the concept of social construction of reality, which is the foundation of the framing theory.

In 1993, Entman referred to framing as “a scattered conceptualization” that needed to be defined and operationalized more consistently (p.51). Up to that point, the term had been “used in different ways in different disciplines to mean largely different things...with different outcomes” (Cappela & Jamieson, 1997, p. 39). For example, scholars such as McCombs, Shaw and Weaver (1997) suggested little difference between framing and agenda setting. They developed the concept of second-level agenda setting as referring to the framing effect. “Thinking of frames as attributes of an object provides the theoretical link between agenda setting and framing research” (Chyi and McCombs, 2004, p. 24). Others, however, argue that although both second-level agenda setting and framing examine salience of attributes, they are distinct from each other. As conceptual inconsistency may result in confounding results of scientific studies, an explication of framing that defines the concept and separates it from other terminologies and theories is needed in order to address the research question in this study.

Framing in The History of Media Effects Research

Developing a conceptual and operational definition of framing requires an effort to understand the theoretical premises that characterized framing studies. As framing theory is embedded in the history of media effects studies, the following section will contextualize framing into major paradigm shifts of media effects research. According to McQuail (2005), there are four stages in the history of media effects that signal the evolution of this field. The first stage from “the turn of the century until the 1930s” (McQuail, p. 456) is a phase in which media effects were viewed as all powerful. Scholars believed that media at that time (print, film, and radio) had direct effects on people to make them think and behave the way mass communicators want them to.

However, the idea that media is immensely powerful was based on people's observation of war propaganda at that time and was not confirmed by any scientific studies.

The second stage in the field of media effects research began in the early 1930s when those theories of powerful media were put to the test. Early studies focused on the influence of mass media on children and young adults. During the post-war era, scholars started to add social and demographic variables to their studies, which made it harder to isolate and identify any specific effect media had on the population. The failure to find scientific evidence to support claims of a powerful mass media disillusioned media scholars.

The third stage is a period when powerful media effects were rediscovered. With the innovation of television in the 1950s and 1960s as the new mediating condition, researchers shifted from seeking direct media effects on opinions and behaviors towards looking for long-term changes in what people learned from media. With this revised idea, researchers then introduced theories such as framing and agenda setting as part of the scholarly effort to restore the powerful media assumption. Guided by these theories, it is believed that media influences public opinion by emphasizing certain aspect of the story over others. Thus, media effect manifests through manipulation of issue and attitude salience instead of through direct persuasion (McQuil, 2005).

The fourth stage beginning in the late 1970s is when scholars started to view media as not only a means to deliver messages, but also as institutions that could construct meanings. With the realization that audiences may not interpret the meaning of a message the way it was intended by the sender, the view of mass media as all powerful was shifted to the idea that media effects are limited and often vary from one person to another. This

paradigm shift recognized the power of media to construct social reality, but also acknowledged the limit of media effects. In this view, individuals are believed to play a significant role as the processor, interpreter, and constructor of meaning from media messages. In other words, the unidirectional effect of media on recipients is denied.

While the fourth and present stage of media studies is characterized by social constructivism, the idea was introduced decades earlier by Lippmann (1922), who argued that by constructing the reality of issues in individuals' minds, media influenced views and actions of foreign-policy makers. The concept of social construction of reality targets the fundamental possible effect of the mass media to suggest that the media actually represent the public knowledge of an event, and in some degree, suggests that individuals are unable to distinguish between real and mediated events (Shapiro & Lang, 1991). This idea is foundational to framing research. As addressed by Scheufele (1999), "framing has to be defined and operationalized on the basis of social constructivism" as "this interactive model of construction of reality has important implications for conceptualizing framing as a theory of media effects" (p. 105).

Conceptual Definition

The idea of a frame was first introduced by psychiatrist George Bateson (1972) as "a spatial and temporal bonding of a set of interactive messages" (138). It was then defined from the sociological perspective, as the "schemata of interpretation" that enable individuals "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" occurrences (Goffman, 1974, p. 21). Gitlin (1980) applied framing in media studies by defining it as "persistent selection, emphasis and exclusion by which symbol handler routinely organize discourse" (p.7). This definition suggests an association between framing and institutional power (Pan,

2010, p. 10). The process of framing then is “commonly conceptualized as a hierarchical process originating from elites, interest groups, or mass media” (Scheufele, 1999, p. 117). In addition, Pan (2010) emphasized cultural setting as where frames are originated and manifested from—“when journalists produce stories based on complex reality, they can embed symbolic devices structured to sponsor a culturally preferred interpretation into their final products” (p. 12).

Framing studies in mass communication usually focus on either (or both) frame building (process of frame construction) and/or frame setting/adoption (framing effect on the audience) (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009). Frame building refers to the process of negotiating and creating frames under the influence of three major factors: journalistic practice, political influence and cultural background. Therefore, a frame “might gain influence because it resonates with popular culture or a series of events, fits with media routines or practices, and/or is heavily sponsored by elites” (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009, P. 22).

Previous studies suggested that there are five aspects of journalistic practice that affect how news are framed in mass media—embedded social norms, internal pressures from the organization, external pressures from authorities, journalistic routines and personal bias of journalists (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Tuchman, 1978). Political actors such as elites, governmental officials and interest groups are actively engaged in frame building process to push frames that in favor of their interest. As acknowledged earlier, journalistic practices are under the pressure of authorities; various studies showed that there are increasing force from interest groups and policy makers that influenced news framing (Andsager, 2000; Nisbet et al., 2003). Frames are often negotiated under certain

cultural context. In other words, frames have their cultural roots and need to resonate with certain culture to have meaning. However, since frame creators such as journalists are influenced by the culture they live in unconsciously, the impact of cultural context on frame building are usually unnoticeable.

Traditional frame building research was more concerned with internal factors, such as journalistic routines, in influencing news frames (Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Tuchman, 1978). As a result, internal factors were believed to have more influential roles than external ones, such as political actors, in shaping media frames. However, Lim and Seo (2009) pointed out that frames promoted by government have advantages over news frames in terms of reach and resources. Frames constructed by the government, which reach to the mass public, can exert much more influence at a state or national level. Political officials are often the major source for news media when it comes to policy related issues, and this reliance on political officials have resulted in issues being framed by them. They control information flow and decide whether a policy statement can be made public or not.

Frame setting and frame adoption are both theories that analyze the framing effect on audiences. Frame setting focuses on the applicability effects of media frames, which refers to the issue-interpretation linkages developed by the audience. In other words, it is believed that a frame is most applicable when it invites the audience “to apply their existing schemas to an issue” (Tewksbury & Scheufele, 2009, p. 25). Similarly, according to frame adoption research, there are two factors that facilitate the adoption of frames. First is accessibility and applicability of the frames. The second is the accordance and consistency between frames and recipients’ prior beliefs. Thus, frames that match

audiences' existing predispositions are more likely to be adopted than counter-attitudinal frames.

To better understand the framing effect calls for a study on audience frames. Kinder and Sanders (1990) suggest that frames function both as “devices embedded in political discourse,” (media frames), and as “internal structures of the mind,” (audience frames) (p.74). Entman (1993) pointed out that while media frames refer to “attributes of news itself” (p.7), audience frames are “information processing schemata” (p.7) of individuals. Although media frames intend to guide audience frames, audiences may or may not adopt media frames under the influence of variables discussed above (applicability and accessibility of the frame, prior beliefs, etc.).

Operational Definition

While aware of the symbolic role of framing, Entman (1991) came up with a more functional definition of media frames that allows operationalization in empirical studies. Entman (1993) defined framing as an information-selection process that chooses “some aspects of a perceived reality and makes 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 for the item described” (p. 52). According to Entman’s (1993) definition, there are four functions of news frames: “define problem,” “diagnose causes,” “make moral judgments,” and “suggest remedies” (p. 52). News frames, therefore, guide the audience on how to interpret, remember, evaluate, and act upon an event. Although the most effective frames are those that satisfy all four of these functions, Entman (1993) suggests, “A single sentence may perform more than one of these four framing functions, although many sentences in a text may perform none of

them. And a frame in any particular text may not necessarily include all four functions” (p.52). This definition provides a way to effectively identify and categorize frames based on their functions.

Similarly, a definition of framing constructed by Valkenburg, Semetko and Vreese (1999) “provided easy guidelines for operationalization” (Pan, 2010, p.11). In their study, they defined a media frame as “a particular way in which journalists compose a news story to optimize audience accessibility” (p.550), and audience frame as “a schema of interpretation that enables individuals to perceive, organize and make sense of incoming information” (p.551). As they came up with the definition from journalistic practices, they summarized four common ways to frame news—by emphasizing the conflict between parties; by focusing on individual and their emotions; by attributing responsibility, crediting or blaming political institutions or individuals; and by focusing on the economic consequences of issues for audience” (Pan, 2010, p. 11). This definition serves as a guideline to capture and classify frames based on the frame selection process.

Measurement

According to Chong and Druckman (2007), there has not been a straightforward guideline in the field of mass communication on how to identify frames. However, “although uniform measurement standards do not exist” (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 106), there are steps that framing scholars tend to follow. First, a specific issue and relatively narrow timeline should be identified (Entman, 2004, p. 23). It is important to clarify the topic of study as frames in mass communication can only be identified within a specific context. Second, an initial set of frames should be identified. Usually these frames can be found from prior scholarly work in the field or in a pilot test (e.g. Entman’s

four functions of frames). Third, sources of analysis should be selected. Finally, coding must be clearly identified and systematized. For studies that rely on computer programs, key words and phrases must be selected in order to capture frames. For manual coding, the researcher must be rigorous in outlining a technique for identifying frames. Manual coding lacks a degree of systemization found in computer coding and can suffer from lower reliability, but manual coding offers greater flexibility in locating complex frames in more sophisticated media content.

Based on this framework, this paper studies U.S. media coverage on China before (2005-2007), during (2008) and after the Beijing Olympics (2009-2011). News articles in the elite news media—the *New York Times* are chosen as the subject of analysis not only because the *New York Times* has the largest amount of coverage on China during the time period studied, but also the largest circulation in the U.S. Most previous works in this line of study also chose *The New York Times* as the representation of elite media. Therefore, the *New York Times* is chosen as the source for elite discourses in this study to make it comparable to previous literatures. The *New York Times* has often been referred a “prestige paper” (Pool, 1952) and “the fifth estate,” – “something akin to a house organ for the political elite” (Sigal, 1973, p. 47). In spite of domestic coverage, the *New York Times* has a unchallenged strength of international reporting that constructs a reality of foreign affairs for policy makers as well as the public (Cohen, 1963). It is recognized both nationally and internationally as a public forum for elite discourse and consumption. It is also based on this assumption that “informed publics,” including policy makers, “are most likely to adopt elite cues in the news to structure their thinking about world events and, further, influence mass opinion” (Lee C.-C. , 2010, p. 345) that the *Times* is chosen

as the most appropriate publication to study for this paper. As introduced by framing theory, media play an essential role as a force that constructs the reality. In order to understand “the symbolic power of media for constructing reality” (Block, 2013, p. 259), the research question is presented.

RQ: What are the images of China constructed by the *New York Times* articles from 2005 to 2011?

Method

A sample of 350 news articles from the *New York Times* was collected using LexisNexis Academic from 2005 to 2011. Data was collected by year with a date selected from the beginning of each year (January 1) to the end of each year (December 31). The *New York Times* was chosen as the source and a key word “China” was used to extract data. In addition, geographic and headline were modified as only news items that were about China geographically, and with China as a key word in the headline, would be selected. This search setting makes sure that all the articles appeared for selection were focused on China instead of just mentioning it with other stories. Both opinion pieces and news articles are included as the study intends to understand the representation of China’s images in *The New York Times* from the audience’s perspective. In other words, what is studied in this paper is the impression or perception of China *The New York Times* delivered instead of intended. It also reflects the belief that the journalistic routine not only includes content creation, but also curation and selection. Hence, the images of China are documented regardless the nature of the articles as they represent the paper when combined. With this search term, 564 articles in 2005, 524 in 2006, 583 in 2007, 609 in 2008, 585 in 2009, 710 in 2010 and 697 in 2011 were collected. Since articles

were all numbered from 1 to the end, a random number generator was employed that randomly selected 50 articles from each year. Policy announcements are open records that can be found at the U.S. state department website. With help from a librarian, policy announcements from 2005 to 2011 were downloaded for analysis.

