



学校代码：10036

对外经济贸易大学  
University of International Business and Economics

# 硕士学位论文

《纽约时报》与《中国日报》关于  
中国“新冠”疫情报道议程设置的比较研究

学位类型：同等学力

论文作者：汪臻

培养单位：英语学院

专业方向：跨文化商务交际

指导教师：冯悦

2021 年 11 月 18 日

学校代码: 10036



對外經濟貿易大學  
University of International Business and Economics

## 硕士学位论文

# 《纽约时报》与《中国日报》关于 中国“新冠”疫情报道议程设置的比较研究

学位类型: 同等学力

论文作者: 汪臻

培养单位: 英语学院

专业方向: 跨文化商务交际

指导教师: 冯悦

2021 年 11 月 18 日

# **MA Thesis**

## **A Comparative Study of the Reports on COVID-19 in China from *The New York Times* and *China Daily***

**Writer: WANG, Zhen**

**Supervisor: FENG, Yue**

**School of International Studies**

**University of International Business and Economics**

**November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

# 学位论文原创性声明

本人郑重声明：所呈交的学位论文，是本人在导师的指导下，独立进行研究工作所取得的成果。除文中已经注明引用的内容外，本论文不含任何其他个人或集体已经发表或撰写过的作品成果。对本文所涉及的研究工作做出重要贡献的个人和集体，均已在文中以明确方式标明。本人完全意识到本声明的法律责任由本人承担。

特此声明


学位论文作者签名： 刘臻

2021 年 11 月 18 日



## 学位论文版权使用授权书

本人完全了解对外经济贸易大学关于收集、保存、使用学位论文的规定，同意如下各项内容：按照学校要求提交学位论文的印刷本和电子版本；学校有权保存学位论文的印刷本和电子版，并采用影印、缩印、扫描、数字化或其它手段保存论文；学校有权提供目录检索以及提供本学位论文全文或部分的阅览服务；学校有权按照有关规定向国家有关部门或者机构送交论文；学校可以采用影印、缩印或者其它方式合理使用学位论文，或将学位论文的内容编入相关数据库供检索；保密的学位论文在解密后遵守此规定。

学位论文作者签名：  2021 年 11 月 18 日

导师签名：冯悦 2021 年 11 月 18 日

## Acknowledgements

Countless people supported my effort on this research. First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest and the sincerest gratitude to my research supervisor, Professor Yue Feng, for giving me the opportunity to complete this research and providing invaluable guidance and feedbacks throughout this research. It was a great privilege and honor to work and study under her guidance. I am extremely grateful for what she has offered me, and appreciated her helpful advices. Her dynamism, vision, sincerity and motivation have deeply inspired me.

I am indebted also to my dear friend, Miaoling Liang, who showed great interests at the same time when I told her about the hypothesis of the paper. She helped me a lot in revising the thesis; provided me with critical but enlightening advises. I really want to express my thankfulness to her for her genuine support.

Also, my family deserves endless gratitude. I am extremely grateful to my parents for their love, caring and sacrifices for educating and preparing me for my future. Every time when I feel stressed and frustrated about this research, they are always there, giving me constant encouragement. I am also very much thankful to my boyfriend for his love and understanding.

I thank the School of Foreign Studies, University of International Business and Economics, for providing an excellent academic environment, and the support to complete this thesis successfully.

Finally, my thanks go to all the friends and my colleagues who have supported me to complete the research work directly or indirectly.

Wanng Zhen

November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## 摘 要

本文对《纽约时报》和《中国日报》关于中国“新冠”疫情的报道进行研究，采用内容分析法和比较分析法，基于议程设置理论框架，着重对比中美代表性媒体在关注议题、引语设置、报道方式、报道倾向方面的特征和异同，分析研究两家媒体在报道中呈现的中国政治形象、社会形象和经济形象。

本研究发现，《纽约时报》更关注于中国政治、人权、民生问题等负面议题，展现其消极形象。在《纽约时报》笔下，中国的政治形象是强硬且缺乏自由的；社会问题突出；而在经济方面，中国既强大又充满不确定性。《中国日报》则更多的关注医疗、经济和国际关系话题。报道中传达了“抗疫必胜”的积极信念，强调了中国人民团结一致，众志成城的社会形象，正面描绘了中方抗击疫情的卓越成就，塑造了中国负责任、有担当的大国形象。由于中美两国在政治核心利益和文化价值取向的不同，和两国媒体各自推崇的新闻理念的区别，导致了《纽约时报》和《中国日报》报道的巨大差异。

本研究发现《纽约时报》通过大量笔墨渲染了中国在抗疫中的负面形象，却忽略了中国在抗疫中做出的努力和贡献。中国媒体在国际传播当中则处于弱势地位。对此，本研究建议提高新闻报道的全面性、中立性和透明度，把握国际舆论动向，以在国际上以中国态度发出中国声音，体现和平友好的外交方针。

**关键词：**新冠疫情；国家形象；《纽约时报》；《中国日报》

## Abstract

This research is to explore the national image of China constructed by *The New York Times* and *China Daily*, in the context of the COVID-19 epidemic in China. Based on the theoretical framework of agenda-setting, this article analyzes the differences of reporting by the two news outlets using the methods of content analysis and comparative analysis. Through media's repeated emphasis on specific topics, China's political, social, and economic images have been shaped accordingly.

Reports from *The New York Times* and *China Daily* are significantly different, likely due to the differences in the core interests, values, the concepts of media communication between the two countries. *The New York Times* pays more attention to issues in politics, human rights, and people's livelihood, portraying a negative image of China. The *China Daily*, on the other hand, pays more attention to medical, economics and international relations, promoting a positive image of the country. This research finds that *The New York Times* exaggerates the negative image of China, but ignores China's outstanding anti-epidemic achievement and international contributions during the epidemic. In this regard, Chinese media is in a vulnerable position in international communication. This research suggests increasing transparency and openness in external-facing media, grasping trends within international public opinion, and promoting friendly cooperation.

**Keywords:** COVID-19; National Image; *The New York Times*; *China Daily*

# Contents

Acknowledgements..... i

摘要..... ii

Abstract..... iii

List of tables..... vi

List of figures.....vii

Chapter 1 Introduction.....1

    1.1 Research Background..... 1

    1.2 Need for the study..... 1

    1.3 Significance of the study.....2

    1.4 Structure of thesis..... 3

Chapter 2 Literature Review..... 5

    2.1 Concepts and definitions.....5

    2.2 Agenda-setting theory.....7

    2.3 China's national image..... 10

    2.4 Media reports on the epidemic.....11

    2.5 Gaps in the literature.....13

Chapter 3 Research Methodology..... 15

    3.1 Research questions..... 15

    3.2 Data collection..... 16

    3.3 Research instruments..... 18

    3.4 Data processing.....20

Chapter 4 Results and Discussion..... 24

4.1 Description of data.....24

4.2 Explanation of data.....40

4.3 Case analysis.....45

**Chapter 5 Conclusion..... 67**

5.1 Major findings.....67

5.2 Implications..... 69

5.3 Limitations..... 71

**References.....73**

**Appendix I Coding Scheme..... 76**

**Appendix II Time Line of the Epidemic..... 78**

**Appendix III Sample Reports from The New York Times and China Daily.....77**

**个人简历 在读期间发表的学术论文与研究成果..... 82**

List of tables

Table 3-1 Reliability of the research.....23

Table 4-1 Quotation sources in the reports.....33

Table 4-2 Keywords in reporting political subjects of China.....45

Table 4-3 Keywords in reporting social subjects of China.....54

Table 4-4 Keywords in reporting economics subjects of China.....61

## List of figures

Figure 3-1 The media bias chart.....	17
Figure 4-1 Trend of number of reports related to the COVID-19 response timeline.....	25
Figure 4-2 Distribution of reporting genres.....	26
Figure 4-3 Topics covered in the reports.....	28
Figure 4-4 Tendency of the reports.....	29
Figure 4-5 Distribution of tendency.....	30
Figure 4-6 Relations between attitudes and topics – <i>The New York Times</i> .....	31
Figure 4-7 Relations between attitudes and topics – <i>China Daily</i> .....	32
Figure 4-8 Quotation Sources.....	33
Figure 4-9 Quotation sources and its origin in <i>The New York Times</i> .....	34
Figure 4-10 Quotation sources and its origin in <i>China Daily</i> .....	35
Figure 4-11 Word cloud for <i>China Daily</i> .....	39
Figure 4-12 Word cloud for <i>The New York Times</i> .....	39



## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

This chapter gives a brief introduction of the research background, the need for, and the significance of this study. The structure of thesis is presented at the end.

### **1.1 Research Background**

In 2020, after the outbreak of the corona virus, with a great number of confirmed cases and the rapid expansion of the epidemic in China, the country has attracted massive attention from Chinese and foreign media. Mass media supplied information, interpretation, and serves instructive functions by providing news reports to the public. It may have both positive and negative impact on the society. In this case, apart from providing the accurate news and information during the pandemic, the media sometimes are expected to feed on the frenzy and exaggerate. Audiences are capable of understanding the progress of the epidemic clearly and intuitively through the reports. The standpoints and attitudes of mass media are various from country to country. The media often comprehensively report the epidemic from perspectives of the epidemic prevention and control, medical and health, economic situation, people's livelihood, etc., and the comprehensive image of a country is also presented in the report.

In previous studies, the national image of China constructed by western media is generally an “incomplete China” filled with stereotypes and flaws and is usually heavily political. Through their lens of reporting, the national image of China as an “evil, barbaric and authoritarian” state has been perpetuated and widely spread in Western society. Over time, China has expanded its presence internationally. The changing dynamics of international politics and foreign relations have led to a shift in China’s national image.

### **1.2 Need for the study**

Media reports were an important channel that reflected the national image of the country. As a citizen of China, the researcher has personally experienced the entire unfolding of the pandemic, from its first cases, to the outbreak, and then to its gradual

subsiding; the researcher also perceived the national image of China shown by Chinese media reports as the epidemic developed. For the most part, Chinese media promoted China's achievements in fighting against COVID-19 and reported such efforts from a positive perspective.

On the other hand, some western media affirmed the reported efforts against the epidemic in an objective manner, others kept their prejudice against China. The United States of America is often regarded as a free market of opinions, and American media reports have strong credibility and reliability on the international scale. In this case, what are the differences of Chinese and American media reports? Is the U.S. media truly communicating the pandemic reality? Is the national image of China, as shaped by the U.S. media, authentic? This article is willing to discuss if stereotypes still hold strong, and how the impression of China is changed during the epidemic.

This thesis selects a mass of relevant reports of the two mainstream media in two countries (*China Daily* and *The New York Times* are selected in this case) as the research objects, and researches on their perspectives on China during the pandemic through the reports. By collecting and categorizing relevant data and information, the purpose is to compare and analyze the publicity and media coverage given by the two countries and their role in shaping and disseminating China's national image. It is important to study the practice of agenda-setting of *The New York Times*, dialectically compare it against the agenda-setting of *China Daily*, and analyze each's tendency of reporting towards China during the epidemic. Its analysis will compare the images that the two media had built, revealing how typical Chinese and American media report on China and which impressions that China is created in the media to the world. On this basis, the thesis is hoping to shed some light on the international communication strategy of China's national image.

### 1.3 Significance of the study

The practical significance of the study is to examine China's national image created by media. With the advance of globalization, as well as the continuous rise of China's international status and the implementation of national strategies such as the "Going Global" export-oriented strategy, building China's national image has become

increasingly important. Media reports on China will directly affect China's image in the international community. In this regard, this research looks into the differences between the media of the two countries in reporting the COVID-19 epidemic in China, in order to compare their similarities and differences and analyze varying presentations of China's national image from the perspectives of China and the U.S. Thereby, this study hopes to postulate and summarize possible causes leading to the results, and propose suggestions for improving the national image of China.

**The theoretical significance** of this study is that, under the theoretical framework of agenda-setting, content analysis and comparative research provide a good foundation for deeper study of media reports. In previous studies, there is a number of analyses of China's national image through Chinese and foreign media reports already exist. Nonetheless, with Covid-19 as a major event of this decade, associated media reports have great value for research. Combined with a sensitive period in international relations, the attitudes of the media of the two countries will also be affected by international politics, and their reporting perspectives, focus and methods are worth studying. Carrying out this research will be beneficial for revealing differences in media reporting methods, focus, perspectives, in addition, enrich related theories and provides another case for the "agenda-setting" theory.

## **1.4 Structure of thesis**

This thesis is broken down to five chapters. Chapter One gives a brief introduction of the background, discussing the thesis statement and the general layout of the thesis, stating the practical significance, theoretical significance and the innovation of this study.

Chapter Two presents a literature review of the definitions of specific terms, provides a brief account of the theoretical framework. In addition, the researcher sets out previous studies on China's national image and others findings.

Chapter Three lists research methodologies applied in this thesis, namely, content analysis and comparative analysis methods. It presents the research questions and the research instruments, and explains the methods of collecting and processing data.

Chapter Four, the main part of the thesis, provides a comparative analysis of China's national image based on the theoretical framework. By performing statistical analysis on the data, the researcher compiles several figures and tables, gives an in-depth descriptive analysis, and explains the results. The analysis covers various topics, focusing on textual content and keywords, to understand how the image of China is portrayed.

Chapter Five gives the natural conclusion of this thesis. It presents major findings of this thesis, gives suggestions, and also points out the limitation of the study.

## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

In this part of the thesis, basic concepts and theories applied will be referenced. A summary of existing findings is given by conducting a literature review on previous studies.

