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FRAMING CLIMATE CHANGE: A COMPARING ANALYSIS OF CHINESE AND AMERICAN ELITE NEWSPAPER'S COVERAGE ON CLIMATE CHANGE DURING 2009 COPENHAGEN SUMMIT

zixian gao
gzzlxy@hotmail.com

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FRAMING CLIMATE CHANGE: A COMPARING ANALYSIS OF
CHINESE AND AMERICAN ELITE NEWSPAPER'S COVERAGE ON CLIMATE
CHANGE DURING 2009 COPENHAGEN SUMMIT

by

Zixian Gao

B.A., Chengdu Institute, Sichuan International Studies University, 2009

A Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Science

Department of Mass Communication and Media Arts
in the Graduate School
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in the field of Professional Media and Media Management

Approved by:

Katherine Frith, Chair

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
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TITLE: FRAMING CLIMATE CHANGE: A COMPARING ANALYSIS OF CHINESE AND AMERICAN ELITE NEWSPAPER'S COVERAGE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Katherine Frith

Climate change is a global issue not only about the natural environment but also international political relations. Different countries have different perspectives on mitigating climate change. The Copenhagen Summit provides a chance for studying different countries' standpoint on climate change. This current paper did a framing study of the news reports about climate change on an elite Chinese newspaper and an elite U.S. newspaper and their view on each country. The results revealed that both the *People's Daily* and the *New York Times* tend to cover politics and economics more than other social contexts. Renewable energy was also often discussed. China and the U.S. both had some negative views on each other and the cooperation on climate change issues between the two countries was not so promising currently.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Along with the globalization of environmental issues, more and more nations, regions and interest groups have been involved into the public agenda of environmental problems. Climate change is one of the salient problems of the environmental disruption which in current days is referred to global warming or the greenhouse effect. The rapid increase in global average temperature over the past several decades is presently believed to be caused by anthropogenic factors like the increase of carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels due to the emissions from fossil fuel combustion and cement manufacture, ozone depletion, etc. and could cause disasters like extreme weather, glacial ablation, drought and flood, etc.

Climate change, if is seen from ecologic perspective, it is an environmental issue, whereas in such an era of globalization, it is not just an environmental problem, but also an international political issue. Since climate change has become a threat to human beings, if it is not controlled, grave natural calamities may happen which then could cause food reduction, disease, fights for water resource, or forced migration, etc. The world's political parties are attentive to the issue of climate change. Also, the negotiation about climate change influences the development of international relations. To solve the climate change problems, international interests are reorganized and reassigned to different countries, (i.e. the mission to reduce the emission of CO₂ could lead to the reduction of manufacturing). In December, 2009, the United Nations Climate Change Conference was held in Copenhagen, Denmark. This

conference is commonly known as the Copenhagen Summit. One hundred and ninety two nations participated in the conference. A framework for climate change mitigation beyond year 2012 was planned to be agreed during the conference. The Copenhagen Accord drafted by the U.S., China, India, Brazil and South Africa, which acknowledged that climate change, is one of the greatest challenges of the present day and all nations should take actions to keep any temperature increases to below 2°C, but it was judged as a "meaningful agreement" by some countries and was not passed unanimously so that no binding act was issued.

China and the United States are the top and the second largest greenhouse gas emission countries and both were the key players in the unsuccessful Copenhagen Summit. The failure of the Copenhagen summit was blamed by both developed countries and developing countries to each other. The United States of America, as the biggest CO₂ emission country (Ai, 2003) and the global superpower (Miller, 2005), was criticized by the developing countries to be irresponsible on tackling climate change. Meantime, China, as the largest developing country, was also first blamed by the developed world for the failure of the conference as well as the uncompleted commitment of reducing emission. Thus, different perspectives on reporting the climate change stories as well as the Copenhagen Conference appeared in various media internationally.

This research examined how the *People's Daily* and the *New York Times* framed the climate change stories during the 2009 Copenhagen Summit in order to understand the way the two largest representatives of the developing and

developed world understand the global climate change and their opinion on each other's role in the climate change issues.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Debate on the Failure of the Copenhagen Summit

The failure of the Copenhagen summit was blamed by both developed countries and developing countries to each other. George Monbiot (2009) stated that the U.S. president Barack Obama was the immediate reason for the failure. He said that Obama went behind the backs of the UN and that most of the member states were willing to strike a deal and then poorer countries had to “either sign the agreement or they lost the adaptation funds required to help them survive the first few decades of climate breakdown.” Also, Obama required concessions from China but offered nothing in return and he ignored the importance of losing face in Chinese politics, which was considered to be a factor that led to the failure. And, as to the commitment for mitigating the climate change, developing countries disliked the unfair deal to decrease the emissions by 40% before 2020 while developed countries only have to cut the emission by 11-19%, and China vetoed another deal to decrease the emission by 50% before 2050 because China thinks that if, according to the deal, developed countries need to decrease the emissions by 80% by 2050 compared to 1990, then, in 2050, developing countries such as China would have the emissions per capita be around one half to one fifth per capita of those of the United States (Khor, 2009). Li (2009) sees the climate change in a diachronic perspective, he argued that, developed countries must take the historical responsibility to largely decrease the emission because from 1985, the emission of the developed

countries took up three-fourth of the global emission, and China, as one of the newly industrializing country, could be relatively satisfied with what it has done to try to keep the balance of economic development, improvement of people's livelihood and the greenhouse gas emission control.

