



**UNIVERSITY OF MACAU**  
**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC**  
**ADMINISTRATION**

***Mission Impossible?***  
**A Study on Sino-American Mutual**  
**Strategic Trust**

**HUA YAN WEN**

**M-A9-5505-4**

**Supervisor: Prof. Wang Jianwei**

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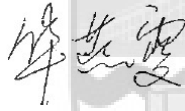
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## Statement

I, Hua Yanwen, hereby state that this thesis is my own and original work, apart from the sections where origins are clearly stated. All the materials in this thesis have never been used (partially or wholly) in fulfilling the requirements for any degree or qualification in this or other universities prior to this submission.

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## Abstract

Sino-American relations are regarded as one of the most significant bilateral relationships in the world. Yet in reality this relationship has often been perplexed by various issues or incidents weakening the prospect of a cooperative tie between the two countries. Among other causes for the instability in the relationship, many scholars impute the problems to the lack of mutual trust between the two countries.

Starting in the 1920s, the study of trust among nations became popular in Europe with the establishment of international organizations such as the League of Nations after the World War I. It aimed to ease conflict and enhance cooperation and friendship between states by taking measures to build confidence in international relations. The post-war European experiences somehow proved the useful effect of building trust on improving relations between former rivalries. More recently, in the study of Sino-American relations, the trust issue also began to draw more attention by scholars and policy makers alike. It is well recognized that compared to European countries, building trust between China and the United States is even more difficult as these two countries have much more differences in many aspects. Yet relative little has been done to study the issue of mutual trust in Sino-American relations.

Therefore, in this study, I will try to highlight the significance and complexity of the issue of “strategic trust” in Sino-American relations, and try to do some exploratory works, both theoretically and empirically, on the issue of “strategic trust” by defining the concept, developing a conceptual framework and a typology to measure and analyze mutual strategic trust and to delineate critical factors contributing to mutual mistrust, and applying the theoretical and conceptual constructs to reality of Sino-American relations. Case study is the main method for the empirical analysis of this study. Two typical cases, the 1999

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U.S. bombing of Chinese embassy in Belgrade and the maritime dispute between the two countries in recent years, are selected for the purpose of testing theoretical propositions of this study. In each case, I will ascertain the degree of mutual strategic trust and its causes by applying three categories of factors (structural, psychological/perceptual, and behavioral factors combined with three main IR theories. And finally, I will draw the conclusion of case studies and offer some policy recommendations.

**Key Words:** Sino-American relation, trust, strategic trust, crisis, core-interest issue, three main IR theories.



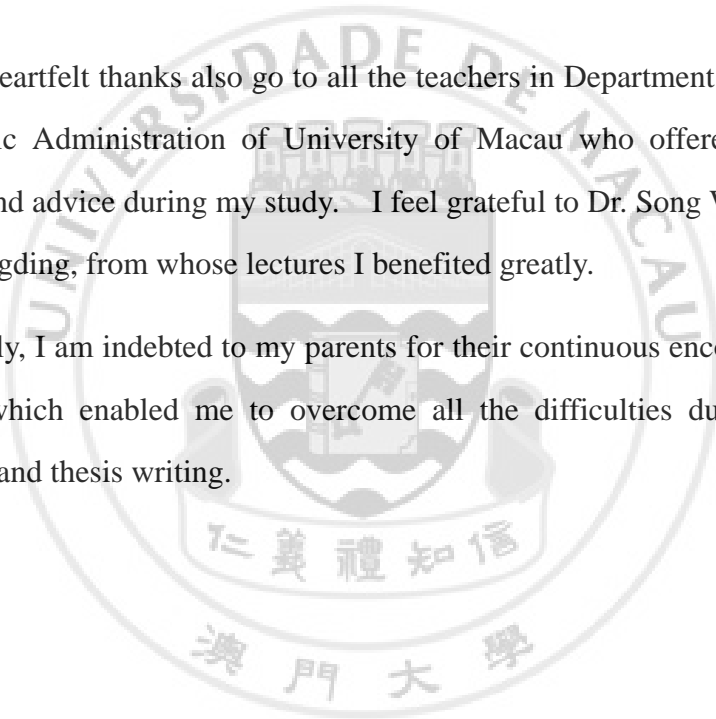
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## Abbreviations

ASEAN--the Association of Southeast Asian Nations  
CCP--Chinese Communist Party  
CIA--Central Intelligence Agency  
CSCE-- Conference on security and cooperation in Europe  
EEZ--Exclusive Economic Zone  
EU--European Union  
FAE-- Fundamental Attribution Error  
IR--International Relations  
KMT--Kuomintang  
NATO --North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
NPT--Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons  
PLA --People's Liberation Army  
PRC--the People's Republic of China  
RtoP--Responsibility to Protect  
RMB--Renminbi (currency of China)  
ROK--Republic of Korea  
SCS--South China Sea issue  
SED--Strategic and Economic Dialogue  
UNCLS--United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea  
UN--United Nations  
WTO--World Trade Organization,



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