### **2.1 Concepts and definitions**

#### **2.1.1 Gatekeeping**

The idea of gatekeeping refers to the process through which information is selected and filtered for dissemination (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008). It was first posited in 1943 by the social psychologist Kurt Lewin, in his work *Forces Behind Food Habits and Methods of Change*, and is still one of the most essential and foundational theories in mass communication and journalism. and the concept has been modified in 1947, in which he introduced the idea of feedback in decision making of groups, which complicates the role of the gatekeeper (Lewin, 1947). A case study done by David Manning White in 1950 has shown that the communication of news is based on the "gate keeper's" own set of experiences, attitudes and expectations, which is highly subjective (White, 1950). In the 1970s, McCombs and Shaw found that the audience learns importance of a news is from the emphasis the media place on it, and have pointed out the relationship between gatekeeping concept and the agenda-setting theory (McCombs et al, 1976).

Gatekeeping falls into a role of surveillance and monitoring data. Gatekeepers may allow certain information to pass through to their audience, based on their personal preference, professional experience, social influences, or bias. Gatekeeping may also have impact on policies and procedures, playing the role of a watchdog within society or simply playing into the audience's confirmation bias. An initial conceptualization of gatekeeping was based on journalism, and was focusing on the process of selecting news. Reporters and editors were playing the role of human filters. Subsequent theory development has demonstrated that gatekeeping as the process includes not only selection but also the way news stories are shaped and presented.

In latest studies on gatekeeping, things have changed. The digital environment

created a variety of new ways to perform gatekeeping. Along with Web 2.0 environment, instead of journalists taking the traditional gatekeeping role, the audience would guide the coverage. Website users are able to manipulate according to their needs and interests, while the journalists provide basic information (Singer, 2003). Nowadays, the term of "audience gatekeeping" is conducted according to Shoemaker and Vos. It is the about the process in which users "pass along already available news items and comment on them" based on the user's own set of criteria about the newsworthiness" (Shoemaker & Vos, 2009).

According to Littlejohn in 2002, gatekeeping is correlated to agenda setting. In this case, journalists and editors from the news outlets as the gatekeepers may be able to decide what to present to the public during the epidemic. It is necessary to study the frequency and focus of reporting, and analyze what information has been emphasized, and as a result, what image has been reinforced.

### **2.1.2 National image**

According to Walter Lipmann, "National image is one of the most salient concepts in the era of globalization" (Lippmann, 1922). It is the images formed in one's head about a foreign country. Kunczik posits that national image is "the cognitive representation that a person holds of a given country, what a person believes to be true about a nation and its people" (Kunczik, 1997). National image deals with the opinion formed by the international public's perceptions and judgments (Wang, 2008).

The concept of national image contains three parts: internal image, external image and media image. According to the Chinese scholar Wenhua Guan, the image of a country is comprehensive, which is the overall evaluation and recognition of the country's action, activities and achievements given by the external and internal audience of the country (Guan, 2000). Positive and negative national images can affect the international influence, national economic interests, and discursive power of a country on the global stage. National image is associated with a country's ability to build and maintain positive relationships with other countries.

As the main channel of conducting public diplomacy, news media plays a significant role in shaping national image. Xu Xiaoge revealed the relationship between

mass communication and national image, stating that “the national image is which presented in international news, or the image constructed in the discourse of reports of other countries” (Xu, 2000). Xu’s definition of national image emphasizes the media factor, drawing an intimate connection between mass media and national image and highlighting the role that social media plays in the process of shaping the national image.

According to previous studies, the national image in the media is often displayed in terms of politics, social issues, and economics. While the reports from *China Daily* and *The New York Times* can also be sorted into these topics during the epidemic. In this case, it is able to analyze the comprehensive national image of China from the reports, from political, social, and economic perspectives.

## 2.2 Agenda-setting theory

Agenda-setting is one of the most recognized communication theories. The principal outlines of agenda-setting theory were sketched by Walter Lippmann, who conducted a series of studies on news media, such as *The New York Times* and the *Time* magazine, and put forward a hypothesis in his 1922 classic, *Public Opinion* (1922; reissued 1956; paperback ed., 1965). The book began with a chapter titled “The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads”. The central thesis of his work is that news media are the primary bridge and major link between the vast array of events in the external world and the truncated views of these events in our minds (McCombs, 2008). As Lippmann noted, our opinions and behaviors are a response to these pictures in our heads, not to the larger outside world. His hypothesis is considered to be the foundation of agenda-setting theory. Lippmann seemed to imply that most people can only rely on the media to perceive the world beyond the scope of their own experience. Therefore, news media influences the public's perception of the world to a certain extent.

In 1963, Bernard Cohen put forward a pithy summary of agenda-setting: “the press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (Cohen, 1963). This statement clearly points out the function of agenda-setting in the media. While the media don’t exactly dictate what people think, but it can set out an agenda for people to

think “about”. People may think they’re free to think whatever they want, when in fact they are already directed by an “object” of thought that the media sets out. Their attention is being directed to limited subjects or aspects of an event.

Nearly half a century later, during the 1968 U.S. presidential election, Lippmann’s observations were the basis of the seminal Chapel Hill study (McCombs & Shaw 1972) that introduced the theory of agenda-setting. Subsequent studies have examined much longer periods of time - for example, a yearlong, nine-wave panel study during the 1976 U.S. presidential election - and found similar evidence of strong agenda-setting effects among the public. According to the research of McCombs and Shaw, the effect of media agenda-setting depends on the influence of factors such as the frequency of public contact with the media, the public's need for the media, interpersonal communication, and the interests of different public audiences.

Lippmann saw news media as a searchlight scanning the landscape, moving restlessly about, bringing one episode and another out of the darkness into spotlight. Some understand his “searchlight” hypothesis as a way of saying, “What is under the searchlight depends on the group that has a special interest in a certain subject, on the pseudo-events that people create to attract public attention, and on certain practices of the journalists themselves” (Guo, 2000). In the eyes of agenda-setting critics, what lies within the searchlight perimeter is the agenda chosen by the media to highlight.

Later, when American scholars Kurt and Gladys Lang developed the agenda-setting theory into “agenda construction” process, they have specifically expressed the selection process of news facts as “highlighted reports.” The six steps of agenda construction, outlined by the two scholars, includes that “different types of topics require different types and weights of news reports to attract people’s attention” (Guo, 2000). In practical applications, the media is able to deepen the impression in people's minds and guide public opinion through a wide range of reports on a certain issue.

The agenda-setting hypothesis highlights the role of media in shaping public opinion. Who, then, set the media agenda? According to recent studies, one of the most important forces in the perception shaping process stems from reports of reputable media, such as *The New York Times*, one of the most well-regarded media in the United States. “When the *Times* indicates that an issue is newsworthy, other U.S. news organizations take note” (Dearing & Rogers, 1996).

In Rogers and Dearing’s model, the gatekeepers, influential media and spectacular



news stories are the source of media agenda. They have the ability to decide what issue and which aspect of an issue are to be reported in media. There are factors that can influence media agenda, such as gatekeepers, government officials and influential personnel. "If the media has close relationship with the elite society, that class will probably affect the media agenda and the public agenda in turn" (Littlejohn, 2002). After the agenda of media is set, it will directly influence the public agenda, since people will talk about what they saw on television or what they read on newspapers. There is no doubt that the tendency of reporting will influence the audience. What the public cares about and how they perceive a certain issue will in turn influence the government's attitude. Through this process, the agenda of media can directly influence the government's policy agenda. Agenda setting can influence the public, and the government about their decisions on what should be emphasized.

The agenda-setting effects of mass media also have significant implications beyond the pictures created in people's heads. In the original, traditional domain of agenda-setting, the salience of public issues, there is considerable evidence that the shifting salience of issues on the media agenda often are the basis for public opinion about the overall performance in office of a public leader. In turn, the salience of a leader in the news also is linked with whether an individual holds any opinion at all. At the second level of agenda-setting, the salience of affective attributes intertwined with the public's cognitive pictures of these leaders represents the convergence of attribute agenda-setting with opinion formation and change. Beyond attitudes and opinions, the pictures of reality created by the mass media have implications for personal behaviors, ranging from college applications to voting on Election Day (McCombs, 2011).

Agenda-setting as an indirect effect is a common phenomenon verified in many cases of study. Although this kind of effect has potential possibility of distorting "the Pictures in Our Heads", it is not a derogatory term. In fact, it is widely accepted by almost all countries and governments that media is a vessel for guiding public opinion to a direction conducive to their own goals, although each's methods and results vary in the process. "Public opinion orientation" is a subjective pursuit; and "agenda-setting" is an objective effect. As China increasingly modernizes, especially with reforms of the political system, the way the government guides public opinion will also change (Guo, 1997).

### 2.3 China's national image

The media is a window for the public to understand and perceive the world. Media report on China is one of the important approaches to understand China from the rest of the world. Alexander Liss and Zengjun Peng are among the first to explore China's national image in American media since the new century. Later, Li Zhang studied China's image in British newspapers (Chen, et al., 2020). Their research notes that, since China's adoption of the Reform and Opening-up strategy and as China's relationship with the world grows tighter, western media has been paying more coverage to China-related news and displays a diversity of dimensions about China, as opposed to the "Red China" stereotype. However, as China's overall national power grows, the notion of "China threat" is also gaining traction.

Recent studies on China's national image shows that foreign media reports focus mainly on Chinese politics, economics, culture and society. In **political** aspects, China is considered "powerful" and "tough". In most cases, China is given a relatively negative image in international political events. Media pays extensive attention to the leaders, the political system, and the development of military power in China. On the other hand, democracy and human rights in China are also emphasized - highly derogatory words such as "suppression, persecution, arrest, deprivation, rights, torture, surveillance, threats, etc." are often associated with China in the reports (Yang, 2015). In general, political reforms in China are widely approved and recognized by the international society. However, when it comes to "liberty", "democracy", "human rights", or international politics on territorial issues such as the "South China Sea issue", China is mostly criticized (Luo, 2019). In terms of **economy**, China has achieved a rapid growth and has become a powerful force that cannot be underestimated worldwide. Problems resulting from industrialization, such as environmental pollution, industrial accidents, patterns of economic growth, etc., are noticed by international media (Luo, 2019). On the **cultural** side, compared to political and economic aspects, the majority of international media holds positive attitudes towards Chinese culture, believing that Chinese culture is rich and profound. On the **social** front, media is fairly critical to the overall image of the Chinese people. Reports on Chinese people violating regulations and littering have led to the formation of prejudices and stereotypes of the Chinese society (Yang, 2015).

As it has been for a long time, American media reports on China have mostly been negative, due to the unbalanced discursive power between China and the United States, different values and ideologies, and the prevalence of stereotypes. Meanwhile, political groups have used media to execute their agenda to a certain extent. As the “mouthpiece” of the government, the media largely reflects the country's political stance. On the issue of democracy, in particular, U.S. media tend to misconstrue Chinese public opinion. In addition, negative reports were made to attract attention due to commercial factors (Feng, 2015).

On the other hand, Chinese media is often regarded as “window dressing”, holding back unpleasant facts. The coverage of information is relatively insufficient and simple, and it lacks in the artistic aspect of news reporting (Feng, 2015). However, thanks to the development of China's economics, the overall national strength and international influence have increased. The number of objective and impartial news reports on China has increased. At present, the national image of China as constructed by the media in the international society has the coexistence of distortion, misunderstanding, and objectivity (Yan, 2014).

## **2.4 Media reports on the epidemic**

The importance of the media in international communication is self-evident, especially during the time of COVID-19 epidemic raging the world. News outlets did invaluable work during the year 2020. In 2021, the Pulitzer Prize Board gave its top honor-the Public Service Pulitzer-to *The New York Times* for its “courageous, prescient and sweeping coverage of the coronavirus pandemic” (Jones, 2021). This fully reveals the attention of the media towards the COVID-19 epidemic. On the one hand, the media performs the function of supervising and criticizing the work done by the government; on the other hand, it is also the mouthpiece of the government.

As a major topic of 2020, COVID-19 has drawn concerns worldwide, and there were thousands of news reports related to the epidemic in China. Apart from rudimentary news reporting, the function of media is various, and the form of reporting changes during the epidemic.

Any point when there is an outbreak, individuals would generally turn to the media for information. During COVID-19, the website “Sprinklr” recorded a count of nearly 20 million mentions of coronavirus on March 11 (Anwar, Malik, & Raees, 2020).

At the beginning of the outbreak, when the situation was unclear, there were deficiencies in media reports. Information fragmentation, and even miss information existed during that time. Before January 20, local mainstream media rarely made the epidemic as front-page content (Luan & Zhang, 2020). Therefore, fragmented self-media reports and the absence of local media in Wuhan have made the epidemic not seriously concerned by the public, and it has also missed the best time for information publicity. The emergence of fake news also spreads the panic and fear of the unknown virus. With the spread of the epidemic, the role of the media and the forms of reporting during the epidemic have become more diversified.

#### **2.4.1 The special roles played by the media**

Web media is relatively more popular during the pandemic than the traditional media, because of its fast and wide range of spreading, and its rich content. 95% of the public uses at least one type of online media to obtain information about the epidemic (He, 2020).

During the epidemic, the media produces "epidemic maps". The aggregate data of confirmed cases, suspected cases, and cured cases in various regions are monitored in real time and presented in visual tables, so that the public can understand the developing situation of the epidemic in various places. In addition, media also plays a role of Integrating information, dispelling rumors, communicating public health guidance, educating the public, and even providing telemedicine (Liu, 2020).

#### **2.4.2 Reporting Methods**

Both Chinese and foreign media have paid great attention to the epidemic. However, the reporting attitudes, methods, and focuses of the news outlets are different. According to Hong Chen (2000), "the western media uses seemingly objective methods to select facts, report events, and express their views in a concealed manner, thereby influencing the audience's thinking, and achieving the purpose of guiding and controlling public opinion."

Chinese official media such as the *People's Daily* bear the important responsibility of information dissemination, public opinion guidance, and soothing people's hearts. The choice of vocabulary and rhetoric used to convey the positive belief. Establishing China's image as a major country in the international community (Zhao, 2021).

On the other hand, some international media, such as *The New York Times* has set an agenda for China through negative lenses, in which the optimistic aspects of issues are ignored, while the negative aspects are scrutinized. *The New York Times* accuses the Chinese government, and contains misunderstanding and prejudice against the government, even applies double standards with negative attitudes (Ge, 2020).

