Forgotten Frames: Proposing the Concept of "Digressive Framing" Using Left-Out Frames in Chinese Media Coverage of Left-Behind Children

RENITA COLEMAN
University of Texas at Austin, USA

TONG CHEN
Hunan Normal University, China

Framing is described as being like a picture that includes some elements but leaves out others, with scholars declaring that what is left out is just as important as what is emphasized; however, few studies specifically examine left-out frames. This study uses a content analysis of Chinese media coverage of China's left-behind children to investigate omitted or repressed frames. It finds that the frames most associated with the root cause of the problem were the least used, and proposes the theoretical concept of "digressive framing," which distracts from the main issue and diverts attention from the real source of problems. This type of framing is about more than simply not providing a frame of reference for understanding or providing a conflicting frame; it is about not providing the frame at the root of the problem. If media do not frame issues in ways that get at causality, long-term solutions will be unlikely.

Keywords: framing, media frames, Chinese media, content analysis, China's left-behind children

Nearly every scholarly article about framing uses the ubiquitous definition that explains how framing includes some aspects of reality, but leaves out others (Entman, 1993), with scholars declaring that what is left out is just as important as what is emphasized. To frame is to make persistent "selection, emphasis, and *exclusion*," says Gitlin (1980, p. 7, all emphases added). "In analyzing frames, it is as necessary to identify *omissions* in coverage as inclusions," and to describe "*voids*" (Entman & Rojecki, 1993, p. 157). Edelman (1993) talks about "what is *repressed*" (p. 232), whereas Van Gorp (2007) notes that "there are more frames than those that are currently applied" (p. 62). Surprisingly, scholars have mostly ignored these left-out, omitted, excluded, or repressed frames.

This study seeks to rectify this by exploring forgotten frames. In so doing, we seek to determine what these frames were in a particular context, and also to explore their generalizable nature, such as

───────────────

Renita Coleman: renita.coleman@austin.utexas.edu
Tong Chen: zsmchen@sina.com

whether they are central or peripheral to the issue, and what processes might be at work to understand why certain definitions, explanations, and remedies might not be available to audiences.

Findings lead us to propose a new theoretical concept that explains how frames that are absent or minimized can obscure the issue's root cause using the management theory definition: "The most basic cause that can reasonably be identified and that management has control to fix" (Paradies & Busch, 1988, p. 479). We situate our examination in China, as even less is known about framing in countries where the press system is controlled, making this an ideal setting for expanding our knowledge of the role of this political system on framing. To accomplish this, we dissect framing according to the type of media—commercial outlets versus the Communist Party press. We also investigate frames as a function of political policy, examining stories published before and after the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs instituted a campaign to improve the plight of "left-behind" children (LBC). This will tell whether policy changes could have influenced any evolution of frames.

The issue involves children who have literally been left behind by parents who move across the country for better pay because of the country's economic boom. An estimated one-fifth of all children in China live without a parent (Sumita, 2011). This issue is not associated with ideological differences that would explain framing, making it appropriate for our study that aims to uncover other processes. Additionally, this issue can have multiple legitimate frames, making the findings generalizable to other topics.

Background

In 2015, in rural southwestern China, four siblings, 5 to 13 years old, committed suicide by drinking pesticide (Phillips, 2015). Two years earlier, seven girls were raped by their teacher; they were 7 and 8 years old (Wu, 2013). In 2012, five children, dubbed "The Little Match Boys," died from carbon dioxide poisoning when they lit a fire in a trash bin to stay warm (Whitman, 2012). While these are some of the more horrifying and sensational stories of what has come to be known as rural China's "left-behind children," these children who have literally been left behind by parents who move across the country are by no means uncommon. Sixty-nine million children in China live without one parent; 2 million live entirely alone ("China," 2018). This phenomenon is the result of the country's economic boom that leads rural parents to migrate to cities for better pay. Even children who are living with grandparents or others can suffer negative consequences, including delinquency, depression, stress, poor nutrition and health, inadequate education, and victimization (Chen, Liang, & Ostertag, 2017; Guang et al., 2017). LBC are children under 18 who live in rural areas of China for at least six months without one or both parents who migrate to other cities for work (Duan & Zhou, 2005).

There are many reasons why parents who migrate do not take their children. Migrants typically earn low pay in construction, service, or manufacturing (Li & Li, 2007), and live in crowded conditions (Wen & Lin, 2012), such as dormitories. They cannot return home more than once or twice a year because they do not get enough time off and cannot afford the trip (Ling, Fu, & Zhang, 2017). Yet the long hours and low pay offer a better living than farming (Wallis, 2011). Much blame is placed on the "hukou" system of household registration, which classifies people as agricultural or urban, and gives benefits of education,

health care, and housing. Benefits are denied to those who move from agricultural areas to cities. Begun in the 1950s, the hukou system was designed to manage population growth, prevent overcrowding in cities, control unemployment, and maintain enough agricultural workers (Chan & Zhang, 1999). Thus, there are reasons for keeping it. Since the 1980s, loosening residency restrictions have facilitated migration, but services have not followed (Chang, Dong, & MacPhail, 2011). Parents often cannot afford schools, doctors, or a place to live with children (Lu, Lin, Vikse, & Huang, 2016). Although the Chinese government has instituted reforms, these are mostly ineffective (McKenzie & Dong, 2016). There is little public support for diluting the benefits of current residents (Juneja, 2017).

The decision to migrate is a true dilemma, as there are proven benefits—higher paying jobs that provide better housing, food, schooling, and medical care for their children and families back home (Chen et al., 2017). However, other consequences can be devastating. The crime rate for LBC is 70% higher than for other children ("The Children," 2009). Significantly more LBC smoke, use alcohol, are addicted to the Internet (Gao et al., 2010), and experience physical and sexual violence (Yang, 2005), victimization (Hartinger-Saunders, Rine, Wieczorek, & Nochajski, 2012), anger, loneliness, depression, and conduct problems than non-LBC do (Hu, Lu, & Huang, 2014).

Literature Review

Framing Theory

Frames constitute the ways journalists organize information for audiences (Gitlin, 1980). A frame is described as being like a picture that includes some aspects of reality, but leaves out others, leading people to focus on certain elements and not consider others (Entman, 1993). This aspect of framing has been understudied compared with research that explicitly looks at frames that are highlighted and made prominent. As Reese (2007) says, there is a "strong tendency in framing research to define the object too strictly as manifest content" (p. 151). Scholars say what is left out is just as important as what is emphasized, for it manipulates the public by omission (Entman, 2007).

