BELIEF CONSISTENCY:

EXPLORING A BALANCE AMONG TRUST IN GOVERNMENT, PERCEIVED NEWS MEDIA CREDIBILITY AND MEDIA USE

BY

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(Chair)

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Abstract

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Based on the balance theory, the main purpose of this study is to explore whether there is a consistent relationship among an individual's trust in government, perceived news media credibility and media use.

After surveying both Chinese and American students, the results reveal that an individual's trust in government is positively related to his/ her perceived media credibility. The study also found that the relationship between trust in government and perceived news media credibility is contingent on the perceived relationship between government and media among American students.

However, this study didn't find the relationship between perceived news media credibility and media use.

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This thesis is dedicated to dad and mom, with love.

(Zhenxian Xie and Yiyong Zheng)

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTIOIN

Situation of Chinese Media and Audiences

In 2003, China was stung by global criticism for covering up the outbreak and the spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Chinese media shared the responsibility for covering up the extent of SARS in China, and thus lost the public's faith. However, no data show that the Chinese are skeptical of the credibility of the current media.

It has always been known that Chinese media are controlled by the government, and the media are used for delivering propaganda to the public. Taking television broadcasting as an example, Chinese television broadcasting is monopolized by Chinese Center Television (CCTV), which is the only national network in China. CCTV is supervised by the Central Propaganda Department, which censors its media contents and assigns its managers. CCTV-1 is the main news channel, and it produces news broadcasts at least five times a day. According to an analysis by Hazelbarth (1997), nearly 500 million people watch CCTV-1's 7 p.m. news broadcast every day, which all local stations are require to carry. The content of the 7 p.m. news is strictly censored by the government, and 50%-80% of the news coverage reports leaders' activities or government policies.

One-sided coverage of government and the exposure of political corruption cases by the media spur growing skepticism toward authority in the Chinese public. Public skepticism toward government authority also includes skepticism toward the media. According to Hazelbarth's (1997) study, although the data about media credibility are

limited, it shows that the Chinese public generally does not trust Chinese media, because they know what they view or hear is controlled by the government. Hazelbarth mentioned: “Chinese public attitudes toward the media historically have been negative because of the media’s traditional close identification with the State.” (Hazelbarth, 1997, p. 15)

The public’s perception of credibility of media is an important issue in communication research. Nevertheless, there is little academic research to be found on Chinese audiences’ perceived credibility of Chinese news media when searching many popular websites concerned with Chinese communication research (e.g. www.cddc.net, www.mediachina.net, www.cjr.org). Furthermore, because of limited research regarding Chinese skepticism toward Chinese media or Chinese government currently, more academic attention is needed.

Differences between Chinese and American Media

China and the United States employ different political systems; therefore, the media play different roles in these two countries. In the United States, which is a democratic nation, the First Amendment guaranteed the right of free media to express opinions without the censorship of the government. Although scholars suspect the “free press” is not really completely free, American media generally claim to be independent from government, and are less restricted by government than in most countries. In China, the totalitarian political regime makes the media a tool of propaganda that influences public opinion. Chinese news media have such a tight connection with the government that the media are always identified as the party’s press. If studying media credibility by the

Chinese public, it would be wholly naive to separate trust in press from trust in government (Chaffee, Nass and Yang, 1991).

Chinese students who are studying in the United States have already grown up in the Chinese government-media environment before they come to the United States. Their individual dispositions toward the media have been shaped by their assessments of the constrained condition of Chinese media. Gunther and Synder (1992) demonstrate that people who live in countries with high censorship are likely to be more critical of news than people who believe their countries have a free and objective press. Therefore, comparing the perceived credibility of media between China and America, it can be assumed that the Chinese public tends to be critical consumers of news more than the American public. When Chinese students study in the United States, the media available to them are different and less restricted than Chinese media. A previous study on Korean immigrants indicated that Korean immigrants carry their perceived connection between government and media from Korea to America (Chaffee, Nass and Yang, 1991). With a similar media situation, Chinese students presumably apply their previous experience with Chinese media to their current attitudes toward American media. If we can determine how Chinese students comprehend the relationship between American government and media, how they perceive credibility and usage of American media, and how they seek information in America, that will provide more understanding of both the global trust and the usage of American and international news media by international students.

Problem Statement

Audience perception of media credibility has been considered an enduring research topic in the field of mass communication. Many previous studies concentrated on finding out how the source of the message, the message itself and the medium containing the message affect personal assessment of credibility. Focusing on the individual who receives the message, some other studies indicate that various individual factors (e.g. involvement, previous experience, skepticism, and etc.) can impact people's perceptions of media credibility. Considering the limited familiarity with the English language and the pressure of studying abroad, Chinese students may pay little attention to the presenting style and transmitting medium of the message. Therefore, this study will focus on the effects of credibility cues of both source and individual dispositions.

Much research has shown that foreign students' attitudinal structure of America will influence their perceptions and usages of American media (Viswanath, 1988; Okigbo, 1985; Chaffee, Nass and Yang, 1991). Few studies document international students' attitudes about trusting and consuming American media. Moreover, according to a BBC report, Chinese students constitute the second largest proportion of international students in American universities. However, few studies have investigated Chinese people's perceptions of both government and media credibility whether those people live in America or China. Also, studying Chinese skeptical dispositions, either toward media or government, can provide an evidence for investigating how the factor of individual's skeptical disposition affects the assessment of media credibility in general.

By exploring how Chinese students perceive credibility of both Chinese and American media, this study will present a more comprehensive and complex picture of

the process of media credibility judgment, focusing on what impact personal attitudes toward government and media have on the assessment of media credibility. This study will also examine whether trust in the government and perceived credibility of media can predict media use. Therefore, this research will explore the relationships among individuals' trust in government, perceived credibility of news media and media use. Chinese students will participate in the study to investigate as a special case whether their skeptical disposition, and governmental faith can explain their perceptions and usages of American media. American students will also participate as a comparison to provide more diversified variables to the study. This is not only a further step to investigate more contributions to audience perception of media credibility, but also an indication of Chinese attitudes toward media and government. To summarize, this present research is purposed to answer the following question:

What are the relationships among trust in government, perceived news media credibility and media use?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Credibility

Credibility is a common concept in the fields of persuasion communication, advertising and public relations. In the previous research, the operational concept of credibility has been approached in multiple dimensions, such as worthiness of being believed (Kaye & Johnson, 1998), accuracy and fairness of media coverage of minority and ethic groups (Beaudoin & Thorson, 2002); believability, accuracy, bias and depth (Johnson & Kaye, 1998, 2002; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; Meyer, 1988; Newhagen & Nass, 1989); and accurate, believable, biased, fair, objective and sensationalistic (Sundar, 1998, 1999, 2000). Some studies focus on the credibility of the source, and define as how the public perceives the source to be trusted (Austin & Dong, 1994; Gunther, 1988; Holland & Weiss, 1951; Milburn, 1991; Slater & Rouner, 1997), or the public perceives claims made about the brand in the advertisement to be truthful and believable (Mackenzie & Lutz, 1989). Some scholars emphasize individual perception of believability of news coverage (Bucy, 2003; Grabe, Zhou, Lang & Bolls, 2000), and individual perceived believability of source, medium and message (Kiousis, 2001; Major & Atwood, 1998).

This present study is especially interested in the dimensions of credibility that are related to news media. Thus, media credibility, or more carefully expressed as perceived media credibility, refers to the extent to which the public perceives news stories to be trustworthy in terms of the perception of believability, accuracy, bias, depth, and objectivity of news media. Basically, the attributes of news media credibility can be

separated into: 1) sources of the news story, e.g. truthful and expert sources; 2) presentation types of the news message, e.g. tabloid or standard version; 3) media of carrying the news message, e.g. newspaper and television; and 4) differences of audiences receiving the news story, e.g. situational and dispositional factors.

Source and Medium Credibility

The research on credibility focuses on two principal fields: source credibility and medium credibility. Some studies have found that there is a correlation between the source of the message and the media credibility (e.g. Austin & Dong, 1994; Holland & Weiss, 1951; Milburn, 1991; Salwen, 1987; Slater & Rouner, 1996; Sundar, 1998). Kiousis defined source credibility as "examining how different communicator characteristics can influence the processing of messages" (Kiousis, 2001, p. 382). For example, Sundar (1998) tested readers' perceptions of online news in terms of the quoted source within the news, and found that the story with quoted sources has a higher rating of credibility than the story without quotes. The source credibility in this study focuses on the extent to which the communicator can make the public perceive its news as credible. O'Keefe (2002) summarized the past research on source credibility into two common dimensions. One is the expertise dimension, which is also called "competence", "expertness", "authoritativeness" and "qualification" (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Berlo, Lemert, & Mertz, 1970; Salwen, 1987; Whitehead, 1968). This dimension is to determine the degree to which the communicator is perceived as knowing about the message. Another one is the trustworthiness dimension, which is also called "character", "safety" or "personal integrity" (Hovland & Weiss, 1951; Berlo, Lemert, & Mertz, 1970; Salwen,

1987; Schweiger, 2000). This dimension is to indicate the degree to which the communicator is perceived as telling the truthful message. The communicator in the source credibility refers to the source that the message comes from, including individual communicators (e.g. authors, journalists or political leaders), and publication institutions (e.g. CNN, CCTV, or New York Times).

On the other hand, some researchers explored the relationship between the medium delivering the message and media credibility. "Medium credibility research has focus on the channel through which content is delivered rather than the sender (or the senders) of that content." (Kiousis, 2002, p.382) The channels may include newspapers, television, radio and the Internet; however, recent studies mostly focus on testing the credibility of the Internet. Johnson and Kaye (1998) did a survey on how politically interested Web users perceive the credibility of online information. The study showed that those users judged online versions to be more credible than traditional versions. Sundar (1999) investigates the factors, which influence the receivers' perception of print and online news, and indicates credibility is one of four criteria used by receivers. Johnson and Kaye (2000) also found out that among politically interested Web users, reliance on traditional media could predict the credibility of its online counterparts. Furthermore, Kiousis (2001) compared perceptions of news credibility among TV, newspapers, and the online news; and found out that newspapers have the highest credibility. Most recently, Bucy (2003) examined the effects of TV and online network news, and suggested that the channel used affects perceptions of credibility.