Today, as the media has become more comprehensive and systematic in reporting on the epidemic, truthfulness and transparency have become central themes and basic requirements of media reporting. Truthful and transparent reports of the coronavirus by official media can deepen the public's understanding of the virus, and thus enhancing the public's understanding of the introduction of preventive measures such as wearing masks, keeping a safe distance, and quarantining at home, and other government measures.

## **2.5 Gaps in the literature**

To sum up, certain international events often attract wide attention from the society, such as the Sino-US trade friction and Huawei incident. Scholars have studied the national image of China through media content. In previous research, there are also studies on the reports about SARS, H7N9 epidemic and other public health emergencies. However, these studies mostly analyze the reporting effect of a specific media, and the selected samples are relatively small. Few scholars have stepped into the research that compares the reports on the epidemic from two news outlets, and conduct an analysis on national image with agenda setting theory.

According to the literature review from above, agenda setting by the media would have impact on shaping the image of a country. As a major international event and social issue, the COVID-19 epidemic has gathered great attention from the world. Media have carried out continuous reporting on the epidemic in China during the special period, and their various reporting contents and methods have played a key role in shaping China's national image.

During the epidemic, the international political situation has undergone great changes. At the same time, due to the rise of new media and social networks, media reporting methods and quotation occupied may change, and China's national image in the world may also be different. These changing social factors have created a certain research gap from previous studies.

Therefore, this research intends to analyze and compare the differences in the

reporting characteristics of the *China Daily* and *The New York Times*, and explore the reasons for the differences. Trying to explore the differences in the public opinion guidance of these two media, and then provide ideas for the future reporting direction of the Chinese media when facing such incidents.

## Chapter 3 Research Methodology

This chapter will explain the research methods of Content Analysis and Coding Scheme, as well as the research process used in this research.

### 3.1 Research questions

As seen from previous studies and research results, international media do not always report on China in an objective manner. Rather, under the influence of ideologies and preconceived stereotypes, they portrayed a negative national image of China. Since the outbreak, news outlets in China and the United States have both carried out large-scale of reports on the epidemic in China. According to the agenda-setting theory, these reports will strengthen China's national image in the international community, with the first level salience of the selected topics and the second level salience of the specific reporting attitudes.

As a result, the research questions of this study are based on the two levels of agenda setting theory. This article will discuss reporting methods and attitudes of the media, analyze the similarities and differences of China's image in the media reports of the two countries.

The main **Research Questions** are as follows:

RQ1: Which topics are mostly emphasized and discussed in *The New York Times* when reporting on the epidemic in China, and what is the national image of China constructed during the epidemic created from those focused topics?

RQ2: Which topics are mostly emphasized and discussed in the *China Daily* when reporting on the epidemic in China, and what is the national image of China constructed during the epidemic created from those focused topics?

RQ3: In terms of the reporting tendency and attitude, source of quotations, discretionary vocabularies, and reporting agendas, what are the similarities and differences between *The New York Times* and *China Daily's* reports to construct and present China's national image?

## 3.2 Data collection

### 3.2.1 Selection of News Outlets

In reporting on major events, mainstream media play an important role that influences public opinion and guides social trends. In the selection of target media, this study chooses two news outlets representative of China and the United States, *China Daily* and *The New York Times*, to present the media of the two parties on reporting the epidemic in China, and to conduct a comparative analysis on the discursive characteristics of their reports.

*The New York Times* is distributed all over the world and has established fairly deep influences. It is one of the most regarded American newspapers and represents serious journalism, with good reputation, credibility and authority all over the world. *The New York Times* editorial page is often regarded as liberal leaning. Jianwu Song of Renmin University once commented that *The New York Times* is a model for the newspaper industry, in terms of its content production and observation of social issues. According to the Media Bias Chart (version 7.0 January 2021), the overall stance of *The New York Times* is Neutral; in the News Value and Reliability scale, it is rated as Fact Reporting. This study believes that choosing *The New York Times* as the research object has high applicability.



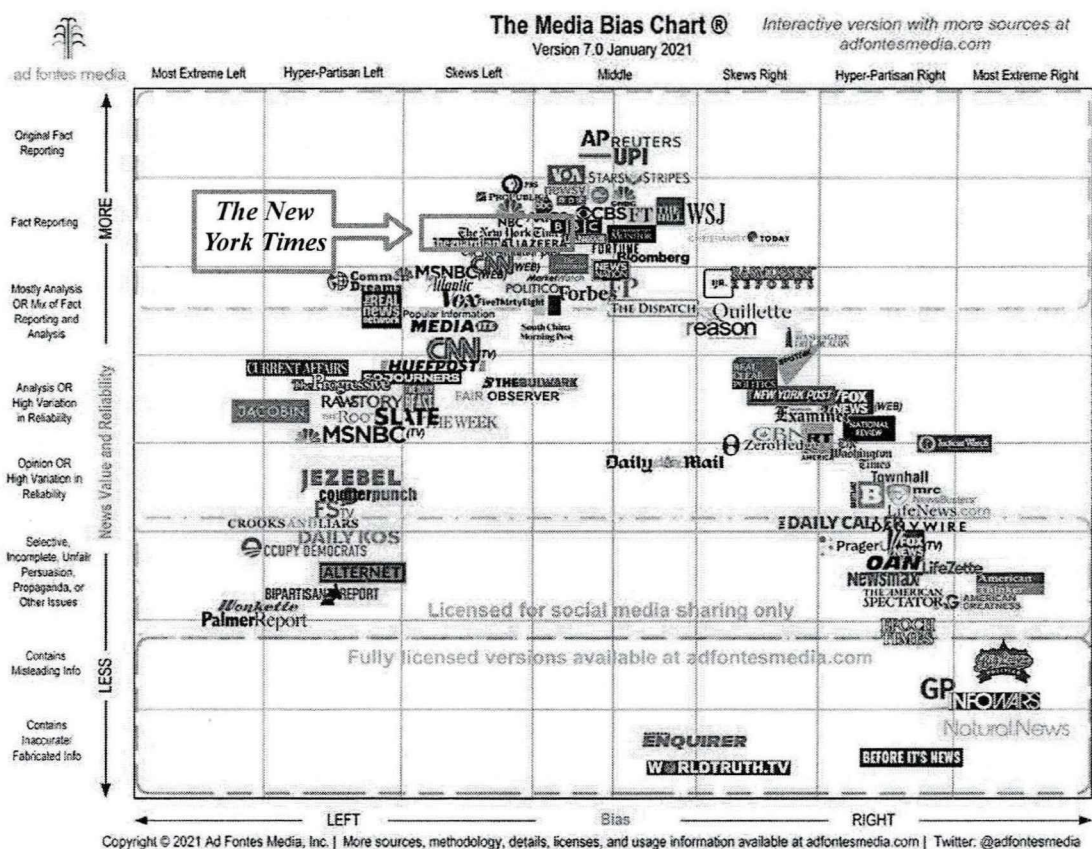


Figure 3-1 The media bias chart

In contrast, *China Daily* is one of the main propaganda units of the Chinese government. As an English-based national newspaper, *China Daily* is a bridge for China facing the world, and for the world to understand China. It is crucial in international communication, and is the window for external publicity. *China Daily* bears the important responsibility of reporting China overseas and shaping a good national image of China. Its stance that can represent China's attitude and the government's views has attracted special attention from overseas. It is also one of the most popular English-language Chinese media staffed by talents in China and abroad.

The value orientation of *China Daily* and *The New York Times* is reporting on serious news, and both reports frequently on major international news around the world. This article selects representative media reports on COVID-19 epidemic in China as the sample, aiming to explore the similarities and differences between the two publications in terms of overall reporting and characteristics of news discourse.

### 3.2.2 Retrieving the Reports

The research objects of this article are the reports published by *The New York*

*Times* and *China Daily* related to the COVID-19 epidemic in China. This study extracted all news reports related to the COVID-19 epidemic in China from January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020 from the two media. The reason for choosing this sample period is mainly that the COVID-19 epidemic broke out at the end of 2019 and started to spread in early 2020; news reports about epidemic in China are concentrated within this time period. At the time of collecting materials from the two media, the global pandemic was still in its developing stage, and media focus had shifted to global vaccination. For the practicality of collecting data, in addition to the limitations of thesis conception and timing, the sample period of this study is limited to the year of 2020.

The selection of news reports of *China Daily* and *The New York Times* report samples were obtained from official websites respectively. In order to retrieve all the reports regarding China's epidemic, this study used "advanced search" tool on the official website of *China Daily*. All the news reports containing "corona virus", "COVID-19", "pandemic", "epidemic" and other key words in the full text were all retrieved, and a total of 672 report samples were obtained. On the other hand, for reports from *The New York Times*, with the instruction of the instructor, this study obtained original data from students in the research group of "The Image of China Revealed by Foreign Media Reports", which contains a total of 1,180 news reports about China. After applying the same keyword screening on data, a total of 749 sample reports were obtained.

### **3.3 Research instruments**

#### **3.3.1 Research methodology**

The main research approach adopted in this study is content analysis and comparative analysis.

**Content analysis** is an empirical research method of social science. It is a "research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Berelson, 1952). The method can be broken down into two concepts: content and analysis. Content refers to the research object, while analysis involves a research method. (Peng, 2012) It is often used to determine the presence of certain words, themes or concepts within given qualitative news reports. Content analysis method allows social scientists to review texts and other forms of

information, based on their various academic backgrounds, theoretical frameworks they used, and their research purposes. The texts are broken down into manageable code categories for analysis and further research, including calculations, overviews, and comparisons based on these data to make descriptions, explanations and inferences afterwards. (Peng, 2012)

**Comparative analysis** is the most basic method of analysis. Without comparison, the analysis cannot begin. According to Pickvance (2005), comparative analysis is conducted mainly to explain and gain a better understanding of the causal processes involved in the creation of an event, feature or relationship usually by bringing together variations in the explanatory variable or variables. This article demonstrates the validity of this study through a large number of comparisons between the representative media of the two countries in reporting on the politics, economy, medical care, people's livelihoods and international relations, also conducts a comparative analysis by examining similarities and differences.

### 3.3.2. Coding scheme

Shifan Wang indicated that "The core work of content analysis is to construct a set of concepts and categories to classify media content... The coding scheme should be mutual exclusion, detailed, and with high reliability" (Wang, 1992).

After selecting the reports on the official websites of *China Daily* and *The New York Times*, this study condenses the content and breaks the text into units for clear interpretation, creating structured categories from a large amount of given data. Next, coding serves as a way of tagging the data and organizing it into a sequence of numbers and keywords to highlight points of relevance.

This research will specifically include quantitative analysis and qualitative analysis. For the collected text, this research regards each piece of news as an analysis unit, based on the news headline: any text with a main headline is regarded as an analysis unit.

In terms of **quantitative analysis**, the research is based on all the samples of news reports about the COVID-19 epidemic in China from *China Daily* and *The New York Times*. After analyzing the samples, a statistical analysis of the number of reports, reporting genres, distribution of reporting tendencies, and quoting structure were

conducted, based on the classification of coding scheme. This method will consider the tendencies of research objects through a statistical lens - such as the reporting frequencies of each media on various topics, making the research more intuitive and accurate through the statistical data. Quantitative analysis objectively reveals the general and basic situation of the two-news media in their reports on the epidemic in China. However, it has certain limitations in terms of considering the expression of information behind the news text, such as the attitude of the media towards the country's politics, economy, culture, and society.

In order to make up for the limitations of quantitative research, this research will also conduct a **qualitative analysis** on news texts. Through an in-depth analysis of the samples, various aspects of news coverage are examined, including reporting attitudes and tendencies, as well as descriptive vocabularies employed. This aims to understand news reporting by its language and writing. By revealing the attitude of news reports and analyzing the similarities and differences in their construction of China's national image, this study is able to discover the general differences in news production of *The New York Times* and *China Daily*, supplemented by findings in the quantitative analysis.

### **3.3.3 Research platform**

The study employed a research platform and tool called "DiVoMiner" to carry out data collation and content analysis. The platform completes quantitative content analysis according to academic standards in one stop, from data upload (quantitative and qualitative), data management, data sampling, reliability testing, content coding, statistical analysis to visualization.

## **3.4 Data processing**

### **3.4.1 Sampling process**

The data is sampled to include only the news reports related to the epidemic in China from the two medias. The definition of "China-related" reports includes reports on the social condition in China during the epidemic, or comments towards the Chinese public; and the reports need to enable an estimation, or clear identification, of the tendency of reporting for the media in question.

For example, the article "TikTok, Trump and an Impulse to Play CEO to Corporate

America" is based on the interests of the U.S. government as a whole, and takes the U.S. government as the first person. There is limited concern for China. As a result, this piece is not included as the research object of this study.

Another example is a report titled "Australia Says Chinese Students Are Targets in 'Virtual Kidnapping' Scams". Although the subject of the report is Chinese overseas students in Australia and the article mentions "coronavirus" pandemic several times, the main content of the article is about telephone scams and that foreign students are extorted in Australia. This report is removed from research objects as well.

Based on the principles above, the study sorted the data extracts collected. After manual screening and removing irrelevant and repetitive news texts that are not related to the issue of the COVID-19 epidemic in China, the data was narrowed down to the focus of this research. The final valid dataset obtained a total of 595 report samples on *China Daily*, and a total of 507 samples on *The New York Times*.

Due to time constraint, the study randomly selected 200 relevant reports respectively from the populations of *The New York Times* and *China Daily* on the DiVoMiner platform. The sample includes 400 pieces in total for conducting coding and a content analysis through the reports. The sampling rate reached 32.52% for *China Daily* and 38.99% for *The New York Times*.

### **3.4.2 Coding categories**

This study defines the quantitative and qualitative areas of research as such: Number of Reports, Reporting Genres, Content of Reports, and Quotations in the Reports.