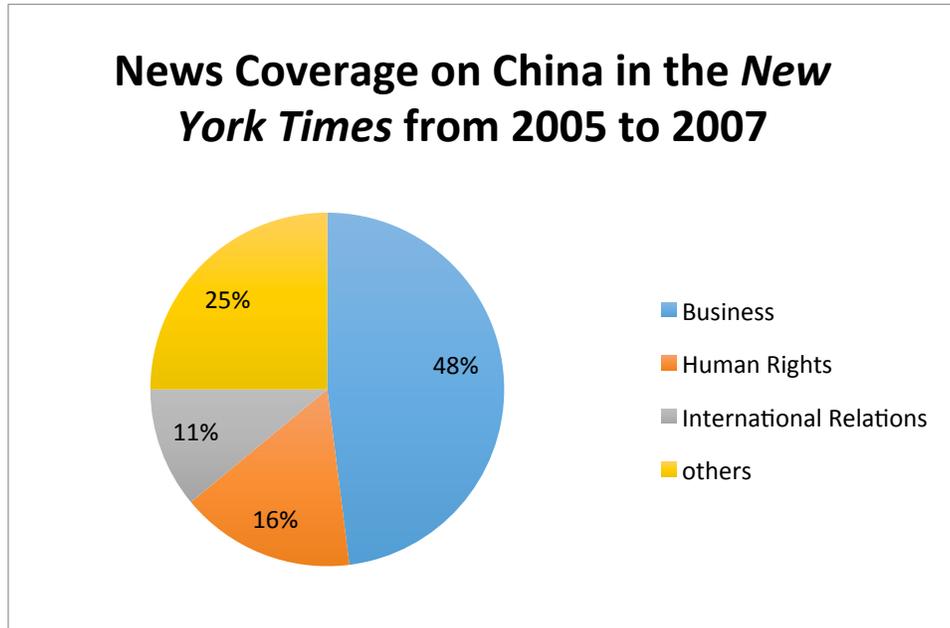
Guided by Entman's categorization of the four functions of news frames, this study examines selected news articles from the *New York Times* and uses frame analysis to look for emerging themes from the pre Olympic era (2005-2007), Olympic year (2008) and post Olympic era (2009-2011). Articles from 2005 to 2007 were put in a single document and analyzed together. Articles from 2008 were analyzed independently, and articles from 2009 to 2011 were examined together. For the initial reading, articles were categorized based on the topic (e.g. business/trade, human rights, environment, technology). Then each article was carefully analyzed under each category. Words and sentences that defined the problem, diagnosed the cause, made moral judgment and offered solution were highlighted. Articles with highlighted words and sentences were moved to a new document and still, categorized under different topics. After reading articles several times with special attention paid to highlighted words and sentences, multiple themes emerged. Similar themes were combined and the four functions of frames—problem definition, diagnosis of causes, moral judgment and suggested remedies—were detected.

Part III

Findings

Pre Olympic Era

Figure 1



The news coverage of China in the *New York Times* from 2005 to 2007 focused predominantly on the business and trade relations between China and the U.S. 48 percent of the 150 articles selected were in the business and financial section, picturing China as a rapidly growing economy with a burgeoning market and deep-pocketed, state-owned enterprises. 16 percent of the articles covered the topic on human rights in China, followed by 11 percent on international relations that discussed China's role in the UN and its relations with other nations. Another 25 percent reported on accidents, crimes and disasters, news events that cannot be categorized. Acknowledging the great potential and global ambition of this rising market force that has shifted the center of the world's economy to the East, the *New York Times*, however, didn't see China's trading

partnership with the U.S. as a win-win relation. Instead, it depicted the relationship as less beneficial to the U.S.

Problem Definition: A trade partner who didn't play by the rules

Under this theme, China was portrayed as a trade partner who didn't play by the rules; thus, the U.S. suffered economic harm and China's rule-breaking caused a disruption in the global market. The rules, as mentioned frequently in the *New York Times* articles, referred to the order of the global trade system built by the international community, primarily the U.S. Or, in a more concrete sense, the international laws and regulations set by the World Trade Organization.

“Or did China execute a commodities-trading head fake, driving up the price so it could sell stockpiles of copper at a greater profit, as some other traders believe?”

“But some traders and other market participants say this is further confusing the issue, because they suspect that the Chinese are supplying false information in a deliberate attempt to move prices” (Timmons, 2005).

“In cases where China may not live up to its, other countries will not be afraid to challenge it through bilateral talks or W.T.O. legal cases” (Bradsher, 2006).

Four causes were diagnosed as evidences that support China's image in the *New York Times* as an irresponsible player in the global trade system. It was made clear that China disturbed the international market by manipulating its currency, producing products of

poor quality, violating copyright and patent laws, and discriminating against foreign companies.

Diagnosis of Causes: Currency Manipulation

The U.S. government has been concerned about the value of renminbi, the official currency of China, also known as yuan, since a close export-and-import trade relationship developed between the two countries. The U.S. officials believed that, with the increasing demand for Chinese merchandises in the marketplace and China's growing trade surplus with other countries, the fair market equilibrium price for renminbi should be much higher than its listed value. Therefore, the Chinese government was under suspicion of intentionally preventing the yuan from rising by selling it in the foreign exchange markets and buying dollar assets to keep the exchange rates of the yuan weak and the dollar strong. This way, China could strengthen its international competitive position, increase its trade surpluses further and "generate domestic production and employment at the expense of the United States and others" (Bergsten, 2015). Although China denied this charge and argued that the U.S. had overestimated the value of yuan, the U.S. didn't find it to be plausible, and kept pressing China to let its currency to appreciate faster. After years of negotiation, China has been allowing its currency value to increase, yet not nearly as fast as the U.S. would like. Thus, this dispute has developed to a major tension and mistrust in trade between the two countries.

Debate on China's currency manipulation dominated the *New York Times*' coverage, and quotes from the President, Congress members, trade experts, economists, company executives and many more relevant parties in the U.S. were included to condemn the conduct of the Chinese government.

“While China is criticized for what its trading partners say are unfair barriers to foreign products, rampant intellectual property theft and the poor quality of some of its exported goods, it is the value of its currency that draws the most hostility, trade specialists say” (Lague, 2007).

Although some articles acknowledged the steady increase of China’s currency value, they claimed that the growth was too small.

“The actual rise in the Chinese currency was tiny: one-tenth of a percent from Friday's level” (Bradsher, 2006).

While narratives of the U.S. urging China to allow its currency to appreciate became salient, the story from China’s side was always missing. No other reason was given as an explanation of China’ undervalued currency except the Chinese government’s intention to keep U.S. business at a competitive disadvantage. When China was given a voice, it was always about China’s reluctance to cooperate.

*“The divergent perspectives were recounted during and after the daylong session by American officials who briefed reporters, but they were also reflected in the opposing statements of Mr. Paulson and his counterpart, Wu Yi, a vice prime minister, who gave a lengthy talk that was both **defensive and defiant**” (Weisman, 2006).*

Product Safety

Product safety became a major concern in the business relationship between China and the U.S. after several scandals of faulty products made in China (e.g. milk tainted with melamine, toys with lead, and toothpaste with the poisonous chemical diethylene

glycol) were reported as the cause of deaths and sickness of customers. After a period of high profile recalls of products made in China from the U.S. and other countries, not only the quality of products made in China, but also the accountability of China as a trade partner, were put under question.

“Administration officials also say that the recent furor over the safety of Chinese food, toys, toothpaste and other products has taken its toll in the economic relationship, and they hope that Mr. Paulson's visit in December coincides with some new agreements to improve safety standards in both countries” (Weisman, 2006).

In 2007, five companies recalled toys made in China, which gained prominent coverage in the U.S. media. With extensive media exposure, the “made in China” label was quickly associated with negative connotation, referring to products with safety concerns. A stereotype of China as a country with poisonous commodities was structured and then reflected in the *New York Times*.

“The U.S. relationship to China is so intricate and so deep that Americans need to know that it's more than cheap labor at Wal-Mart or tainted toys,' Mr. Koppel said. 'We'd have a hard time extricating ourselves from it” (Lee F. R., 2007).

The quote implied that at that time the American public perceived U.S.-China trade relations primarily as low-wage Chinese labor working for U.S.-based multinational companies that produced faulty products for export to world markets. One can argue that this impression may come from, or is largely shaped by, news media coverage.

Counterfeiting

Counterfeiting and unlawful copies of patents and copyright in China was another causes diagnosed by the *New York Times* that contributed to China's image as a business partner who failed to meet the international standard of trade. Along with other reasons, it explained why the trading relationship with China was rather challenging than promising for the U.S.

“Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez warned on Thursday that without solid enforcement of patent and trademark rights in China, trade tensions with the United States would increase” (Buckley, 2005).

Counterfeiting was described as a common business conduct in China where vendors copied the design, made and sold products, usually of inferior qualities, under another brand name (usually from the U.S.) without the brand owner's consent. According to news articles in the *New York Times*, although productions of this kind infringed the trademark, patent or copyright of the brand owner, China failed to pass or carry out laws that fight this crime effectively; therefore, led to significant profit loss for the U.S. The coverage of the U.S. officials demanding China to take actions and put more efforts on addressing this problem then, became the major story involving this topic.

*“Mr. Evans's contention that China must do more to stamp out the unlicensed reproduction of software, industrial designs, drugs and other patented products has been a **mantra** of his visits to Beijing”* (Buckley, China Urged, Again, to Protect Copyrights and Patents, 2005).

Sometimes,

built the impression of China as a country full of knock-off products by inserting that image in articles that were not even relevant to the topic. For example, in an article that talked about China's role in the negotiation between North Korea and the U.S., the last paragraph said:

“On the sidewalk outside the hotel this afternoon, a street vendor was hawking a DVD of "The Aviator," which is not scheduled to come out officially for several months, for \$1.75. A police officer on patrol took no particular notice” (Brinkley, 2005).

Without pointing it out directly, the quote suggested that China was not devoted to solving the problem of counterfeiting.

A Relatively Closed Market

China relied on a state planned economy with a closed market under the Communist rule for thirty years before Deng Xiaoping, a party leader, introduced the open door policy that opened up the market in China for trade with all the countries on equal basis in 1979. With this policy, which intended to transform China to a market-based economy, China joined the World Trade Organization in 2001 with a commitment to the multilateral system. As a condition of its WTO membership, Beijing agreed to open the market to foreign competitors. However, the conservative Hu Wen administration began to reverse some of Deng Xiaoping's reforms in 2005, adopting more egalitarian and populist policies and increased control and subsidies for state-owned business. This act intensified the tension on trade between the U.S. and China as more barriers were set for the U.S. companies to compete with their Chinese counterparts and make profit out of the

Chinese market. It was also criticized by the U.S. as a sign of trade protectionism and nationalism.

“There is clearly a growing economic nationalism in China that is leading to discrimination against foreign investors in pillar sectors of the economy,” said Myron Brilliant, vice president for Asia at the United States Chamber of Commerce. “It’s not only a threat to foreign investors but it also undermines China’s transition to a market-based economy” (Weisman, China Stand On Imports Upsets U.S., 2007).

In reporting on this issue, the *New York Times* highlighted the fact that there has not been a free market in China yet and lots of enterprises were still state-owned, which was the origin of the problem.

“In China, the problem lies in the old state-owned industries” (Norris, 2005).

“The Chinese government still plays an important role in the creation of companies” (French, 2005).

“The Chinese government owns about half the equity in that country’s apparel firms” (Johnston & Bradsher, 2005).

Under this description, competition between Chinese and the U.S. companies was framed as a race between two different economic models.

“China’s state-owned banks and far-flung rural credit cooperatives have many defenders in the ruling Communist party, and they are certain to oppose well-financed competition from Western banks” (Andrews, 2005).

In order to resolve the tension, as suggested by the *New York Times*, China was the one that needed to change. State controlled economic model should be abandoned and a transformation to a free and open market was needed.

“The future of the economic relationship of the two nations will depend in part on the openness of the Chinese” (French, 2005).

Moral Justification: Competition and Threat

While China was defined as a trade partner who violated the international order with currency manipulation, faulty products, counterfeiting and trade protectionism, the *New York Times* made a moral evaluation of the economic relationship the U.S had with China, and suggested that the nature of this relationship was competition rather than collaboration. Since China was not playing by the rule, the U.S. could not see China as a trustworthy partner to cooperate with. Moreover, when competing with China, the U.S. was at a disadvantage because China competed unfairly.