What frames are left out or minimized is important because media frames set the parameters of public dialogue (D'Angelo, 2002), drive public opinion and the solutions and policies endorsed (Pan, 2013). Media have the power to influence policy and governmental regulation (Walgrave & Aelst, 2006), and the public's reaction to frames can affect governments' frames (Entman, 2004). People are not slaves to frames; they can and do develop their own interpretations (Pan & Kosicki, 2001). However, media frames have consistently been found to influence people's perceptions. Entman (1993) says omitted frames "may be as critical as the inclusions in guiding the audience" because, "receivers' responses are clearly affected if they perceive and process information about one interpretation and possess little or incommensurable data about alternatives" (p. 53).

One possibility for why certain frames may be omitted from news coverage is culture (Entman, 1993). Van Gorp (2007) proposes a "cultural stock of frames" (p. 67) or central themes that influence the schemas of both journalists and audiences. For example, one cultural frame in China is the nation as family

(Pan, Lee, Chan, & So, 1999). If a certain frame does not exist in a culture, it will not be included in the frames of the media or audiences. This could be the case for repressed frames.

Few studies could be found that explicitly examined omitted or underrepresented frames. Exceptions include Entman and Rojecki's (1993) study of how the nuclear freeze movement was framed, and other plausible frames not conveyed. Though most of the public supported the movement, media framing was not aligned with public opinion. Entman's (2003) study of 9/11 examined how journalists tried to incorporate frames of attribution of responsibility to Saudi Arabia that had initially been left out, focusing on Iraq instead. Bell and Entman (2011) showed how frames omitted from stories about tax cut policies left U.S. citizens without a balanced picture of the politics' effects. Beyond these, most studies that mention the least frequently used or omitted frames do so with little attempt to theorize them.

The context within which we examine left-out and repressed frames is appropriate because there are instances of Chinese media ignoring or minimizing causal frames. For example, in studying environmental disasters in China, the ecological-environmental frame was the least used even though the disasters were intrinsically environmental (Sukosd & Fu, 2013). The authors speculate this may have arisen from tensions between the government's duty to the health of citizens and economic development, which is the primary criterion for promoting leaders. Beaudoin (2007) found that Chinese coverage of the SARS virus used the responsibility frame the least, despite the government's mismanagement, slowness to warn, and failure to educate the public being primarily responsible for the outbreak's severity.

The Chinese government is highly concerned with how media influence public opinion and understands how media framing can be an effective propaganda tool (Zhang, Shao, & Bowman, 2012). Public deliberation is necessary for people to consent to authoritarian rule; it leads to proposed solutions and forces governments to be accountable (Jiang, 2010). Thus, understanding media framing is essential not only for a particular issue but also for how Chinese media structure public discourse in general.

The LBC issue provides an opportunity to examine Chinese media framing for what is excluded or minimized because it is not associated with ideological differences, such as a conflict that could be framed as security or occupation (Rettig & Avraham, 2016). And, like many issues, it can have multiple legitimate frames. We include frames that experts identify as the root causes of the problem because a "key component of framing" (Tankard, 2001, p. 103) is the function of promoting causal relationships (Entman, 2004). The LBC issue fits this criterion because experts who have extensively studied and worked on solving the problem of LBC have identified one particular cause as pervasive in the problem's cause and solutions, as will be explained below. This study looks at a nonideological issue with multiple legitimate frames, with one in particular closely connected to the cause, to see whether one or more of these frames is excluded or minimized in favor of others.

Government Policy

The LBC issue also affords the opportunity to examine whether and how frames shifted before and after a government policy change. In November 2016, the Chinese government issued a directive aimed at mitigating the problem following the pesticide suicide. It mainly provided guidance to the new profession of

social workers created to deal with LBC, but also reiterated laws against abandoning children (China Development Brief, 2017). The government began a nationwide census to count LBC (Sudworth, 2016) with the goal of placing them with guardians and ensuring they attend school. Similar to other issues in China (Beaudoin, 2007), journalists were initially forbidden from reporting it, but received greater freedom after the government directive. As public concern increased, the Communist Party appears to have relaxed its rules and allowed more leeway (Sudworth, 2016). For example, in 2012 a journalist who wrote about the boys who died in a dumpster fire was jailed, but by 2015, when the pesticide suicides occurred, there was widespread coverage, and local officials were punished (Miller, 2015). By comparing framing before and after the directive, we will be better able to see whether it influenced the amount of coverage and frames.

Framing Types

There are two distinct but complementary types of frames (de Vreese, 2005)—generic and issue-specific—that exist on different levels of abstraction in a layered structure (Brüggemann & D'Angelo, 2018). Given that most news stories employ both types, we examine both to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the issue. *Generic frames* are abstract-level frames, the most common of which include conflict, human interest, economic consequences, and morality (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000), and are typically coded at the story level, with each story primarily framed as one. Conflict frames emphasize disagreements; human-interest frames personalize an issue using emotion and by putting a face on the issue. Morality frames are concerned with right and wrong or ethics. Economic consequences frames focus on potential or actual financial impacts.

Studies of framing in Chinese media show no consistent pattern; for example, in the crash of a Malaysian airplane in 2014, the morality frame was used least (Bier, Park, & Palenchar, 2018), yet in coverage of the Asiana Airlines crash in 2013, morality was the second most common (Yan & Kim, 2015). In China's dispute with Google over censorship, Chinese newspapers used the conflict frame most, followed by economic consequences, morality, and human interest (Zhou & Mastin, 2014).