The focus of this study is on source credibility rather than medium credibility, because when people are critical of news, they pay more attention to the news source

rather than the news story itself (Gunther & Snyder, 1992). The arguments above have already identified Chinese people as critical consumers of news, and thus Chinese students are supposed to emphasize which person or institution is telling the news story when they evaluate the credibility of the news story. Furthermore, because of the different familiarities with English and lengths of stay in the U. S., Chinese students seek news information from both American media and Chinese websites. According to Viswanath's (1988) analysis, Asian students read more newspapers than watch television audiences when they consume the international news in America. Also, as observed, Chinese students always go to the Internet to get the Chinese news for their daily lives. Where Chinese students seek information in America may depend on which type of media is more convenient, not which type of channel is more credible. In other words, it can be assumed that newspaper, television or the Internet doesn't make too much difference for the judgment of the credibility of the American news media by Chinese students. Gunther and Synder (1992) examined how Indonesians judge the credibility of the press in a censored press environment, and suggested the Indonesians pay more attention to the source of the story. Applying this finding to Chinese students who also experienced a censored media situation in China, Chinese students may be expected to connect the media with the source institution such as Chinese or American media, when making judgment of the credibility of the media.

Individual Differences

A large amount of research viewed credibility as a function of the media, and comparably fewer studies focused on how people's own dispositions influence their

judgments on credibility of media. Theoretically, the characteristics of a person should influence the cognitive process of making a judgment. It means different characteristics of individuals can contribute to their judgments of trust or distrust of media. Normally, the individual factors can be separated to two categories: 1) situational factors such as "involvement or personal stakes in the message topic" (Gunther, 1986; Arpan & Raney, 2003; Niven, 2003; Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2003), and "knowledge and direct experience" (Chaffee, Nass and Yang, 1991; Viswanath, 1988); and 2) dispositional factors such as "incredulity or skepticism toward media" (Gunther, 1988, 1992; Bennett, Rhine, Flickinger & Bennett, 1999), and "cognitive complexity" (Slater & Rouner, 1996; Austin & Dong, 1994).

Partisanship and involvement have been found as two important situational factors (also called relational factors), which predict the effects of individual's relationship with a special group or an issue on the perception of credibility. Gunther (2002) found "a respondent's own group identification is the strongest predictor (Gunther, 2002, p. 147)". The Hostile Media Effect (HME) suggests that the partisans who identified themselves with a special group are likely to perceive the news against their own group or in favor of the opposite group as biased (Arpan & Raney, 2003; Mason & Nass, 1989; Vallone, Ross & Lepper, 1985). Involvement is another concept close to partisanship. Previous studies examined the connection between the involvement of the individual with the issue and the media credibility perceived by the individual, and found that as the individual rating of the issue importance increased, the trust in the news story also increased (Gunther & Lasorsa, 1986, 1992; Major & Atwood, 1997). Furthermore, Gunther (1988) investigated about an individual's extremity of attitude toward an issue and trust in media, and

observed that "media trust ratings went up as extremity of attitude increased from low to moderate, and then turned down again as attitude extremity increased from moderate to high" (Gunther, 1988, p. 283).

An individual's dispositional factors, which refer to the general disposition to believe or disbelieve the information, have a function in individual assessment of media credibility. Individual's general disposition to trust or distrust media can be one of the explanations of assessment of media credibility (Gunther, 1992). Based on this viewpoint, if a person holds a general skeptical attitude toward media, he will disbelieve any information in any situation. Nevertheless, a skeptical disposition toward media only can predict credibility in some cases (Gunther, 1992). "While a dispositional view predicts a reflex trust response across situations, the situational approach proposes that important components of trusting or skeptical response do not exist until a person has something to be trusting or skeptical about (Gunther, 1992, p. 149)". Considering the relation of skeptical disposition with situational involvement, some studies have found that trust in the government, i.e. a person's disposition to be trusting or skeptical about the government, can be the predictor of credibility (Johnson & Kaye, 2002; Bennett, Rhine, Flickinger & Bennett, 1999). Trust in government reflects not only an individual's disposition to believe or disbelieve, but also an individual's identification with members of a political group and involvement with a political issue. Moreover, comparing American readers and Indonesian readers, Gunther and Synder (1992) suggested that individual differences predict Indonesian readers' response is more specific to source information. Presumably, the emphasis of Chinese news on politics increases the contribution of the governmental sources to Chinese perceptions of the news, and thus

Chinese impressions concerning the government affect their credibility judgments. This study intends to extend the investigation on the relationship between the disposition to trust in government and perceived media credibility through comparing both Chinese students and American students.

Audience demographics have been identified as correlates of media credibility, for example, gender (Robison & Kohut, 1988; White & Andsager, 1991), and race (Coleman, 2003). Although audience demographic is not the focus of this study, the existing research has shown that male audiences are inclined to perceive lower credibility of media than female (Robison & Kohut, 1988).

Trust In Government

In many countries, mass media are closely connected with the government. Therefore, if people approve of governmental institutions, they supposedly perceive high credibility on the media. On the other hand, if people reject government's policies, they presumably perceive low credibility in the media. Chaffee, Nass and Yang (1991) demonstrated that Korean immigrants to the United States assess credibility of Korean media similarly to trust in Korean government since the press and government are closely related in Korea. Chinese media are also linked closely to the Chinese government; therefore, trust in government can be one of the predictors contributing to Chinese perceived credibility of news media. Studying Chinese trust in government can provide more evidence of both the influences of government-media trust and media-cynicism on the public.

The issue of cynicism has been addressed by several researchers (e.g. Austin & Pinkleton, 1995; Narris, 2000; Leshner & McKean, 1997; Pinkleton & Austin, 2001, 2002), which define cynicism as lack of confidence or a feeling of mistrust toward the government. Trust in government, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which people believe that "the government is functioning and producing outputs in accord with individual expectations" (Miller, 1974, p. 952). Previous research emphasizes how media use causes political cynicism, which is a feeling of mistrust toward the political system (Austin & Pinkleton, 1995; Pinkleton & Austin 2001; Norris, 2000). This study intends to explore the opposite side, that is, how political cynicism influences the public's perceived credibility, and consequently affects the public's usage of media. Trust in government indicates individual positive attitude toward political systems, which includes political officials and political institutions. The components of trust in government are divided into: 1) "regime-based component", which is the belief about political systems and institutions such as the form of the government; and 2) "incumbent-based component", which is belief about political officers such as political leaders and authorities (Craig, Niemi & Silver, 1990). A combination of both components is applied to testing the extent to which Chinese students believe in the Chinese communist party, the Chinese socialist political system and the Chinese president.

Narris (2001) suggests that media use is significantly related to political trust, and the decline of public trust has a relationship with the rise of more cynical news media. However, media exposure is insignificantly correlated to media trust except that attention to campaign news is positively related to media trust. This proved to be another evidence of media malaise theory (Bennett, Rhine, Flickinger & Bennett, 1999). The direction of

causality in this relationship is hard to address, because, it can be argued that the person who consumes more news will have more positive orientation toward the political system, but also the person who trusts the political system may pay more attention to news about public affair (Narris, 2000).

Based on the argument above, the direction of the relationship among trust in government, perceived credibility of media and media use in this study is also hard to identify. Logically, high perceived credibility of media positively leads to more media use. If trust in government has a positive relationship with perceived credibility of media, it can be assumed that trust in government also is positively correlated to media use. The study on political cynicism proved that media use causes the declining of trust in government because the increasing cynical news coverage (Robinson & Kohut, 1988; Austin & Pinkleton, 1995, 2001; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997; Norris, 2000). But, equally plausible, it can be argued that trust in government is a predictor of media use, because the person who trusts in government will pay more attention to the news media coverage about political systems, no matter whether the coverage supports or criticizes the government (Gergen, 1984; Schneider & Lewis, 1985; Lipset & Schneider, 1987).

The following hypotheses are proposed to examine the relationship between trust in the government and perceived credibility of news media. Hypothesis 1 is designed to test the relationship between the trust in Chinese government and perceived credibility of Chinese news media under the Chinese government-media connection environment. Hypothesis 2 suggests that Chinese students carry the perception of government- media connection to the U. S., and apply it to their evaluations of the credibility of American news media. Hypothesis 3 expects that how the public perceives the relationship between

the government and the media can influence the correlation between trust in government and perceived media credibility. In other words, if a person believes the government can influence the media, then his trust in government can be a contribution to his perceived media credibility. For example, American students' attitudes of trust or distrust in American government have no significant impact on their perception of American media credibility, since American students normally believe the media are objective and independent from American government. However, if American students perceive that there is a relationship between government and media, American students' attitude of trust in American government will correlate with their perceived media credibility.

H1: Trust in the Chinese government will be positively related to perceived credibility in Chinese news media among Chinese students.

H2: Trust in the American government will be positively related to perceived credibility in American news media among Chinese students.

H3: The relationship between trust in government and perceived news media credibility will be contingent on the perceived relationship between government and media.

Media Use

Regardless of which of the factors above contribute to the perception of media credibility, a central effort in the study of media credibility is to predict media use. The concept of media use is sometimes measured as frequency of media exposure. Logically,

the more a person perceives the media as credible, the more they will use the media to seek information. If a person depends on the media for his daily information, presumably, he will go to a medium mostly which he believes is credible. It is unreasonable that a person always seek information from a source he doesn't trust. However, some studies found that the frequency of media exposure doesn't relate to media credibility, and the reason is that the frequency of media exposure doesn't precisely reflect people's usage of media (Bennett, Rhine, Flickinger & Bennett, 1999; Leshner & McKean, 1997; Narris, 2000; Wanta & Hu, 1994).