On the other side of the world, among the developed countries, criticism was pointed at the developing nations. Doelle (2010) explored the process and substance of the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Summit by assessing the role of the key players of the conference and states that emerging economically developing countries such as Brazil, South Africa, India and China have aimed at protecting their own right for realizing economic development, so that they vetoed the binding commitments to avoid the heavy burden of emission control which might restrict the development. Revkin (2009) retold in his news report that the British environmental activist Mark Lynas claimed that:

“The bottom line for China (and India) is growth, and given that this growth is mainly based on coal, there is going to have to be much more pressure on China if global emissions are to peak within any reasonable time frame. In Beijing the interests of the Party come first, second and third, and global warming is somewhere further down the list. Growth delivers stability and prosperity, and keeps the party in power.”

Talking about the same topic of global climate change, different media have different, and even opposite voices. Much research have been done to examine the framing of global affairs, and many of these show that in the U.S., the coverage of affairs that are related to other countries are decided by how

much the U.S. is involved in those events. By studying the coverage of foreign events on the network television and in the *New York Times*, researchers also have realized that any events that the U.S. was involved in got more positive coverage than a comparable important event which the U.S. was not involved in (Chang, Shoemaker & Brendlinger, 1987). When studying the *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune*, Riffe and Shaw (1982) also find that the report about the Third World countries in American newspapers tend to cover “bad” news about the developing countries and most of the news are oriented to be told in a negative way while in the Third World countries, the same events are reported in another more positive tone.

2.2 Why China and the U.S.

Developing countries like China, India and the Middle East are expected to take up more than three quarters of energy related CO₂ emission growth and industrial countries including the United States cover less than fifty percent of global CO₂ emissions (International Energy Agency [IEA], 2008). In the past few decades, China began to play the most significant economic and political role in the Asian-Pacific Region and has contributed a lot to the regional economic development, but it also became the largest CO₂ emission developing country and is the second largest emission country following the U.S. (Fan, 2010). Harris and Yu (2005) discussed that China as a developing country and at the same time as a crucial influential nation on global climate change, which position enables China great power in international negotiations. Since China has been vitally involved in the debate and negotiation about global climate change issues,

it deserves a close examine of what is happening in Chinese media, and what the Chinese government is thinking. China is believed to be a single-party state (Hong, 2006), and Chinese media are considered as the mouth of the Communist Party and always speak uniquely followed by the indication of the interest and the will of the party, thus, it has great power to let the Chinese people understand certain things the party allows, guides their attention, as well as shaping the ideology of the Chinese people (Lee, 2000).

The U.S., as one of the largest economically developed country and the biggest CO₂ emission country (Ai, 2003), also has great influence on both the economy and environment in the whole world. Moreover, the U.S. news media are among the most prolific, and influential media on the earth (Good, 2008), which is the source of the information about the U.S. foreign policy and is able to guide the public opinion as well as the politic policy (Doris, 2009).

2.3 Framing as Media Discourse

Many scholars have tried to identify the meaning and concept of framing. And the idea of framing has been used in many ways so that it is not easy to give a clear definition on “framing” (Scheufele, 1999). Among those scholars who studied framing in social science, Goffman (1974) describes framing as basic cognitive structures that guide the perception and representation of reality which means that the definitions of a situation that are built up in accordance with principals of organization that govern an event and people’s subjective involvement in them.

When studying the media framing, Gitlin (1980) drew on his own experiences and interviewed news reporters of the antiwar demonstration that happened in Chicago during the 1968, and showed how media selected and emphasized governor-preferred aspects of the story and framed the democratic movements as oddities, which also reveals that media frames organize the world in an unacknowledged way for both journalists who report it and the audience who rely on the reports. By examining the coverage of the 2003 Iraq War on international news web sites, researchers showed that media frame an article around certain ideas or themes and tend to emphasize particular aspects and make some more “salient” than others (Dimitrova, Kaid, Williams and Trammell, 2005).

2.4 Framing Climate Change

Plenty of studies have shown different media preferences on framing climate change stories in different countries and circumstances. By doing a content analysis of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, McComas and Shanahan (1999) have found that from 1980 to 1995, the frequency of newspaper coverage showed cyclical attention to global warming, and the coverage about risk and consequences of global warming were gaining increasing attention in news agencies while the coverage of controversy among scientists maintained in a great amount. And the climate change stories were also largely framed with economics during the downside of the attention cycle. Climate change reports are also relevant to the weather condition. Studying such relationships in New York and Washington D.C., scholars found that journalists

are more likely to discuss climate change during unusual temperature periods (Shanahan & Good, 2000). When doing a qualitative study of U.S. print media coverage of the green house effect, Wilkin (1993) finds that three values: progress, the institutionalization of knowledge, and innocence help frame news of the greenhouse effect. These values are closely tied to the goals and aims of the scientific coverage, and are serving economic and governmental communities, while human values were less considered in the report. He pointed out that “Scientific explanations of the problem [of climate issues] tend to frame the issues in ‘science’ driven terms, rather than suggesting that political policy and human choices are the base of the physical phenomenon” (p. 73). By doing the analysis of news reporters' understanding of climate change, Wilson (2000) finds that media are important sources of scientific information for climate change.