“American oil companies have voiced growing alarm that they may be unable to compete with deep-pocketed state-owned oil companies worried about national security” (Bradsher & Pala, China Ups The Ante In Its Bit For Oil, 2005).

“Political anxiety about China's huge trade surplus and its competitive pressure on American producers has risen in many quarters of Congress” (Andrews, Trade Truce With China In the Senate, 2006).

And instead of bringing in more opportunities and profits, the rise of China as an economic rival was portrayed as a threat to the U.S. and the fear and concern of the U.S. officials were documented.

*“China's acquisitiveness, including Lenovo's purchase of I.B.M.'s personal computer business in December, is raising **alarms** in Washington”*
(Stein, 2005).

*“That has prompted **fears** in the United States that low-cost Chinese exports may flood American and European markets and bankrupt local companies”* (Bradsher, U.S. Official Faults China On Textile Trade Moves, 2005).

“For years, the rapid growth of China and India has been based on business with the developed world, and has often meant taking business away from Western industries” (French, 2005).

Suggested Remedies: Follow the Lead of the U.S.

As the *New York Times* defined China as a violator of international trade rules, a theme emerged from the analysis. This recurring theme suggested that it was the responsibility of the U.S and its allies to correct the behavior of China. It implied that China should follow the lead of the U.S. and abide by rules of the global trading system. Under this theme, the U.S.'s allies were expected to support the U.S. by exerting their power to penalize China's unlawful behavior.

“American, European and Japanese companies and industry groups complain as well that Chinese officials do little to enforce the many

intellectual property laws on their books, and the American industry groups have pressed the Bush administration to consider filing suit at the W.T.O. unless enforcement improves” (Buckley, Commerce Secretary Warms China on Patent Violation, 2005).

The *New York Times* coverage also reflected a belief that the U.S. had more power in this economic bargain and it was capable to influence the decision-making in Beijing. It was made clear that although the trade relations with China was challenging, the U.S. had more control in this relationship and should take the lead to put China in its place.

*“Though many of the ideas are familiar, and often supported by Chinese leaders in principle, the list reflects an increased effort to **lecture** China about internal financial issues” (Andrews, U.S. Offers Details of Plan For Open Markets in China, 2005).*

*“Mr. Paulson **asserted** that as a result of the talks, China would move to open its economy and enforce intellectual property rights, and would adopt "greater flexibility" in exchange rates” (Weisman, Talks with China End with Few Signs of Progress on Currency Issue, 2006).*

The U.S. was also expected to take a tougher measure to push China further to protect its own interests instead of compromising. The condescending tone was obvious in this theme.

“The pending agreement was denounced by Bruce S. Raynor, general president of Unite Here, a union representing textile workers, for being 'unnecessarily generous to the Chinese'” (Johnston & Bradsher, 2005).

On the other hand, China was suggested to follow the international order and act more responsibly as the rising economic power.

"There is an obligation that goes along with the role to which China aspires in the world trading system and the world economy as a whole"

(Bradsher, U.S. Official Faults China On Textile Trade Moves, 2005).

It was also expected to adjust its policies to fit into the trade system built by the U.S. and its allies. When it came to the dispute with the U.S., China was the one who was supposed to compromise. The concession made by China; however, was not only the necessary step it should take under the power dynamics, but also the right thing to do in order to move towards a more advanced economy.

"The closing ceremony on Friday capped an unusual two-day dialogue behind closed doors on economic issues, promoted clashing visions of how quickly China should move to modernize its economic policies to resolve tensions with Washington" (Weisman, Talks with China End with Few Signs of Progress on Currency Issue, 2006).

In summary, the first and the most salient theme emerged from the news articles analyzed in *New York Times* from 2005 to 2007 portrayed China as an irresponsible trade partner who didn't play by the rule. China's currency manipulation, sub-quality products, violation of copyrights and the failure to open the market further all contributed to this problem. Therefore, the partnership between U.S. and China on trade signaled competition and threat to the U.S. instead of more opportunity or profit. In order to solve this problem, the *New York Times* suggested China to take more reasonability in the

global trading system, respect the international rules set by international organizations, follow the lead of the U.S. and adapt to the western economic model (free market and free trade).

While many stories on China in the *New York Times* from 2005 to 2007 focused on trade and economy, others concentrated on the human rights, which became another salient topic that attracted attention to China at that time. Stories about social protests, religious and ethnic struggles put China in a negative light as the way China handled those conflicts was disapproved by and conflicted with the common political beliefs in the U.S. Popular ideologies in the U.S. such as freedom of speech and democracy were described as taboos in China.

“Microsoft also censors sensitive words in the Chinese version of its blog-hosting software; the blogger Rebecca MacKinnon found that it rejected as 'prohibited language' the title 'I Love Freedom of Speech, Human Rights and Democracy'” (Kristof, 2006).

As ideas of political, religious and press freedom seemed to be rejected in China, An image of China as a country with little respect to human rights was painted.

Problem Definition: A country with little respect to human rights

Although journalists from the *New York Times* sometimes pointed out the human rights violation in China explicitly in their own words, for example,

“Since 1977, the United States State Department has issued an annual global report card called the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. The

document has long been a thorn in the side of authoritarian governments, including China's..." (Edidin, 2005).

More often, they framed this image of China by giving voices to dissidents and advocacy groups in the U.S. who condemned China's human rights abuses. Quotes that expressed strong sentiment of dissatisfaction with the government were salient in those articles.

"The villagers hoisted a white banner whose black-ink characters read: 'The dead suffered a wrong. Uphold justice'" (French, Protesters Say Police in China Killed Up to 20, 2005).

"'The government just wanted control and to brainwash us,' Father Peter said" (Yardley, 2005).

"If the Chinese wish to help Tibet, said the teacher, who asked not to be identified for fear of reprisals against his family back home, 'they should stop the immigration and give the opportunities to local people so they can improve their lives, and we can protect our culture'" (French H., 2005).

The government's voice; however, was missing in most stories. Government officials were often described as reluctant to answer the question or address the incident. Although the lack of access of government officials and their refusal to comment could be attributed to legitimate reasons (e.g. government policies that prevent the share of information), the silence was described as more suspicious than reasonable. Therefore, the *New York Times* defined human rights abuse as a major problem in China by framing complaints from oppressed dissidents, concerns from U.S. advocacy groups and silence from the Chinese government.

Human rights, as defined by the *New York Times*, included political rights to protest and voice dissident opinions; religious freedom that allows citizens to practice their religious beliefs; and press freedom with little interference from the government. Accordingly, China was accused of human rights violations because of their policies and reactions to protests, religious activities and media operations.

Diagnosis of Causes: Protest—heavily armed forces against unarmed protesters

When covering stories of social protests in China, the *New York Times* articles emphasized on the grievance and causes of protesters in contrast to the heavy-handed and cold-blooded suppression from the government. Images of well-equipped police force and a heavy presence of military personal, which signaled a clear threat to unarmed citizens, were depicted whenever a protest was covered.

“Terrified residents said their hamlet has been occupied since then by thousands of security officers, who have blocked off all access roads and were arresting residents who have tried to leave the area in the wake of the heavily armed assault” (French H. W., Protesters Say Police in China Killed Up to 20, 2005).

“Residents of a fishing village near Hong Kong said Friday that as many as 20 people were killed by the paramilitary police this week, in an unusually violent clash that marked an escalation in the widespread social protests roiling the Chinese countryside” (Lague, China Premier Blames Dalai Lama for ‘Appalling’ Violence in Tibet, 2007).

The protesters, on the contrary, were described as harmless and innocent people who were fighting for legitimate causes in a non-violent way. They were usually described as wronged by the government. Some had their lands illegally taken away, others with family members killed for challenging the authority. Media narratives expressed sympathy for the protesters, who were often described as brave. This contrast implied that the action taken by the Chinese government was unnecessarily harsh and had little moral ground. By picturing protesters as threatened and assaulted, the tight control carried out by the government was seen as a clear violation of human rights.

Diagnosis of Causes: Religious Freedom—political control of church affairs

The Chinese constitution claims that freedom of religion is protected in China under certain conditions. Namely, when the religious practices take place within government-sanctioned religious organizations. China's five officially sanctioned religious organizations are the Buddhist Association of China, Chinese Taoist Association, Islamic Association of China, Three-Self Patriotic Movement and Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association, which are subject to restrictions and controls under the State Administration for Religious Affairs. However, conflict arose when people denied the legitimacy of those religious organizations, refused to recognize religious leaders appointed by the government, and formed their own religious groups such as Tibetan Buddhists, underground Catholics and Uyghur Muslims. Members of these groups; however, were often persecuted or forced to convert by the Chinese government according to the *New York Times*.

“Still, government officials sometimes take underground priests to visit famous sites of the Communist Revolution as an 'educational tour' in

which they are lectured on the primacy of the government” (Yardley, 2005).

Strong believers who insisted to practice their religious beliefs in their own ways and followed spiritual leaders who were not endorsed by the Chinese government were identified as lawbreakers. For example, the *New York Times* reported incidents involving Tibetans who were shot after crossing the Chinese border to Nepal to visit the Dalai Lama. They also reported on Catholics who were dispersed when they gathered to mourn for the death of Pope John Paul II.

“With a large, framed photo of Pope John Paul II propped atop a makeshift altar, a Chinese priest named Father Joseph stood before a few hundred peasants on Wednesday and led a memorial Mass that broke the law” (Yardley, 2005).

Diagnosis of Causes: Freedom of Speech—censorship and persecution of journalists

Censorship is real in China. With most mainstream media outlets run by the state, the flow of information in China is tightly controlled. Journalists are educated to serve the best interest of the Communist Party and follow journalistic guidelines set by the Chinese government. Along with self-censorship, media agenda is often set by the propaganda department and media content is strictly regulated by the General Administration of Press and Publication. Information about politically sensitive topics, such as 1989 Tiananmen Square protest, Dalai Lama and the legitimacy of the Communist Party are always censored.

“But official records in China, whether party histories dating back 70 years or next-day transcripts of public news conferences, tend to be scrubbed clean lest they portray the party itself as fallible” (Kahn, 2005).

The clampdown on press freedom in China was described as a human rights violation in the *New York Times*, especially when journalists were threatened or persecuted by the government because they failed to commit to self-censorship.

*“They said Mr. Ching was a consummate professional whose efforts to report on delicate political topics might have prompted Chinese authorities to **muzzle** him” (Kahn, Wife Says Jailed Reporter Had Been Helping China, 2005).*

*“They risk **retaliation** from the police if they use such inside information to write articles officials consider unfavorable” (Kahn, Wife Says Jailed Reporter Had Been Helping China, 2005).*

Moral Judgment: “government by thuggery”

As the Chinese government violently suppressed protests, restricted religious freedom and censored journalists, an article in the *New York Times* addressed the Chinese authority as “government by thuggery.” This phrase summarized the moral evaluation made by the *New York Times* under this theme. This evaluation was supported by the *Times*’ assessment of Chinese government’s policies and actions regarding to social protests, religious freedom and the freedom of speech.

The 1989 Tiananmen Square protest is probably the most memorable Chinese protest covered by the U.S. media for the U.S. public. This student-led demonstration,

which demanded a reform in the government towards greater accountability and transparency, was suppressed with a military crackdown, which led to a significant death toll, a number that remained as a secret till today. The military action was largely criticized by the international society as well as the U.S. media, and led to a breakdown of the U.S.-China relations. The Chinese authority was remembered for this incident as a government that brutally killed its own citizens. When covering protests in China from 2005 to 2007, the *New York Times* made a moral evaluation of Chinese government's handling of these demonstrations by bringing back the memory of the Tiananmen Square protest and drawing a parallel between Chinese government's crackdown of protests in 21st century and its massacre in 1989.

*“It was the largest known use of force by security personnel against citizens since the **killings around Tiananmen Square in 1989**”* (French H. W., 2005).

*“So the country today reminds me of **early 1989, before the Tiananmen protests**, or of South Korea and Taiwan in the mid-1980's as citizens began defying the dictatorships in those places. All around China, from Thailand to Indonesia to Mongolia, rising incomes and education levels eventually led to major protests demanding more accountable government”* (Kristof, Rumbings From China, 2006).

It suggested that the *Times* saw a similarity between Chinese authorities in the 21st century and the government that slaughtered innocent students in 1989, at least when it came to the suppression of social protests.