**1. Number of Reports :** Calculate the number of reports on the COVID-19 epidemic in China in terms of time period;

**2. Classification of Reporting Genres:** Divide the genres of reports into 5 categories against which to classify data: News, Newsletters, Commentary, Interviews and Others. Objects are labelled by the length, timeliness, reporting objects, etc.;

News consist of brief news reports that emphasize timeliness and highlight the most updated and important news facts;

Newsletters consist of relatively long, less time-sensitive but more detailed

reporting;

Commentaries consist of articles where reporters, experts or scholars in related fields comment and analyze a certain social phenomenon or hot topic;

Interviews consist of reporters' interviews with relevant people on a specific issue;

Others consist of reporting that cannot be classified into the above categories, including speech drafts, specific policy documents, etc.;

**3. Topics of Reports:** Read through and classify all the collected report samples. The investigation of the report content mainly examines two parts, namely, the topics covered by the report, and the tendency of the report towards China. In practice, the topics covered in the reports are classified into categories of: Domestic Politics, Medical and Health, Economics and Trading, Environment and People's Livelihood, Human Rights system, Art and Sports, International Relations, Science and Technology, and Others. The tendency of the piece is estimated by its attitudes to examine if it is positive, neutral, or negative;

**4. Quotations in the reports :** The sources of quotation and their respective regions of origination are investigated and measured. The sources of the quotation are classified into: Government or International Organizations, Non-governmental Organizations, Business Circle, Academia (including the Medical Profession), Media, Ordinary People, and Others. The regions of quotations are classified into: China (excluding Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan), Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan regions, the United States, the European Union and Other European Countries, and Other Countries or Regions.

By using a content analysis method, it is possible to analyze the reports of *The New York Times* and *China Daily* on the COVID-19 epidemic in China. An additional comparative analysis will explore the presentation of China's image in the media, and clarify whether there are issues such as media bias in the text. The specific categories and coding scheme is attached at the end of the article as appendix.

### **3.4.3 Reliability and validity**

In order to improve the validity of the research, the researcher asked the supervisor for suggestions, and has researched the categories based on previous studies and the specific conditions of this project, focusing on specific concepts, classification, and

constantly revising the expression of the content to achieve the validity of the research.

According to Peng Zengjun in his work “Media Content Analysis Method”, the core of quantitative content analysis lies in systemicity, objectivity, and repeatability. The reliability test is of great significance: “Specifically, reliability in content analysis refers to the consistency between coders, it is an important measure of reliability” (Peng, 2012).

In this research, Scott’s pi is calculated as an index of agreement to test reliability and observe the agreement. Scott’s pi is a measure of intercoder reliability for nominal level data with two coders, which was developed by William A. Scott in 1955. The formula for Scott’s pi is:  $\pi = \frac{\Pr(a) - \Pr(e)}{1 - \Pr(e)}$ .

The study randomly selected 20 news articles (40 articles in total) respectively from the samples of *The New York Times* and *China Daily*, to perform reliability training and testing among coders. After discussion sessions between the two coders, the tests of intercoder reliability reached a Scott's Pi of 0.82 and 0.84 in *The New York Times* and *China Daily*, respectively. The Scott's Pi statistic of each independent category is shown in the following table:

Table 3-1 Reliability of the research

	<i>China Daily</i>	<i>The New York Times</i>
<b>Composite reliability</b>	0.84	0.82
News Genre	0.75	0.75
Topics Covered in the Reports	0.93	0.87
Tendency of the Whole Report	0.7	0.85
Quotation Sources in the Report	0.85	0.82
Regions of the Quotation Sources in the Report	0.89	0.75

It can be seen from the table that the Scott’s pi coefficients of the related categories are concentrated in the range of 0.7 to 1.0. Therefore, this research approach has a high degree of reliability.

## Chapter 4 Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Description of data

#### 4.1.1 Number of Reports Related to Range of Time

The research objects of this paper are the reports about COVID-19 epidemic in China. The number of reports is closely related to the development trend of the pandemic. As a result, this study refers to the timeline about the development of corona virus, generated by The American Journal of Managed Care, and "Timeline of China releasing information on COVID-19 and advancing international cooperation on epidemic response" published by Xinhua agency of China. Combining the two references, a timeline of important events about the COVID-19 epidemic through the year of 2020 is presented in the Appendix II.

Generally speaking, the number of media reports on a news event is an intuitive way to understand the impact of the event at a certain stage, as well as the degree of media attention to the event. Through the expression and dissemination of information in the media, the audience is capable to understand the event more comprehensively; communication of information is achieved.

Through statistical analysis of the 400 selected samples, this paper tabulates the number of news reports from the representative media of the two countries as follows, by the time of their publication in chronological order.

As can be seen from the figure below, it shows the monthly distribution of news reports published, as related to the COVID-19 epidemic in China, in *China Daily* and *The New York Times*. As seen, the distribution of relevant reports in *China Daily* in 2020 is relatively even, while that of *The New York Times* shows more obvious volatility. The fluctuating trends of the two media are relatively consistent.



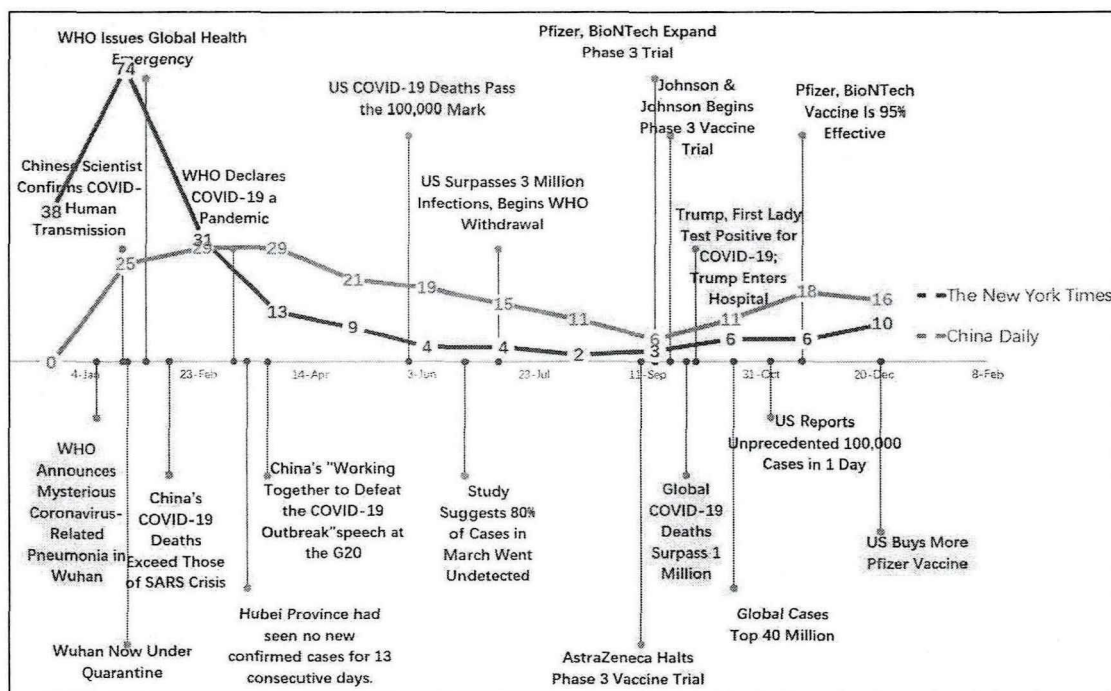


Figure 4-1 Trend of number of reports related to the COVID-19 response timeline

With the spread of the epidemic in China, and China's fight against the epidemic, the number of reports on the COVID-19 epidemic in the *China Daily* and *The New York Times* reached their peaks in February and March, respectively. The number of reports reached 29 and 74 relatively at that time. And with the control of the epidemic, the number of related reports has decreased monthly, reaching the lowest point in August and September separately, which is 2 and 6. After that, as seen in the timeline, with the increase in the number of infected cases and deaths worldwide (on July 7th, U.S. Surpasses 3 million Infections; on September 28, Global COVID-19 Deaths Surpass 1 million), the progress of R&D of vaccines (starting from September) , and even the infection of U.S. President Donald Trump on October 2nd, there has been subtle changes in the international situation, and the number of related reports rebounded again.

It is worth mentioning that *China Daily* had almost no reports in January 2020, while *The New York Times* had reported nearly 40 news reports on the outbreak of COVID-19 epidemic in China at the same time period. From the perspective of *China Daily*, releasing fewer reports may be an attempt to reduce the panic caused by the fallout of the epidemic. On the other hand, it may also become the cause of foreign media criticizing China for its non-transparency.

The number of reports is changing with the spread of the epidemic. *The New York*

*Times* reported less frequently on the epidemic after the situation in China stabilized in April. In contrast, after the epidemic was roughly under control, *China Daily* continued reporting about resumption of work and production, recovery of the economy, and publicizing on the international aid provided by the Chinese government. As a result, the reduction in number of reports is less dramatic, comparing to *The New York Times*.

As the epidemic has gradually become a global problem and the number of confirmed cases in the United States has gradually increased (as shown in the timeline), *The New York Times* pointed blame at the transparency of China's epidemic strategy at the early stages, criticizing China for deliberately concealing the facts and missing the best window for control, which eventually led to the epidemic spreading to the world. In addition, with the so called "the vaccine campaign" between countries, the number of reports from both media has increased slightly after September.

As two influential and professional news media, *China Daily* and *The New York Times* have regularly reported on China. Their coverage of news events in China and their attention to emergencies in China are also very noteworthy.

4.1.2 Statistical Analysis on Genres of the Reports

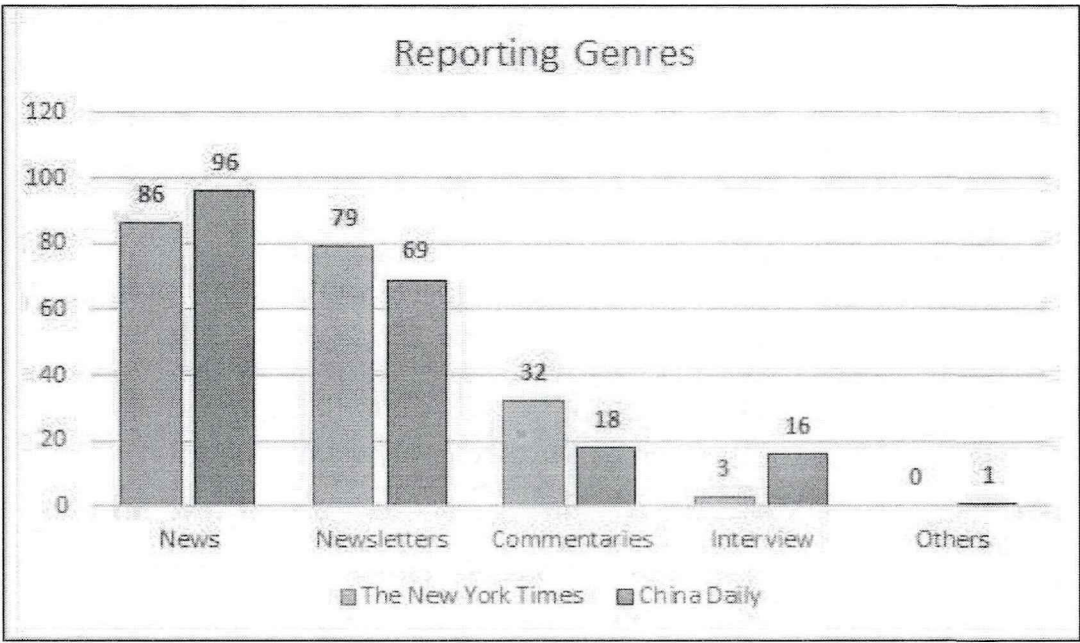


Figure 4-2 Distribution of reporting genres

As seen from the diagram above, in terms of genres of the news report, *China Daily* and *The New York Times* have shown a relatively consistent pattern in reporting. Both of the media provide mainly real-time news reports, giving light to what is going on as soon as possible. At the same time, there is a considerable proportion of reports in

the "Newsletter" genre, which accounts for the reports that are relatively long in length, less time-sensitive, and written in more detail. Rather than communicating the facts immediately, the news topic itself has been expanded and elaborated in the Newsletter genre, integrating more quotations in order to make the report more comprehensive. The News and Newsletter genres represent 48% and 34.5%, respectively, of articles in the *China Daily*, and 43% and 39.5% in *The New York Times*.

In addition, the two media have a small number of commentaries and interviews. *The New York Times* has 32 commentaries in the sample selected, accounting for 16% of the total, which is more than those in *China Daily*. The quantity of commentaries and interviews in *China Daily* is about the same, each representing 9% and 8% of the sample. Most of *China Daily*'s interview subjects were certain companies and merchants. The proportion of interviews is larger than that in *The New York Times*, which provides a more detailed discussion on a certain topic or a certain perspective, but at the same time, leads to less quotation from diversified sources to a certain extent. It also reflects the fact that *China Daily* is more easily to get access to the interviewer, and values the voice of the public. It may also lead to higher credibility in reporting. On the other hand, *The New York Times* contains more commentaries on specific issues or topics, quoting from various sources, to make its point more clarified, convincing, and impressive.

#### **4.1.3 Main Topics of the Reports**

According to a statistical analysis of the content of the topics, it is found that *The New York Times* and *China Daily* have obvious differences in the choice of topics.