Climate change has been a global scientific phenomenon, but it is represented in highly varied manners at the national level (Billett, 2010). Billett did a discourse analysis to quantify and qualify the frames in climate change reports in Indian national circulations and showed that the national press has set up a strongly nationalistic position on climate change that divides the climate issue along developmental lines. Based on interviews with scientists, journalists, and environmental leaders, Mormont and Dasnoy's (1995) study also highlighted that the climate story is told in quite different terms from one country to another. Through a content analysis study of *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, Boykoff and Boykoff (2004) find

that U.S. national press has contributed to an obvious divergence of popular discourse from scientific discourse while media in developing countries like India's present climate change in a far more scientifically representative frame.

2.4.1 Climate Change and Social Context

Climate change does not exist isolated from society but is interpreted in the context of certain social values and cultural norms. Demeritt (2006) discussed the relationship of the reality of global warming and the politics of science studies, and noted that the conflicting relationship between the two issues reveals that politics has the great influence on modern science of the environment, but on the other hand, political action on environmental issues is limited by the uncertain scientific knowledge.

Through a discourse analysis of newspaper reports of climate change from three U.K. broadsheet papers during 1985 to 2003, Carvalho and Burgess (2005) identified that climate change in three distinctive periods: 1985–1990, 1991–1996, 1997–2003 were reported with different framings of risks. And the dominant ideology in different newspapers played as an important role in shaping the U.K.'s broadsheet newspapers' discourse on the "risks" of climate change and as a gatekeeper of climate change information.

Cline (1992) examines the costs and benefits of the global actions to limit greenhouse warming. From the standpoint of an economist, he analyzed the relations between the economic damages and agricultural losses, the loss of forests, water scarcity, and many other major effects in order to mobilize the global response to mitigate global warming. The importance of economics is one

of the main topics besides politics, in the environmental reports on the media of developing countries (Billett, 2009 & Chen, 2010).

The discussion about Kyoto Protocol is also one of the common frames in the media of both countries (Good, 2008). The Protocol, which was initially adopted on 11 December 1997 in Kyoto, Japan, is a protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change aimed at fighting global warming. According to the treaty, fast growing economy countries like China, South Africa, India and Brazil did not need to follow the commitment legally. But it commits that the industrialized nations are legally bound reductions in emissions of six “greenhouse gases” (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulphur hexafluoride). If the United States were to ratify the Protocol, it would have to reduce greenhouse gases by 7% below 1990 between 2008 and 2012. The United States signed the Protocol on November 12, 1998. However, the Clinton Administration did not submit the Protocol because they acknowledged that one condition outlined of the Protocol was meaningful and too benefit for developing countries to avoid limiting greenhouse gases (Purvis, 2004).

2.4.2 Climate Change and Causes & Consequences

The existence of climate change has been accepted globally. But the uncertainty within the cause of climate change is still being discussed. The core controversial question is “what is the crucial cause for climate change?” The mainstream view is that the rapid increase of greenhouse gas is most related to the increased mean temperature on the earth, thus, human activity is most probably for the reason for climate change (i.e. humans burning fossil fuels)

(Gao & Hu, 2010). While the consequences of the climate change are directly related to natural disasters, the United Nations predicts that climate change will give rise to more extreme weather, drought, forest fire, and flood, etc. (Smith, 2004).

Media both inform the audience and interpret the reality to the public from certain perspectives especially when the subject of the news story is relatively far from the experience and the basic knowledge of the readers (Jayakar and Jayakar 2002). There has always been extreme weather, and the public are dependent on media to tell them what is “natural” or “anthropogenic” and what is related to climate change (Good, 2008).

2.4.3 Climate Change and Solutions

Stevenson (2008) discusses how climate issue framing shaped Australia's response to global climate change between 1996 and 2007 and shows that the country frames the issue as a specific problem with corresponding solutions. In order to see how the newspapers in the U.S., Canada and the world frame climate change, Good (2008) set up four frame categories: social context, causes, consequences and solutions and examined 14 major Canadian newspapers, 40 major U.S. newspapers and 70 major non-U.S. newspapers. She shows that globally, climate change stories are likely to be framed in social context (science, politics, economic as well as the Kyoto protocol which 175 of the world's almost 200 countries have ratified but the United States), but are less likely to be framed with consequences or solutions.

Previous research and literature have shown that climate change stories are told in different ways in different countries. Most of the research was done in developed countries like the U.S., France or Canada, etc. fewer studies have focusing on developing countries which have a growing influence on climate change. The developed countries and developing countries always have differences and contradictions on solving the climate change problems because technology and economic situations are varied in countries and individual commitments are thought to be imbalanced and both sides tend to consider their own interests. Methodologically based on the previous researches that have been done, this current paper tries to contribute an analysis of how climate issued are being framed in the newspapers in the largest developing country- China and the Largest developed country-the U.S. Additionally, it also examines how China and the U.S. understand the each other on climate change issues. Therefore, the research questions of this present paper will be:

- (1) How do Chinese and the U.S. elite newspapers frame climate change stories within a social context, cause, consequence, and solution?
- (2) How do the elite newspapers of China and the U.S. frame the each other about climate change story?