When describing China's insult of religious freedom, the Dalai Lama was a popular example that mentioned frequently in the *New York Times*. He was portrayed as respected and revered by Tibetans, but feared and resented by the Chinese government. The *Times* articles told stories of Tibetans who kept photographs of Dalai Lama and crossed the border to Nepal to visit him. When it came to the Chinese authorities, however, the *Times* articles suggested that they not only expelled Tibetans' religious leaders, but also tried to dampen their spiritual culture.

“By some estimates, the new train will carry as many as 900,000 people to Tibet each year, with the newcomers overwhelmingly consisting of members of China's Han majority, many of whom will opt to stay, further dampening demands for independence and diluting Tibet's spiritual culture” (French H. W., 2005).

While the *New York Times* addressed Dalai Lama as the spiritual leaders for Tibetans, Chinese officials referred to him as a separatist who promoted violent rioting in Tibet. This contrast indicated a moral evaluation made by the *Times* as it sided with Dalai Lama and his followers.

“The Chinese authorities forced Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama to flee into exile in 1959 and have no tolerance for Tibetan separatist sentiment in Tibet or adjoining provinces populated by ethnic Tibetans” (Kahn, 2006).

Censorship in China was described in the *Times* as Chinese government's effort to block truth and manipulate the public. Voice of America, known as an American

propaganda apparatus in China, was described in the *New York Times* articles as a media channel that was similar to the BBC and that tried to deliver truth to the Chinese.

“For many years, the United States government's Voice of America and the BBC's World Service tried to penetrate China's antitruth fire wall with radio broadcasts that could skip into the country from transmitters outside the country... Chinese government transmitters tried to jam these radio broadcasts, and the same is happening today, in the digital world, via China-based Cisco routers that block the truth” (Jackson, 2006).

Moreover, the *New York Times* largely criticized American companies who worked with and accommodated China's censorship laws. One opinion column by a *Times* staff member compared the Chinese government with the Nazis, implying that cooperating with Beijing to identify dissidents online was like working with the Nazis to track down Anne Frank

“Suppose that Anne Frank had maintained an e-mail account while in hiding in 1944, and that the Nazis had asked Yahoo for cooperation in tracking her down. It seems, based on Yahoo's behavior in China, that it might have complied” (Kristof, China's Cyberdissidents and Yahoos at Yahoo, 2006).

This analogy incorporated a strong value judgment that regarded dissidents in China who refused to self-censor online as heroes and the government as a tyrant.

“Even so, critics say, the service violates Google's motto, "Don't Be Evil." They say the company has lent its expertise and good name to

blocking information on religion, politics and history that the Communist Party feels might undermine its monopoly on power” (Kahn, So Long, Dalai Lama: Google Adapts to China, 2006).

This quote from the *New York Times* warned Google that cooperating with the China government on censoring information online would be seen as “evil,” which was an obvious value judgment.

Suggested Remedy: Call for an intervention from the U.S.

With China defined as a country with little respect of human rights because of its violent response to protests, intolerance of religious freedom, and suppression of freedom of speech, the *New York Times* evaluated the Chinese authority as a government by thuggery. In order address this problem, the *Times* suggested an intervention from the U.S. Under this theme, the U.S. was expected to help finance organizations advocating for human rights in China as well as spreading the idea of freedom and democracy to China.

“She did so in part, she said, because she believes that engagement with the West is helping to liberalize China” (Eckholm, 2007).

In the meantime, this theme acknowledged that there were also human rights violations in the United States, which needed to correct its own behavior before assisting others so it could be the model for the rest of the world to follow.

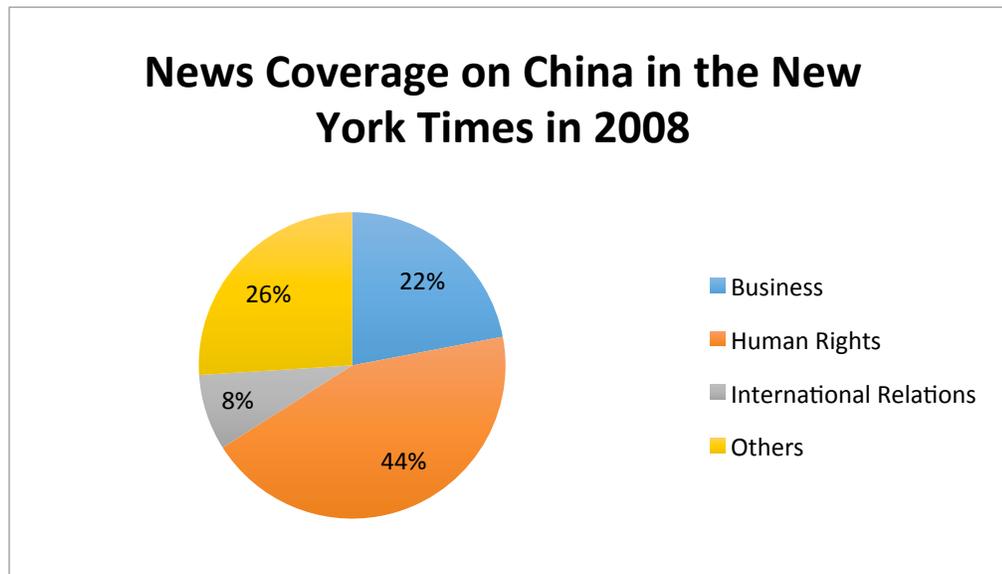
“The United States must stand up against such human rights abuses around the world -- and our first step should be to clean up our act” (Kristof, Repression by China, And by Us, 2007).

“So, Mr. Bush, give prisoners like Mr. Hajj their rights -- and give America back its moral authority to speak up for human rights around the world” (Kristof, *Repression by China, And by Us*, 2007).

In conclusion, the second theme emerged from news coverage in the *New York Times* from 2005 to 2007 focused on the human rights violation in China. Under this theme, China was defined as a country with little respect to human rights because of its violent crackdown on protests, overarching control of religious activities, and intense repression of freedom of speech. The *New York Times* called China a “government by thuggery” and condemned U.S. companies that cooperate with the Chinese government to censor information online. This moral evaluation led to a suggestion made by the *Times* that called for an intervention from the U.S. to stop China’s human rights abuse and serve as a role model for other countries to follow.

The Olympic Year

Figure 2



News coverage on China in the *New York Times* in 2008 unsurprisingly focused on the 2008 Beijing Olympics. As the host of the Summer Olympics, China was put under the spotlight and attracted global attention. The Beijing Olympics was viewed as a coming-out party for China after years of international isolation since its military crackdown on the Tiananmen Square protest. China attached great importance to its role as the host of this Olympics, which could be a chance to showcase its economic development, national strength, and growing international influence to the world. However, the spotlight on Olympics did not bring recognition of China's prestige as it expected; instead, it brought "massive pressures for political change that if ignored will undercut any potential prestige China desires." Different from news coverage during the pre Olympic era, a large portion (44 percent) of the 50 articles selected in 2008 emphasized on the human rights abuses in China. Coverage on business and trade issues however, dropped to 22 percent. Another 26 percent talked about accidents and disasters

happened during the Olympic year focusing on the Sichuan earthquake and the poisoned milk scandal. Other articles discussed China's relations with other nations and its performance in the UN.

Problem Definition: An Olympic Game hosted by an authoritarian regime

While known as international sporting event, the Olympics have always been more than just sport. Historically, they have been viewed as “political event, creating both tactical and ideational pressure for political change.” In the past thirty years, there has not been an authoritarian regime that served as the host of the Olympic games. Therefore, under the one-party system, China's role as the host of the 2008 Olympics received extensive criticism targeting its illiberal policies and human rights violations, which made the 2008 Olympics the most controversial one in the contemporary history. Advocacy groups even named it as the “Genocide Olympics” and organized a boycott of the Games. Political leaders in Western countries threatened not to attend the opening ceremony unless certain human rights concerns were addressed. Massive media attention focused on the nature of the political system in China.

Under this theme, China was defined as an authoritarian regime that was not eligible to host the Olympics. When China won the right to host the Olympic games in 2000, it was expected to improve its states on environment, human rights, and political freedom by 2008 in an attempt to meet the international standard and be considered as a qualified host. However, China was framed in the *New York Times* as has failed its responsibilities at all levels, especially on human rights.

“With a year remaining before the 2008 Olympics open here, Beijing officials on Monday gave an upbeat progress report about their preparations, even as critics warn that China may fall short on Olympic commitments on the environment, human rights and press freedom” (Yardley, China Praises Its Progress Towards Olympics, 2008).

“On Tuesday, the Committee to Protect Journalists is holding a Beijing news conference to release a report that is expected to say China is failing to meet the promises it made on press freedom when it lobbied to be selected as the host for the Games” (Yardley, China Praises Its Progress Towards Olympics, 2008).

As the international community put China under scrutiny because of the Olympics, dissident groups in China saw it as the perfect timing to get attention from the foreign media and seized the opportunity to voice their grievances, which contributed to the negative coverage of China under this theme.

Diagnosis of Cause: An Olympic Game for dissident groups to promote their causes

On March 14, 2008, three months before the Beijing Olympic games, a series of riots, protests and demonstrations broke out in Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, and later spread to other Tibetan areas, which led to violence from both the protesters and the Chinese police force. The Chinese administration believed that the unrest was promoted by Dalai Lama, who intended to separate Tibet from the Chinese territory. Dalai Lama, however, denied the charge and claimed that the demonstration was resulted from the public discontent in Tibet. The *New York Times* appeared to side with the Dalai Lama,

covered stories of Tibetans suffering under the Chinese government, and gave voices to human rights advocacy groups that condemned China's control in Tibet.

“International human rights groups say China has tightly restricted religious freedoms and enacted other policies that threaten Tibet's indigenous culture” (French H. W., China to Resume Talks with Dalai Lama, 2008).

While China initiated a dialogue with the Dalai Lama under the pressure from the international society, advocates of Tibetan independence around the world decided to take advantage of the Olympic year to push their causes further. As China was on the global radar for the Olympics, stories of Tibetans fighting for freedom received attention from the Western media, including the *New York Times*. Many advocates even went to Beijing to promote their campaigns, knowing that the Chinese government would restrain from taking tough measures against them because of fear of media scrutiny and global criticism.

“An advocate of Tibetan independence, Lhadon Tethong, executive director of New York-based Students for a Free Tibet, has been filing daily updates on her blog as she tours Beijing (for the Olympics) this week. 'It's an opportunity for us to highlight this issue and let the world know that Tibetans are still suffering,'” Ms. Tethong said” (Yardley, China Praises Its Progress Towards Olympics, 2008).

The 2008 Beijing Olympics was named as the “Genocide Olympics” by Olympic Dream for Darfur, an organization that pressured the Chinese government to intervene on

the side of civilians in the Darfur conflict. The Darfur conflict was a civil war between the government of Sudan and rebel groups that began in 2003. The president of Sudan was criticized for genocide and crimes against humanity as he carried out a campaign of ethnic cleansing against Darfur's non-Arabs as a response to the rebels' attack. Olympic Dream for Darfur, on one hand, believed that the Chinese government's position in the Darfur conflict was crucial and that, considering its business ties with Sudan, China had a responsibility to bring the Sudanese government and the international community together to resolve the issue. On the other hand, as the organizations tried to gain international attention for their campaign, building a connection between Darfur and China allowed them to make an association between Darfur and the Olympics, which provided a high-profile platform for their advocacy. Major newspapers in America including the *New York Times* used the term the "Genocide Olympics" in reporting the demand of the organization to boycott the Beijing Olympics.

"But across the globe, sports fans should take a stand, ensure that the Beijing stadiums are empty and deprive the government of the hotel, restaurant, travel and tourist revenue it is counting on to recoup its costs"
(Forney, 2008).

As dissident groups and advocates took the Beijing Olympics as an opportunity to promote their causes, they successfully shifted the media attention from the effort China made to prepare for the Games to the internal problems in China, which critics claimed disqualified Beijing as the host of the Olympics.

Moral Judgment: Faked solidity and harmony

As dissident groups tried to increase their exposure during the Olympic year, China struggled to maintain a positive image under the spotlight. Although China restrained from responding aggressively to protesters, and even opened up a zone in Beijing for dissidents to exert their free speech rights, these efforts were criticized as insincere and insufficient. It was reported by the *New York Times* that people who sought to protest in the free speech zone in Beijing were all arrested or assaulted. In addition, China installed a large amount of monitoring devices, claiming that they would be used to minimize the risk of terrorist attack during the Olympic games. However, the *Times* questioned the Chinese government's real intention and worried that those surveillance measures would stay after the Olympics to enforce the authority's control over the public.