Bennet and his associates (1999) found out that none of the media exposure variables are significantly related to credibility, except for attention to the news, which is positively correlated with trust. Leshner and McKean (1997) also concluded that attention to the news is an important variable for political knowledge studies. Therefore, to sum up, this study operationally measures the concept of media use by two diversified ways --- media exposure and attention to news. The previous findings lead to the expectation of a relationship between perceived media credibility and media use. Hypothesis 4 is proposed to explore whether the more the public trust in the media, the more the public will use the media.

H4: Perceived media credibility is positively correlated to media use.

Cognitive Consistency

Psychologists indicate that a consistent relationship exists among people's cognitive beliefs and attitudes. Heider (1958) proposed balance theory, which says that people

prefer to maintain a balanced relationship in their cognition about a subject (Milburn, 1991; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). According to balance theory, there are three elements: perceiver or reference person (p), other person (o) and thing (x). The symbol p is the person who has the cognition about the thing x. “The symbol o represents anything other than the perceiver, and the symbol x represents anything other than a person, which includes physical objects, social issues, and value and other abstractions.” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 134) For the three elements, Heider defined a balanced structure as the following triad. In a balanced triangle, if p positively correlates to o, p will have the same relationship with x as o has with x. Or if p negatively correlates to o, p will have the opposite relationship with x as o has with x. In an imbalanced triad, if p positively correlates to o, p will have the opposite relationship with x as o has with x. Or if p negatively correlates to o, p will have the same relationship with x as o has with x. For example, if p likes o, o likes x, and p likes x, then that is balanced. If p likes o, o likes x, and p dislikes x, then that is imbalanced.

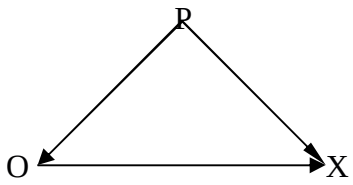

Figure 1 Balance theory representation of a three-element structure

In this study, balance theory would help to explain the connections among trust in the government, perceived media credibility and media use. Moreover, finding this balanced relationship can also enlarge the evidence of balance theory. As Figure 2 below shows, when trust in the government and the media is related, trust in government would

predict the perceived media credibility, and consequently would predict the behavior of media use, suggested by the balance theory (Milburn, 1991; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

Based on the left triangle in Figure 2, when trust in government is perceived positively associated with trust in the media, if a person has a high level of trust in government, meanwhile believe the government and the media are related, presumably the person should perceive a high credibility of the media. Bennett and his associates (1999) demonstrate that trust in media fairness is significantly related to trust in government. Fairness is one component of credibility of media; therefore, there is supposedly a positive relationship between trust in government and perceived credibility of media. The GPSS data also shows a significant positive relationship between confidence in the executive and legislature and the confidence in the press and TV (Bennett, Rhine, Flickinger & Bennett, 1999). Therefore, it hypothesizes a balanced relationship among an individual's perception of trust toward both government and media.

As the right triangle in Figure 2 shows, this study also intends to prove a balanced relationship between perceived credibility of media and media use. According to balance theory, when there is a positive relationship between perceived media credibility and media use, if a person has a positive association with perceived media credibility, the person is supposed to hold another positive correlation with media use. If a person trusts in the media but doesn't use it, or uses the media but doesn't trust it, then the belief of the person has lost balance and consistency, and consequently the person will reduce the dissonance in order to keep the belief balanced. Thus, the argument leads to a hypothesis of a balanced relationship among an individual's perception of media credibility and media use.

To sum up the two balanced relationships discussed above, a research question is asked to examine whether trust in government can predict perceived media credibility, and, consequently, predict media use:

RQ: Is the relationship among trust in government, perceived media credibility and media use balanced?

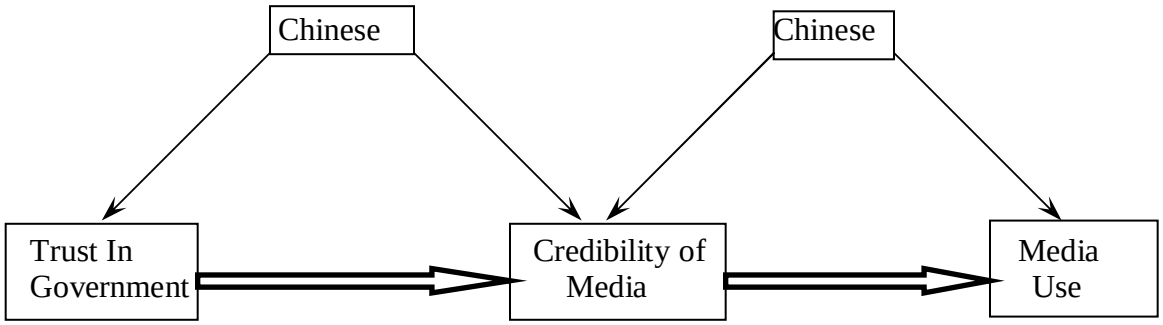

Figure 2. Balanced representation of hypotheses about the relationship among trust in government, perceived media credibility and media use by Chinese students.

Since the balanced relationship is based on the first connection between trust in government and media, it is supposed to exist in the government-media association condition, for example among Chinese students. Chinese students perceive the media to be linked with the government, thus if they trust in the Chinese government, they would perceive high credibility of Chinese media, and would seek information from Chinese media. Similarly with Chaffee, Nass and Yang's (1991) study on Korean immigrants, Chinese students are supposed to apply the process of evaluation of Chinese media to evaluation of American media. On the other hand, the majority of American students

always believe that the media are independent from the government (Gunther & Synder, 1992). Therefore, the connection between trust in government and perceived media credibility is broken, and there is no balanced relationship between them. On the other hand, the balance theory still can apply to the correlation between perceived media credibility and media use by American students. Previous studies have also found that there is positive relationship between trust in government and attention to the news about political systems (Gergen, 1984; Narris, 2000; Schneider & Lewis, 1985; Lipset & Schneider, 1987). Nevertheless, supposedly, American students' trust in government cannot predict their media use based upon the balance theory. The balance in the process of trust in media, perceived media credibility and media use by American students is indicated Figure 3, which will be examined in the study as a comparison with Chinese students.

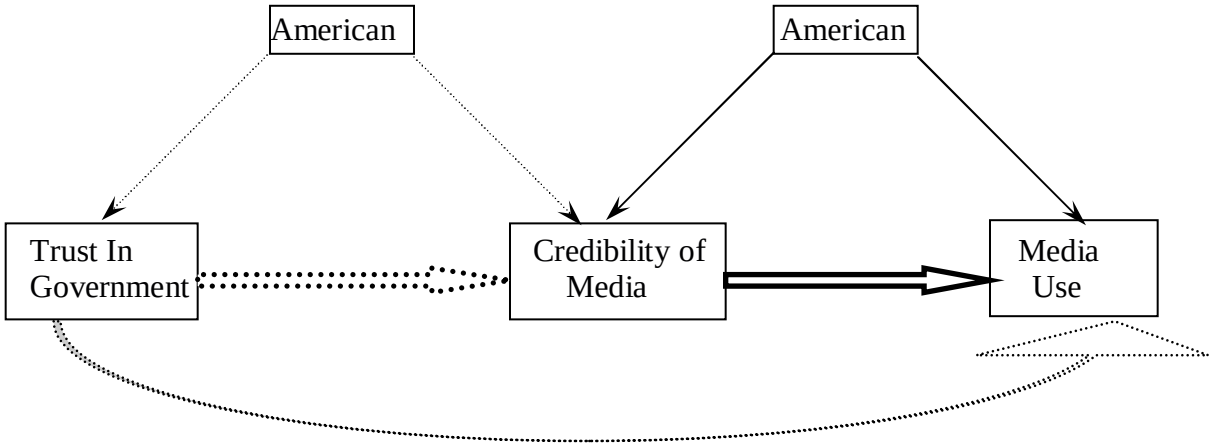

Figure 3. Balanced representation of the relationship among trust in government, perceived media credibility and media use by American students. An unbroken arrow signifies a positive relationship, and a broken arrow signifies no relation.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Participants

This study was conducted using a convenience sample of both Washington State University and University of Idaho Chinese students, representing current Chinese students in the United States. Due to the lack of a comprehensive list of Chinese students in both Universities, a random sample was not possible. The Chinese participant groups were chosen based upon their availability to the researcher. All Chinese willing to participate were surveyed, including students, scholars, staff and faculty in order to provide a sufficient number of respondents for statistical analysis. American students in an introductory level communication course at Washington State University also participated in the study for purposes of comparison with Chinese students. The course is open to students of all majors.

A survey was distributed to the Chinese students at various places frequented by them, including computer labs, student apartments, restaurants and shops. Also, the survey was passed out in the Chinese Spring Festival party held in the middle of January. Respondents were asked to fill out the self-administered questionnaire and to send it back in a stamped, self-addressed envelope provided. The American students filled out a questionnaire after the class time and handed it in the next class time. Questionnaires given to the two groups were different in the following ways: 1) American students didn't have the questions regarding to Chinese media and government; 2) American students had less questions about demographic information. Both Chinese and American

respondents were instructed that their participation was voluntary and that they would be anonymous.

Measures

Trust in Government

This variable is measured by asking to what extent the individual has a positive attitude toward the two political systems-Chinese and American. Craig, Niemi and Silver (1990) offered a measure that was modified slightly in this study, which asks respondents to identify their opinions about the following statements concerning the performance of both Chinese and American governments. A 7-points scale is used to ask whether respondents strongly agree or disagree about the statements, with 1 indicating strongly disagree and 7 indicating strongly agree. The higher the number is, the more it shows the respondents trust in the government.