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

The aim of this analysis in this paper was to provide an overview of how the Chinese and the U.S. newspapers frame climate change story. And the analysis was done by carefully reading of the climate change news stories one elite newspaper in China and the U.S.: the *People's Daily* and the *New York Times*.

Elite Newspapers were chosen because of their national wide circulation and readers can get deep impact on their minds by reading the elite newspapers (Xie, 2008). The *People's Daily* is among the top ten newspapers in the world awarded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. It is the most authorized and influential newspaper in China. It builds the bridge to connect the people and the government and is the window for the world to see China. The *People's Daily* is also the first choice for the government to inform its new policies and decisions in print version (the *People's Daily*, 2003). The print version of the *New York Times* remains as the largest local metropolitan newspaper in the United States, and as the third largest newspaper in the U.S., behind the *Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today* (Perez-Peña, 2009). It is also known as the “newspaper of record” worldwide. Since 1981, the *New York Times* has begun to cover many environmental reports, and helped the public to build the risk cognition of environmental problems in order to appeal for the protection of environment (Weart, 2003). It also has been examined in many framing study

about climate change news stories. And it is one of the most political important newspapers in the United States and even worldwide (Hughes 1995).

Articles on the *People's Daily* and the *New York Times* were collected through the website of the *People's Daily* and database on the *New York Times* official website. Each search was done using keywords (see Tables 1 through 4 of the "Results" section below for the actual keywords used) searching in the title and lead paragraphs of articles from each of the databases. The time period studied was from December 2 to December 20, 2009 around the Copenhagen climate change summit. Climate change stories in this period along with the coverage of the Copenhagen summit was carefully examined. This time period was chosen because intensive news reports about climate change stories appeared within this time. And, the international debate on the Copenhagen summit provided an opportunity for studying China and the U.S.'s opinions and ideas on each other. Seventy-five news articles about climate change were collected from the *People's Daily* and one hundred and twelve news articles were collected from the *New York Times*.

In order to answer the first research question of how China and the U.S. frame climate change on the sample newspaper, four categories: Social Context (science, Kyoto, politics and economics), Cause (greenhouse gases, cars/vehicles/automobiles, and fossil fuel), Consequence (extreme weather, flood, fire, hurricane/storm) and Solution (energy conserve, renewable energy/alternative energy, and solutions) are built based on previous framing

studies about climate change (Good, 2008). Quantitative study will be applied during the analysis.

Qualitative framing analysis enables people to understand how media structure messages (Miller and Riechert 2001). Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) say that using inductive approach to do qualitative framing analysis, the researcher starts with strong presuppositions, predefines certain frames and then studies the occurrence of the frames in news stories. Gamson and Modigliani (1989) have defined five framing devices in news stories: (1) metaphors, (2) exemplars, (3) catchphrases, (4) depictions, and (5) visual images. To increase the objectivity for the second research question, inductive approach is chosen and all five framing devices in the climate change news stories will be carefully read and identified. These analytic points were then merged into important framing themes to demonstrate how Chinese newspaper frames the U.S. on climate change issues.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The *New York Times* had one hundred and twelve climate change news reports that was more than the news reports on the *People's Daily*-seventy five. This may show that the *New York Times* was more interesting in covering climate change issue. As to the four categories, some were mainly discussed in the same articles, so the total number of the climate change stories sorted out were more than the actual news articles.

As to the exam of how the *People's Daily* frames the climate change stories with social context, the result obviously shows the story of climate change has often been told a story of politics. China is a one-party state and the Communist Party are always highlighted, either as a great leader, protector, or helper, in many important news stories such as the Sichuan earthquake, any natural disasters, especially when issues are involved in international relations. Climate change is a crucial global issue, so the *People's Daily* did tend to report in a political way. Thirty-five percent of the climate change stories focused on politics (search results were divided by the total climate change stories).

In about 15 news stories, the *People's Daily* focused on discussing developed countries' failure of completing their duty on helping developing countries either technologically or economically, and stated that the success of the climate change summit was decided by whether developed countries would commit their duty to help developing countries. When the newspaper covered the Copenhagen Summit, the contributions of China (under the lead of the party)

were described as “outstanding”, and the Chinese government’s determination to mitigate climate change was mentioned often. Also, the underdeveloped countries were always framed as they appreciated Chinese sympathy, understanding and help, as well as they had common view and standpoint with China about climate change. China also showed intention to cooperate with these countries to dealing with climate change. In an article called “Wen Jiabao Meet with Leaders from Ethiopia and Bangladeshi”, the Chinese government said that China and the underdeveloped countries belonged to the developing countries. The paper said that underdeveloped countries now have the assistance from China to develop economics, eliminate poverty, etc. so that special requirement from undeveloped countries to get fund from developed counties to deal with climate change is understandable and China will support such requirements and will help these countries, too (December, 18).