“The government actions have also served as a reminder that China employs a huge public security apparatus to contain social and political tension at a time when the governing Communist Party is attempting to portray an image of unity before the Beijing Olympic Games in August”
(Lague, 2008).

China was portrayed as an authoritarian regime that failed to meet the expectation as a responsible host of the Olympics in the *Times* due to the extensive media coverage given to dissident groups that raised concerns for the misconduct of the Chinese government. Therefore, although China endeavored to rescue its image, those efforts were evaluated as propagandas that intended to cover up the real problems and internal conflicts in the country.

*“For China, the unrest in Tibet has drawn **unwelcome** attention to some of the longstanding tensions in the country as the governing Communist*

Party is planning a show of unity and harmony during the Olympics”

(Lague, 2008).

This moral judgment made by the *Times* not only suggested a hypocritical nature of the Chinese government, but it also implied that despite the image the authority tried to fake, the country was actually in chaos instead of harmony, and the public was split rather than unified.

Suggested Remedies: The power of the International Community

The *New York Times* suggested that the international community, especially America, should take the Beijing Olympics as an opportunity to push China towards more freedom and openness. Articles in the newspaper maintained that since the desire for China to promote a positive image peaked at a time of Olympics, criticism and demand made by the international community during the Olympic year would be more likely to force China to cooperate, compromise, and make progress towards human rights protection.

“We urge the International Olympic Committee to exert pressure on China so that those attending the Games -- and ordinary Chinese citizens -- can enjoy freedom of expression and movement,' he said”

(Jacobs, 2008).

“But like many experts, he said the Olympics were pushing China to experiment with a greater degree of openness” (Jacobs, Quake Toll Rises; China Struggles To Reach Victims To the Rescue, Uncensored, 2008).

New York Times articles also pointed out that changes made during the Olympic year could remain in place after the Games, instead of serving as temporary window dressing that protected China from criticism from the world in 2008.

"A person's ability to express his or her opinion is a basic human right and as such does not need to have a specific clause in the Olympic Charter because its place is implicit," said Jacques Rogge, the president of the International Olympic Committee, at a meeting in Beijing in April" (Bradsher, China Lists Dos and Don'ts for Olympics, 2008).

Recognize China as a rival

Another important theme emerging from news coverage in the *New York Times* during 2008 was the parallel between China and the Soviet Union. As China and the United States competed fiercely for gold medals during the Beijing Olympics, some commentators claimed that the rivalry reminded them of the race between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War era.

"Like the Soviet Union at the height of the cold war, China is looking to make a statement by winning more Summer Olympic gold medals than the United States. Both countries will doubtless honor the systems that they say produce victories -- Chinese authoritarianism versus American liberty" (Forney, 2008).

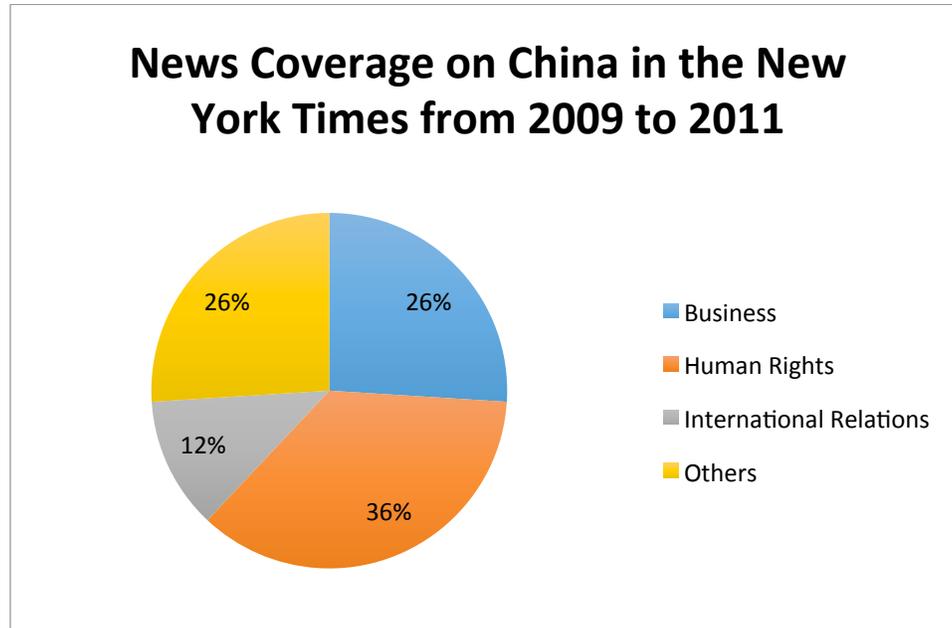
China's competitiveness during the Games was interpreted as provoking a challenge to U.S. dominance in summer Olympic sports. The athletic competition was seen as a metaphor for the difference in political ideologies. While the U.S. represented liberty and

China symbolized authoritarianism, the two nations were described as opposing to each other. Moreover, the assumption suggested that there could only be one winner.

Themes emerged from the analysis of news articles in 2008 centered on the topic of the Beijing Olympics. As suggested by the *New York Times* in 2008, China was perceived as an authoritarian country that disappointed as the host of the Olympics. The major reason for this image was that most coverage during the Olympic year was given to dissidents who saw the Olympics as a chance to reveal the misconduct of the Chinese government. Although the Chinese government tried to balance the media coverage by promoting a positive image, the effort it made in an attempt to defend its qualification as the host of the Olympics was evaluated as insincere by the *Times*. In addition, acknowledging that China was eager to restore its reputation and rebuild its prestige during the Olympic year, the international community, especially the United States, took it as a chance to press China to make some political transformations. The fierce competition over the gold medals during the Olympics between China and the United States led to another theme in this year's news coverage that compared China with the Soviet Union. It implied that the U.S. started to recognize China as a rivalry, not only on sports or economy, but also at the ideological level.

Post Olympic Era

Figure 3



Similar as the coverage before the 2008 Beijing Olympics, news articles on China in the *New York Times* from 2009 to 2011 focused on two topics—business and trade with China, and human rights violations in China. However, unlike the pre Olympics era during which there was a large distribution of news on the business and finance section, the post Olympics coverage focused more on the human rights abuse in China, and pictured a country with a tyrannical government and a struggling population. Three themes emerged from the analysis, and four dimensions of these themes were discussed. The first theme from the business section portrayed China as a market that was no longer friendly to foreign companies.

Problem Definition: A market that was increasingly hard to do business with

As the *New York Times* articles indicated, it became increasingly hard for foreign, especially American business to enter, compete and survive in the Chinese market.

“Still, even if the Chinese market is potentially hugely lucrative, doing business there is far from easy. The regulatory system is uncertain. The complexity of its bureaucracy is daunting. The department stores are of varying quality, and because Chinese tastes are changing rapidly, a store that attracts crowds one day can be deserted the next” (Burr, 2009).

As the quote demonstrated, there were couple reasons that led to the increasing difficulty for American companies to succeed in China. The *New York Times* pointed out that all of those problems were originated from the economic model in China, which emphasized on a heavy regulation from the government.

Diagnosis of causes: Government Intervention

There were systematic problems rooted in the economic model in China, which involved considerable amount of government intervention and regulation. As suggested by the *New York Times*, since the state played a significant role in China’s market, the market did not simply function in accordance with economic rules, but fluctuated because of the change of policies in the government. However, the Communist Party in China has only been put into power for approximately sixty years, and it was still considered as a newly formed state. The bureaucratic structure, therefore, was not advanced and the legal system was not complete. For Western corporates that were founded and operated in developed economic environments and stable political systems, it was hard to adjust to China’s immature regulatory environment. In addition, as the state and the market went hand in hand, business problems could easily turn into political ones, which led to serious

consequences. Laws broken by foreign employees in China, which resulted in severe punishments, were frequently reported and caused a panic for foreigners doing business in China.

“The four employees, including an Australian citizen, had been detained for six weeks, setting off international expressions of concern that foreigners doing business in the country could fall victim to the **legal morass** of China's expansive state secrets laws” (Barboza, 2009).

In addition to the incomplete and complex legal system, policies and regulations that were constantly changing were also identified as a major problem that prevented foreign business from profiting in the Chinese market.

“ ‘One difficulty for foreign exchanges is that the Chinese policy has been in flux, sometimes allowing overseas listings and then restricting them’, said Christine Loh, chief executive of a public policy research group, Civic Exchange, and a director of Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing” (Kanter, 2009).

In China, the government not only maintained a monopoly of the most crucial industries, but also spent a lot of money and resources to subsidize state controlled companies. With government subsidies, Chinese companies had a significant advantage than their foreign competitors as they can export their products at a lower price without worrying about not making profit. However, such behavior broke the rule set by the World Trade Organization as they made it unfair for foreign companies with no financial help from their states to compete in the global market. In the *New York Times*, U.S.

officials were given voices to express condemnations and anger regarding the subsidies from the Chinese government.

*“The question is whether China is building this industry in ways that are **unfair** to overseas competitors and make other nations overly dependent on a Chinese industry whose approach to the business may not be economically or politically sustainable”* (Bradsher, 2010).

“Government-subsidized turbine makers are now preparing for large-scale exports to the United States and Europe, which could also result in violations of W.T.O. rules” (Bradsher, 2010).

It was made clear by the *New York Times* that China’s approach to business, not only broke the international trade laws, but also built a system that was not desirable as it might lead to some long term problems.

Moral Judgment: Growing hostility between the U.S. and China on trade

While doing business with China before the 2008 Olympics was evaluated as provoking competition and threat for the U.S. by the *New York Times*, the trade relations between China and the U.S. was described as hostile after 2008. As the global financial crisis broke out in 2008, large financial institutions collapsed, stock market dropped and housing market suffered, which led to evictions, foreclosure and prolonged unemployment worldwide, especially in the U.S. China, on the contrary, was not impacted by the crisis as severely as others were. Although the economic growth slowed down, there was not a significant recession observed in China. While the high

unemployment triggered political anxiety in the U.S. government, economic prosperity in China was blamed for financial problems in the U.S.

“What's more, there are further signs of trade hostilities from Washington, where the impulse is to blame China's cheap exports, at least partly, for America's continued high unemployment” (Bradsher, 2011).

Whether this accusation was reasonable or not, under this theme, where China was defined as a market that made it increasingly hard for foreign companies to succeed, the *New York Times* implied a moral judgment that described China as the source of the economic problems in the U.S.

Suggested Remedy: Worldwide support was needed

For years, the U.S. accused China of mal-competition that disturbed the international trade order and violated rules of the World Trade Organization. However, while from 2005 to 2007, the U.S. felt confident in terms of pressing China to change its policies and cooperate with the international community, after 2008, there were increasing coverage in the *New York Times* that focused on U.S.'s frustration of achieving its goal.

“The United States and its allies, frustrated in their efforts to pressure China directly to change its economic policies, are seeking to enlist other developing nations in an international campaign that China may find more palatable” (Appelbaum, 2011).

It was recognized by the U.S. that China was reluctant to follow its lead, and with China's increasing economic influence, a combined international action might be needed for China to behave.

Under this theme, China was portrayed as a market that was increasingly hard for foreign companies to make profit from because of over changing interventions and regulations implemented by the Communist Party. With a escalating domestic pressure resulted from high unemployment rate in the U.S., Washington became increasingly hostile and less patient with China when it engaged in business behavior that might violate the international laws on trade. It called for an international effort to implement tougher measures to contain China as China refused to behave under the U.S.'s demand.

Problem Definition: Intensified tension on human rights between China and the U.S.

Despite the conflict on trade, the dispute between China and the U.S. was also intensified on the human rights issues as illustrated by the news coverage in New York Times after 2008. The tension peaked when Liu Xiaobo, a political prisoner in China was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "for his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China". Liu Xiaobo was a human rights activist who promoted a democratic reform that would put an end to the one party Communist rule in China. In 2008, Liu and some other Chinese intellectuals drafted Charter 08, a manifesto that honored the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and called for a regime change in China. He was later arrested under the name of "inciting subversion of state power" and was sentenced for eleven years imprisonment. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize while serving his sentence. The Chinese authority was infuriated by the award and claimed that the whole thing was a "plot" brewing by the U.S and its allies to interfere China's internal affairs.