Specific to Chinese media is the *constructive* frame, which favors positive angles and the party's viewpoint (Yanqiu, 2014). This frame allows media to report on problems, creating a sense that the government is not suppressing negative news, while also giving the impression the party is responsive and effectively addressing issues (Repnikova, 2017). Thus, the party is less focused on censoring information than on framing it (Bandurski, 2010). In one study, this translated into factual details about a flood with positive information about crisis management (Repnikova, 2017). Chinese media tend to emphasize this frame, especially when the issue is nationally relevant (Kuang & Wei, 2018). Kuang and Wei (2018) proposed that when issues are nationally as opposed to locally sensitive, both party and nonparty media adopt the government's frames, and are less likely to use human interest and conflict. If this is the case, because the LBC issue is nationally important, we expect all forms of media to use the constructive frame significantly more than other generic frames. If Kuang and Wei's (2018) geographic relevance hypothesis holds, human interest and conflict frames should be used least. One weakness of extant studies is that they do not all include the constructive frame; however, from the studies that did, this frame was most prevalent, and it seems intuitive given the Chinese press system and the national importance of this issue that it would dominate:

H1:   *There will be significantly more constructive frames than other generic frames (conflict, human interest, economic consequences, morality) in Chinese media coverage of LBC.*

RQ1a: *Which of the generic frames are left out or repressed?*

Understanding the impact of government policy on framing is our second goal:

RQ1b: *Does generic framing of LBC change after the government directive is issued?*

Because news stories are not monothematic, coding only generic frames is inadequate; thus, in addition, there are concrete-level *specific frames* unique to each topic. Specific frames allow for a "profound level of specificity and details" (de Vreese, 2005, p. 54). Issue-specific frames are theoretically important for studying voids in coverage, as it is difficult to study what is not there unless we first have some idea of what should be there. Relying solely on news stories will only reveal frames that are present, not those that are absent. Instead, Van Gorp (2007) and Tankard (2001) suggest identifying frames from other contexts, including a review of academic literature. To increase the chances of identifying frames that may be omitted or repressed, we derived specific frames from studies on LBC in psychology, social work, education, and others. This allowed us to see what frames were most indicative of the issue as identified by experts outside the news industry.[1] We also searched stories from news organizations not in the sample inside and outside China (CNN, BBC, etc.). Because our data show only six stories coded as frames other than frames we identified—all one-paragraph briefs announcing events—we consider our frame list to be as exhaustive as possible.

Prominent frames from academic literature were *health,* including psychological (He et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2015), *deviance* by the children (Chen, 2009; Hartinger-Saunders et al., 2012) and *victimization* by others (Chen et al., 2017), *education* (Kong & Meng, 2010; Youlu, 2017), and the children's *relationships* with parents and others, such as their social networks and friends (Jia & Tian, 2010; Ling et al., 2017). We identified one root cause frame; almost all these studies discussed *financial* issues arising from the hukou system, costs of housing, education, and medical care as underlying causes of the problem. One review of literature (Shen, 2003) notes that most studies contain "special reference to the structural factor of uneven economic development" and that Chinese "migrate with the main purpose of earning more" (p. 89). "Most Chinese researchers agree that . . . choices based on economic reasons characterize the migration" (Shen, 2003, p. 89). Thus, we include financial issues as a specific frame, and suggest that as a root cause of this problem it should appear frequently.

Our final specific frame arose when we noted frequent use of frames showing that not all aspects of LBC lives were negative. This included respect for the elderly, caring by the LBC, and having fun; we

---

[1] To discover issue-specific frames, we searched "China" and "left-behind children" in Academic Search Complete and Google Scholar. This returned 163 and 106,000 studies, respectively. We read the abstracts, introductions, and literature reviews of all studies from the first search and 150 from the second until we reached saturation and uncovered no more new frames. We discarded duplicates and studies about left-behind women, left-behind elderly, or children in Romania.

named this the *positive* frame. As no research has been conducted on which of these specific frames are most prominent and left out in media coverage, this study makes a prediction and asks two questions:

H2:   The financial frame will be used significantly more than the other specific frames (health/psychological, deviance/victimization, relationships, education, positive).

RQ2a: Which of the other specific frames are left out or repressed?

RQ2b: Do the specific frames of LBC change after the government directive is issued?

China offers an opportunity to build framing theory partly because of the nature of its media system. It is a Communist country with state-owned media that is essentially an extension of the government, with daily directives from the party. Control is exercised tightly over political topics such as Tiananmen Square, Falun Gong, and Tibetan independence (Harwell & Romm, 2019). Instead of repression and regulation, nonparty media are subject to a "culture of uncertainty," with the party sending mixed signals about what is permissible and even abruptly reversing course and punishing journalists for something previously allowed, thus encouraging self-censorship (Stern & Hassid, 2012, p. 1231). Chinese media offer an opportunity to see how framing might work differently under these conditions, thereby building theory.

Over the past 25 years, as China has opened up to world trade, a more independent type of media has emerged (Zhao, 2008) that has more editorial autonomy than the ideology-oriented media that serve as mouthpieces for the Communist Party (Chan, Lee, & Pan, 2006). These news organizations are not subsidized by the government, but rely on advertising and subscribers (Zhao, 2008). Though still subject to government oversight, they have more editorial freedom (Lin, 2010). Because they face market constraints and competition, they need to appeal to audiences who are mostly middle class, young, educated, and liberal (Yuan, 2013; Zhao, 2008). To do so, they cover serious social problems and provide more criticism than the party press. One study of a deadly fire in a Shanghai apartment building found that nonparty newspapers questioned official explanations, aligning themselves with their audiences (Yuan, 2013).

Even though the nonparty media are still subject to censorship, scholars (Yuan, 2013) have found framing differs between it and the party media. This study compares nonparty media to Communist Party media to determine whether the nonparty media are indeed providing different frames to give citizens additional reference points:

H3:   Nonparty media will cover the LBC issue significantly more than party media.

H4:   Generic and specific frames will be significantly different in nonparty and party media.

Method

This study content analyzed six prominent media outlets in China, three controlled by the Communist Party and three nonparty media.

Party Media

People's Daily (People.com.cn) is the official newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party. It provides information directly from the party on its policies and views. Xinhua News Agency (Xinhuanet.com) is the official press agency of the party, and the country's largest media organization. Their websites are some of the most visited online news sites in China (China Internet Watch, 2015). Rednet.com (Rednet.cn) is a local news website of the Hunan Provincial Party Committee, located in one of the provinces with the most LBC—more than half the children there (Luo et al., 2019).

Nonparty Media

Sina.com.cn is an online news site with more than 2.2 million users (Sina.com, n.d.) and one of China's top 10 news websites (China Internet Watch, 2018). QQ.com (Tencent) is a large-scale portal that tied for top news information site in 2018 (China Internet Watch, 2019). The online news site of a Hong Kong television broadcaster, iFeng.com was a top 10 website in 2018 (China Internet Watch, 2018) and was temporarily shut down by the government (Udemans, 2018). China allows licensed Internet news outlets to collect, edit, create, and reprint information published by other entities (China Law Translate, 2017). Some websites reprint more than create; however, the focus of this study is what frames audiences are exposed to rather than who creates them.