The statements are: "Whatever its faults may be, the Chinese [American] form of government is still the best for the Chinese [American] people"; "There is not much about the form of Chinese [American] government to be proud of"; "I would rather live under the system of the Chinese [American] government than any other that I can think of"; "You can generally trust the people who run the Chinese [American] government to do what is right"; "When Chinese [American] government leaders make statements to the Chinese [American] people on television or in the newspaper, they are usually telling the truth"; and "Most Chinese [American] public officials can be trusted to do what is right without our having to constantly check on them." The first three questions indicate the extent to which respondents trust the political institutions, and the second three

questions show the degree to which respondents evaluate the performance of the political officials. The item, “There is not much about the form of Chinese [American] government to be proud of” was reverse coded for analysis. Trust in Chinese government was computed from the six Chinese items, while trust in American government was computed from the six American items. Chinese students evaluated the statements for both Chinese and American governments, while American students only responded to the statements about the American government. Coefficient alpha of Chinese students’ trust in Chinese government was .89, of Chinese students’ trust in American government was .80, and of American students’ trust in American government was .80.

Perceived Media Credibility

Perceived media credibility questions were adapted from previous studies on media credibility. Chinese respondents were asked to rate both Chinese and American news media in terms of the criteria of objectivity, accuracy, balance, believability and depth. American respondents only rated the objectivity, accuracy, balance, believability and depth of American news media. These five measures are used commonly in media credibility research (Johnson & Kaye, 1998, 2002; Gaziano & McGrath, 1986; Meyer, 1988; Newhagen & Nass, 1989). A 5-point scale, with 1 indicating “very poor” and 5 indicating “excellent”, is used to rate Chinese/American newspapers, Chinese/American television, and Chinese/American online news separately. A higher number refers to the higher perceived media credibility.

Because considering the different news coverage which the respondents are thinking about when they evaluate the news media might influence their perception of media

credibility, the ratings of news media were divided into three issue areas: public health, economy and national and international affairs. The respondents were asked to think separately about "the news coverage about public health", "the news coverage about economy" and "the news coverage about national and international affairs" before rating the media.

The fifteen news source credibility items on public health are combined to measure perceived news media credibility on public health; the items on economy are combined to measure perceived news media credibility on economy; and the items on national and international affairs are combined to measure perceived news media credibility on national and international affairs. The measure of perceived media credibility is a combination of the total of the items above with the credibility ratings of three different news media (newspaper, television and internet) in this study. The reliability calculations for all composite measures regarding perceived media credibility were performed and the Cronbach's Alphas shown in Table 1 were generated.

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha of Perceived Media Credibility

Measures	Alpha
Chinese perceived credibility of Chinese media on public health	.95
Chinese perceived credibility of Chinese media on economy	.97
Chinese perceived credibility of Chinese media on national and international affairs	.96
Chinese overall perceived credibility of Chinese media	.98
Chinese perceived credibility of American media on public health	.97
Chinese perceived credibility of American media on economy	.97
Chinese perceived credibility of American media on national and international affairs	.88

Chinese overall perceived credibility of American media	.97
American perceived credibility of American media on public health	.83
American perceived credibility of American media on economy	.90
American perceived credibility of American media on national and international affairs	.89
American overall perceived credibility of American media	.94

The entries in Table 1 are the reliability coefficient alphas indicating the higher the coefficient, the higher the level of reliability. As Table 1 shows, the reliabilities of the measures of perceived credibility of both Chinese and American news media among both Chinese and American students are above .90, with coefficient alphas of .98, .97, and .94 respectively.

Media Use

Media use is always measured as frequency of media exposure. However, some studies found that the frequency of media exposure does not relate to media credibility, because the frequency is not precise enough to reflect an individual's behavior of media use (Bennett, Rhine, Flickinger & Bennett, 1999; Leshner & McKean, 1997; Narris, 2000; Wanta & Hu, 1994). Therefore, two diversified ways, which are found relative to both media use and media credibility in previous studies, were combined in this study to measure media use. These two ways are media exposure (Chaffee, Nass and Yang, 1991) and attention to news (Bennett, Rhine, Flickinger & Bennett, 1999; Leshner & McKean, 1997; Narris, 2000).

Media exposure was measured in terms of hours respondents spend on consuming Chinese and American media separately every week. The questions were asked as follows: “How often do you read Chinese [American] newspapers?” “ How often do you watch Chinese [American] TV news programs?” “How often do you read the news on the Chinese [American] website?” and “how often do you read the Chinese language news produced in America? _____Hours/week”. The last question regarding the Chinese language news was counted into the American media use because it is produced in America, and has less restriction than the media being operated in China. Chinese respondents answered all seven questions, while American respondents only answered three questions, which concern consuming American media.

The measurement of attention to news was adapted from Bennett and his associate’s (1999) study by asking, “How much attention do you pay to media accounts about public health?” “How much attention do you pay to media stories about economy?” and how much attention do you pay to media stories about national and international affairs?” The numbers from 1 to 5 indicate the interest from low to high, and consequently show the level of attention to news. Both Chinese and American respondents answered the three questions, producing an alpha of .85 for the measure of Chinese attention to news and .67 for American attention to news.

Furthermore, combining the items of Chinese respondents’ Chinese media exposure with the items of attention to news produced a composite measure of overall Chinese media use of Chinese respondents. Combining the items of Chinese respondents’ American media exposure with the items of attention to news produced a composite measure of overall American media use of Chinese respondents. For American

respondents, combining the items of media exposure with the items of attention to news produced a composite measure of overall American media.

Perceived Relationship between Government and Media

According to the balance theory (Milburn, 1991; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993), the relationship between trust in government and perceived media credibility is based on the public's perception that the government has a connection with the media. It demonstrates that if the public believes the government influences the media, then they will perceive the media as being credible when they trust in the government in order to keep their cognitive beliefs consistent. The variable of perceived government influence on media is applied to measure to the extent to which the public perceives the correlation between the government and the media.

The respondents were asked to indicate their opinions about government and media by answering the following questions. The questions are "To what extent do you think the Chinese government can influence Chinese media?" "To what extent do you think the Chinese economy can influence Chinese media?" "To what extent do you think the American government can influence the American media?" "To what extent do you think the American economy can influence the American media? _____ percent" . The Chinese respondents answered all four questions, while the American respondents only answered the last two questions. During the process of data analysis, the two questions about the economy and the media were found unrelated to the hypothesis, therefore were omitted.

Demographic Information

Age. Respondents were asked to answer the question, “How old are you”. Both Chinese and American respondents answered this question.

Gender. Simply indicate one: male or female. Both Chinese and American respondents answered this question.

Year in school. Respondents were asked to indicate which group they belong to, based on the year in school. The options include Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Master, Ph. D, Post Doctor, Staff or Faculty. Both Chinese and American respondents answered this question.

Nationality. Respondents were asked to indicate what nationality they are. Both Chinese and American respondents answered this question. This study focuses on comparing Chinese students with American students; therefore, only the nationalities of Chinese and American respondents were counted into the data.

Length of stay. Respondents were asked how long they have stayed in the U.S. as indicated by years or months. Only Chinese respondents answered this question.

U.S. residency. Respondents were asked about their post graduation plan after completing their studies. The choices were: “return to China immediately”, “return to China after working in the U.S.A.”, or “settle in the U.S.A. and become a naturalized citizen (not return to China)”. Only Chinese respondents answered this question.

Fluency in English. Respondents were asked to describe their fluency in English with “Very good”, “Somewhat good”, “Neutral”, “Somewhat bad” and “Very bad”. Only Chinese respondents answered this question.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULT

Descriptive Statistics

The data for this study were gathered from responses to a questionnaire employing a convenience sample of Chinese students at Washington State University and the University of Idaho, and American students at Washington State University. Of the 250 questionnaires distributed to the Chinese students, 64 responses were returned, but only 58 were completed, producing a 23.2% response rate. Of the 140 questionnaire distributed to the American students, 80 completed survey were returned, producing a higher response rate of 57.1%. In combination, 138 questionnaires out of 390 distributed were completed for a combined 35.4% response rate.

Among Chinese respondents, demographic data (Table 2) showed that most of the participants were master (20.7%) and doctoral (50%) students, and the ages mostly were 20-39 (85.5%). Twenty-five participants (43.1%) were male, and thirty (51.7%) were female. For the length of stay in America, 41.8% or 23 participants have stayed for 0-2 years, and another 41.8% or 23 participants have stayed for 2-4 years, indicating that most of the participants have stayed long enough to experience the American media. When reporting their graduation plan, most (62.1%) of the Chinese respondents plan to go back to China after working in America. For the fluency in English, 51 out of 56 participants (91.1%) believed their fluency in English was above or equal to average Three Chinese respondents left out demographic information.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics of Chinese Respondents

Characteristic	N		Characteristic	N	
Age	55		Length of Stay	55	
10-20	1	(1.8%)	0-2	23	(41.8%)
20-29	25	(45.5%)	2-4	23	(41.8%)
30-39	22	(40%)	4-6	4	(7.3%)
40-49	5	(9.1%)	10-20	4	(7.3%)
60-69	2	(3.6%)	20-30	1	(1.8%)
Missing	3	(5.2%)	Missing	3	(5.2%)
Gender	55		U.S. Residency	51	
Male	25	(43.1%)	Back to China	7	(12.1%)
Female	30	(51.7%)	Back after working	36	(62.1%)
Missing	3	(5.2%)	Not back to China	7	(12.1%)
			None	1	(1.7%)
			Missing	2	(5.2%)
Year of School	53		Fluency in English	56	
Freshman	1	(1.7%)	Very good	13	(22.4%)
Sophomore	1	(1.7%)	Somewhat good	20	(34.5%)
Senior	1	(1.7%)	Neutral	18	(31%)
Master	12	(20.7%)	Somewhat bad	4	(6.9%)
PHD.	29	(50%)	Very bad	1	(1.7%)
Post doctor	4	(6.9%)	Missing	2	(3.4%)
Staff or Faculty	5	(8.6%)			
Missing	5	(8.6%)			