*“A commentary in **the principal party newspaper** People's Daily suggested that Mr. Liu's award was a plot by the United States and other Western democracies that 'fear the rise of China' and seek to subvert its political system” (Wines, 2010).*

This quote, although seemed to display the story from China’s side, highlighted the fact that the argument was made by the major party press, which indicated that it was in fact a claim made by the Party instead of the media or the people. When the *New York Times* quoted from the Chinese news media, the party affiliation was always underlined, indicating a lack of credibility of the source.

Diagnosis of Causes: Different understandings of human rights between the U.S. and China

As documented by the *New York Times*, after years of dispute and negotiation, the U.S. finally came to a realization that the reason it could not reach an agreement with China on the topic of human rights had its ideological origin. While the U.S. believed that entitlement of human rights was a universal value, China had a different understanding, which led to distinct moral standards of the two countries. China has always referred its human rights violation as a domestic matter, and believed that the major reason why the U.S. wanted to intervene on such issue was because of its desire to stir up chaos in China, thus, achieving its international ambition as maximizing the power. Therefore, criticism from the U.S. on China’s human rights abuse triggered a defensive mechanism that led to resistance and mistrust. The *New York Times* explained this longstanding difference on the notions of human rights between China and the U.S. with a quote from the Vice President Biden.

“Maybe the biggest difference in our respective approaches are our approaches to what we refer to as human rights,' he said. 'I recognize that many of you in this auditorium see our advocacy of human rights as at best an intrusion and at worst an assault on your sovereignty,' he added. But for Americans, he said 'there is a significant moral component to our advocacy'” (Wong, 2011).

As the *New York Times* illustrated, the disagreement between U.S. and China lay on whether the U.S. addressed the human rights abuses in China for an ethical or political consideration, or both?

Diagnosis of Causes: Reluctant to follow the lead of the U.S.

In addition to different perceptions, another reason why the relationship between China and the U.S. deteriorated, especially on the matter of human rights, was that China didn't want to be seen as following the U.S.'s lead. As a communist country, compromising on certain issues with Western democracies can lead to questions of the basic values of Communism, thus, shake the legitimacy of the Party.

“In the past, Beijing has tried to avoid looking as if it has been directly influenced by American decisions” (Wong & Bradsher, China Proposes a Plan to Slow Greenhouse Gas, 2009).

From the U.S.'s side; however, as the world's only super power for decades, it assumed a leadership position in this relationship from the beginning (as demonstrated in the analysis before). The resistance from China, therefore, posed an unwelcoming challenge of the dominant role U.S. took in the world since the end of the Cold War. Neither China

nor the U.S. wanted to be seen as the weak in this relationship. Aggressive stances on both sides then automatically led to a strained relationship.

Moral Judgment: Distrust

The intensified tension between China and the U.S. led to the mistrust between the two countries, primarily shown on their military relations. As China saw the U.S. as attempting to intervene on its domestic issues, and potentially threaten the regime, it became increasingly reluctant to share information with the U.S, especially on military matters.

“If anyone ever doubted it, a testy exchange at a Singapore conference last weekend made it clear: Relations between the American and Chinese militaries are in a very deep freeze” (Wines, Behind Gusts of a Military Chill: A More Forceful China, 2010).

“Policy toward the United States -- especially military policy -- is concocted in a black box at the government's highest levels, Mr. Swaine and others said” (Wines, Behind Gusts of a Military Chill: A More Forceful China, 2010).

However, the more China was hiding, the more the U.S. was suspicious. With limited military exchange and mounting distrust, the U.S. defined China as “not friendly” and expressed concern when its allies tried to develop a closer relationship with China.

*“The Democrats have to realize the **threat** we have on the Korean Peninsula, and that China is not a friendly country in military matters,” Mr. Okamoto said”* (Fackler, 2010).

“Mr. Soeya, of Keio University, warned that the new Japanese government should at least think hard before sidling closer to China, saying, ‘Mr. Hatoyama does not have a clear sense of what relying on China would really mean, or whether it is even actually desirable’” (Fackler, 2010).

In this article, the *New York Times* warned that the U.S. might lose Japan to China, which indicated an opposed position between the U.S. and China as the Japanese government was asked to pick a side.

Suggested Remedies: Cooperation

If China was only viewed as a rising economic power during the pre Olympic era, the post Olympic coverage in the *New York Times* recognized China as a super power whose global influence has gone beyond the economy. Considering the great impact the U.S.-China relations might have on the world, the *New York Times* urged the two countries to think beyond their own interests and cooperate with each other.

“For the visit to be more than symbolic, Presidents Obama and Hu should make a serious effort to codify in a joint declaration the historic potential of productive American-Chinese cooperation. They should outline the principles that should guide it. They should declare their commitment to the concept that the American-Chinese partnership should have a wider mission than national self-interest. That partnership should be guided by the moral imperatives of the 21st century's unprecedented global interdependence” (Brzezinski, 2011).

This suggestion was made based on an understanding that unlike the Cold War era, countries were increasingly interdependent in today's international system. Although there were fundamental differences in ideology and values between the U.S. and China, especially on the approach of human rights, a deteriorated relationship would not only hurt both nations, but also have tremendously detrimental impact on the international community. Therefore, as responsible and rational super power in the world, the U.S. and China should seek common ground while reserving differences in order to enhance mutual trust.

All in all, the *New York Times* articles from 2009 to 2011 described an increasingly strained relationship between the U.S. and China, not only on trade, but also at the ideological, political and military level. The criticism from the U.S. on China's human rights violations was perceived as a political strategy that was intended to overturn the Communist regime. Therefore, mistrust was developed and deepened as both countries took strong stances and refused to compromise. While the *New York Times* acknowledged China's role as another super power in the world, which might challenge the U.S.'s domination in the world for decades, it promoted a multipolar international order, under which countries became increasingly interdependent. It suggested more cooperation between China and the U.S. since this relationship would not only affect both countries, but also the entire world.

While the Chinese government was described as facing serious challenges from the U.S. and its allies for its relatively restricted market and constant violations on human rights, it was also portrayed as under great internal conflict. The third theme emerged

from analysis of news articles from the *New York Times* between 2009 and 2011 indicated an intensified tension between the Chinese government and its own people.

Problem Definition: Intensified tension between the state and the public

Unlike the pre Olympics coverage where Chinese people's struggle was portrayed as entangled around the deprivation of human rights, news coverage after 2008 pictured a population that was also suffered from the government's economic policies. While the economic development in China was generally viewed as beneficial to the Chinese public, under this theme, it was described as prohibiting China's small business owners from success.

The title of a news article summarized this problem--"One Entrepreneur's Rival in China: The State". China has been encouraging individuals to start business in the private sector since the open door policy was implemented. However, a reverse trend was spotted by the *New York Times* from 2009 to 2011 as the Chinese government tried to contain private business and empower the state owned enterprises.

"After more than a decade in which private companies have been the prime engine of China's economic miracle, the Chinese government is eager to control more of that wealth -- even if that means running roughshod over private companies" (Barboza, One Entrepreneur's Rival in China: The State, 2011).

The political and economic model in China, which allowed heavy regulation and intervention on the market from the state, made it hard, if not impossible, for the private companies to compete or even share the market with the state owned corporates. As the

private sector shrank and the government controlled industries prospered, the state was getting rich by taking profits away from the people.

“The usurping of private enterprise has become so evident that the Chinese have given it a nickname: guojin mintui. That roughly translates as ‘while the state advances, the privates retreat’” (Barboza, *One Entrepreneur’s Rival in China: The State*, 2011).

The Chinese government then made a negative impression in the *New York Times* as one that did not act upon the best interest of its people, but against it.

“But today, Mr. Liu says the state has become his opponent” (Barboza, *One Entrepreneur’s Rival in China: The State*, 2011).

Other than business, political and human rights struggle of Chinese people remained as a consistent theme in the *New York Times*. In addition to address the problem directly, human rights abuse was portrayed when individuals interviewed refused to give their names for fear of reprisal from the government.

*“It’s not as tense as last year, but the police are still worried about problems,” said one ethnic Uighur man who, like many in this city, spoke only on the condition of anonymity **for fear of reprisal**”* (LaFraniere & Ansfield, 2010).

*“We can’t predict how the rest of the employees will feel about it, and we are not so happy,” said the worker, who did not want his name printed **because of concerns he might anger management and the local government**, which has an ownership stake in the plant”* (Jacobs, 2010).

As Chinese people interviewed asking to remain anonymous became a pattern in the *New York Times*, it went without saying that people were oppressed and censored, and the government would retaliate when people tried to speak up in a brutal way that could scare them.

*“The bosses have **warned** us against talking to the foreign media,’ one worker said, in an interview by phone”* (Jacobs, 2010).

*“I cannot give you any details, but you understand the situation in China,’ said one, a ranking editor at Sohu, who declined to be named **for fear of reprisal**”* (Ansfield, 2010).

These quotes also suggested that the government was hiding something from the public and the foreign media. Although it could be for legitimate reasons, the news frame made it sound suspicious.

Diagnosis of Causes: A Government in deep fear

In 2010, a revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests against the authoritarian regimes in the Middle East broke out, some of which, led to civil wars in the Arab world. This political upheaval in the Middle East, also referred as the Arab Spring, was initiated by the younger generations who demanded a change in the regimes towards more accountable and democratic governments. As a result, many rulers were forced to step down, which led to collapses of several totalitarian regimes. While many Western countries, especially the U.S. voiced their support for the movement, other authoritarian regimes such as China, regarded it as an alarm bell. According to the *New*

York Times, China tightened control over the population for fear that people might be motivated by the Arab Spring and challenged the legitimacy of the Communist Party.

“Officials seemed especially eager to emphasize the party's history as a populist movement at a time when mass protests have swept authoritarian leaders from power in the Middle East” (Wong, 2011)

“There are a variety of reasons the Chinese government is seeking an enlarged role in the economy -- including fears that wealthy entrepreneurs could begin to challenge the Communist Party” (Barboza, One Entrepreneur’s Rival in China: The State, 2011).

Some people argued that the Arab Spring would not have succeeded without the Internet. The Internet, especially the social media sites served as an online public sphere for advocates to spread information and organize campaigns. It also allowed protesters to quickly spread the words to the rest of the world and got attention from foreign media. This power of Internet was recognized by the Chinese government and was seen as a threat to the Communist Party in power. Therefore, more strict regulation and censorship laws were drafted and implemented that restricted people’s free speech rights even further.

*“Officials have justified stronger measures by citing various **internal threats** that they say escalated online. Among them: the March 2008 riots in the Tibetan capital, Lhasa; reported attempts to disrupt the August 2008 Olympic Games and the amassing of more than 10,000 signatures supporting a petition for human rights and democratic freedoms, an*

*example of how **democracy advocates** could organize online” (LaFraniere & Ansfield, 2010).*

This quote illustrated what was referred to as an advocacy for democracy by the *New York Times* was described as an internal threat by the Chinese government, which implied a significant difference in ideologies between China and the U.S. Knowing that the U.S. had a different approach, the Chinese government was afraid that the Internet could serve as a tool for the U.S. to promote dissident movements in China that threaten the regime.

“In the view of both political analysts and technology experts here and in the United States, China's attempts to tighten its grip on Internet use are driven in part by the conviction that the West -- and particularly the United States -- is wielding communications innovations from malware to Twitter to weaken it militarily and to stir dissent internally” (LaFraniere & Ansfield, 2010).

Diagnosis of Causes: Where there is oppression there is resistance

As the Chinese government sought to increase its influence on the market in order to undermine the power of private companies and rich entrepreneurs, as well as depriving more freedom from the population, a public indignation was provoked. According to the *New York Times*, the tightened control of the government, which was intended to prevent people from rebelling, backfired. As the public discontent was rising, more dissidents chose to speak up even at the risk of their lives. The government responded; however, with more high hand measures, which led to the intensified tension between the state and the public.

“People start to hold a grudge against the government for depriving them of access to the Web sites they regularly visit,’ Mr. Mao says” (Stone & Barboza, 2010).

“Some human rights advocates say they believe that a growing number of agitators who seek government redress are confined in Chinese mental hospitals” (Wines, 2010).

When framing those stories, the *New York Times* not only gave voices to dissidents, but also praised them as the “conscience of China”. As dissidents were defined as heroes fighting for freedom and democracy, quotes from them were always touching and aroused sympathy.

“If you look at the Tibetan struggle for the last 60 years, neither torture nor financial incentives by the Chinese have been able to win the hearts of the people,’ he said” (Jacobs, 2010).