A G*Power analysis showed that a sample size of 134 was needed for a power level of .95 and error probability of .05. We used five constructed weeks to represent one year (Hester & Dougall, 2007). Data were collected one year before the LBC policy was issued (February 2015–January 2016) and one year after (February 2016–January 2017) for 10 constructed weeks in the six news media, for 138 stories total.[2]

We used the story as the unit of analysis for generic frames (Semetko & Valkenberg, 2000); coders decided which one the story was mainly framed as for a categorical measure. Frames were operationalized as follows: *Conflict*, showing two sides to a story by pitting sources or viewpoints against each other, was coded if the story primarily reflected disagreement among parties, individuals, groups, or countries, or referred to two or more sides of the problem. *Economic consequences,* about poverty, costs, finances, or economic implications, was coded if it primarily concerned the costs or financial consequences of a course of action, or the financial costs/degree of expense involved, or monetary losses or gains. *Human interest*, using examples that personalize a story, or an emotional angle, was coded if the story primarily used adjectives or vignettes to generate feelings of outrage, empathy or caring, provided a human example or put a face to the issue, or discussed how the issue or problem affected individuals and groups. *Morality,* emphasizing values, ethics, morals, religious or cultural norms or tenets, was coded if the story primarily contained ethical messages, made reference to God or other religious tenets, or gave specific prescriptions on how to behave. The *constructive* frame, favoring positive angles and the Communist Party's point of view (Wekesa & Yanqiu, 2014; Yanqiu, 2014) and creating the impression that the party is responsive and effectively addressing issues, was coded if it primarily included factual details with positive information about

---

[2] The number of articles is comparable to other studies of specific issues (e.g., Entman, 2003; Rettig & Avraham, 2016).

the management of the issue, official announcements, constructive advice from experts rather than criticism, and citizens praising government efforts (Repnikova, 2017).

Issue-specific frames were derived from academic research on the concerns around LBC and a close reading of stories not in the sample. Six emerged: *Health*, including physical and psychological issues, such as depression, stress, suicide, self-harm, nutrition, hygiene, injuries, and disease. *Deviance/victimization*, included crimes and bad behavior by LBC and crimes committed against them, including addiction to online games, stealing, vandalism, death, murder, rape, stigma, and discrimination. *Education* included school attendance, learning, studying, and tutoring. *Relationships* focused on friends, family, loneliness, happiness, and life satisfaction. *Financial* frames included discussions of poverty, costs of goods and services, difficulty finding work, low pay, and jobs. A close reading of stories not in the sample revealed the existence of another frame we called *positive.* It showed not all aspects of LBC lives were negative and included respect for the elderly, caring by the LBC, having fun, and helping people. As smaller recording units are appropriate for specific frames (Bruggemann & D'Angelo, 2018), we coded the number of paragraphs containing each frame for a continuous measure.

Two coders, both native Chinese speakers, were trained for 40 hours over three weeks using data not in the study. After training and several pretests, 30 stories (22%) not included in the sample were coded independently. Intercoder reliability was excellent (Krippendorff's alpha: generic frames = .931; specific frames—health = .982; deviance/victimization = 1.0; education = .998; relationships = 1.0; financial = 1.0; positive = .931).

Results

Of the 138 stories, 69% came after the policy, significantly more than before it ($t = -2.304$, $df = 136$, $p < .05$).

H1, predicting there would be significantly more constructive frames than other generic frames, was not supported. There were significant differences between frames ($\chi^2 = 118.606$, $df = 4$, $p < .001$),[3] with human interest used most and constructive second (see Table 1).

Table 1. Frequencies and Percentages of Generic Frames.

	Combined	Party	Nonparty
Human interest	68 (51.5%)	25 (46.3%)	43 (51.2%)
Constructive	42 (31.8%)	25 (46.3%)	17 (20.2%)
Conflict	14 (10.6%)	3 (5.6%)	11 (13.1%)
Economic	4 (3%)	1 (1.9%)	3 (3.6%)
Morality	4 (3%)	0	4 (4.8%)

---

[3] Assumptions for chi-squared tests of independence were met, as no cells had expected frequencies less than five.

RQ1a asked which generic frames were least used: these were economic consequences and morality. Both frames appeared in only 3% of the stories (see Table 1).

RQ1b asked whether generic framing changed after the government directive; we found it did not (χ^2 = 4.129, df = 5, p = .531).

H2, that the financial frame will be used significantly more than other specific frames, was not supported; in fact, there was significance in the opposite direction predicted. Financial frames were used significantly *less* often than relationship (t = −3.685, df = 137, p < .001) and positive frames (t = −2.649, df = 137, p < .01).

RQ2a—which of the specific frames were least used—found these were deviance/victimization and financial, with an average of 1.04 deviance frames per story, and 1.45 financial frames per story (see Table 2).

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations of Unique Frames.

Frame	Mean (*SD*)
Positive	2.33 (2.95)
Relationships	2.12 (2.88)
Health/Psychological	1.83 (3.77)
Education	1.69 (2.27)
Financial	1.45 (2.69)
Deviance	1.04 (3.30)

RQ2b asked whether the specific frames changed after the government directive. Welch's test, recommended when assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity are not met, was used with a Bonferroni correction. None of the frames were significantly different after the policy than before (see Table 3).

Table 3. Welch's Tests of Specific Frames Before and After Government Policy, and by Media Type.

Specific frame	Before/After policy *F* (*df*), *p*	Party/Nonparty media *F* (*df*), *p*
Financial	1.53 (1), .204	6.38 (1), .013
Health/Psychological	.21 (1), .644	7.43 (1), .007*
Deviance/Victimization	.24 (1), .623	3.77 (1), .054
Education	.46 (1), .498	.30 (1), .583
Relationships	1.64 (1), .203	5.25 (1), .023
Positive	.76 (1), .384	1.96 (1), .164

*p < .008
Note. Bonferroni correction for six tests set the criterion *p* value at .008.

H3, predicting that nonparty media would cover the issue significantly more than party media, was supported (t = −20.201, df = 135.994, p < .001; party, M = 27.50, SD = 15.732; nonparty, M = 96.5, SD = 24.393).