Among American students, Table 3 shows that the participants were distributed in different years of school, with 36.3% or 29 freshmen, 26.3% or 21 sophomores, 31.3% or 25 juniors and 6.3% or 5 seniors. The age of these participants ranged from 18 to 23 years. Thirty-eight participants (47.5%) were male, and forty-two participants (52.5%) were female. Although some of the participants indicated their nationality as African American or Mexican American, they were all counted into the nationality as American.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of American Respondents

Characteristic	N		Characteristic	N	
Age	80		Year of School	80	
18-20	55	(68.8%)	Freshman	29	(36.3%)
21-23	22	(27.5%)	Sophomore	21	(26.3%)
24-26	1	(1.3%)	Junior	25	(31.3%)
27-28	2	(2.5%)	Senior	5	(6.3%)
Gender	80				
Male	38	(47.5%)			
Female	42	(52.5%)			

According to the descriptive statistics in Table 4, Chinese respondents perceived similar credibility on three types of news coverage in Chinese media, and also similar credibility on all three Chinese media. Among the perceived credibilities of three types of news coverage, the mean for Chinese media coverage of national and international affairs is 3.07 (SD=. 89); for Chinese media coverage of economy is 3.02 (SD= .89); and for Chinese media coverage of public health is 2.99 (SD= .85). Chinese respondents reported the perceived credibility on Chinese Internet (mean=3.12; SD=. 83), Chinese television (mean=2.98; SD=. 93) and Chinese newspaper (mean=2.98; SD= .88). In total, the mean of Chinese overall perception of Chinese media credibility was 3.02 (SD= .82). The

paired group t-tests showed that different types of news coverage and media made no difference on the perception of media credibility. The t values were t (57) = -.50, p= .62 for public health credibility versus economy credibility; t (57) = -1.18, p= .24 for public health credibility versus national and international affair credibility; t (57) = -.63, p= .53 for economy credibility versus national and international affair credibility; t (57) = .05, p= .96 for newspaper credibility versus TV credibility; t (57) = -1.71, p= .09 for newspaper credibility versus online credibility; t (57)= -1.55, p= .13 for TV credibility versus online credibility. Table 7 indicated that perceived credibility of different types of news coverage and news media were significantly, positively correlated with the overall perceived credibility of Chinese news media.

Table 4
Chinese Respondents' Chinese Media and Government Credibility Score

Variables	Mean	SD	N
Chinese Media Public Health Credibility	2.99	.85	58
Chinese Media Economy Credibility	3.02	.89	58
Chinese Media National International Credibility	3.07	.89	58
Chinese Newspaper Credibility	2.98	.88	58
Chinese TV Credibility	2.98	.93	58
Chinese Internet Credibility	3.12	.83	58
Chinese Media Overall Credibility	3.02	.82	58
Chinese Trust Chinese Government	3.74	1.44	58

According to the descriptive statistics in Table 6, Chinese respondents perceived similar credibility on three types of news coverage and all three American media. Among the perceived credibilities of three types of news coverage, American media coverage of the economy is highest (mean=3.86; SD=. 74), followed by American media coverage of public health (mean=3.70; SD= .82; t [57] = 2.59, $p < .05$); and then American media coverage of national and international affairs (mean=3.45; SD= .86; t [57] = 2.49, p

< .05). Chinese respondents reported the perceived credibility on American television (mean=3.72; SD=. 74), American Internet (mean=3.66; SD=. 74) and American newspaper (mean=3.62; SD= .74). To sum up, the mean of Chinese overall perception of American media credibility (mean= 3.67; SD= .70) is higher than Chinese media credibility (t [57] = -4. 99, p < .01). As the paired group t-tests indicate, except for where American newspaper credibility is lower than the American TV credibility (t [57] = -2.94, p < .01), the credibility of different types of news media are not significantly different. The t values were t (57) = -.70, p= .49 for newspaper credibility versus online credibility; t (57) = -.92, p= .36 for TV credibility versus online credibility. Perceived credibilities of different types of American news coverage and American news media have significantly positive correlation with the overall perceived credibility of American news media, as shown in Table 8.

Table 5
Chinese Respondents' American Media and Government Credibility Score

Variables	Mean	SD	N
American Media Public Health Credibility	3.70b	.82	58
American Media Economy Credibility	3.86a	.74	58
American Media National International Credibility	3.45c	.86	58
American Newspaper Credibility	3.62b	.74	58
American TV Credibility	3.72a	.74	58
American Internet Credibility	3.66	.74	58
American Media Overall Credibility	3.67	.70	58
Chinese Trust American Government	4.75	1.05	58

* Means of different superscripts are significantly difference from each other

As Table 6 shows, American respondents' perception of credibility is similar for three types of news coverage in American media, and similar credibility for three American media. The mean credibility for American media coverage of the economy is

3.40 (SD=. 62); for American media coverage of public health is 3.35 (SD= .54); and for American media coverage of national and international affairs is 3.27 (SD= .68). Only the credibility for the coverage of economy was significantly higher than the coverage of national and international affairs ($t(79) = 2.03$, $p < .05$). Other t values were $t(79) = -.98$, $p = .33$ for public health credibility versus economy credibility; $t(79) = 1.28$, $p = .21$ for public health credibility versus national and international affair credibility. Furthermore, American respondents' perceived credibility was highest for American newspapers (mean=3.53; SD= .66), followed by American Internet (mean=3.29; SD= .65; $t(79) = 4.70$, $p< .01$) and American television (mean=3.20; SD= .70; $t(79) = 2.98$, $p < .01$).

Table 6
American Respondents' American Media and Government Credibility Score

Variables	Mean	SD	N
American Media Public Health Credibility	3.35	.54	80
American Media Economy Credibility	3.40	.62	80
American Media National International Credibility	3.27	.68	80
American Newspaper Credibility	3.53	.66	80
American TV Credibility	3.20	.70	80
American Internet Credibility	3.29	.65	80
American Media Overall Credibility	3.34	.53	80
American Trust American Government	4.92	1.01	80
Perceived American Government Influence American Media	65.27	22.24	80

H1: Trust in the Chinese government will be positively related to perceived credibility in Chinese news media among Chinese students.

Hypothesis 1 investigated the relationship between the trust in Chinese government and perceived credibility of Chinese news media. As Table 5 shows, trust in Chinese government is positively related to perceived credibility in Chinese news media among Chinese students across all three media and three kinds of news coverage. This means that the more the Chinese respondents' trust in Chinese government, the more they trust in Chinese news media. In particular, the correlation between trust in Chinese government and overall perceived Chinese media credibility was .60 ($p < .01$, $n=58$). The correlation between trust in government and perceived Chinese public health news credibility was .60 ($p < .01$, $n=58$); between trust in government and perceived Chinese economy news credibility was .52 ($p < .01$, $n=58$); between trust in government and perceived Chinese national and international news credibility was .56 ($p < .01$, $n=58$); between trust in government and perceived Chinese newspaper credibility was .67 ($p < .01$, $n=58$); between trust in government and perceived Chinese TV credibility was .59 ($p < .01$, $n=58$); between trust in government and perceived Chinese Internet credibility was .39 ($p < .01$, $n=58$). Hypothesis 1 is supported by the data.

Table 7
Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Chinese Trust in Chinese Government and Perceived Chinese Media Credibility (Test H1)

Variables	Chinese Government Trust	Chinese Overall Media Credibility	Chinese Public Health Credibility	Chinese Economy Credibility	Chinese National International Credibility	Chinese Newspaper Credibility	Chinese TV Credibility	Chinese Internet Credibility
Chinese Government Trust	1.00							
Chinese Overall Media Credibility	.60**	1.00						
Chinese Public Health Credibility	.60**	.95**	1.00					
Chinese Economy Credibility	.52**	.94**	.86**	1.00				
Chinese National International Credibility	.56**	.92**	.82**	.77**	1.00			
Chinese Newspaper Credibility	.67**	.96**	.91**	.88**	.91**	1.00		
Chinese TV Credibility	.59**	.95**	.89**	.87**	.90**	.92**	1.00	
Chinese Internet Credibility	.39**	.88**	.85**	.86**	.75**	.75**	.70**	1.00

(**) Pearson Correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed)
* N's for correlation is 58.

H2: Trust in the American government will be positively related to perceived credibility in American news media among Chinese students.

Hypothesis 2 explored whether Chinese students carry the perception of government- media connection to the U. S., which influences the relationship between trust in American government and perceived credibility of American news media. As Table 7 shows, all of the Pearson correlations proved that trust in American government is positively correlated with perceived credibility in American news media among Chinese students across all three media and three kinds of news coverage. In other words, the more the Chinese trust in American government, the more highly they rate the credibility of American news media. In particular, the correlation between trust in American government and overall perceived American news media credibility was .54 ($p < .01$, $n=58$). The correlation between trust in government and perceived American public health news credibility was .53 ($p < .01$, $n=58$); between trust in government and perceived American economy news credibility was .51 ($p < .01$, $n=58$); between trust in government and perceived American national and international news credibility was .38 ($p < .01$, $n=58$); between trust in government and perceived American newspaper credibility was .56 ($p < .01$, $n=58$); between trust in government and perceived American TV credibility was .56 ($p < .01$, $n=58$); between trust in government and perceived American Internet credibility was .41 ($p < .01$, $n=58$). Hypothesis 2 is also supported by the data.