“How many other sages like my master are there among the Chinese people now?’ he wrote. ‘I do not know. How many innocent political prisoners are still imprisoned? I also do not know. But writers like me from the bottom of society still have to write, record and broadcast, even to the dismay of the Communist Party of China. I have the responsibility to make you understand that the life of the Chinese spirit is longer than the totalitarian government’” (Wines, For 13th Time, Critic of China Is Barred From Travel Abroad, 2010).

Moral Judgment: An unethical government

News coverage from New York Times on China after 2008 described an increasing tension between the public and the state resulted from the government's fear of losing power and the public's wrath. Under this theme, the *New York Times* made a moral judgment of the situation by praising the courage of Chinese dissidents and focusing on the unethical actions of the government. The *New York Times* accused the Chinese government of using its economic power as leverage to get away with its unethical behavior.

*“China's vigorous reaction to the award has been viewed by many outsiders as an effort to **wield its newfound economic muscle to assert its political interests worldwide**”* (Wines, 2010).

“And last December, 20 Uighur refugees who had sought United Nations protection in Cambodia were deported to China. The United States and human rights groups howled in protest; a day later, the Chinese vice president arrived in Cambodia with \$1.2 billion in economic aid” (Jacobs, Isreal Makes Case to China for Iran Sanctions, 2010).

*“Days after it **flexed its economic muscle** in a diplomatic dispute with Japan, China continued to display a more assertive international economic policy on Sunday as it imposed steep tariffs on poultry imports from the United States”* (Bradsher, China Imposes A Steep Tariff On U.S. Poultry, 2010).

These quotes constructed an image of a bully, who threw its weight around. China's economic development was no longer viewed as all positive; instead, it was described as

a power that was abused by an irresponsible government to disturb the moral standard and the international order.

Suggested Remedy: Move towards democracy

Although the *New York Times* tried to avoid making direct comment on how China should reform in order to solve the problem, by giving voices to various dissidents who advocated for democracy, the suggested remedy was obvious.

“Beijing authorities are likely to be unhappy with Mr. Zhao's airing of inside conflicts as well as his conclusion, arrived at in isolation after he left power, that China must turn toward parliamentary democracy if it is to tackle corruption” (Eckholm, 2009).

Many advocates believed that most problems in China were rooted in the nature of the authoritarian regime, and in order to tackle them, a systematic reform was needed. And it was only through democracy that the tension between the people and the state could be solved. Other measures promoted by the government; however, would only serve as a palliative rather than a cure.

The third theme to emerge in news coverage of China in the post-Olympic years portrayed increasing conflict between the Chinese government and its citizens. This internal struggle, resulting from the government's fear of losing power and the people's demand for freedom and democracy, questioned the legitimacy of the ruling Communist Party. The *New York Times* evaluated the Chinese government as a state that abused its economic power to silence domestic and international dissidence. Under this theme, China's economic development was no longer viewed as contributing to the wellbeing of

its people and the world. Therefore, a transformation of the regime towards more freedom, openness, and democracy was suggested.

In response to the first research question “How did images of China evolve in the *New York Times* before, during and after the 2008 Olympics?” six images of China in total were portrayed by the newspaper’s news coverage between 2005 to 2011. Before the 2008 Olympics, news coverage on China from the *Times* focused predominantly on the business and trade affairs between China and the United States, with several articles discussing human rights violations in China. Two themes emerged during this period of time. The first portrayed an image of China as a business partner who didn’t play by the rules. The second theme defined China as a country with little respect of human rights. During the Olympic year, the emerging theme revolved around the Beijing Olympics, and China was defined as a disqualified host who failed to meet the international expectations, especially on human rights. Three themes emerged from news articles between 2009 and 2011. The first pictured China as an unfriendly market. The second portrayed China as an ideological opponent against the United States. And the third described China as ruled by a government that stood against its own people.

The second research question asks, “What are the political values embedded in the images of China emerged from the *New York Times*?” Although they were not elaborated directly in the articles, a few political ideologies that guided the value judgment of the *New York Times* are identified. When framing China as a trade partner who didn’t play by the rules, it was assumed by the *Times* that there is an international order that should be followed. In addition, it is through U.S. and international institutions such as the WTO that the rules are developed and reinforced. When the *New York Times* described the

business environment in China, the relatively closed market and heavy government intervention were criticized and attributed as causes of the tension in U.S.-China trade relations. It is obvious that the *New York Times* embraced the value of free trade and free markets and believed that they were the only way for countries to prosper at a national and international level. China was perceived as a threat in the *New York Times* articles because it failed to follow the international rules and refused to develop a system that resembles the American one. The underlying value, therefore, is that a country can be dangerous when it is not like “ours”.

When addressing human rights, the *New York Times* was specifically targeting religious freedom, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly, the rights that are mentioned in the U.S. constitution. In addition, the *Times* regarded human rights as a universal value that is vulnerable against the state power. As the *Times* told stories of how the Chinese people were deprived of basic human rights, it was implied that this would lead to resentment and rebellion against the government. Under this theme, the *Times* framed the Chinese government as the “government by thuggery,” and even addressed it as “evil.” As the newspaper coverage positioned the United States as an opposition of that evil, it called for U.S. intervention to support human rights in China. The *Times* also suggested that before intervening to halt China’s human rights abuse, the United States needed to correct its own behavior in order to set an example for the world to follow. As for China, the *New York Times* recommended it follow the U.S. example on the issues of both international trade and human rights. U.S. hegemony was assumed in this relationship as it was implied that China was the one that should compromise and accommodate. China’s refusal to behave was also criticized.

In addition, the power of allies and the international community was recognized in the *New York Times*. It was advocated for the United States to form a coalition with its allies and work with other countries in the international community to pressure China to behave accordingly. The *Times* coverage also demanded China, especially during the year of 2008 Olympics to transform to a more liberal state. It was implied that the liberal values are the mainstream ideologies in the international community and countries with competing ideologies such as authoritarianism were not qualified as hosts of major international events. The word “curb” was used frequently in the *New York Times* articles, implying a need for the U.S. to contain China as a rising power. Last but not the least, the newspaper’s coverage suggested moving towards democracy as a remedy for all the problems and tensions in China. It was believed that democracy was desired by the Chinese people and would bring peace and harmony to China as well as the U.S.-China relations. As the news texts are closely studied and interpreted, I now link the findings back to the larger political context in the U.S. in an attempt to first explain the relationship between constructed image of China in the *New York Times* and the reality of U.S.-China relations, and second, identify the hegemonic origin of the underlying political values embedded in the *New York Times* articles.

Part IV

Discussion

Linking China's Images in the *New York Times* with the U.S. Diplomacies

As pointed out by Yu (2009), historically the relationship between U.S. and China after the establishment of diplomatic ties is distinctly influenced by two cycles. The first one is called as “small cycle,” which refers to international incidents that lead to policy revision that influenced the relationship. The other one, known as the “big cycle,” is driven by the U.S. presidential election held every four years. During the presidential election year, a kind of “China syndrome” arises as “the candidate from the opposition party always brings out and criticizes the China policy of the incumbent administration and makes Sino-US relations the victim of party politics”(p. 81). From 2005 to 2011, there was a shift of power in the U.S. government from the conservative Bush administration to the liberal Obama administration, which served as the “big cycle” that resulted in some changes on the priorities of the China policy.

The U.S.-China relations under the Bush administration from 2005 to 2007 were affected by the “big cycle” as Bush pursued a so-called “ABC line (Anything But Clinton) that was opposed to all that Clinton advocated” (Yu, 2009, p. 84). In Sino- US relations, Clinton and Former Chinese President Jiang Zemin reached a “common commitment to the establishment of Sino-US constructive strategic partnership,” and defined China as a “constructive strategic partner” (Clinton, 1998). Bush, however, made an effort to reverse the image of China after he was brought into power, and explained his policy preference towards China which sees the country “as a competitor, not a partner and treated without

ill will but without illusions” (Bush, 1999). While the early days of Bush’s presidency focused on the U.S. business relations with China and defined the country as a competitor, the image of China was transformed as an irresponsible stakeholder during the second term of the Bush administration. On September 21, 2005, the US Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick announced that “we now need to encourage China to become a ‘responsible stakeholder’ in the international system” in his speech to the National Committee on US-China Relations in New York. While transforming the image of China from a constructive partner, to a strategic competitor, and from a strategic competitor to an irresponsible stakeholder, the China policy under Bush administration focused on competition, threat and a call for China to behave more responsible in the global system. This image of China framed in the policy documents is paralleled with China’s image and relationship with the U.S. emerged from the news articles in the *New York Times* from 2005 to 2007.

In 2008, official documents from the U.S. state department reflected a U.S. agenda to transform China to a more democratic state. For the U.S., the Beijing Olympic is a best opportunity for China “to put its best face forward and take steps to improve its record on human rights and religious freedom” (Casey, 2008). This statement represented the tone of the U.S. government’s policy attitude towards China during 2008, which put China under international scrutiny for the human rights abuse within the country. It is consistent with the message in the *New York Times* articles that demanded China to take the chance of the Olympics to transform to a more liberal state. Besides Beijing Olympics, 2008 is a crucial year in the U.S. as it marked a leadership transition from a Republican presidency to a Democratic administration.

As the Obama administration took power in 2009, it was announced that unlike the Bush administration, which focused on the business relation with China, China Policy under Obama would take human rights as a priority in the relationship (Clinton H. R., 2009). Similarly, while the majority of news articles analyzed from 2005 to 2007 focused on business and trade stories, the news coverage after 2008 predominantly concentrated on the human rights violations in China. In the fall of 2011, the Obama Administration announced that with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan winding down, the United States was, in President Obama's words, "turning our attention to the vast potential of the Asia Pacific region" (Obama, 2011). This shift of foreign policy focus intensified the tension created by the dispute on human rights issues between U.S. and China and brought the mistrust to a military level, especially after 2010 when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton explicitly declared a U.S. "national interest" in maintaining freedom of navigation in the South China Sea (Clinton H. R., The South China Sea, 2011). The news coverage in New York Times after 2008 reflected on this tension and not only pictured the deteriorated relationship but also addressed the military mistrust between the two nations.

Tracing Political Values Emerged from the *New York Times* to Fundamental Ideologies in the US Foreign Policy

Liberalism

Liberalism here refers to "Lockeanism", which represents a political system that is build on a combination of a set of political values such as individual freedom, equality, free market and representative government (Meyers, 1963; Roden, 2003). As Kennan (1951) argued, historically, the international behavior of the United States has been largely shaped by Liberalism. Although the U.S. is not the only country that is founded

on a liberal tradition, it is different from other liberal regimes as it was “born democratic” (Desch, 2007). In other words, there has not been any other major political ideology in this country that competes with Liberalism, thus making it unchallengeable. In addition, as suggested by Desch (2007), with the rise of U.S. hegemony following the end of the Cold War, “there have been fewer physical constraints on the excesses of U.S. Liberalism”, which makes the idea more prevailing. Therefore, when it comes to national security, the U.S. tends to perceive another country such as China as a threat, not so much for the physical threat (e.g. military capabilities), “but rather the existential threat to the American way of life” (Desch, 2007).

According to Monten (2005), there are two strands of Liberalism—exemplarism and vindicationism. While exemplarism endorses spreading liberal ideas by setting an example back home, vindicationism believes that the effort to promote democratic values should be incorporated into the U.S. foreign policy. Vindicationism is supported by Wilsonianism, an ideology that advocates the spread of democracy and capitalism through diplomacy and intervention, which is argued to be the core value embedded in the U.S. grand strategy (Layne, 2008). There are three mechanisms through which liberal ideas in the U.S. are reinforced and promoted worldwide—“economic interdependence, international institutions and democratization” (Friedberg, 2005, p. 12).

Economic interdependence is the idea that bilateral economic exchanges based on free trade create shared interests between states, and builds a liberal market order in the international community. As argued by Beeson and Higgott (2006), “The rule-governed economic international order achieved an apparent independence that effectively insulated and entrenched the USA’s overall position as the lynchpin of the system created

in the early phase of US hegemony” (p. 1175). As proved by Weymouth and Macpherson (2012), it is U.S. trained economics with a deep belief of free trade, who contributed to the global trade liberalization. In addition, Founding and promoting international institutions allows the U.S. to infuse its liberal ideas to other international players. As pointed out by Beeson and Higgott (2006), “while the roots of contemporary US foreign policy are national, they have been most successfully realised through international institutions that enjoyed a good deal of legitimacy”(p. 1175). Taking economic policy as an example, the formation of international institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) that promotes free trade and free market allows the U.S. to institutionalize its power to an international level. Thus, the institutionalization of US power harnessed what were ostensibly competitor economies (such as government regulated market in China) “to economic ideas emanating from Washington” (Roden, 2003, p. 194). Consequently, “the US dominance flow from its institutionalized position at the centre of an increasingly ubiquitous, not to say ‘global’, liberal economic order that was seen to benefit allies and bind the USA to a regulated, rules-based order” (Beeson & Higgott, 2006, p. 1175). The *New York Times* recognized the legitimacy of this international system and identified rule breakers such as China as a problem.