H4, predicting that frames would be significantly different between nonparty and party media, was partially supported. It was supported for the generic frames (χ^2 = 11.889, *df* = 4, *p* < .05), and one of the six specific frames. A 2 × 2 chi-squared test of independence using the two most frequent frames, human interest and constructive, showed that nonparty media used the human interest frame significantly more than party media, and party media used constructive frames significantly more than nonparty media (χ^2 = 5.424, *df* = 1, *p* < .05; see Table 1). This was also supported for one of the six specific frames—health/psychological—using Welch's tests with Bonferroni corrections, *F* = 7.42 (1), *p* = .007. Nonparty media used more health frames than party media: nonparty, *M* = 2.51 (4.64), party *M* = .76 (1.08); see Table 3.

Discussion

As it was our intent to discover what frames were left out as well as what were included, it is notable that for this issue there were not more generic economic consequences and specific financial frames, which literature indicated were at the root cause of the problem. In fact, these represented the least used and second-least used frames, respectively. There were occasional sentences about financial aspects, but few stories were framed mainly as economics. This is counterintuitive for an issue that arises out of poverty, leading parents to leave home for better pay, with financial constraints from the way social benefits are awarded deterring parents from taking children with them. The pay that drives migration is still not enough for parents to afford to return home often. The ultimate solution—reforming the hukou system—would mean fewer economic benefits for current citizens. Despite all these economic implications, the economic consequences frame tied with morality for last place in generic framing, appearing less than human interest, constructive, and conflict. The financial frame was the next-to-the-least used of the specific frames, occurring slightly more than the deviance/victimization frame. The few economic-consequences-framed stories all appeared in the nonparty media. The nonparty media may soften their frames they create or choose to reprint (Zhou & Moy, 2007) for fear it would be perceived as criticizing the party itself. In November 2015, the Communist Party prioritized the fight against poverty to ensure that the rural poor would be lifted out of economic hardship by 2020. President Xi Jinping emphasized that eliminating poverty, improving people's livelihoods, and gradually achieving common prosperity are an important mission. Yet there remain 40 million poor people in China, and the number of LBC grows. Framing the issue in terms of economics would only serve to highlight the lack of progress. Another explanation could be that the economic and financial frames are just not in the cultural stock of frames in China (Van Gorp, 2007), although we find that unlikely, as they appeared in Chinese media with respect to Google (Zhou & Mastin, 2014) and SARS (Beaudoin, 2007).

Instead, the Chinese news media were significantly more likely to frame the LBC issue using constructive frames encouraged by the party and human interest. This broke down by media type. Party media used constructive framing most, followed by human interest. Nonparty media framing was reversed—human interest first, constructive second. This is counter to the findings by Kuang and Wei (2018), who predicted and found that human interest would be among the least used frames in a nationally sensitive issue; in *this* nationally sensitive issue, it was the most used frame. We find the geographic relevance hypothesis (Kuang & Wei, 2018) is not generalizable to all nationally sensitive issues in China; rather, something else is going on. In this we see framing as either a device of self-censorship or cultural resonance, or perhaps a combination of both. Regardless of the reason, journalists appear to be eschewing the root

cause frames either out of an abundance of caution about offending the government, or subconsciously because it is not culturally congruent with their schemas. In selecting the human-interest frame, journalists are deviating from the root cause of the problem and distracting readers from the main issue. We call this "digressive framing"—when a frame diverts attention from the root cause of the issue (explained in detail in the conclusion). This type of framing is about more than simply not providing a frame of reference for understanding the issue; it is about not providing the frame with greater promise of solutions.

Until the media begin to frame the issue as one of finances and economic consequences, the root cause of LBC is unlikely to be resolved. Solutions implemented so far have reflected the human-interest aspects of media framing; for example, social organizations have organized opportunities for LBC to experience Chinese traditional culture, such as free art training. After the policy was enacted, more people joined organizations to care for LBC. One group taught children to ballroom dance. Businesses set up charitable activities such as the "Love Heart Miles" walk sponsored by a pharmaceutical company. In another area, LBC wear wristbands with GPS tracking that allows them to report emergencies to police ("Smart Wristbands," 2017). Youth centers with books and sports equipment have been built (Wei, 2018). Though laudable, these efforts reduce the harm to LBC, but do not address the cause or provide long-term solutions. Tellingly, it was the nonparty media that reported these efforts. The party media concentrated on reporting the efforts of local and regional governments to comply with the party policy by surveying the number of LBC and issuing statements reinforcing the responsibility of parents, emphasizing that education is compulsory, and working to establish the new profession of social work. There was little discussion of reforming the hukou system. The paucity of economic frames makes it unlikely that the problem will be solved and families reunited. Instead, harm reduction efforts will dominate.

Another purpose of this study was to examine how the LBC policy of November 2016 affected media framing. The answer is not much. The policy appears to have facilitated journalists' ability to write more stories, especially by nonparty media, where most of these stories appeared. But it had no effect on framing. There was slightly more of an effect on framing by the type of media—nonparty or official Communist Party. Nonparty media wrote significantly more stories on LBC and used the human-interest frame significantly more than the party media; the party media used the constructive frame significantly more. Nonparty media also framed significantly more stories as health related than did party media. Nonparty media are indeed free to frame stories in ways other than the party line; however, they appear to have used one frame—human interest.

We suggest that highlighting failed economic policies, even in indirect ways, may be seen as akin to criticizing the party itself. The lack of economic consequences frames at the generic level, and financial frames at the specific level is concerning in that the nonparty media are not providing more critical commentary. Given the government control of the party media, it will be up to the nonparty media in China to provide citizens with information and frameworks that they cannot come up with on their own to solve problems effectively.

Conclusion

Chinese media frame the LBC issue quite narrowly using predominately two frames—human interest in the nonparty media, and the constructive frame in the party media. The second most common frames are the same but reversed, with nonparty media using the constructive frame and party media the human-interest

frame. The amount of coverage of the issue increased after the government issued its directive in November 2016, thus drawing more attention to the problem, but framing did not change. Though there may be more discussion of the subject among China's citizens, the range of solutions is likely to be limited to what individuals can do to reduce suffering, rather than what can be done to eliminate the problem. Public opinion is unlikely to induce changes in government economic policy because that is not what is highlighted. Based on the root cause of the problem, we expected the economic consequences and financial frames to be more prominent; however, they were sorely lacking, even in the nonparty media. This cannot be because the economic frame is off-limits in China, as it has been found in studies of issues such as SARS (Beaudoin, 2007) and Google, where it was the second most prevalent frame (Zhou & Mastin, 2014). But unlike the Google issue, the topic of LBC is tied to economics that arise directly out of the government's hukou policy, rather than from foreign interests. Using the economic consequences and financial frames for this issue would indirectly cast criticism on the government and highlight the lack of progress on poverty in general. Instead, journalists used the human-interest frame, something we call "digressive framing," because it shifts the frame from what it should logically be to address root causes. It redirects the audiences' attention. We note that some frames will always be more frequently used than others; this does not make the least used frame "digressive." To qualify as digressive, the frame that is minimized or repressed must be at the root of the problem—for example, experts have attributed homelessness to both economics (lack of good paying jobs) and mental illness (alcohol and drug addiction); framing that diverted attention away from these would meet our definition of digressive. In this issue, the morality frame is also not much used, but there is no indication that morals are at the root of the LBC problem. If frames that are at the root cause of the issue are not appearing frequently, then it may be considered digressive framing. Digressive framing masks the importance of the primary cause of the issue and shifts the focus to other topics. It inexplicably leaves out these frames about the root cause, despite their logical connection.