Table 8
Pearson Correlation Coefficient for Chinese Trust in American Government and Perceived American Media Credibility (Test H2)

Variables	American Government Trust	American Overall Media Credibility	American Public Health Credibility	American Economy Credibility	American National International Credibility	American Newspaper Credibility	American TV Credibility	American Internet Credibility
American Government Trust	1.00							
American Overall Media Credibility	.54**	1.00						
American Public Health Credibility	.53**	.91**	1.00					
American Economy Credibility	.51**	.90**	.83**	1.00				
American National International Credibility	.38**	.82**	.56**	.55**	1.00			
American Newspaper Credibility	.56**	.97**	.92**	.88**	.75**	1.00		
American TV Credibility	.56**	.96**	.89**	.86**	.77**	.94**	1.00	
American Internet Credibility	.41**	.92**	.78**	.82**	.81**	.83**	.80**	1.00

(**) Pearson Correlation is significant at the .01 level (two-tailed)
* N's for correlation is 58.

H3: The relationship between trust in government and perceived news media credibility will be contingent on the perceived relationship between government and media.

Suggested by the balance theory, hypothesis 3 predicts that people's perceptions of government-media connection have an impact on the relationship between trust in government and perceived media credibility. As Figures 2 and 3 show, the relationship between trust in government and perceived media credibility is based upon the belief that the government can influence the media. The data from both Chinese and American respondents was combined together to test the hypothesis. The composite data was split into two groups by the mean of the perceived American government influence on American media variable, with a group of high perceived government influence on media (mean >61%) and low perceived government influence on media (mean< 61%). As Table 9 shows, in the group of high perceived government influence on media, the correlation between trust in government and perceived media credibility was significant and positive ($r= .56$, $p< .01$). On the other hand, the correlation between trust in government and perceived media credibility is not significant ($r= .22$, $p= .07$) in the group of low perceived government influence on media. After calculating the 95% confidence interval level and testing the difference between the Z values, the two correlations are not significantly different. Therefore, the result showed that an individual's perceived relationship between government and media didn't significantly affect the relationship between an individual's trust in government and perceived media credibility. Hypothesis 3 is not supported by the data. In order to test whether the variable

of nationality affected the results, the same test was conducted as followed for both Chinese and American respondents separately.

Table 9
Correlations between Trust in Government and Perceived Media Credibility

Variables	High Perceived Government Influence Media (>61%)	Low Perceived Government Influence Media (<61%)	All Perceived Government Influence Media
Correlation Between Trust In American Government and Perceived American Media Credibility	.56**	.22	.41**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* N's for correlation is 138.

According to the data, American respondents had greater variance in their response of perceived relationship between government and media as compared to the Chinese respondents. As Table 10 shows, the data of American respondents was split into two groups by the mean of the perceived government influence on media variables, with a group of high perceived government influence on media (mean >65%) and low perceived government influence on media (mean< 65%). After calculating the 95% confidence interval level and testing the difference between the Z values, the result showed that the correlation between trust in American government and perceived American media credibility are significantly different for the two groups. In the high perceived government influence, the correlation between trust in government and perceived media credibility was significant and positive ($r= .50$, $p< .01$). On the other hand, the correlation between trust in government and perceived media credibility is not significant ($r= .03$, $p= .88$) in the group of low perceived government influence on media. In other words, an

individual's trust in government is related to his perception of media credibility only when he believes the government can influence on the media. The data from American respondents provide support for hypothesis 3. The data demonstrated the prediction of balance theory on the relationship between trust in government and perceived media credibility among American respondents. The public will assess credibility of media similarly to trust in government when they perceive the press and government are closely related. American respondents reported higher media cynicism in this study than in the prior research, with a mean of 65 percent to which American government influences American media. Moreover, the result showed that American respondents' trust in government was significantly correlated with perceived media credibility when they perceived a close link between the American government and American media.

Table 10
Correlations between American Trust in Government and Perceived Media Credibility

Variables	High Perceived Government Influence Media (>65%)	Low Perceived Government Influence Media (<65%)	All Perceived Government Influence Media
Correlation Between Trust In American Government and Perceived American Media Credibility	.50**	.03	.37**

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tail).
* N's for correlation is 80.

For Chinese respondents, 57 out of 58 (98.2%) respondents perceived to be above 50 percent to which Chinese government influences Chinese media. The perceived relationship between Chinese government and Chinese media was high and varied little. Therefore, the data from Chinese respondents was split into two groups by the mean of perceived relationship between American government and American media. As Table 11

shows, for the two groups of high perceived American government influence on American media (mean>55%) and low perceived American government influence on American media (mean < 55%), the correlations are .65 ($p < .01$, n= 58) and .42 ($p < .05$, n=58) separately. After calculating the 95% confidence interval level, the two correlations are overlap, and so are not significantly different. Also, the test of difference between the Z values shows that the two correlations are not significantly different. The result from Chinese respondents didn't strongly support hypothesis 3. According to the data, Chinese respondents had less variance on perception of government influence on media than American respondents.

Table 11
Correlations between Chinese Trust in Government and Perceived Media Credibility

Variables	High Perceived Government Influence Media (>55%)	Low Perceived Government Influence Media (<55%)	All Perceived Government Influence Media
Correlation Between Trust In American Government and Perceived American Media Credibility	.65**	.42*	.54**

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* N's for correlation is 58.

H4: Perceived media credibility will be positively correlated with media use.

The data in Table 11 shows that Chinese students spend nearly the same number of hours on Chinese media and American media (t (57) = -.60, p= .55). The mean for Chinese respondents' use of Chinese media is 2.88 (SD= 2.12), while the mean for Chinese respondents' use of American media is 2.75 (SD=1.83). For attention to news, the Chinese respondents reported a mean of 2.96 (SD=1.37) on the 5 points scale. The combination of the variables of Chinese use of Chinese media and Chinese attention to news produced the variable of Chinese overall Chinese media consumption, with a mean of 2.92 (SD=1.33). Meanwhile, the combination of the variables of Chinese use of American media and Chinese attention to news generated the variable of Chinese overall American media consumption, with a mean of 3.00 (SD= 1.30).

Table 12
Chinese Respondents' Chinese and American Media Use

Variables	Mean	SD	N
Chinese Use Chinese Media	2.88	2.12	58
Chinese Use American Media	2.75	1.83	58
Chinese Attention to News	2.96	1.37	58
Chinese overall Chinese Media Consumption	2.92	1.33	58
Chinese overall American Media Consumption	3.00	1.30	58

For the data from American respondents, the mean for American respondents' use of American media is 2.70 (SD=2.12), while the mean for American respondents' attention to news is 2.65 (SD= .89). The combination of the variables of American use of American media and American attention to news produced the variable of American overall media consumption, with a mean of 2.67 (SD= 1.33).

Table 13
American Respondents' Media Use

Variables	Mean	SD	N
American Use American Media	2.70	2.12	80
American Attention to News	2.65	.89	80
American overall Media Consumption	2.67	1.33	80

Hypothesis 4 predicted a positive relationship between perceived media credibility and media use. However, the result (see Table 13) revealed that the perception of credibility for Chinese and American media seems to be not connected to the media use. Correlations suggest that there is an insignificant linkage between perceived media credibility and media use. The correlations between perceived Chinese media credibility and use of Chinese media, and overall Chinese media consumption are -.02 (p=. 86, n=58) and .09 (p= .49, n=58) respectively. The correlations between perceived American media credibility and use of American media, and overall American media consumption are -.08 (p= .56, n=58) and -.11 (p= .41, n=58) separately.

The data display some interesting relationships among Chinese respondents that are shown in Table 13. Attention to news is positively related to the use of American media($r = .29$, $p < .05$). The use of Chinese media is positively correlated with use of American media ($r = .50$, $p <. 01$), and overall American media consumption ($r = .50$, $p <. 01$). The use of American media is positively related with overall Chinese media consumption ($r = .53$, $p < .01$). The overall Chinese media consumption is positively correlated with overall American media consumption ($r = .69$, $p < .01$).

Table 14
Correlations between Chinese Perceived Media Credibility and Media Use (Test H4)

Variables	Chinese Media Credibility	American Media Credibility	Attention to News	Use Chinese Media	Use American Media	Overall Chinese Media Consumption	Overall America Media Consumption
Chinese Media Credibility	r=1.00 p=.						
American Media Credibility	r= .17 p= .20	r=1.00 p=.					
Attention to News	r= .27 p= .05	r= -.11 p= .41	r= 1.00 p=.				
Use Chinese Media	r= -.02 p= .86	r= -.18 p= .17	r= .25 p= .06	r=1.00 p= .			
Use American Media	r=-.09 p= .50	r= -.08 p= .56	r= .29* p= .03	r= .50** p= .00	r=1.00 p=.		
Overall Chinese Media Consumption	r= .09 p= .49	r= -.20 p= .14	r= .64** p= .00	r= .91** p= .00	r= .53** p= .00	r= 1.00 p= .	
Overall American Media Consumption	r= .04 p= .75	r= -.11 p= .41	r= .67** p= .00	r= .50** p= .00	r= .91** p= .00	r= .69** p= .00	r= 1.00 p= .

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* N's for correlation is 58.

The data from American respondents in Table 14 didn't show any significant correlations between perceived media credibility and media use either. However, the result in Table 14 indicated that the correlations between perceived media credibility and

media use are .10 (p= .40, n=80) and .13 (p= .27, n=80) separately. Similar to Chinese respondents, American respondents also showed a significantly positive correlation between attention to news and American media use (r= .49, p< .01). The two results of both Chinese and American respondents suggest that the more the public pays attention to the news, the more they will use news media.

Table 15
Correlations between American Perceived Media Credibility and Media Use (Test H4)

Variables	American Media Credibility	American Attention To News	American Media Use	American Overall Media Consumption
American Media Credibility	r= 1.00 p= .			
American Attention To News	r= .15 p= .19	r= 1.00 p= .		
American Media Use	r= .10 p= .40	r= .49** p= .00	r= 1.00 p= .	
American Overall Media Consumption	r= .13 p= .27	r= .72** p= .00	r= .96** p= .00	r= 1.00 p= .

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* N's for correlation is 80.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship among trust in government, perceived news media credibility and media use. Based on the balance theory, this study examined whether there is a consistency among respondents with respect to trust in government, perceived media credibility and media use. What distinguished this research from previous research on media credibility is that this study examined the role of an individual's trust in government on his or her perception of news media credibility.