The *New York Times* also liked to frame climate change with politics during Copenhagen Climate Summit. Twenty-Eight news stories talked about the political issues. The *New York Times* said that the United States was against the Kyoto Protocol because it gave manufacturers in nations like developing countries an unfair advantage who did not need to face restrictions on the emissions under that treaty. The world trade and border taxes were the political issue that the *New York Times* liked to cover. The paper said that the United States would allow imposition of tariffs on goods from countries like China and India that do not constrain their carbon output. And as to the countries’ duty on helping cutting emission, the *New York Times* described in a more fair way, not

like the *People's Daily* which stated China's great effort, that "Copenhagen is all about attitudes and aspirations" (Beyond Copenhagen, December, 6), both China and The U.S. were waiting for each other to determine to cut emission first. A real willingness from the U.S. and China to realize the claimed promise to lower emission that could be just enough to persuade the other 190 countries in Copenhagen to take the first step in doing so. However, neither the two countries had offered specific goals.

Compared to the Political framing, Science was much less framed with climate change on the *People's Daily* during Copenhagen Summit. Only about seven percent of the climate change stories were framed with science. Science was framed as evidence of the occurrence of climate change and the possible solutions were analyzed in a scientific way. A news story named "Turn Waste into Wealth", the statistics showed that animal husbandry (opening up pasture, producing forage, process meat and dairy, transporting food, etc.) brought eighteen percent of the total greenhouse gas which was more than the total greenhouse emission from automobiles and aircrafts. Then scientists and organizations advocated vegetarian lifestyle to turn the "waste" of animals' organ or excrement into fuel elding bunkers, and so on (December, 18).

Two times more (thirteen percent) climate change stories were framed with Science on the *New York Times*. Not like the *People's Daily* which discussed Science as an evidence for climate change, the *New York Times* discussed Science as a possibility but not certainty which could not estimate how much global temperature would rise in the future. Several solutions for dealing

with greenhouse gas were talked in climate change stories on the *New York Times*. In a paper called “New materials may aid to capturing carbon” introduced a metal-organic framework which can help absorb the CO₂ (December, 7). Forests were emphasized to be a good way to absorb CO₂.

Seventeen percent of climate change stories were framed with economics on the *People’s Daily*. When talking about economic related topics of climate change, Chinese newspaper liked to talk about developing alternative energy industries to build the economics. Twice (thirty-Four percent) more news stories were framed with economics on the *New York Times*. In the U.S., sharp reductions in emissions was believed to be possible to achieve with only a small impact on the American economy’s growth, and on the contrary, to reduce emission could help the economy recover. For example, climate change legislation would probably mean more investment which was what the economy needs (An Affordable Truth, December, 6).

The Kyoto protocol was discussed for about ten percent of the time and it was mentioned pretty often when politics was covered during the Copenhagen Summit. China framed Kyoto in a positive way and was so supportive to the protocol that is always emphasized that every country who signed the Kyoto should execute of the duty. This maybe because China as a developing country was benefited from this protocol which said economic developing countries only need to commit self-regulation to cut the greenhouse gas emission depending on the country’s economic situation. On the *New York Times*, about eight percent climate change stories were framed with Kyoto. The *New York Times* described

the Kyoto in a negative way. Kyoto Protocol, on the *New York Times*, was described as it gives manufacturers in nations like China and India an unfair advantage because they do not face restrictions on their emissions under that treaty and the paper said that the U.S. would not sign any unfair treaty.

The results can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Social context: Story Topics as a Percent of Total Climate Change Stories

	Climate change stories on the <i>People's Daily</i>		Climate change stories on the <i>New York Times</i>	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
"climate change" & "science"	5	6.7%	14	12.5%
"climate change" & "Kyoto"	8	10.1%	9	8.0%
"climate change" & "politics"	26	34.7%	32	28.6%
"climate change" & "economics"	13	17.3%	38	34.0%
Total	52	69.3%	93	83.0%

The results of the Causes search reveals that of the *People's Daily* was less likely to cover this topic. There were about only twelve percent of the climate change stories that covered the Causes of climate change. Even though in 2009, the growth of auto production has reached the highest in Chinese auto history and China overtakes the U.S. to be the largest auto maker in the world (Li, 2010), very few climate change new stories discussed about the emission from car/vehicle/automobile. The Cause of the greenhouse effect was framed in a general way that due to human development, people cut down the trees, burn

the forests to be fields, so that huge amount of CO₂ was emitted to the air. The focus on the current industrial influence on greenhouse effect was less covered.

The *New York Times* was relatively more likely to report the Cause of climate change than China. Greenhouse gas was framed more than cars and vehicles and fossil fuel with climate change. Greenhouse gas was emphasized when talking about the world's CO₂ emission. And China, India were often framed as the largest greenhouse emitter. The pollution from vehicles was told to be one major impact on the most densely populated area, such as New York City. Only three news stories mainly discussed the cause of climate change from fossil fuel.

The results can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Cause: Story topics as a percent of total climate change stories

	Climate Change stories on the <i>People's Daily</i>		Climate change Stories on the <i>New York Times</i>	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
"climate change" & "greenhouse gas"	4	5.3%	7	6.3%
"climate change" & "cars" or "vehicles" or "automobiles"	2	2.7%	5	4.5%
"climate change" & "fossil fuel"	3	4.0%	2	1.8%
Total	9	12.0%	14	12.5%

On the *People's Daily*, about three percent of total climate change stories that were framed with Consequences of extreme weather in the headline and lead paragraph as well as the percent of climate change stories that contained extreme weather phenomena-flood, fire, hurricanes/storms were examined as

the consequence. The coverage about consequence was also few. Fire and storm was discussed by three percent of the climate change reports. Also, the fire and storm stories discussed were often happened in other countries. The extreme weather also was not often covered in the leading paragraph or as a main topic, but every time when the news stories mentioned about extreme weather, it was interpreted as consequences of climate change.