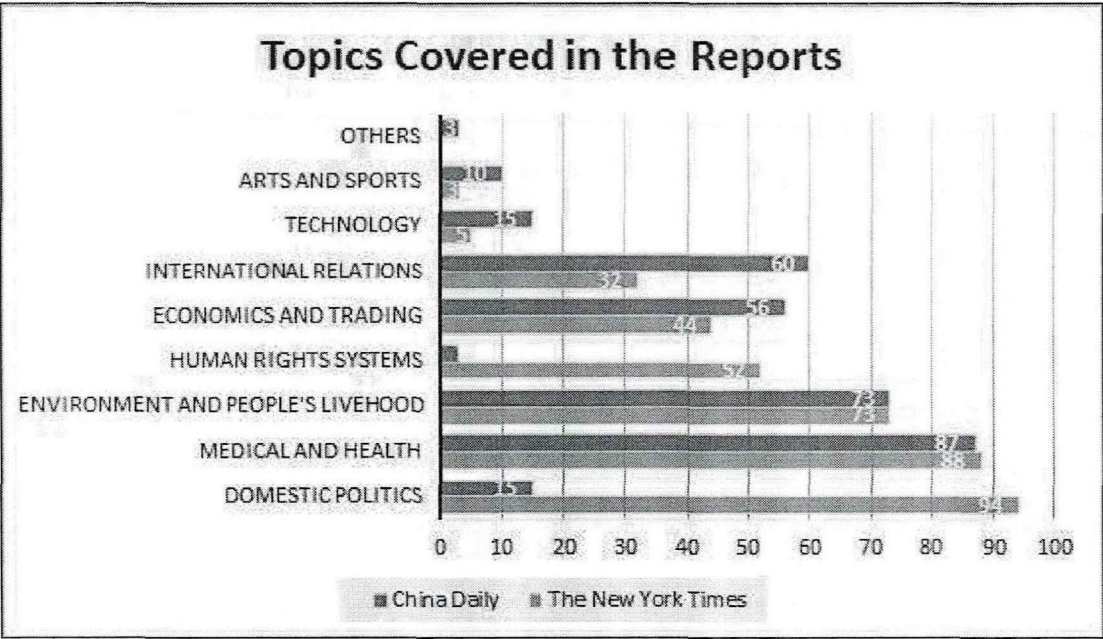


Figure 4-3 Topics covered in the reports

Sorted by number of topics covered in the reports, the topics that *The New York Times* is most concerned about are: "Domestic Politics", "Medical and Health", "Environment and People's Livelihood". The number of reports related to the above topics reached 94, 88 and 73 respectively, each representing 24.04%, 22.51% and 18.67% of the sample selected. Topics such as "Human Rights Systems", "Economics and Trading", "International Relations" also have a considerable number of reports related to them, reaching 52, 44 and 32 respectively and representing 13.30%, 11.25% and 8.187% of the sample selected.

*China Daily* presents a considerably different feature from *The New York Times* in terms of topic covered. The most concerned topics in *China Daily* is "Medical and Health". There are 87 pieces of reports (27.02%) related to this topic. "Environment and People's Livelihood" is another popular topic, which has 73 (22.67%) reports related to it. Topics of "International Relations" and "Economics and Trading" represent 60 (18.63%) and 56 (17.39%) individually in *China Daily*.

It is clear that the two media similarly focus on the topics of "Medical and Health" and "Environment and People's Livelihood". *The New York Times* pays more attention to "Domestic Politics" and "Human Rights" of China during the epidemic, whereas *China Daily* have more reports on the "Recovery of China's economy", as well as "international relations and collaboration". *China Daily* has very limited reporting towards politics including human rights, which is totally different from *The New York Times*. This will be discussed further in the sections 4.3.1 of this article.

In addition, *China Daily* reported more on China's network technology and technological development, art and sports during the epidemic than in *The New York Times*. The number of reports related to the topics of "Technological", "Arts and Sports" and "Others" account for 15 (4.66%), 10 (3.11%), and 3 (0.93%) articles in *China Daily*, versus 5 (1.28%), 3 (0.77%), 0 (0.00%) in *The New York Times*. Technology and arts are closely related to activity of the people, and most of these topics are positively reported. The emphasis on these topics during the epidemic also reflects *China Daily's* attention to the living condition of the public.

In terms of the number of topics, *The New York Times* covered more topics in an article; on average, each article covered 1.96 topics. While the number of topics covered in *China Daily* was relatively small, it has also reached an average of 1.61 topics per article. *The New York Times* is more abundant in text than *China Daily* in terms of article length and word count, and the content involved is also richer. *China Daily* is more inclined to discuss a single topic.

4.1.4 Tendency of the whole reports

4.1.4.1 An overall analysis of the attitudes

The researcher classified each report into three categories: "positive", "neutral", and "negative" according to the reporting tendency. According to the category definition and coding principles seen in the Appendix, manual coding is adopted at this time, and the statistical results of the data are as follows.

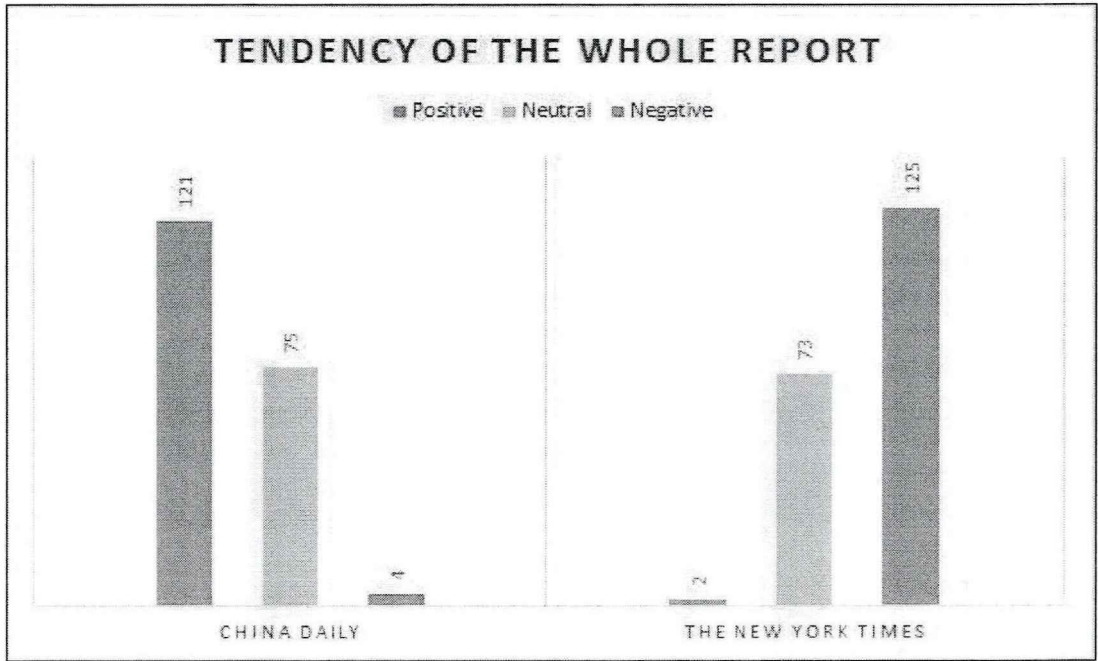


Figure 4-4 Tendency of the reports



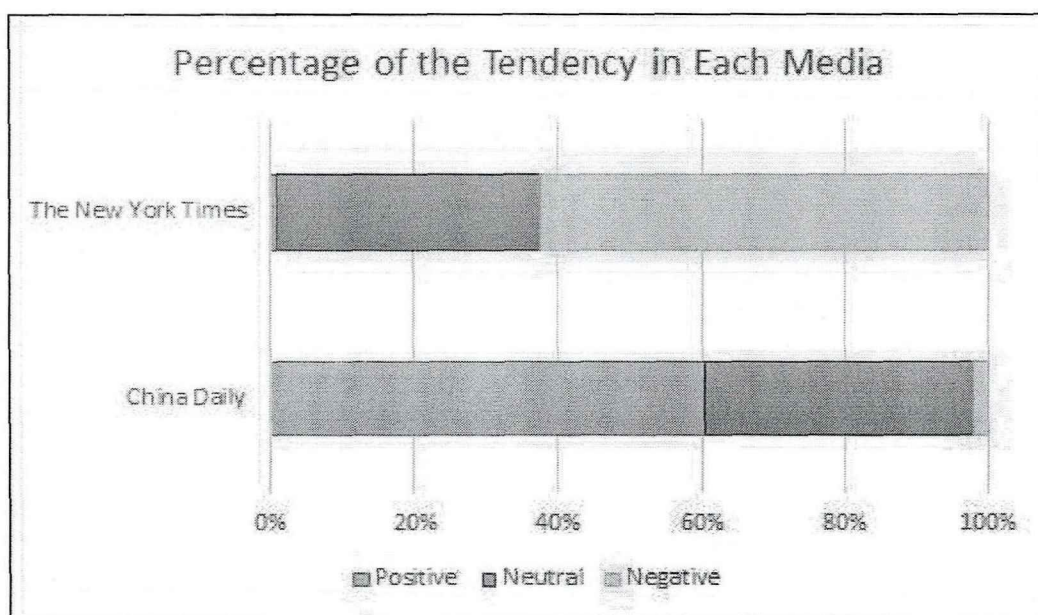


Figure 4-5 Distribution of tendency

#### (1) *The New York Times*

On the whole, the editorial standpoints of *The New York Times* are mainly negative criticism, according to their reports on the epidemic of COVID-19 of China in 2020. The proportion of negative reports is much higher than that of positives. Among the 200 report texts randomly selected as a sample, 125 reported negative reviews, accounting for 62.5% of the total, 73 neutral reviews, accounting for 36.5% of the total, and only 2 reported positive reviews, accounting for the total 1%.

As other researchers in previous studies on foreign media pointed out, the image of China constructed by Western media has remained negative for a long time. In recent years, as the international situation changed and the political struggles between China and the United States intensified, *The New York Times*, in particular as a representative of American media, has not changed its stance and still maintains a negative reporting tendency. This tendency persisted in the face of a potential global event developing from the epidemic of COVID-19.

#### (2) *China Daily*

Compared with negative reviews in *The New York Times*, as a window for China's external communication, *China Daily's* reporting attitude towards COVID-19 epidemic in China has shown a completely opposite trend. Among the 200 samples, positive reports accounted for the largest proportion, with a total of 121 accounting for 60.5% of reports. Neutral reports came in second, accounting for 37.5%, and the number of

reports was 75. In addition, there are 4 negative reports, accounting for 2%, which means that the characteristics of constructing a positive national image in *China Daily's* domestic reports are still maintained. In *China Daily*, through the positive reports on China, the positive image of China has been publicized.

4.1.4.2 Tendency related to topics

As the above statistical analysis shows, *The New York Times* and *China Daily* have great differences in reporting tendencies. The results are presented in two Sankey Diagrams of the samples selected from *The New York Times* and *China Daily* using the DiVoMiner platform. They reveal the focus of the two media on the topic of the reports, as well as the sources of the positive, negative, and neutral reports of the two media. The overall tendency of the samples and topics related, as shown in the figures below.

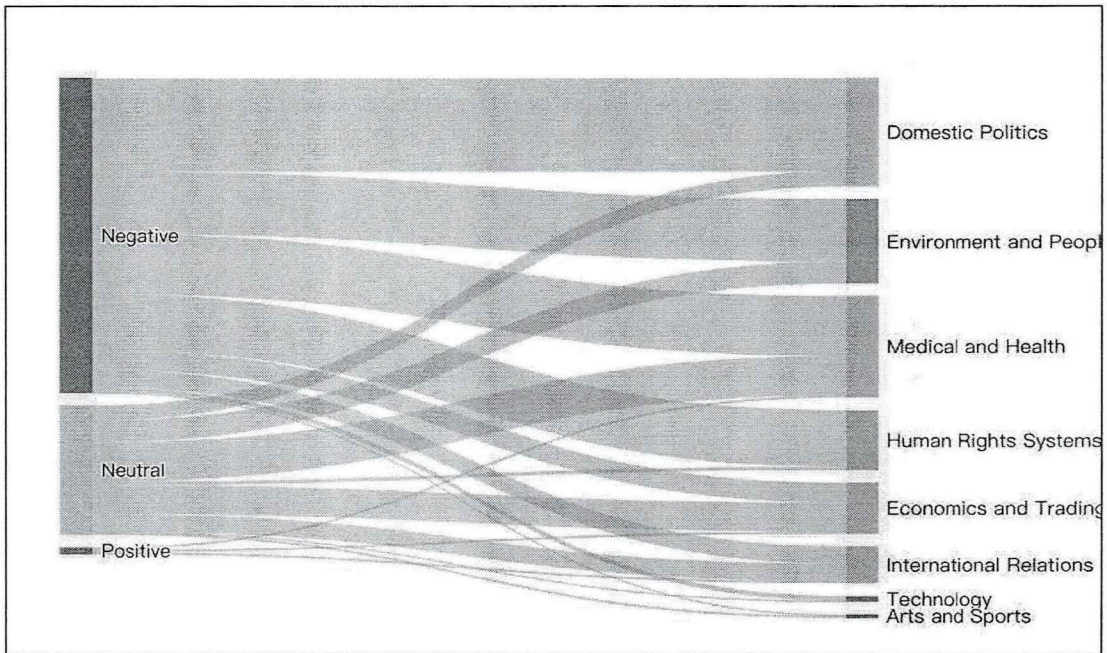


Figure 4-6 Relations between attitudes and topics-*The New York Times*

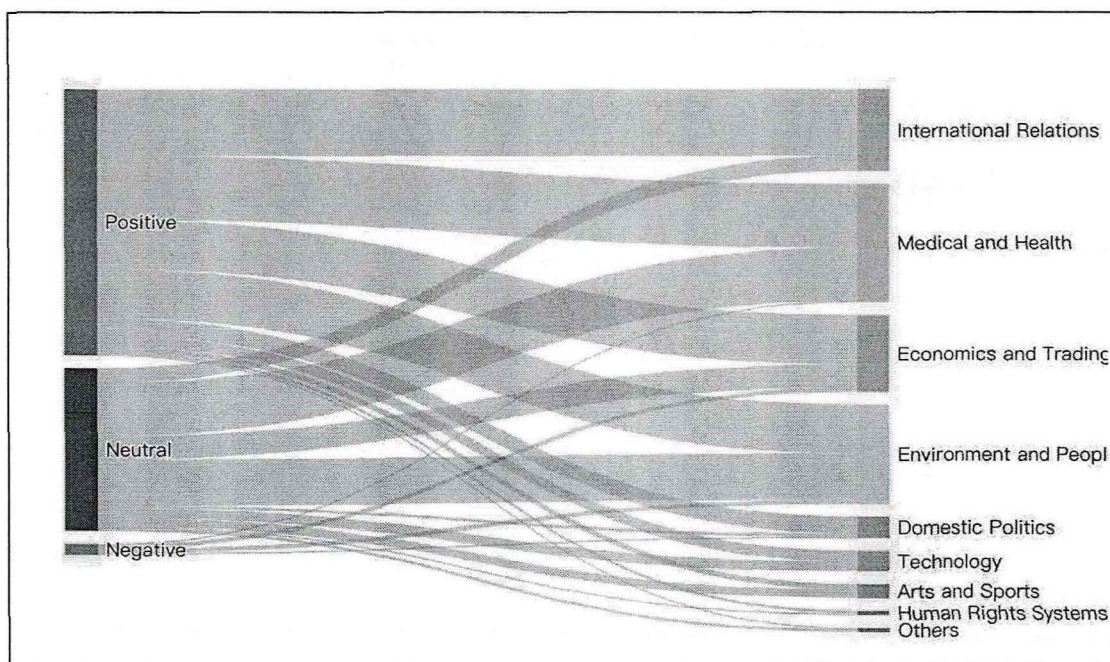


Figure 4-7 Relations between attitudes and topics – *China Daily*

It can be intuitively grasped from the above chart that the main sources of negative news in *The New York Times* are the topics of Chinese politics, people's livelihood, medical and health, and human rights system. There are only negative reports and neutral reports on topics related to politics and human rights, and the proportion of negative reports is relatively large. The very few positive news came from Medical and Health, Economics and Trading, and International Relations.