The human-interest frame appeals to audiences while appeasing censors, and it comports with cultural schemas of the Chinese government as the head of the "family," caring for its citizens. However, digressive framing masks the importance of the root cause of the issue and shifts the focus to other topics. When that happens, effective change cannot occur because citizens are focused on symptoms and not causes of problems. We argue that in a culture where media are controlled, when government policy is at odds with remedying an issue, or cultural schemas do not exist, the frame most associated with the root cause of the issue is not the one most used. Instead, other "safer" frames that distract from the logic of the real solution dominate. This theoretical idea of digressive framing may occur in other situations where government policy is at the root of a problem. For example, stories about human rights violations or climate change, which are directly caused by China's policies and could be remedied by them. Two studies have hinted at this; one about environmental disasters, where the health of citizens is at odds with economic development (Sukosd & Fu, 2013), and another about the SARS virus, which avoided frames that implicated the government as responsible (Beaudoin, 2007). This also could occur in other countries that have varying degrees of media freedom, and even in cultures with free media. Entman and colleagues' studies of framing of the nuclear freeze movement (Entman & Rojecki, 1993), 9/11 (Entman, 2003), and tax cut policies (Bell & Entman, 2011) suggest as much. Another recent example is when professional football players kneeled during the U.S. national anthem to highlight mistreatment of African Americans by police; framing shifted from racism to patriotism, distracting audiences from the underlying cause of the protest. In this case, sources were responsible for the digressive frame that diverted attention from the original intent. To build theory, there should be more focus on frames

that are inexplicably left out, despite their connection to the problem's cause. Understanding digressive framing is a start. Studies in other contexts with different issues could examine whether this theoretical idea is generalizable. This could represent a subtle form of self-censorship, where journalists must walk a fine line between implicating the government and providing citizens with legitimate frames of reference to solve problems, a case of cultural incongruence, where journalists simply do not have these underlying frames at their cognitive disposal, or something else. Understanding how and when digressive framing occurs will lead to a more sophisticated theory. Practical solutions that help journalists adapt should also be explored; for example, whether weaving more financial frames into human-interest stories would achieve the goal of better representing the entirety of the problem while skirting the government censors' notice.

This study has only analyzed traditional and online news outlets, and thus one limitation is that it does not capture frames in other outlets, such as social media, or attempt to compare media frames with audience frames. Now that this study has uncovered the dominant media frames of the LBC issue, future research should examine frames the audience uses to interpret the problem, comparing them with the media's frames. Interviews conducted with Chinese journalists may shed light on influences on frame selection. Studies of Chinese journalists' production processes might reveal ways to encourage framing that address root causes. This study did not measure other indicators of repressed frames such as story placement. Future research also should examine omitted or minimized frames in other issues and countries to determine whether digressive framing is generalizable.

References

Beaudoin, C. E. (2007). SARS news coverage and its determinants in China and the United States. *International Communication Gazette, 69*(6), 509–524.

Bell, C. V., Entman, R. M., Gross, K., & Rojecki, A. (2014). *Racial framing and racial appeals in the 2012 Presidential election*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, D.C.

Bier, L. M., Park, S., & Palenchar, M. J. (2018). Framing the flight MH370 mystery: A content analysis of Malaysian, Chinese, and U.S. media. *International Communication Gazette, 80*(2), 158–184. doi:10.1177/1748048517707440

Bruggemann, M., & D'Angelo, P. (2018). Reconciling generic and issue-specific frames. In P. D'Angelo (Ed.), *Doing news framing analysis II: Empirical and theoretical perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Chan, J. M., Lee, F. L. F., & Pan, Z. (2006). Online news meets established journalism: How China's journalists evaluate the credibility of news websites. *New Media & Society, 8*(6), 925–947.

Chan, K. W., & Zhang, L. (1999). The Hukou system and rural urban migration in China: Processes and changes. *China Quarterly, 160*, 818–855.

Chang, H., Dong, X. Y., & MacPhail, F. (2011). Labor migration and time use patterns of the left-behind children and elderly in rural China. *World Development, 39*(12), 2199–2210. doi:10.1177/1461444806069649

Chen, X. (2009). The link between juvenile offending and victimization: The influence of risky lifestyles, social bonding, and individual characteristics. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice, 7*, 119–135. doi:10.1177/1541204008328799

Chen, Z., Liang, N., & Ostertag, S. F. (2017). Victimization of children left behind in rural China. *Journal of research in Crime and Delinquency, 54*(4), 515–534. doi:10.1177/0022427816660145

"China." (2018). *UNICEF Annual Report 2017.* Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/about/annualreport/files/China_2017_COAR.pdf.

China Development Brief. (2017, August 22). *Government issues guidance on social workers involved in the protection of rural left-behind children.* Retrieved from http://www.chinadevelopmentbrief.cn/ news/government-issues-guidance-on-social-workers-involved-in-the-protection-of-rural-left-behind-children/

China Internet Watch. (2015, November 9). China Top 10 news websites in September 2015. *China Internet Watch.* Retrieved from https://www.chinainternetwatch.com/15375/news-websites-september-2015/

China Internet Watch. (2018, November 9). *Statistics: Top 500 websites in China by unique visitors (UV) in May 2018.* Retrieved from https://www.chinainternetwatch.com/15375/news-websites-september-2015/

China Internet Watch. (2019, January 16). *China's top mobile apps in social media, news, and paid knowledge in Q3 2018.* Retrieved from https://www.chinainternetwatch.com/?s=news+media

China Law Translate. (2017, May 22) Retrieved from https://www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/detailed-rules-on-the-implementation-of-internet-news-information-service licensing/

D'Angelo, P. (2002). News framing as a multiparadigmatic research program: A response to Entman. *Journal of Communication, 52*(4), 870–888.

de Vreese, C. H. (2005). News framing: Theory and typology. *Information Design Journal + Document Design, 13*(1), 51–62.