The *New York Times* did not cover much Consequences of climate change. Droughts, floods and extreme, were often discussed together as weather altering climate patterns. Like the *People's Daily*, the *New York Times* covered most of the cases of extreme weather in other countries, especially in poor countries (In Bolivia, Water and Ice Tell of Climate Change, December, 13).

The results can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Consequence: Story Topics as a Percentage of Total Climate Change Stories

	Climate change stories on the <i>People's Daily</i>		Climate change stories on the <i>New York Times</i>	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
"climate change" & "extreme weather"	2	2.7%	4	3.6%
"climate change" & "flood"	3	4.0%	2	1.8%
"climate change" & "fire"	2	2.7%	2	1.8%
"climate change" & "hurricane" or "storm"	2	2.7%	1	0.9%
Total	9	12%	9	8.0%

About twenty-two percent stories framed Solution in the climate change stories on the *People's Daily*. China is described by many news media of other countries to be a large new energy country (Shi, 2009) and according to the

Chinese government policy that China will make great efforts to develop nuclear power as well as other renewable energy such as solar power for alternative energy. (The State Council, 2008) This may be the reason of the newspaper's preference of covering the Solution to climate change. Good (2008) did a comparative analysis about global newspapers' coverage of climate change and says that globally, news stories about climate change tend to be reluctant to frame solution. But, in this current study, I saw that the *People's Daily* in China relatively liked to cover the solution. The new technology of developing renewable energy was discussed more often than the conservation of energy such as low carbon life on both the *People's Daily* and the *New York Times*. Low carbon economics was discussed six times during the month on the *People's Daily*, which was about how to improve the energy efficiency, to conserve energy. If people live a low carbon life style, such as to turn off the air conditioner three minutes before going out will save electricity of five kilowatt hour per air conditioner per year, and to use cloth bags instead of plastic bags to save the energy that is used to produce plastic bags, etc. (Cast Accounts of Low Carbon Bill, December, 14). Low-carbon development strategy was covered on the *New York Times* as a way to help cut emission as well as help the country's economy develop sustainably. New ways to trap carbon dioxide output were discussed four times on the *New York Times*. The renewable energy was discussed fourteen times. China was framed very ambitious about leading the world's renewable energy industry to contribute to the tackling of global climate change. The economic benefit was also highlighted during the analysis of the renewable

energy industry. Another way the *People's Daily* framed Solution of climate change was appealing for the cooperation between the countries. Cooperation- both technologically and sacrificially (all nations should cut more greenhouse gas emission) was described as a crucial factor to change the current climate situation. On the *New York Times* the U.S. and China's movements were the key to let the world seriously begin to achieve the goal to cut emission. However, the *New York Times* more often discussed the impact of developing countries' greenhouse gas emission.

The results can be found in Table 4.

Table 4

Solution: Story Topics as a Percent of Total Climate Change Stories

	Climate Change stories on the <i>People's Daily</i>		Climate change Stories on the <i>New York Times</i>	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
"climate change" & "energy conserve"	5	6.7%	5	4.1%
"climate change" & "renewable energy" or "alternative energy"	7	9.3%	9	8.0%
"climate change" & "solution"	5	6.7%	7	6.1%
Total	17	22.7%	21	18.8%

During the one-month intensive coverage of climate change, the *People's Daily* and the *New York Times* expressed their way to view the developed countries and developing countries' role in tackling climate change. The U.S and China were directly and indirectly framed by the climate news stories on each other's main print media.

The U.S's image on the People's Daily

Frame 1: The U.S is irresponsible to the climate change.

The *People's Daily* liked to see the climate change issue from a political perspective and when international relations of the global climate change stories were discussed, the U.S was often described as the largest greenhouse gas emission country that should firmly fulfill the commitment that was required in the Kyoto protocol to cut down the emission. And, developed countries, led by the U.S., should economically support the developing and underdeveloped countries to apply new renewable energy technology. An article called "The Success of Copenhagen Summit Can be Achieved if Developed Countries Commit Their Duty to Help", the emission of developed countries and developing countries were calculated, and the U.S. and other developed countries were described as the crime culprit of climate change, and the developing countries were described as the victims. So that developed countries must cut down the emission while developing countries who suffered the consequence of climate change should cut down the emission but never hurt their economic development (December, 14)

When describing the U.S. commitment of tackling climate change, the *People's Daily* used the catchphrases of "irresponsible", "buck-passing", and "unkind". On December 19, a article called "If the Extreme Weather Attacks Copenhagen" used a metaphor to describe the international relations of the climate change. The climate change summit was compared to a feast held by the U.S. and other developed countries (wealthy family members), and the

developing countries were compared to poor relatives who joined the feast at the last moment and just drank a cup of coffee. Then the wealthy relatives said at the end of the feast: "Let's divide the check equally and everyone pays for it!" The *People's Daily* described this as so unfair and the U.S. was so irresponsible on the climate change.