In contrast to *The New York Times*, these three topics are the main positive reporting that are highlighted by *China Daily*. The profile of positive topics is completely different; it also includes Environment and People's Livelihood. It can be seen that the two media have significant differences in their attitudes and their decisions of topic selection.

A detailed analysis of the two media about their reports on different topics will be discussed in the following section to examine the similarities and differences when setting the agenda.

#### 4.1.5 Quotation sources in the reports

Apart from the tendency and topics covered, the Chinese and U.S. media also showed differences in their quotations, which is crucial when the setting the agenda. Around a news event or the subject of a report, there are often voices from different quarters and opinions of different groups of people. The quotation in the reports does

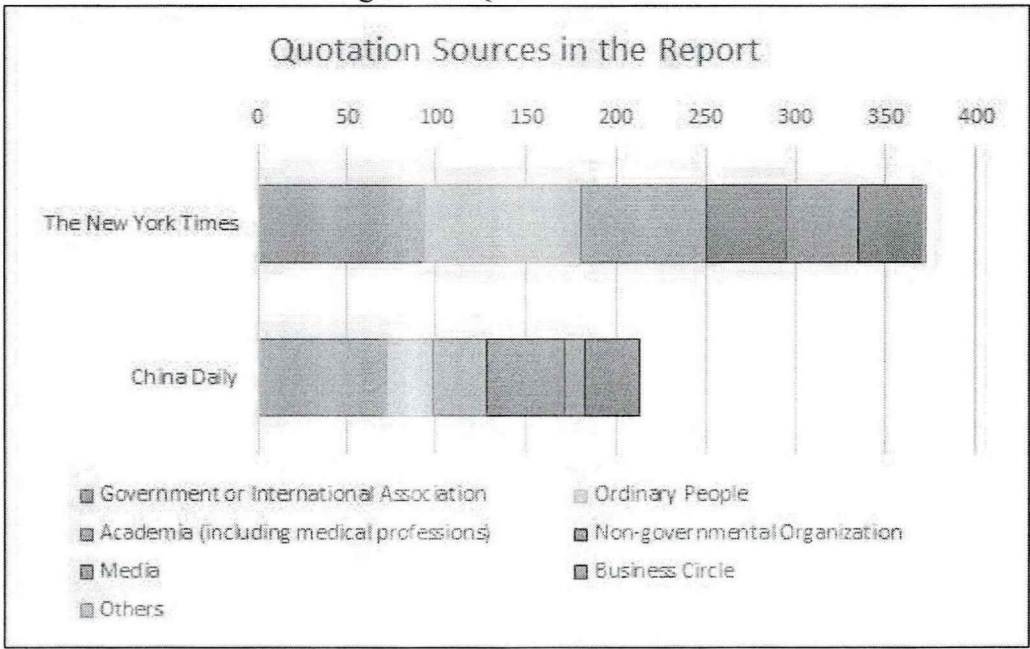


not only implicitly express the position held by the reporter and the media, guiding readers to think in a way they wanted, but also increases the credibility and readability of news reports, expanding the influence of reports and allowing for wider acceptance. The quotation sources and the structure of the quotes are shown in Table 4-1 and Figure 4-8.

Table 4-1 Quotation sources in the reports

Quotation Sources in the Report	<i>The New York Times</i>		<i>China Daily</i>	
	Number of quotations	Percentage	Number of quotations	Percentage
Government or International Association	93	25.00%	71	33.33%
Ordinary People	87	23.39%	28	13.15%
Academia (including medical professions)	70	18.82%	29	13.62%
Non-governmental Organization	45	12.10%	44	20.66%
Media	40	10.75%	11	5.16%
Business Circle	35	9.41%	30	14.08%
Others	2	0.54%	0	0

Figure 4-8 Quotation sources



4.1.5.1 Similarities in the quoting structure



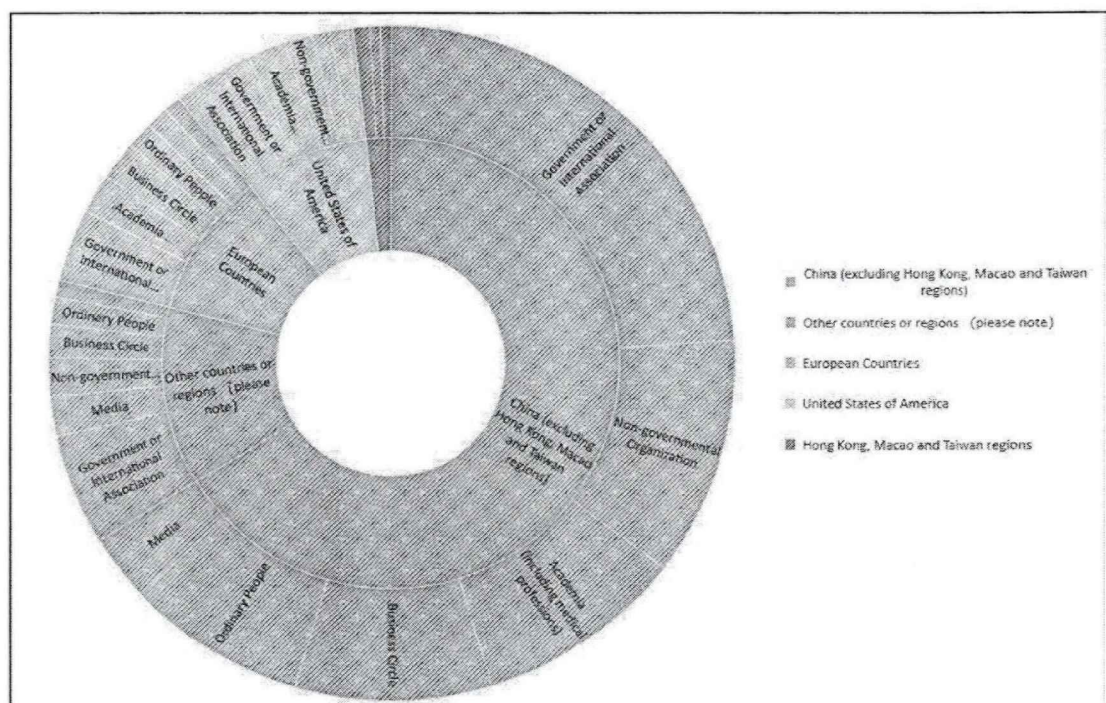


Figure 4-10 Quotation sources and its origin in *China Daily*

Both media choose to structure the quotes mainly from China, as evident from the regions of the quotation sources. This is expected as the research object of this article is the reports related to COVID-19 epidemic in China. In terms of data collection, both media use official data disclosed by authorities when reporting.

*China Daily* quotes more from government, official organizations and institutions, also experts in related fields. Most of the regions of quotations are from China and other countries or regions (Mostly from Vietnam, Nigeria, Pakistan and other developing countries). On the other hand, *The New York Times* has a higher proportion of quotations from ordinary people in the mainland and Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. When it comes to quotations from official organizations and experts, *The New York Times* tends to cite those authorities from the United States, as well as Europe, Australia and other regions. Based on the above findings, it can be seen that both *China Daily* and *The New York Times* have selected political allies with "close relations" with their governments as the main regions of source for their quotations. The voices of these political allies also reflect the political stance of the countries themselves to a certain extent. Although the regions of source of the quotations are not the same, it can be seen that the media of the two countries have used the same reporting strategy when using quotations.

#### 4.1.5.2 Differences in quotation sources

From the above analysis, it is obvious that *China Daily* and *The New York Times* have very different reporting tendencies, and these different tendencies are clearly reflected in the quotations

##### (1) *China Daily*

It can be clearly seen from the above chart that, compared to *The New York Times*, *China Daily* has fewer quotes, amounting to almost half of that of *The New York Times*. Quotations are relatively concentrated and singular. Most of quotations are from government or official organizations and institutions in China's mainland, such as Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, World Trade Organization, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc., accounting for 53.99% of the total quotations. The second largest source of quotations is Academia (accounting for 13.62%), since there is a number of topics related to Medical and Health, quoting from professionals would make the reports more convincing and reliable. In *China Daily*, another major source of quotation is from the business community. This is related to the fact that *China Daily* has more "Economics and Trading" topics, thus it quoted more from business people and companies in the texts. In addition, *China Daily* also provides stories from general public, 13.15% of quotations are from ordinary people. Repeatedly telling their determination and confidence in fighting the epidemic, representing their uplifting, inspiring and expectant stories. It also shows the stability and unity of China's people and the image of the government being trusted by the people.

For example, in *China Daily*, a report titled with "Taiwan natives provide help during the pandemic", reveals how the spread of epidemic have touched the hearts of people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait. *China Daily* have interviewed three ordinary people from Taiwan province, from their perspective, it shows the positive and optimistic attitude, as well as the warm hearts and unity of the people on both sides of the strait during the epidemic. These people are movie director, coffee shop owner, and community volunteer for epidemic prevention and control. They through composing and writing songs, giving out for free coffee, and helping the others. In the reports, quotations such as "From time to time, people shouted 'Come on, Wuhan!' from their windows. They did it instinctively, and I was greatly inspired and moved. It was a really complicated feeling" and "I received many thank-you messages. Some said it was a very heartwarming gesture and the doctors and nurses had drunk the coffee as soon as they got off work. Some wrote things like, 'The disease will go away and Fuzhou will



get better.”. These stories portrayed the strength of Chinese people and the unity of the public.

## (2) *The New York Times*

When the *China Daily* cite from an ordinary person, reflecting the unity of the Chinese people in the battle against the epidemic and their trusts and confidence towards the country and the government; *The New York Times* often uses a confusing trick to unfold the story of an ordinary person, and to bring out its negative views.

*The New York Times* published an article titled "Coronavirus Pummels Wuhan, a City Short of Supplies and Overwhelmed", where the stories of ordinary people such as Gan Hanjiang, Long Jian, An Jianhua, and Amy Hu are used as examples. In the report, these people were living in miserable conditions, and waiting for medical attention. They were turn away to self-quarantine, and their health are declining rapidly. Official diagnosis was required for treatment, while there was shortage of testing kits and other medical supplies. Patients could not be diagnosed. The article alleges "Layers of bureaucracy" for the shortage of medical supplies and the social chaos. *The New York Times* suggests that the outbreak is spreading far beyond the official count of cases. It intentionally implies and criticizes Chinese for falsely reporting the number of cases, and accuses the Chinese government of lacking transparency.

Furthermore, *The New York Times* often uses unknown sources that are full of discrimination and definitely lacking objectivity to support its news reporting. Such sources dominate the content of the report, inviting speculation and subjective judgment. For example, an article named "Thousands of internal documents reveal how China censored its internet in the early days of the pandemic" is questionable from the title to the context. It writes that "The orders were among thousands of secret government directives and other documents that were reviewed by *The New York Times*". The article is full of unfounded censures, which violently accused and criticized the "censorship system" and the government's "controlling over the opinions". Meanwhile, the credibility of the so-called "secret government directives and other documents" is not mentioned.

Another example is an article titled "How Many Coronavirus Cases in China? Officials Tweak the Answer", which opened with "The news was abrupt and, to some, surprising: Overnight, Heilongjiang, a Chinese province near Russia, had cut its count of confirmed coronavirus cases by more than a dozen". There is no clear source in the report, but it claims that "The revision stemmed from what appeared to be a

bureaucratic decision, buried in a series of dense documents from the national government." The article repeatedly claims that mistrust of the Chinese government remains pervasive. But what is the source of the claims? *The New York Times* did not answer to that.

It is worth noting that with the rise of online platforms, the anonymity of social network has reduced the threshold for information distribution. "Netizen comments" on the Chinese social media such as Weibo and WeChat are gradually becoming part of the source of quotation for *The New York Times* to obtain quotations and information, which may have led to the issue of false reporting. Opinions and comments on the Internet are relatively more subjective, emotional and exaggerated rather than reliable sources. By quoting radical comments from netizens, *The New York Times* has implied the suppression of the Chinese government by suggesting that China's censorship system officially banned or deleted by the government negative comments. The comments from the Internet also provide convenience for foreign media to intercept speeches that are not favourable to China, and has become a new starting point and foothold for foreign media to incite emotions.