Duan, C., & Zhou, F. L. (2005). Research on the left-behind children in China. *Population Research, 29*, 29–35.

Edelman, M. J. (1993). Contestable categories and public opinion. *Political Communication, 10*(3), 231–242. doi:10.1080/10584609.1993.9962981

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication, 43*(4), 51–58.

Entman, R. M. (2003). Cascading activation: Contesting the White House's frame after 9/11. *Political Communication, 20*(4), 415–432. doi:10.1080/10584600390244176

Entman, R. M. (2004). *Projects of power: Framing news, public opinion, and U.S. foreign policy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Entman, R. M. (2007). Framing bias: Media in the distribution of power. *Journal of Communication, 57*(1), 163–173. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00336.x

Entman, R. M., & Rojecki, A. (1993). Freezing out the public: Elite and media framing of the U.S. anti-nuclear movement. *Political Communication, 10*(2), 155–173. doi:10.1080/10584609.1993.9962973

Gao, Y., Li, L. P., Kim, J. H., Congdon, N., Lau, J., & Griffiths, S. (2010). The impact of parental migration on health status and health behaviors among left behind adolescent school children in China. *BMC Public Health, 10*, 56. doi:10.1186/1471-2458-10-56

Gitlin, T. (1980). *The whole world is watching*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Guang, Y., Feng, Z., Yang, G., Yang, Y., Wang, L., Dai, Q., . . . & Zhao, M. (2017). Depressive symptoms and negative life events: What psychosocial factors protect or harm left-behind children in China? *BMC Psychiatry, 17*(402), 1–16. doi:10.1186/s12888-017-1554-1

Hartinger-Saunders, R. M., Rine, C. M., Wieczorek, W., & Nochajski, T. (2012). Family level predictors of victimization and offending among young men: Rethinking the role of parents in preventing and interventions models. *Children and Youth Services Review, 34*, 2423–2432. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2012.08.017

Harwell, D. & Romm, T. (2019, November 5). Inside Tik Tok: A culture clash where U.S. views about censorship often were overridden by the Chinese bosses. *The Washington Post.* Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/11/05/inside-tiktok-culture-clash-where-us-views-about-censorship-often-were-overridden-by-chinese-bosses/

Hester, J. B., & Dougall, E. (2007). The efficiency of constructed week sampling for content analysis of online news. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 84*(4), 811–824. doi:10.1177/107769900708400410

Bandurski, D. (2010, June 19). How officials can spin the media. *China Media Project.* Retrieved from https://chinamediaproject.org/2010/06/19/how-officials-can-spin-the-media/

Hu, H., Lu, S., & Huang, C. C. (2014). The psychological and behavioral outcomes of migrant and left-behind children in China. *Children and Youth Services Review, 46*, 1–10.

Jia, Z., & Tian, W. (2010). Loneliness of left-behind children: A crosssectional survey in a sample of rural China. *Child: Care, Health and Development, 36*(6), 812–817.

Jiang, M. (2010). Authoritarian deliberation on Chinese Internet. *Electronic Journal of Communication, 20*(3/4). Retrieved from http://www.cios.org/www/ejc/v20n34toc.htm#jiangfr

Juneja, P. (2017, July 14). China's hukou system: An interview with Fei-ling Wang. *The Diplomat.* Retrieved from https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/chinas-hukou-system/

Kong, T., & Meng, X. (2010). The educational and health outcomes of the children of migrants. In X. Meng, C. Manning, S. Li, & T. N. Effendi (Eds.), *The great migration: Rural-urban migration in China and Indonesia* (pp. 97–120). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Kuang, X., & Wei, R. (2018). How framing of nationally and locally sensitive issues varies? A content analysis of news from party and nonparty newspapers in China. *Journalism, 19*(9/10), 1435–1451. doi:10.1177/1464884917731179

Li, P., & Li, W. (2007). Economic status and social attitudes of migrant workers in China. *China and World Economy, 15*(4), 1–16. doi:10.1111/j.1749-124X.2007.00072.x

Lin, F. (2010). Research report: A survey report on Chinese journalists in China. *The China Quarterly, 202*(1), 421–434.

Ling, H., Fu, E., & Zhang, J. R. (2017). Peer-relationships of left-behind children in China moderate their loneliness. *Social Behavior & Personality, 45*(6), 901–914. doi:10.2224/sbp.6021

Lu, S., Lin, Y. T., Vikse, J. H., & Huang, C. C. (2016). Well-being of migrant and left-behind children in China: Education, health, parenting, and personal values. *International Journal of Social Welfare, 25*, 58–68. doi:10.1111/ijsw.12162

Luo, J., Zou, J., Ji, M., Yuan, T., Sun, M., & Lin, Q. (2019). Emotional and behavioral problems among 3- to 5-year-old left-behind children in poor rural areas of Hunan province: A cross-sectional study. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 16*(21), 4188–4200. doi:10.3390/ijerph16214188

McKenzie, D., & Dong, S. (2016, February 16). China to migrant workers: Take your kids with you. *CNN.* Retrieved from https://edition.cnn.com/2016/02/16/asia/china-migrant-children/index.html

Miller, M. (2015, June 15). The heartbreaking reason four Chinese siblings drank poison and died. *The Washington Post.* Retrieved from https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2015/06/15/the-heartbreaking-reason-four-chinese-siblings-drank-poison-and-died/?utm_term=.478410ac2189

Pan, J. (2013). Impacts of content preferences and elaboration on the effects of "incompetent authority" frame in Chinese product recall coverage. *Atlantic Journal of Communication, 21*, 200–215. doi:10.1080/15456870.2013.823968

Pan, Z., & Kosicki, G. M. (2001). Framing as a strategic action in public deliberation. In S. D. Reese, O. H. Gandy Jr., & A. E. Grant (Eds.), *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world* (pp. 1–32). New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.