Frame 2: The cooperation between China and the U.S. is significant but optimistic.

China and the U.S. have established diplomatic relations for thirty years. China always pays special importance to the relation between them. A steady, cooperative, and upbeat relation will bring mutual interest and benefit the world. Just like the increase of bilateral trade volumes, the climate issue will also be worked out if the two countries go hand in hand.

The news report that covered the meeting between Chinese premier Wen Jiabao and the U.S. president Obama showed that both sides understand the importance of cooperation between the two big countries, and hope to realize cooperation (Wen Jiabao Meets the U.S. President Obama, December 19). When the cooperation was discussed, stories often covered the blame from the developing countries who always expressed dissatisfaction with the support as well as the burden from the developed countries, and they, including China are at the standpoint to maintain the Kyoto protocol. Catchphrases describing the developing countries' perspectives were like "long appeal", these all reveal a disappointed feeling about the cooperation.

China's image on the New York Times

Frame 1: China does not have stringent determination to cut emission.

China was told to be the largest emission country followed by the U.S. on the *New York Times*. China had caught serious attention in the world and it should not continue to claim that it needs the economic development regardless of the greenhouse gas emission. Even though China stated that it will reduce 40 to 45 percent in energy intensity, it does not have any serious law to guarantee the compliance. What is more, “if China or any other country wants to be a full partner in global climate efforts, that country must commit to transparency and review of their emissions-cutting regime,” (China and the U.S. hit strident impasse at climate talks, December 14, 2009), but China refused to accept any kind of international monitoring of its emissions levels. Also, the U.S. was waiting for China’s to move on, but China often had excuse saying that if it really makes climate change a priority, it could peak by 2030, but if they get support from developed countries, they could do it even faster. Thus, on the *New York Times*, China was described as without stringent verification of cutting emission, which was why China and the U.S. always had impasse at international climate change tackling treaties. China was often been called as the “world’s emerging economic power” and “largest greenhouse gas producer”. Its commitment of cutting emission was described as “not verifiable”, “unstated target”, etc.

Frame 2: China and the U.S. have impasse on climate change negotiation.

The ineffective negotiations between China and the U.S. have been covered on the *New York Times*. China had been mentioned for many times as

the “largest polluter”. Even though it was mentioned alone with the U.S., it was described as an economy developing country whose emission was growing rapidly but was required nothing by the Kyoto Protocol while the developed countries were required to cut down emissions about 5% by 2012 (Lessons from Kyoto, December 7). China and the United States made up an additional 40 percent of global emissions, the developed countries made up only about a third. The developed world not only ratified the deal to cut emission, but also gave billions of aid to developing countries while China enjoyed an unfair advantage but did not face restrictions on their emissions. Thus, the U.S. was not happy about what China contributed and claimed firmly that the U.S. would sign any unfair treaty like the Kyoto. During the climate change negotiations, the dispute between China and the U.S. were always there, the negotiations between China and the United States were compared to a “Ping-Pong match” by the European countries that each were just looking at the other. playing and setting rules in the global game of climate change mitigation (Europe stew as its clout diminishes on climate, December, 3). European countries now had been largely pushed to the side of the negotiation and they were watching the world's two largest emitters of greenhouse gases. Negotiators for the U.S. and China had made little progress on critical issues of climate change treaty. An article called “Obama has goal to wrest a deal in climate change” said that “top negotiators here (attending Copenhagen Summit) said that the talks could also prove a humiliating failure, because China and the United States, the world’s two largest emitters, remain deeply divided over a number of difficult problems” (December

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The first research question asked about how frequently Chinese and the U.S. newspaper framed climate change report from different perspectives. From the result, I clearly find that the Politics was covered far more than any other climate-related stories on the *People's Daily*. The emphases about the right lead of Chinese policy, the contribution of cutting emissions and the firm standpoint of China towards the international cooperation of tackling climate change were highlighted in a large number of the news report. These politically-oriented reports were commonly seen in many of Chinese news reports. Such preference may give the Chinese audience a feeling of pride and make them think that what they have done to mitigate climate change is enough and climate change is due to the others' failure of commitment. The *New York Times* also covered large part of political issues related to the climate change negotiation. The *New York Times* described that developing countries were taking advantage of some climate change treaties and the U.S. did not want to take serious responsibility to mitigate climate change unless large emission country like China allowed the international monitor to press it to cut certain amount of emission. Both China and the U.S. expressed an unwillingness to take the first step for solving the global crisis considering their own economical interests. Economics were also largely discussed on each newspaper. On the *People's Daily*, economics framed stories were mostly talking about the renewable energy industry's potential to increase the economics. The results confirmed that the importance of Economics