*The New York Times* has never conducted any statistics analysis of the attitudes of ordinary people towards the government's response to the pandemic in China. It arbitrarily informs that "distrust of the Chinese government still remains" and jumps to hasty and unexamined conclusions. *The New York Times'* intention of citing public opinion excessively is questionable.

#### **4.1.6 Word cloud for the two media**

After extracting prepositions (to, between, among, etc.), conjunctions (and, which, that, etc.), numerals (one, million, etc.) and other functional words, as well as time-indicating words with no significance (years, recent, Wednesday, etc.), two word cloud charts are constructed for *China Daily* and *The New York Times* in Figure 4-11 and Figure 4-12.



relatively high frequency are **"control"**, **"measures"**, **"prevention"**, a proof that the Chinese media is concerned about epidemic prevention and government measures of control. Words such as **"economy"**, **"market"**, **"trade"** and **"development"** are related to China's economics and trading. In addition, the use of **"international"**, **"cooperation"**, **"global"**, **"foreign"**, **"overseas"** and other words shows that the Chinese media emphasizes international exchanges and cooperation during the epidemic. The characteristics of a "community with a shared future for mankind" is disseminated by the Chinese media.

In addition to the focus on the virus itself, *The New York Times* focuses more on politics, which is reflected in their word cloud. **"Government"**, **"political"**, **"party"** and other words are frequently used. Moreover, **"officials"**, **"authorities"**, **"experts"** also validate the characteristics of the quotations in *The New York Times* - that is, a wide range of experts and authoritative figures are cited to increase the credibility of the article.

The above findings can also be confirmed in the subsequent analyses.

## 4.2 Explanation of data

The most concerned topics in the two media are: Domestic Politics, Medical and Health, Environment and People's Livelihoods, Human Rights Systems, Economics and Trading, and International Relations. The above topics accounted for 97.95% and 91.30% of the two media respectively. In this context, a comparative analysis of the main subjects of the *China Daily* and *The New York Times* was carried out. It can be seen that the *China Daily* and *The New York Times* have adopted very different methods to report the COVID-19 epidemic in China. Their perspectives, content, and focuses of the reports differed significantly.

According to the agenda setting theory, the media agenda can influence the public's thinking, and the topics that the media pays attention to and emphasizes will also be strengthened in the minds of the audience. The effect of media agenda-setting depends on the influence of factors such as the frequency of public contact with the media, the public's need for the media, interpersonal communication, and the interests of different audiences. Different types of topics require different forms and weights of news reports to attract people's attention. The two representative media from China and the United States have clearly expressed their attitudes and opinions towards the epidemic of



China by emphasizing on specific issues, and highlighting specific topics.

There are many subjects being reported by the two media. For example, China's achievements in fighting the epidemic, economic recovery, and mutual assistance in international relations. These are all positive topics. It was emphasized in the *China Daily*, but in *The New York Times* report, these topics were diminished or even dismissed, while it focused instead on negative topics such as missteps by the government.

How did the two media report the epidemic in China? What did they say about the epidemic in China? The researcher will conduct a comprehensive analysis of relevant reports in *China Daily* and *The New York Times* based on the above data.

#### **4.2.1 *China Daily***

In 2020, the number of *China Daily*'s reports on the COVID-19 epidemic in China has reached 597, fully demonstrating the high degree of attention to this topic. The number reports and topics that *China Daily* concerned are closely related to the spread of the epidemic. According to the time distribution of the number of reports, it can be seen that *China Daily* did not report on a large scale at the beginning of the outbreak, that is, in January. This is potentially due to that in the government's view, it was not the right time for controversies, and fewer reports may reduce public panic. In the next few months, the number of reports remained at a relatively steady level. *China Daily* continues to pay attention to China's economic conditions, people's livelihood, international cooperation and other issues in a positive way. It emphasized positive news such as China's economic recovery and unity of the people, and shaped China's image as a responsible, major country in the international community. The number of positive reports in the sample is 121, accounting for 60.5%. The study is willing to discuss what kind of impression do these reports give people, and what kind of information is presented and valued.

Agenda-setting theory suggests that media tells us what to think about and uses framing to tells us how to think about it. As gatekeeper, journalists and editors determine whether or not the news is to be seen or heard, and selectively reporting on positive topics would lead the audience to focus on the positive subjects. The most reported topics in *China Daily* are: Medical and Health, Environment and People's Livelihood, International Relations and Economics and Trading. As these events and topics have become the most prominent in the media, it gives people the impression that

these particular news are the most important ones.

According to Duan Peng and Zhou Chang's research conducted from a sample of *China Daily's* reports, they found the paper tend to "report the good but not the bad" in external-facing reports. Most of the attitudes towards the authority is most likely to be positive (Duan, 2007). This is also verified in the reports on the epidemic. *China Daily* focuses more on showing China's outstanding and extraordinary achievements in the battle against the epidemic, such as the effective measures being implemented, recovery in the economic environment, as well as its generosity and selflessness in international relations. In the sample of *China Daily's* report, the Chinese government is people oriented; the public of China is united; and China has strong willingness to help others globally. It is responsible and calls for a community with a shared future for mankind. The Chinese government has adopted the most comprehensive, strict, and thorough prevention and control measures, and has achieved important phased results in epidemic prevention and control with immense courage and strength. China is taking a leading role to support the global fight against the pandemic, providing reliable vaccine doses with impressive protection data. Although both two media have repeatedly emphasized transparency in China, *The New York Times* is criticizing the lack of transparency, while *China Daily* has clarified this statement indirectly by citing specific data from official organizations and announcements from the government.

It can also be seen from the wording that *China Daily* pays attention to topics such as international relations, measures of epidemic prevention and control, and so on. In shaping the image of China, it focuses on reporting on positive topics. According to the *China Daily* report, China's political image is decidedly open-minded and transparent, proactive and helpful; China's social image is that the people are optimistic, united and actively fighting the epidemic and eliminating poverty; and China's economical image is stable, sustainable, determined and confident.

#### 4.2.2 *The New York Times*

"The world presented by the media is often constructed from the 'objective fragments' that collected by the editors with their 'badly subjective' (Chen, 1999). When *The New York Times* reported on the epidemic in China, the common reporting method was to weaken the positive issues and exaggerate the negative issues. Carole Rich, the American journalism professor, used to claimed that "timeliness, proximity, prominence, consequence, human interest and conflict are the main elements of the news" in his

work "Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method". In the reports of *The New York Times* on the epidemic in China, more conflicting and explosive news were selected, and by weakening achievements and exaggerating negative issues, its intention is to attract negative comments from the audience towards China. It deliberately expounds the conflicts in politics, and has made human rights a prominent feature of *The New York Times'* coverage of the epidemic in China.

According to the statistics shown in the chapters above, the reports by *The New York Times* on China's fight against the COVID-19 epidemic are mostly negative, lacking in-depth thematic manuscripts or detailed, comprehensive manuscripts. This resulted in a lack of complete, comprehensive, and neutral narrative when constructing China's national image in *The New York Times*. There are only one-sided, conflicting reports that appear in the public, which is not conducive to a positive expression of China's national image.

Through selective reports, *The New York Times* pays more attention to China's political issues, human rights system, and economic situation. In the context of the raging epidemic, *The New York Times* sets up an agenda with topics related to depressive medical and health condition, miserable livelihood of the people, exaggerating the missteps of China, while turning a blind eye to China's progress in containing the virus.

In *The New York Times* report, news stories are not presented in chronological order or according to the number of people affected, but in the order that the producer or editor determines the most "sensational" or most attractive to the audience. The attention to political events such as death of Dr. Li Wenliang has fully confirmed this point. For example, in the 200 samples, 32 texts have mentioned Dr. Li and his identity as the "whistle blower", accounting for as much as 16%. And Dr. Li's name has even been mentioned 42 times. The date of these reports ranged from January 22 to December 20, 2020. The references are not directly related to a specific time or event, but the death of Dr. Li has become a powerful tool for *The New York Times* to criticize the transparency of China, and impress the negative image of Chinese politics. It constantly blamed the government of China and implied that the Chinese authorities' suppression of doctors' voices and deliberate concealment of the epidemic caused the epidemic to spread globally. As a result, the more *The New York Times* pays attention to these issues, the more the general public tends to consider them as important. In other words, although *The New York Times* would not necessarily tell people what they

should think or feel about these issues, they set an agenda for what people should think about.

*The New York Times* prefers to use the words or opinions of others to express its own opinions on the main event, disguising its position through superficial neutrality. It is accustomed to suggesting ideas with expert sources and indirect speech, or starting with the stories of ordinary people, rendering negative emotions, with the aim of demonizing China and its government. At the same time, *The New York Times* features news and commentaries from a personal perspective, to carry out negative reports on China's politics, medical conditions, economic environment, and other social issues. The reports mostly start from a political perspective, paying particular attention to the human rights system in China. It also continually questions the medical situation in China. In many reports, the medical and health system of China is concerning, as it has repeatedly followed that the government has run vaccine campaigns, falsely reported number of infected cases, and other related issues.

According to the Agenda Setting theory, in the case of COVID-19 pandemic, *The New York Times* and other influential media played an important role in shaping the public's idea of China. As a mainstream media in the international society, the attitude of *The New York Times* is most likely to gain public attention, instructing and guiding people of their opinion. While concealing the efforts and achievement that China has made during the epidemic, *The New York Times* also executed its agenda by repeatedly emphasizing the dictatorship of the Chinese government, and undermining China's ambition "vaccine diplomacy" and "Mask Diplomacy" in international exchanges. The political influence of *The New York Times* report is rather prominent, and the negative image of China is accentuated. From the perspective of agenda setting theory, these reinforced views will undoubtedly lead and guide readers to look bad on China. According to *The New York Times*, China's political image is authoritarian and tyrannical; China's social image is chaotic and disorderly; China's diplomatic image is geopolitical and scheming, and people's livelihood in China is painful and miserable.

The frequency, content and tendency of the reports can be influential in shaping the national image of China. Subsequently, the U.S. government's China-policy might be influenced by the public's opinion of China, which had been directly shaped by the reports on *The New York Times* and other media.

4.3 Case analysis

Affected by the epidemic, the global economy has severely declined. China took the lead in controlling the epidemic and promoting the return to normal production and life. According to previous studies on national image, the national image in the media is often displayed in terms of politics, social, and economics. Therefore, this article divides the most interested topics into these three categories, and will discuss China's Political Image (including topics of Domestic Politics, Human Rights Systems, and International Relations), Social Image (including topics of Medical and Health, Environment and People's Livelihood). and Economical Image (including topic of Economics and Trading).

In the following section, the researcher will provide examples of reports on COVID-19 epidemic of China from the media of China and the United States, so as to compare the similarities and differences between China’s political, social, and economical images presented in the reports. The study gathered representative descriptions that were used in different topics, and presented several tables of key words related to each topic to reflect comprehensively the attitude of both media on this topic.

4.3.1 Political image of China

The political image contains three aspects in this article, which are Domestic Politics, Human Rights Systems, and International Relations

Table 4-2 Keywords in reporting political subjects of China

Topics/Key Words	<i>The New York Times</i>	<i>China Daily</i>
Domestic Politics	Underreporting cases; slow response; aggressive; discredited; contradictor; conspiracy theories; cajole; bungling; continuing crackdown; draconian; foolish ruler; militaristic tone; grip; lack of transparency; hiding; hawkish; dishonest; corrupt; arbitrary; nefarious; single-minded; repressive	transparent; government’s supporting policies; confidence; community with a shared future for mankind; fiscal support; income support; job protection measures; strong leadership; people-centered philosophy; extraordinary; strategic achievements; safeguarding; fairness; effective; praising

Human Rights Systems	authoritarianism; dictator, suppressing; humanitarian disaster; humanitarian plight; authoritarian regime; authoritarian rule; repression; censorship; stifle criticism; iron-fisted; delete; remove; oppression; no free speech; forbidden; blocked; muzzling; tighter grip; scrutiny; forceful testing; inhuman treatments; racism; trapped; race-based scapegoating; detain; expulsion; clampdown; muffle the outspoken; strong-arming;	humanitarianism; people-centered; not neglected the rights; mutual respect;
International Relations	Mask diplomacy; globalization; trade; helping hand; fight together; politics of generosity	fairness, health, resilience; appreciation; support; dispatching medical professionals; sharing experiences; assistance; help; donated; responsible; international collaboration; cooperation; strong global leadership; community with a shared future for mankind; international humanitarianism

#### 4.3.1.1 *China Daily*

As the medium of external communication of China, *China Daily* bears the important responsibility of reporting China overseas and shaping a positive national image of China. Its speech, representing the views and attitudes of China and its government, has attracted special attention of other countries. As seen from the above table, when reporting on topics related to Domestic Politics, *China Daily* often uses positive or neutral terms, and promulgate the results of anti-epidemic policies.

##### (1) Political issues and human rights

Generally speaking, The topic of political issues in *China Daily* accounts for a relatively small proportion. Mostly are about policy promulgation, contribution to public health and other subjects, emphasizing China combating epidemic by using a people-first approach.

##### *Extract 1*

Chinese government has adopted the **most comprehensive, strictest and most sweeping preventive measures** since the outbreak of the epidemic...the Chinese government will lead its people to **win the war** of epidemic prevention and control with **greater confidence, stronger resolve and more**

**targeted measures.** (“Xi: Nation can limit impact of epidemic”, *China Daily*, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

*Extract 2*

Under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at the core, the country has put people's lives and health first, fully demonstrating its **people-centered philosophy**. (“China combating epidemic by using a people-first approach”, *China Daily*, July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

As it can be seen from the examples above, the Chinese government has described the fight against the epidemic as a battle, or a war, and the people are the warriors. It reveals the seriousness of situation, and courage and unity of the people. In Extract 1, *China Daily* reported that the Chinese government did not hesitate to adopt resolute, firm, and effective measures, leading Chinese citizens to fight the epidemic without hesitation. *China Daily* quoted speech from President Xi Jinping, and employed the words such as “**greater confidence**”, “**stronger resolve**”, and **other positive terms shown in the above chart**, demonstrating the confidence and determination of the central government in the Chinese people and rest of the world.