Most of the hypotheses presented received support. According to the results, there is a balanced relationship between an individual's attitude toward government and his/her assessment of news media credibility. In other words, an individual's trust in government is positively related to his/her perception of media credibility, and the relationship is contingent on the perceived relationship between government and media. Therefore, as Figure 4 shows, the study enlarged the evidence for the balance theory and presented a triangle model for the relationship between trust in government and perceived media credibility. In a balanced triangle, if a person perceives a government link to the media, his attitude toward the government will be positively related to his/her assessment of media credibility. In an imbalanced triangle, if a person perceives a government link to the media, his attitude toward the government will have a negative relationship with his assessment of media credibility. To sum up, when a person believes the government

influences the media, the more he trusts in the government, the more he will perceive the media to be credible.

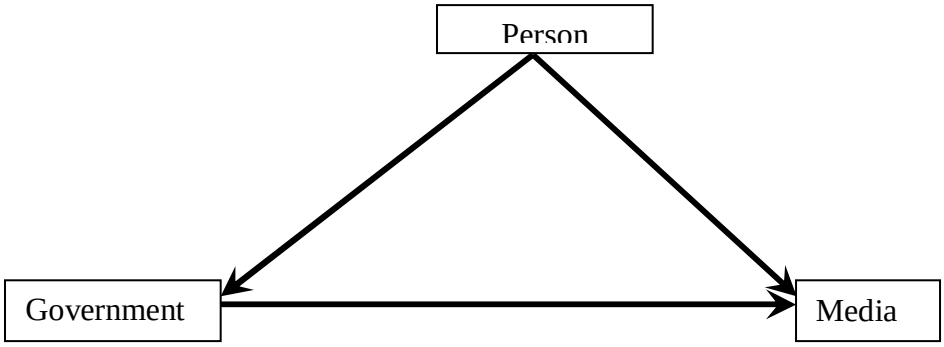

Figure 4. Balanced representation of the relationship between trust in government and perceived media credibility.

Also, the study found that perceived media credibility was marginally connected with media use, which contradicted the fourth hypothesis. Furthermore, the results revealed that American students hold higher cynicism about government and media than what is expected, and showed that American students' trust in government is positively correlated with their perceptions of media credibility.

The first hypothesis, which predicted that the more Chinese students trust in Chinese government, the more they will perceive Chinese news media as being credible, was supported. This was based on Heider's (1958) balance theory and the assumption of Chinese public's skeptical disposition. The model shows that Chinese students' assessment of Chinese news media credibility will be consistent with their attitudes toward Chinese government. Consequently, the study found that their attitudes toward Chinese government predict their assessments of Chinese news media. The results indicate a positive relationship between trust in Chinese government and perceived Chinese new media credibility among Chinese students.

The second hypothesis predicted that the more Chinese students trust in American government, the more they will perceive American news media as being credible. The analysis supported the hypothesis that Chinese students' trust in American government is positively correlated with perceived American news media credibility. According to Chaffee, Nass and Yang's (1991) study, Chinese students presumably carry their perceived connection between government and media to the U. S., and apply it to their evaluations of the credibility of American news media. The results indicated that the American media available to Chinese students are different and less restricted than Chinese media, but Chinese students still apply their previous experience with Chinese media to their current attitudes toward American media. Therefore, Chinese students perceived American media as being linked to American government, and so their attitudes toward American government contribute to their perceptions of American media credibility.

The data from American students provided support for the third hypothesis, predicting that the relationship between trust in government and perceived news media credibility will be contingent on the perceived relationship between government and media. Based on the balance theory, an individual's perception of the connection between the government and the media has an impact on the relationship between trust in government and perceived media credibility. For instance, if a person perceives a high level of government and media connection, his attitude toward the government will contribute to his perception of media credibility. However, if a person perceives a low level of government and media connection, or he believes the media are independent from the government, his attitude toward the government is unrelated to his perception of

media credibility. Since American students perceive American government as being close to American media, the prediction of relationship between trust in government and perceived media credibility was also demonstrated among American students. In other words, the more American students trust in government, the more American students perceive American media as being credible. Additionally, an interesting finding was that these American students hold a high cynicism toward American government and media. The mean of the perceived American government influence American media is 65 percent among American student. The sample of American students was taken from a communication course, which might lead to the high cynicism of American students, because they have been educated in an environment of criticizing the media and the government.

Hypothesis 3 was not supported among Chinese students, suggesting that the relationship between trust in government and perceived media credibility is not affected by perceived relationship between government and media. This result may be seen as contradicting the balance theory. However the reason might be that the level of perceived relationship between government and media was high and varied little among Chinese students. About 98% of Chinese students perceived the percentage to which Chinese government influences Chinese media to be above 50 percent, while the variance of American students' perceived percentage to which American government influences American media is from 10 percent to 100 percent. Therefore, the lack of variance on the Chinese students' data cannot provide enough cases to find out a significant difference between the group with high perceived government influence on media and with low perceived government influence on media.

Regarding the fourth hypothesis, the study did not find the predicted relationship between perceived media credibility and media use, suggesting that there was no significant relationship between media credibility and media use. As discussed above, it is logical that the more a person perceives a medium as being credible, the more he is supposed to seek information from that medium. However, the result contradicted the prediction, indicating that an individual's perception of media credibility doesn't affect his or her usage of media. People might seek the information from media based on other factors, such as his or her habit or preference.

Furthermore, previous studies have found that there is positive relationship between Americans' trust in government and their attention to the news about political systems (Gergen, 1984; Narris, 2000; Schneider & Lewis, 1985; Lipset & Schneider, 1987). However, this study didn't find a significant relationship between trust in government and media use in the data from American respondents. The correlation between trust in government and media use is .07 ($p = .50$, $n=80$), while the correlation between trust in government and attention to news is .20 ($p = .08$, $n=80$). American respondents might use the information even though they don't trust the source or the media, especially when they mostly depend on the media to seek the information.

As mentioned above, the frequency of media exposure by estimation of the media use per week/ day doesn't precisely reflect people's usage of media in previous study (Bennett, Rhine, Flickinger & Bennett, 1999; Leshner & McKean, 1997; Narris, 2000; Wanta & Hu, 1994). Therefore, the measurement of media use by hours per week is also lack of precise in this study, which might be the cause for the opposite result from the hypothesis. Moreover, the variable measuring attention to news provided some support

for the previous study, indicating that an individual's attention to news is positively correlated with an individual's usage of media. As a consequence, an individual's attention to news has more impact on his or her media use than perceived media credibility.

Limitation

The limitations of this study rested mostly on the distribution of the survey and the sample size. Possible internal validity issues reside in the background of the participants. For Chinese respondents, their personal experience might have influenced their participation in the survey, skewing the results. According to the feedback from Chinese students, some thought the questions about Chinese government were too sensitive to answer. The returned surveys also showed that some respondents answered all the questions except for the demographic information, and some respondents obviously skipped all questions regarding the Chinese government and media. Most of the factors above could affect their self-report in the questionnaire, and consequently the precise reflection of their opinions about the government and media. On the other hand, the education of American respondents from the communication courses might make them have more political and media cynicism than Americans in general.

Another validity issue could be that the sample was not randomized, but selected because of the accessibility of respondents to the researcher. This non-randomized selection process makes the results hard to generalize. Therefore, representing the standpoints of highly educated Chinese and American college student, this study provides

a special case for research on political trust and media credibility. In addition, the small sample size of this study also lowered the external validity.

Furthermore, the composite measures designed to identify the exposure to the media found different estimates based on the method used by the respondents. Media exposure, measured by hours per week, had a low reliability due to the low usage of media and inappropriate estimate among both Chinese and American respondents. The items related to Chinese media exposure obviously confused Chinese respondents. Because the question is asked about respondents' Chinese media use in China, while most of the respondents reported their Chinese media use in America, with an abnormally low rate of media use. In light of the lack of a standardized and precise measure of media use, the composite instrument of media exposure and attention to news may not give a complete picture of an individual's usage of media.

Implications and Further Study

One of the main purposes of this study was to explore more dimensions that exist in the process of media credibility judgment. The most important finding is the positive relationship between an individual's trust in government and perceived media credibility. This study employed the balance theory, and revealed several contributions to audience perception of media credibility, which provides practical and theoretical implications for future research on both political trust and media credibility. Furthermore, the study is a preliminary look at Chinese attitudes toward media and government, which would suggest the use of a larger, more representative sample in future research on

understanding of both the global trust and the usage of American and international news media by international students.

Given the limitations of this study, a future study should address the following issues. First, in order to find more evidence for the balanced model, it is necessary to study more people from different countries. Also, special attention should be given to investigate the impact of perceived relationship between government and media on the relationship between trust in government and media credibility from a broader and more diversified group of people. Second, researcher should design a more effective measure of media use, because a central effort in the study of media credibility is to predict media use. The lack of support for the prediction of media use demands more research into the relationship between media credibility and media use.

To sum up, this study provides a complex picture of the relationship among trust in government, perceived media credibility and media use. Also, it is an indication of both Chinese and American attitudes toward the two governments and the media. Moreover, it suggest future investigators a path to study media credibility from the perspectives of the individual's skeptical disposition, trust in government and usage of media among different groups of people.

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APPENDEX A:
Consent Form and Questionnaire
For Chinese Respondents

Dear Friends,

My name is Lingling Xie, and I am a graduate student in the department of communication at Washington State University. I am collecting data for my thesis regarding media credibility. Your participation is very important to this study, and I would like to ask for your help by answering a few questions. Your participation in this survey should take about 15 minutes.