is one main topic following politics in environmental report on the media of developing countries (Billett, 2009 & Chen, 2010). The crisis of economy due to the climate change effects like agricultural losses, the loss of forests, water scarcity etc. that discussed by Cline (1992) was not covered by Chinese newspaper. The *New York Times* also framed climate change and economics in a broader way that to mitigate emission and develop alternative energy can build job opportunities and arouse more investments such as well as getting cheaper energy saving materials to help develop economy. Kyoto and science were less framed in climate change stories as Social Context on the *People's Daily*. It was seen that China is the supporter of Kyoto probably because China does not need to commit to binding commitment according to the protocol which was signed in 1997. This is a sign that China may not act so actively in mitigating climate change, but wants to take advantage of the protocol was that issued based on the international climate and economic situation a decade ago. The U.S., oppositely, stated that it would never sign any unfair treaty like Kyoto. As to the Science reports, the way in which science has been framed in the articles on the *People's Daily* was mainly discussing that the climate was changing and why it was changing but not focusing on what will be the effects of climate change. The *New York Times* had twice more scientific related reports which was like what Good's study showed that the U.S. news reports were more tending to cover science frames than international newspapers such as China. Also, from the way the *New York Times* covered the climate change on the scientific perspective, more objective discussion was seen on this newspaper while Chinese

newspaper described the reason and cause of climate change more affirmatively.

Neither the *People's Daily* nor the *New York Times* so seriously discussed the Cause and Consequence of climate change. On the *People's Daily*, most of the cases about the consequence of climate change such as fire, extreme weather were chosen from the abroad, which may make Chinese audience feel that they were just watching the climate change happen but they were detached. It is necessary for Chinese newspaper to report more cases that happen to China around the people to get more attention from the population. Cause related to climate change did not include much of the car and combustion of fossil fuel that can emit CO₂ on the *People's Daily*. I expected to see more analysis of the greenhouse gas emission from automobiles because China now enjoys the largest auto market in the world.

Previous Research has found that, worldwide, media do not like to frame the Solution of climate change. But this paper shows that solution was positively discussed by Chinese newspaper and China seems interested in developing alternative and renewable energy. The *New York Times* also have more Solution report than the Cause and Effect reports. But overall, I found that both Chinese and the U.S. newspaper liked to cover the complaint of the failure of climate change negotiations and the economic benefit they could get by either avoiding cutting emission, such as China, or the ideal of developing economy by cutting emission. Neither of them mainly discussed serious crisis that human beings

might face if the two largest polluters continued to blame each other but not to take action to solve the problems.

The results for the second research question have shown an unfriendly relation between China and the U.S. about the climate change issues. “A propaganda model,” wrote Herman & Chomsky, “traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalize dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their messages across the public” (1988, p. 2). The way the two elite newspapers described each country demonstrated this rule in mass media. The U.S. behavior on solving climate change was told in an unpleasant tone by the Chinese newspaper. The *People’s Daily* framed the U.S. as an irresponsible player in mitigating global climate change that failed to economically help underdeveloped countries to apply renewable energy technology and put too much pressure on cutting emission in developing countries. On the other side, even though the *New York Times* could relatively cover the global climate change in a more objective way, when it covered the issues that relevant to the American benefit, the paper often reported the issues considering its own interests. It emphasized China’s responsibility, highlighted the high-energy consumption and high pollution, while overshadowed the carbon emissions from western industrial countries over the past two hundred years. The cooperation between China and the U.S. was literarily framed to be important but actually sounds like an unrealistic action currently on the *People’s Daily*. Such results were not surprising because Chinese media stand on the developing countries’ views that

it deserves a privilege to solve the economic problems within the country so they liked to push the duty to developed countries like the U.S. And Chinese media do tend to frame international cooperation in any global affairs such as anti-terrorist, but most of the cooperation appeals were nonsense without real action. I expected to see cooperation to be framed by media in a practical way and detailed descriptions about cooperation on climate change issues. The *New York Times* did not appeal for cooperation between China and the U.S. but covered the dispute between the two countries. The U.S. doubted that developing countries like China had the right to develop economy but the U.S. had to pay the indemnity. It wanted China to be monitored to do its duty, which China would never agree. The dispute was also due the selfishness of the country.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The core of climate change news report in the *People's Daily* was about to mitigate climate change is to promote social and economic development. The climate change stories on the *People's Daily* emphasized social development, trying to coordinate social development with climate protection. China is facing the multitask of developing its economy and protecting the natural environment, its climate change reports tends to stand on the point that China is doing right and will always make an effort to mitigate the global climate change. The standpoint of Chinese climate change news may also consider reporting more risks of the climate change and responsibility to tackle climate change. The *New York Times* about questioning the meaning of Copenhagen Summit and other climate change negotiation. It reported climate change more scientifically but avoided talking about the historical responsibility and highlighted the responsibility of the developing countries. Both newspapers revealed the selfishness of the nations. Climate change is a crucial and urgent problem faced by the human beings' only planet and home. The Media and the nations should try to function together to bring more solutions of the environmental problems and also shape people's ideology to live a lifestyle that protects the climate.

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VITA

Graduate School
Southern Illinois University

Zixian Gao

Date of Birth: April 5, 1987

400 Southern Hills Drive, Carbondale, Illinois 62901

Mid Chongqing Road, Chongzhou, Sichuan, China 611230

gzzlxy@hotmail.com

Chengdu Institution Sichuan International Studies University
Bachelor of Art, English, June 2009

Research Paper Title:

Framing Climate Change: A Comparing Analysis of Chinese and
American Elite Newspaper's Coverage on Climate Change during 2009
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Major Professor: Katherine T. Frith