Pan, Z., Lee, C. C., Chan, L. M., & So, C. Y. K. (1999). One event, three stories: Media narratives of the handover of Hong Kong in cultural China. *Gazette: International Journal for Communication Studies, 61*(2), 99–112. doi:10.1177/0016549299061002001

Paradies, M., & Busch, D. (1988). Root cause analysis at Savannah River Plant. *Conference Record for 1988 IEEE Fourth Conference on Human Factors and Power Plants, Monterey, CA,* 479–483. Retrieved from http://ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=7086683&site=ehost-live

Phillips, T. (2015, June 11). Four "left-behind" children in China die of poisoning after being abandoned. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/11/four-left-behind-children-in-china-die-of-poisoning-after-being-abandoned-by-parents

Reese, S. D. (2007). The framing project: A bridging model for media research revisited. *Journal of Communication, 57*, 148–154. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00334.x

Repnikova, M. (2017). Information management during crisis events: A case study of Beijing floods of 2012. *Journal of Contemporary China, 26*(107), 711–725. doi:10.1080/10670564.2017.1305503

Rettig, E., & Avraham, E. (2016). The role of intergovernmental organizations in the "battle over framing": The case of the Israeli–West Bank separation barrier. *International Journal of Press/Politics, 21*(1), 111–133. doi:10.1177/1940161215613060

Semetko, H. A., & Valkenburg, P. M. (2000). Framing European politics: A content analysis of press and television news. *Journal of Communication, 50*(2), 93–108. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02843.x

Shen, T. (2003). Rural workforce migration: A summary of some studies. *Social Sciences in China, 24*(4), 84–101.

Sina.com. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://ir.sina.com/news-releases/news-release-details/largest-chinese-internet-portal-sinacom-completes-25-million

Smart wristbands protect China's left-behind children. (2017, September 30). *Xinhua/English.news.cn.* Retrieved from http://www.xinhuanet.com//english/2017-09/30/c_136650972.htm

Stern, R. E., & Hassid, J. (2012). Amplifying silence: Uncertainty and control parables in contemporary China. *Comparative Political Studies, 45*(10), 1230–1254. doi:10.1177/0010414011434295

Sudworth, J. (2016, April 12). Counting the cost of China's left-behind children. *BBC News.* Retrieved from: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-35994481

Sukosd, M., & Fu, K. W. (2013). *How Chinese netizens discuss environmental conflicts: Framing and functions on Sina Weibo.* Retrieved from http://com.cityu.edu.hk/COMDOC/Seminar/paper/2013/seminarPaper-2013-09-16-1.pdf

Sumita, M. (2011). Communique of the National Bureau of Statistics of People's Republic of China on major figures of the 2010 population census. *China Population Today, 6*, 19–23.

Tankard, J. W. (2001). The empirical approach to the study of media framing. In S. D. Reese, O. H. Gandy, & A. E. Grant (Eds.), *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world* (pp. 95–106). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

The children of migrant workers in China. (2009, May 8). *China Labour Bulletin.* Retrieved from https://clb.org.hk/en/content/children-migrant-workers-china-2).

Udemans, C. (2018, September 27). *Briefing: Chinese regulator suspend ifeng.com's services over "illegal" information*. Retrieved from https://technode.com/2018/09/27/ifeng-suspension-cac/

Van Gorp, B. (2007). The constructionist approach to framing: Bringing culture back in. *Journal of Communication, 57*(1), 60–78. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00329.x

Walgrave, S., & Aelst, P. V. (2006). The contingency of the mass media's political agenda-setting power: Toward a preliminary theory. *Journal of Communication, 56*(1), 88–109. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00005.x

Wallis, C. (2011). New media practices in China: Youth patterns, processes, and politics. *International Journal of Communication, 5*, 406–436. doi:1932–8036/20110406.

Wang, L., Feng, Z., Yang, G., Yang, Y., Dai, Q., Hu, C., . . . & Zhao, M. (2015). The epidemiological characteristics of depressive symptoms in the left-behind children and adolescents of Chongqing in China. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 177*, 36–41. doi:10.1016/j.jad.2015.01.002

Wei, L. (2018, February 7). *"Companion mothers" help care for rural left-behind children*. Retrieved from http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-02/07/c_136956976.htm

Wekesa, B., & Yanqiu, Z. (2014, May). Live, talk, face: An analysis of CCTV's adaptation to the African media market. *China Africa Reporting Project* (Unpublished paper). Stellenbosch University, Centre for Chinese Studies. Retrieved from http://www.sun.ac.za/ccs

Wen, M., & Lin, D. (2012). Child development in rural China: Children left behind by their migrant parents and children of nonmigrant families. *Child Development, 83*(1), 120–136. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2011.01698.x

Whitman, H. (2012, November 22). Deaths in dumpster expose plight of China's street kids. *CNN.* Retrieved from https://edition.cnn.com/2012/11/21/world/asia/china-boys-dead-dumpster/index.html

Wu, U. (2013, August 12). The abuse of China's 'left-behind' children. *BBC News.* Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-23628090

Yan, Y., & Kim, Y. (2015). Framing the crisis by one's seat: A comparative study of newspaper frames of the Asiana crash in the U.S.A., Korea, and China. *Asian Journal of Communication, 25*(5), 486–506. doi:10.1080/01292986.2014.990470

Yang, D. (2005). *The development report of China's education*. Beijing, China: Social Sciences Academic.

Yanqiu, Z. (2014, September). *Understand China's media in Africa from the perspective of constructive journalism.* Paper presented at the International Conference China and Africa Media, Communications and Public Diplomacy, Beijing, China.

Youlu, S. (2017). "Migrating" or being "left behind": The education dilemma of rural children in mainland China. *Chinese Education & Society, 50*(3), 217–244. doi:10.1080/10611932.2017.1331014

Yuan, E. J. (2013). Online journalism in social transformations: A community structure approach. *Journalism Studies, 14*(1), 78–93. doi:10.1080/1461670X.2012.679861

Zhang, G., Shao, G., & Bowman, N. D. (2012). What is most important for my country is not most important for me: Agenda-setting effects in China. *Communication Research, 39*(5), 662–678. doi:10.1177/0093650211420996

Zhao, Y. (2008). *Communication in China: Political economy, power, and conflict*. New York, NY: Rowman & Littlefield.

Zhou, C., & Mastin, T. (2014). Chinese, U.S. newspapers differ in use of news frames. *Newspaper Research Journal, 35*(3), 52–65. doi:10.1177/073953291403500305

Zhou, Y., & Moy, P. (2007). Parsing framing processes: The interplay between online public opinion and media coverage. *Journal of Communication, 57*(1), 79–98. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00330.x