Your response will remain totally anonymous—neither your name nor any other identifying information will be asked or recorded. Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free not to answer any questions you may find objectionable. When you finish, please put the survey in the envelope and send it back to the university at your convenience. This study has been reviewed and approved by the WSU Institutional Review Board. If you have questions and concerns regarding this study, you may contact Lingling Xie at (509) 332-5840. Or if you have questions about your rights as participants, you may call the WSU IRB at (509) 335-9661.

Again, thank you very much for participating in this study.

Section 1: Now, please tell us about your image of <u>Chinese media</u>.

Please think about **the news coverage about public health** and rate the media according to the criteria listed below, assigning a number between 1 and 5, from 1 = very poor, to 5 = excellent.

Criteria	Chinese Newspapers	Chinese Television	Chinese Online News
Objectivity	_____	_____	_____
Accuracy	_____	_____	_____
Balance	_____	_____	_____
Believability	_____	_____	_____
Depth	_____	_____	_____

Please think about **the news coverage about economy** and rate the media according to the criteria listed below, assigning a number between 1 and 5, from 1 = very poor, to 5 = excellent.

Criteria	Chinese Newspapers	Chinese Television	Chinese Online News
Objectivity	_____	_____	_____
Accuracy	_____	_____	_____
Balance	_____	_____	_____
Believability	_____	_____	_____
Depth	_____	_____	_____

Please think about **the news coverage about national and international affairs** and rate the media according to the criteria listed below, assigning a number between 1 and 5, from 1 = very poor, to 5 = excellent.

Criteria	Chinese Newspapers	Chinese Television	Chinese Online News
Objectivity	_____	_____	_____
Accuracy	_____	_____	_____
Balance	_____	_____	_____
Believability	_____	_____	_____
Depth	_____	_____	_____

(Please see the reverse side)

Section 2: We would like to ask your general opinion about the <u>Chinese government</u>.

Please circle one <u>number</u> corresponding to your best answer to the following statement.

1) Whatever its faults may be, the Chinese form of government is still the best for the Chinese people.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

2) There is not much about the form of Chinese government to be proud of.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

3) I would rather live under the system of the Chinese government than any other that I can think of.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

4) You can generally trust the people who run the Chinese government to do what is right.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

5) When Chinese government leaders make statements to the Chinese people on television or in the newspaper, they are usually telling the truth.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

6) Most Chinese public officials can be trusted to do what is right without our having to constantly check on them.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

Section 3: Now, we would like to ask your overall image about <u>American media</u>.

Please think about **the news coverage about public health** and rate the media according to the criteria listed below, assigning a number between 1 and 5, from 1 = very poor, to 5 = excellent.

Criteria	American Newspapers	American Television	American Online News
Objectivity	_____	_____	_____
Accuracy	_____	_____	_____
Balance	_____	_____	_____
Believability	_____	_____	_____
Depth	_____	_____	_____

Please think about **the news coverage about economy** and rate the media according to the criteria listed below, assigning a number between 1 and 5, from 1 = very poor, to 5 = excellent.

Criteria	American Newspapers	American Television	American Online News
Objectivity	_____	_____	_____
Accuracy	_____	_____	_____
Balance	_____	_____	_____
Believability	_____	_____	_____
Depth	_____	_____	_____

Please think about **the news coverage about national and international affairs** and rate the media according to the criteria listed below, assigning a number between 1 and 5, from 1 = very poor, to 5 = excellent.

Criteria	American Newspapers	American Television	American Online News
Objectivity	_____	_____	_____
Accuracy	_____	_____	_____
Balance	_____	_____	_____
Believability	_____	_____	_____
Depth	_____	_____	_____

(Please see the reverse side)

Section 4: Please tell us your general opinion about the <u>American government</u>.

Please circle one <u>number</u> corresponding to your best answer to the following statement.

1) Whatever its faults may be, the American form of government is still the best for the American people.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

2) There is not much about the form of American government to be proud of.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

3) I would rather live under the system of the American government than any other that I can think of.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

4) You can generally trust the people who run the American government to do what is right.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

5) When American government leaders make statements to the American people on television or in the newspapers, they are usually telling the truth.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

6) Most American public officials can be trusted to what is right without our having to constantly check on them.

   Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

Section 5: We would like to ask you a few questions about your use of both Chinese and American media.

1) How often do you read Chinese newspapers?
_____Hours/week

2) How often do you watch Chinese TV news programs?
_____Hours/week

3) How often do you read the news on the Chinese websites? For example: www.sina.com.cn, www. 163.com.
_____Hours/week

4) How often do you read American newspapers?
_____Hours/week

5) How often do you watch American TV news programs?
_____Hours/week

6) How often do you read the news on the American websites? For example, www.msn.com, www.cnn.com.
_____Hours/week

7) How often do you read the Chinese language news produced in America?
_____Hours/week

8) How much attention do you pay to media accounts about public health?
_____(1=no attention; 5= a great deal of attention. Assign a number between 1 and 5.)

9) How much attention do you pay to media stories about economy?
_____(1= no attention; 5= a great deal of attention. Assign a number between 1 and 5.)

10) How much attention do you pay to media stories about national and international affairs?
_____(1= no attention; 5= a great deal of attention. Assign a number between 1 and 5.)

10) Please list at least three names of media, from which you always seek information for your daily life.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

(Please see the reverse side)

Section 6: We would like to ask your opinion about the government and media.

1) To what extent do you think the Chinese government can influence Chinese media?
_____Percent

2) To what extent do you think Chinese economy can influence Chinese media?
_____Percent

3) To what extent do you think the American government can influence American media?

_____Percent

4) To what extent do you think the American economy can influence American Media?

_____Percent

Section 7: Please give us the information about yourself.

1) How old are you? _____

2) Are you male _____ or female _____?

3) Year in school: ____Freshman; ____Sophomore; ____Junior; ____ Senior;
____Master; _____Ph. D; _____Post Doctor; _____Staff or Faculty

4) What is your nationality? _____ Chinese, _____ American or
_____others

5) How long have you stayed in the U. S.? _____Years or _____Months

6) Which of following three options would you like to take when you complete your study?

_____ Return to China immediately
_____ Return to China after working in the U.S.A.
_____ Settle in the U.S.A. and become a nationalized citizen (not return to China)

7) How do you describe your fluency of English?

____Very good;_____Somewhat good;_____Neutral;_____Somewhat bad;____ Very bad

APPENDEX B:
Consent Form and Questionnaire
For American Respondents

Dear Friends,

My name is Lingling Xie, and I am a graduate student in the department of communication at Washington State University. I am collecting data for my thesis regarding media credibility. Your participation is very important to this study, and I would like to ask for your help by answering a few questions. Your participation in this survey should take about 10 minutes.

Your response will remain totally anonymous—neither your name nor any other identifying information will be asked or recorded. Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free not to answer any questions you may find objectionable. This study has been reviewed and approved by the WSU Institutional Review Board. If you have questions and concerns regarding this study, you may contact Lingling Xie at (509) 332-5840. Or if you have questions about your rights as participants, you may call the WSU IRB at (509) 335-9661.

Again, thank you very much for participating in this study.

Section 1: Now, we would like to ask your overall image about <u>American media</u>.

Please think about **the news coverage about public health** and rate the media according to the criteria listed below, assigning a number between 1 and 5, from 1 = very poor, to 5 = excellent.

Criteria	American Newspapers	American Television	American Online News
Objectivity	_____	_____	_____
Accuracy	_____	_____	_____
Balance	_____	_____	_____
Believability	_____	_____	_____
Depth	_____	_____	_____

Please think about **the news coverage about economy** and rate the media according to the criteria listed below, assigning a number between 1 and 5, from 1 = very poor, to 5 = excellent.

Criteria	American Newspapers	American Television	American Online News
Objectivity	_____	_____	_____
Accuracy	_____	_____	_____
Balance	_____	_____	_____
Believability	_____	_____	_____
Depth	_____	_____	_____

Please think about **the news coverage about national and international affairs** and rate the media according to the criteria listed below, assigning a number between 1 and 5, from 1 = very poor, to 5 = excellent.

Criteria	American Newspapers	American Television	American Online News
Objectivity	_____	_____	_____
Accuracy	_____	_____	_____
Balance	_____	_____	_____
Believability	_____	_____	_____
Depth	_____	_____	_____

(Please see the reverse side)

Section 2: Please tell us your general opinion about the <u>American government</u>.

Please circle one <u>number</u> corresponding to your best answer to the following statement.

7) Whatever its faults may be, the American form of government is still the best for the American people.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

8) There is not much about the form of American government to be proud of.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

9) I would rather live under the system of the American government than any other that I can think of.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

10) You can generally trust the people who run the American government to do what is right.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

11) When American government leaders make statements to the American people on television or in the newspapers, they are usually telling the truth.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

12) Most American public officials can be trusted to what is right without our having to constantly check on them.

Strongly Disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Strongly Agree

Section 3: We would like to ask you a few questions about your use of the media.

1) How often do you read newspapers?
_____Hours/week

2) How often do you watch TV news programs?
_____Hours/week

3) How often do you read the news on the websites?
_____Hours/week

4) How much attention do you pay to media accounts about public health?
_____(1=no attention; 5= a great deal of attention. Assign a number between 1 and 5.)

5) How much attention do you pay to media stories about economy?
_____(1=no attention; 5= a great deal of attention. Assign a number between 1 and 5.)

6) How much attention do you pay to media stories about national and international affairs?
_____(1=no attention; 5= a great deal of attention. Assign a number between 1 and 5.)

7) Please list at least three names of media, from which you always seek information for your daily life.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Section 4: We would like to ask your opinion about the government and media.

1) To what extent do you think the American government can influence American media?

_____Percent

2) To what extent do you think the American economy can influence American Media?

_____Percent

(Please see the reverse side)

Section 5: Please give us the information about yourself.

1) How old are you? _____

2) Are you male _____ or female _____?

3) Year in school: ____Freshman; ____Sophomore; ____Junior; ____ Senior;
____Master; _____Ph. D; _____Post Doctor; _____Staff or Faculty

4) What is your nationality? _____