The idea of democratization is rooted from the democratic peace theory, which states that democracies are less likely to engage in armed conflicts with each other. Some foreign policy makers believe that in order to diminish the likelihood of international conflict, democracy should be promoted worldwide. As the number of democracies in the world increases, the chance for countries going to wars would decrease (Friedberg, 2005). The U.S. is probably the strongest advocate of democratic peace approach. As Smith put

it, “The most consistent tradition in American foreign policy...has been the belief that the nation’s security is best protected by the expansion of democracy worldwide” (Smith, 1993, p. 9). For example, President Clinton’s National Security Strategy in 1996 claimed, “The more that democracy and political and economic liberalization take hold in the world...the safer our nation is likely to be and the more our people are likely to prosper” (A National Security of Engagement and Enlargement , 1996). In his 2004 State of the Union address, President Bush also confirmed, “Our aim is a democratic peace” (State of the Union Address, 2015). This idea also resonates with the *New York Times*’ advocacy for China to move towards a more democratic political system. Democracy was also accredited in the *New York Times* as the solution for problems in China.

China Policy

Guided by liberalism, the United States regards nations like China, which refuse to adopt American-style liberal political and economic systems, and do not play by the rules of the U.S.-led international order as “ipso facto threats to US interests—threats to which America must be prepare by respond aggressively” (Layne, 2008, p. 16). Based on this understanding, there are two policy alternatives towards China from Washington—engagement and containment. Proponents of engagement believe that China’s contact with the outside world and exposure to Western political and cultural values would lead to a democratic reform within the nation. Economic interdependence, international institutions, and democratization are believed to be the major forces that would transform China to a more reliable partner of the United States. “Proponents of engagement have also argued that the United States can help foster political liberalization in China by integrating the country into the international economy and embedding it in the complex

web of international institutional arrangements. As China so engaged, it is said, will have strong interests in cooperation and will not be inclined to pursue security competition with America or with its Asian neighbors” (Layne, 2008, p. 14).

This argument was also the major rationale behind the advocacy of the Clinton administration to invite China to join the WTO. The Clinton administration created a global economic order with multilateral institutions and internationalism that legitimizes the leadership of the U.S. By engaging China, the United States not only brought China within the institutional framework of the post-Cold War world order, but also maximized the opportunity for the United States to benefit from a huge emerging market (Roden, 2003). In addition, there are conditions with China’s gaining access to trade benefits, which required China to open its market further, play by the rules of free trade, and thus transform into a more liberal economy. The Bush administration also promoted an internal transformation towards liberalism in China. In their 2002 National Security Strategy, the Bush administration declared, “ America will encourage the advancement of democracy and economic openness” in China, “because these are the best foundations for domestic stability and international order” (The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, 2002).

Although the Clinton and Bush administration prioritized promoting liberal economic policy rather than liberal political policy in China, the Obama administration emphasized U.S. democracy and human rights campaigns. While Washington 10 million dollars in 2002 on foreign operations appropriations for democracy programs in China, the figure grew to approximately 17 million dollars in 2011. The U.S. budget for promoting liberty in Tibet also grew from 4 million dollars in 2004 to 7.4 million in 2010

(Lum, 2012). In 2010 and 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton criticized China publicly for the lack of Internet freedom. In the meantime, President Obama met with the Dalai Lama and made several public announcements that requested China to release the Nobel Peace Prize winner Liu Xiaobo, a political prisoner in China.

The U.S. officials assumed a moral superiority of promoting democracy and human rights in China, but it is surprising for them to see that their efforts are not well received, not by the Chinese government, and not by the majority of the Chinese public either. Instead, the democracy and human rights promotion intensified the distrust between China and the United States. The Chinese called the U.S. democracy programs a conspiracy theory. They were perceived as “a strategic move to destabilize the rise of China and sabotage the Communist Party’s Leadership” (He, 2013, p. 37), thus, democracy programs were securitized as a threat to the regime. In addition, the U.S. human rights policy is condemned as “a tool for conducting ‘peaceful evolution’ in socialist countries...to attain its long-range strategic goal: to impose on socialist countries its own values, ideology, political standards, and development model, aimed at changing the nature of the Chinese socialist system” (Zong, 1993, p. 57). The failure of U.S. democracy and human rights programs in China stems from the knowledge gap between the U.S. and China. While the United States regards human rights and democracy as universal values, China has a different approach. As Zhou put it, “It is extremely difficult for the majority of Chinese to understand why U.S. citizens never question the sincerity of their government’s pursuit of democracy and human rights in foreign countries. Similarly, many U.S. citizens may not understand why the Chinese do not accept social and economic rights or the right to exist as fundamental human rights” (2005, p. 112).

In the U.S., human rights often are equated with civil rights—religious freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly—and political rights—the right to vote and to petition the government of the U.S. constitution. “For most Americans human rights are American values writ large, the export version of its own Bill of Rights” (Ignatieff, 2005, p. 14). Human rights under the U.S. values are also “closely intertwined with democracy and the separation of political power” (Krumbein, 2014, p. 158). This concept is originated from the idea that the only body of power that is sufficient to suppress human rights is state power, therefore, “where human rights are asserted, they are asserted as claims by individuals and against the power of the state, or against other individuals” (Mendus, 1995, p. 12). The Chinese, however, have never perceived human rights this way. In the traditional Chinese view, there has never been a concept of individual rights; instead, it is the state that is responsible for providing for the needs of the people. As Lo Chung-Sho put it “there was no open declaration of human rights in China, either by individual thinkers or by political constitutions, until this concept was introduced from the West” (1949, p. 187). The traditional Chinese philosophy regards political power as a “mandate from heaven,” which is meant to secure order and prosperity among people. The aim of political power “was not to protect the individual against the state but to enable the individual to function more effectively to strengthen the state” (Zhou, 2005, p. 115). In addition, under a communist political system (or what it is claimed to be in China), the assumption that there is a conflict of interest between the state and the people is incompatible with the fundamental socialist belief that the state functions to promote and protect social and economic rights of the public (Zhou, 2005). Therefore, it is hard

for the Chinese political officials as well as the public to comprehend the idea of human rights through the Western lens.

There is also a discrepancy of the understanding of state sovereignty between China and the United States. As the U.S. assumed a responsibility to spread liberal values around the world, “it is taken for granted in Washington that the United States can bypass governments” to fulfill its mission “without due respect to sovereignty” (He, 2013, p. 46). China, on the other hand, has always claimed that issues such as human rights are internal affairs that permit no interference from other countries. While the U.S. promoted the idea that human rights are supreme to national sovereignty, this concept is rejected by China as it challenges the traditional Chinese view of the relationship between the state and the individual. With a lack of understanding of the competing perspective that is deeply rooted in the Chinese culture and history, the U.S. effort to promote democracy and human rights in China failed to yield positive outcomes. It not only intensified the mistrust between the two nations, but also “damaged America’s reputation in the eyes of many Chinese, including those who are committed to reform” (Cao, 2001, p. 68), which resulted from “the US government’s imposition of its own values and political institutions on the Chinese” (Zhou, 2005, p. 123).

Engagement strategy promotes economic interdependence and democratization in China and hopes to transform and assimilate the nation. Advocates for containment also suggest another approach that relies mostly on the traditional hard power tools such as military might to contain the expanding power of China. The hard power approach “calls for the United States to emulate its anti-Soviet cold war strategy by assembling a political coalition of states sharing a common interest in curbing rising Chinese power” (Layne,

2008, p. 15). In practice, Washington's actual approach towards China is a combination of both engagement and containment strategies. In other words, it requires China to accept both geopolitical and ideological hegemony of the US. Strategically, the U.S. will act to prevent any other state from building up military capabilities in the hope of "surpassing, or even equaling, the power of the United states". Ideologically, the US foreign policy is "based on a distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests" (The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, 2002). Similarly, values of both engagement and containment can be found in the *New York Times* articles as there were themes both advocated for a political transformation in China towards a more liberal state, and recommended corporation with allies to curb the growth of military and economic power of China.

As illustrated above, images of China portrayed in the *New York Times* changed from 2005 to 2011 accordingly with the change of diplomatic focus of the U.S. government. Although a causal relation cannot be developed by this study, a correlation between news coverage and the shifts in foreign policy is observed. Moreover, political values identified in the *New York Times* articles are traced back to the longstanding political ideologies that guided the U.S. grand strategy. As the *Times*' coverage reflected some fundamental political values in the U.S., one can argue that dominant American political ideologies helped to produce and shape social institutions such as the elite media, and it is through the elite media that the existing political order is reinforced.

Conclusion

Ji Pan (2002) analyzed research papers that studied U.S. media coverage of China-related issues from 1973 to 2009, and developed "a theme structure featuring the

‘incompetent government’, ‘strategic partner’, ‘tricky Communists’ and ‘human right abuser’ (p. 85). According to Pan (2010), this line of research suggested that the U.S. news coverage towards China has always been negative in nature. This study, which added to Pan’s findings, found three major images of China in the U.S. media from 2005 to 2012. During the Pre-Olympic years, China was portrayed in the *New York Times* as “irresponsible trade partner” and “human rights violator.” During the Beijing Olympics, China was depicted as an authoritarian country and its qualification for hosting the games was questioned. After the Olympics, the images of “human right violator” and “irresponsible trade partner” reoccurred and intensified. Comparing findings in this study with themes identified in previous research, the frame of China as “human right abuser” holds consistent. The theme of “incompetent government” and “tricky Communist” combined is reflected as the image of an authoritarian country that failed as Olympics host in this study. When it comes to China’s role as a trading partner, however, the frame is changed from a “strategic partner” to an “irresponsible partner.”

The U.S. foreign policy as well as the political ideologies that guided the policy making process are analyzed as a potential explanation of the images of China portrayed in the U.S. elite media. This assumption comes from the idea of media hegemony introduced by Antonio Gramsci (1971), who argued that by manipulating the value system and mores of a society, the ruling class makes their view the worldview. According to media hegemony theory, all the social institutions including mass media, churches, and schools function to produce and distribute meanings and values that legitimize the existing order of the society. This idea emphasizes the role of media in producing a dominant political ideology and “provides a framework for examining the

mass media's ideological role by focusing on the relationship between the mass media and power" (Carrage, 1993, P. 331). Under this context, media have two intertwined roles. First, it is the production of the hegemonic meanings and values. Those working in the media grow up with and internalize hegemonic discourses that influence their news judgment, and the media organizations as well as journalistic routines are created and operated based on the prevailing values in the society. Second, media outlets are also the inventors of the hegemonic values as they cultivate dominant ideologies and help alter these ideologies to "adapt to the demands of legitimation in a changing world" (Hallin, 1987, p. 4).

While a correlation between the U.S. foreign policy and the images of China in the *New York Times* is suggested and supported by literatures reviewed, it is important to acknowledge that there is no evidence provided by this study to verify such a relationship. Future studies in experiment setting are required to show causation and provide evidence of the connection. In addition, this study focuses on China's image in the U.S. media, which intends to explain the relationship from the U.S. side. However, the discourse and international relations between China and the U.S. are reciprocal and interactive. A future study that approaches the story from China's side may complete the dialogue and provide a better understanding of the relationship. Another limitation of this study originates from the human bias that is rooted in the nature of the qualitative study. It is important to acknowledge that although detailed code book is developed to systemize the coding process, as the only coder of the study, the author comes from certain culture and language background, which may shape the judgment she makes when coding articles.

Future studies can invite two coders and test inter coder reliability in order to eliminate potential bias.

All in all, guided by framing theory, this study contributes to the existing literature by extending the study of how China has been portrayed by U.S. elite media in the 21st century. It also offers analysis and possible explanations for the use of these depictions. It documented China's images in the *New York Times* from 2005 to 2012 in three stages (Pre-Olympics, Olympic year, Post-Olympics) and explored the public opinion and foreign policy changes. While consistent frames are identified, some new images are introduced. Interesting dynamics between public agenda, media agenda, and policy agenda are observed and call for future studies.

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