In Extract 2, *China Daily* pointed out that the people-oriented approach of governance has demonstrated its strength in the country's battle against coronavirus. Chinese government has assumed responsibility the moment the epidemic broke out, and shows its confidence in marching towards long-term goals with determination.

Reports on Human Rights system account for a very limited proportion. Expect from emphasizing “people-oriented” principle as in Extract 2, there is another example points out the situation of Chinese people being accused and discriminated by foreign countries.

*Extract 3*

...some countries, however, have made insulting, discriminatory remarks against China and the Chinese people, such as “Coronavirus, made in China”, “Chinese virus”, or “yellow peril”, and “China is really the sick man of Asia”. Some countries have **overreacted** by excluding tourists from China or discriminating against local Chinese...the spread of racial discrimination on the back of such fears, which constitutes exploitation of the epidemic for

**discrimination** that aims to **subvert** the human rights values of equality and non-discrimination, and challenge the international human rights system. (“Epidemical discrimination violates spirit of human rights”, *China Daily*, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020)

International discrimination against China has been criticized in the article, instead of comment on the human-rights system in China. The report has quoted from Antonio Guterres, the UN Secretary-General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus the WHO Director-General, and several Conventions and Regulations, such as International Health Regulations, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, intending to clarify the point of anti-racism, and protect citizens from discrimination.

## (2) International Relations

When reporting on International Relations, *China Daily* has shown the image of Chinese government helping other countries in a friendly and positive manner. China shows its willingness of helping other countries and assumes the responsibility of a great power. The government has emphasized a community with a shared future for mankind, as reported by the media.

In such reports, China is moving quickly to lend its hand, and share its experience with the world. China has shared technical documents and diagnosis and treatment plans with other countries, as well as with international or regional organizations. It has conducted technical exchanges and sent expert teams to provide support overseas. *China Daily* also emphasized China's willingness to take the lead in the international fight against the COVID-19 epidemic, as China provides help and donates materials to other countries.

### *Extract 4*

China stands firmly with the EU, supports its anti-epidemic efforts, and will facilitate its procurement of **medical supplies** through commercial channels, he said, adding that China is also ready to actively carry out **international cooperation** to jointly **protect the health of mankind**. (“Premier: China stands firmly with EU in epidemic battle”, *China Daily*, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

### *Extract 5*



It has held hundreds of videoconferences to **share its experiences** with other countries, **sent medical teams** to some countries, and pledged to make its vaccine, when one is developed, a global public good. ("World can learn from China's right response to pandemic", *China Daily*, September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

*Extract 6*

China has shown **strong global leadership** to the world in efforts to combat the pandemic and has led the way by introducing a range of public policy measures. ("Nation hailed for efforts in pandemic fight", *China Daily*, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

*Extract 7*

International and regional cooperation should be expanded, and good communication with the WHO and experience-sharing with relevant countries should be continued, Xi said, adding that China will **shoulder its responsibilities** as a major country and provide **necessary assistance** to the countries affected by the novel coronavirus. ("Xi's diplomacy bolsters epidemic fight", *China Daily*, February 26, 2020)

"Community with a shared future for mankind" is a key term when Chinese talking about International Cooperation. *China Daily* pointed out epidemic prevention and control have no borders, and China is always appealing for global cooperation. For instance, in Extract 4 to Extract 5, it indicated the effort made by the Chinese government, such as sharing experiences and donating. Also, *China Daily* demonstrated that help from Chinese government has received appreciation from overseas, emphasizing the achievements of China's international cooperation during the epidemic.

In Extract 6 and Extract 7, It quoted from President Xi Jinping, and revealed China's willing to shoulder its responsibilities, and the ambition of Chinese government taking the lead.

In general, as can be seen from the above examples, the political image of China created in *China Daily* is **firmly open and transparent, proactive and helpful**.

#### 4.3.1.2 *The New York Times*

##### (1) Political issues and Human Rights

From the outbreak of the COVID-19, rumors and conspiracy theories around China have spread. After the corona virus broke out, *The New York Times* has

repeatedly claimed that the Chinese government is authoritarian, suppressing and aggressive.

Human rights issues occupy almost half of comments on China's Domestic Politics in *The New York Times*, and they are basically all negative criticisms and accusations. It often criticizes that China didn't respect people's democracy and freedom when reporting on China. As it shown in the table of keywords above in the Table 4-2, the words "suppressing", "dictator", "authoritarian" have been used continually. It portrays China as an authoritarian regime that is "extremely ambitious", without any freedom or political liberty.

*The New York Times* strives to falsely exaggerate the "brutal totalitarian rule" of the Chinese government. It portrays the Chinese government as suppressing human rights, sacrificing personal interests in exchange for the normal operation of the national system, and failing to respect the privacy of citizens. For example, in the article titled "In Coronavirus Fight, China Gives Citizens a Color Code, With Red Flags", the reporting is full of typical American pride and prejudice towards China's situation. On the use of health codes, the U.S. media portrayed this measure as an evil weapon for collecting private data, monitoring and restricting citizens' freedom in China. In another article titled with "China May Be Beating the Coronavirus, at a Painful Cost", *The New York Times* criticizes the impact of China's lockdown strategy in Hubei Province. It believes that "Relationships are fraying as families are forced to live for extended periods in confined spaces", and indicates "there is a number of residents reporting physical abuse at home".

Transparency is another issue that is being criticized by the US media. *The New York Times* focuses on the lack of information at the beginning. And on social media controversies rather than the core issue itself.

#### *Extract 8*

China's sudden action drew praise from the World Health Organization and other bodies overseas, but at home, **anguished** and **angry** comments sneaked past censors. Yet not all criticism made it through the great firewall. On the Chinese internet, people **complained** that **censors** were working in overdrive as many articles and social media posts were **deleted**. ("China Increasingly Walled Off as Countries Seek to Stem Coronavirus", *The New York Times*, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020)

#### *Extract 9*

Internet platforms have **removed** a range of articles that suggest shortcomings in the Chinese government's response or are otherwise negative about the outbreak. Local officials have also **cracked down** on what they call online "**rumors**" about the virus. China's public security ministry this week lauded such efforts, which have continued even after one person who was reprimanded for spreading rumors turned out to be a doctor sounding the alarm about early cases of the illness. ("China Clamps Down on Coronavirus Coverage as Cases Surge", *The New York Times*, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

#### *Extract 10*

...censorship usually meant disappearing posts and inaccessible foreign websites. Now the police actively pursue the authors of forbidden material, and irritation has been replaced by fear...posts get **deleted** and there's no more voice of opposition. The Chinese internet is filled with **apparently sincere praise** for the government's efforts. ("Muting Coronavirus Anger, China Empowers Its Internet Police", *The New York Times*, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

*The New York Times* repeatedly claims that China's accuracy is particularly acute, given the government's history of concealing unfavorable news, regarding the government is not trust worthy. Transparency is also related to authoritarian and censorship. Chinese government is described as hawkish and combative, and its citizens is muzzled and stifled with fear and anger. Even public praise towards the Communist Party is deemed insincere. Examples are included in Extract 8 to Extract 10.

#### *Extract 11*

Chinese medical workers at the forefront of the fight against the coronavirus epidemic are often becoming its **victims**, partly because of government **missteps** and logistical **hurdles**. ("China's Doctors, Fighting the Coronavirus, Beg for Masks", *The New York Times*, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

In the process of reporting the epidemic, *The New York Times* described the chaos and negative impact of the epidemic on the society, with the purpose of targeting the Chinese government and its measures, accusing the government of its mistakes and questioning the effectiveness of the measures, as it can be seen in Extract 11.

In the reports posted by *China Daily*, there are several impressive stories from variety of ordinary people, demonstrating the sense of civic duty and responsibility of the Chinese. However, this action was mocking by *The New York Times*.

*Extract 12*

...they would “strengthen control over online media” as one of several measures to maintain social stability. The leaders said that the government’s **propaganda** efforts should focus on “vividly conveying the stirring achievements from the front lines of epidemic prevention” and “showing the Chinese people’s unity and spirit of pulling together in difficult times. (“China Clamps Down on Coronavirus Coverage as Cases Surge”, *The New York Times*, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

There are several sarcastic comments towards Chinese government's effort to raise awareness, as shown in Extract 12. *The New York Times* believes it’s a “strategy” of turning the stories of ordinary people into a narrative of national unity and resilience.

(2) International relations

Different from the accommodating, responsible, and friendly national image constructed by *China Daily*, *The New York Times* uses words such as “Mask diplomacy” when reporting on China’s international exchanges, implying that China has a hidden purpose under the “friendly donations”. It undermines China’s attempt at shaping itself as a responsible power in the international community, and portraying itself as a heroic warrior against the contagion and a model for the world.

*Extract 13*

Nations have been receiving shipments of medical gear from China, though some of the test kits for the virus have turned out to be **faulty**. (“In Diplomatic Whipsaw, U.S. and China Seek to Cooperate on Pandemic and Economy”, *The New York Times*, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020)

*Extract 14*

officials in Italy have said that many of the so-called gifts are actually exports. Other countries have **complained of faulty test kits and masks**. The

European Union's top diplomat, Josep Borrell, warned in an unusually blunt blog post that China was seeking to use the **"politics of generosity"** to **undermine** European solidarity. ("China's Coronavirus Battle Is Waning. Its Propaganda Fight Is Not", *The New York Times*, April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

#### *Extract 15*

One can respect China's might and achievements, while being **vigilant about its intentions**, especially when it comes to material assistance. ("Does China's Propaganda Work?", *The New York Times*, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

In the reports by *The New York Times*, the quality of medical products donated by Chinese government was questioned (Extract 13). In addition to quality issues, the paper also quoted from "Italian officials" (in Extract 14) to suggest that China's aid to the continent was a mask for its geopolitical ambitions. In Extract 15, it directly and clearly stated the political risks of accepting China's medical aid.

The sample of reports of *The New York Times* has presented an overall negative sentiment. In the context of the spread of COVID-19 in China, the political image of China and the Communist Party is described as "authoritarian", "infringing" on human rights, and "anti-freedom", enabled by the regulations to overcome personal interests, prevent the spread of the virus and achieve benefits for the collective. *The New York Times* continually criticizes and creates a false appearance of people distrusting the government, in spite of what people actually think in China.

#### **4.3.2 Social image of China**

The social image contains two aspects in this article, which are Environment and People's Livelihood, and Medical and Health.

Table 4-3 Keywords in reporting social subjects of China

Topics/Key Words	<i>The New York Times</i>	<i>China Daily</i>
Environment and People's Livelihood	frustrated; alone; overwhelmed; abject; desperate; stranded; poor condition; fearful towns; lockdown; isolation; restriction; denial of basic dignity; confined; lockdown; quarantine; poor condition; suspending; anger; incredulous; infuriated; struggle; chaos; disorganization; anxiety; plight; nervous; scared; homeless; mental breakdown; panicked; unfortunate	ensuring (people's safety, employment, livelihood, education, etc.); bringing convenience; diverse array of services; ensure livelihoods; people-centered
Medical and Health	Overwhelmed; understaffed; limited; plight; extreme shortage (personal protective equipment, testing kits, staff and equipment, health professionals, protective wear, bed and utilities, and other medical supplies); seriously lacking; unproven vaccines; risks unknown; disguise; questioned revision; exacerbated; diminishing; strained; not sufficient; stretched; ineffective; unorthodox;	Chinese medical science; contribution; traditional Chinese medicine; control; confidence; transparent; psychological assistance; confidence; emergency response measures; best medical resources were pooled to save lives

From the sample reports, both media have paid great attention to the topic of "Medical and Health" in China. Both *China Daily* and *The New York Times* have quoted a large number of experts and scholars, such as the World Health Organization and the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, to provide near real-time feedback on the risk of the novel coronavirus.

However, other than basic information on the spread of the epidemic, the differences between the *China Daily* and *The New York Times* in reporting the epidemic are very big, when it comes to medical and health.

**4.3.2.1 *China Daily***

**(1) Medical and Health**

*China Daily's* reports on the medical subjects can be roughly divided into two stages. In the early stage of the outbreak, *China Daily* objectively reflected the medical status of the outbreak region. It used a mass of data to reflect the new infection cases confirmed and quoted announcements from Zhong Nanshan and other medical

professionals, regional health commissions, and Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. By incorporating the epidemic prevention and control measures in the text, *China Daily* reported the spread of the epidemic condition in a relatively analytical and objective way. For example, in a report titled “Manzhouli finds more COVID cases” has used data to reflect the situation, such as “eight positive results”, “more than 3,800 close contacts of the patients”, “A total of 486 contacts have been found...478 results so far came back negative.” The descriptive vocabulary used is neutral, without exaggerating the fact.

At the later stage, after the epidemic was effectively controlled, *China Daily's* reports tend to be more positive, promoting the implementation of epidemic prevention measures. *China Daily* expresses its affirmation of the results and praises China's contribution for halting the epidemic in its tracks. This can be seen in Extract 16 and 17.

#### *Extract 16*

Their cycles were shortened not only because medical workers had gained more **treatment experience** during the outbreak, but also because of the **effective measures** taken by the hospital. (“Xinjiang, Dalian discharge more COVID-19 patients”, *China Daily*, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

#### *Extract 17*

The **fatality rate** remains at a relatively **low** level, breakthroughs are being made in treatment methods and the **recovery rate** continues to **rise**. (“Xi: Nation can limit impact of epidemic”, *China Daily*, February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

In addition, as seen in extract 18, *China Daily* uses the stories of ordinary people, volunteers, medical staff and foreigners to portray the image of Chinese people united as one in the fight against the epidemic.

#### *Extract 18*

As one of the first volunteers in a clinical trial for a COVID-19 vaccine in China, Wu Ni said she is happy to hear that a nationwide **inoculation program** will be conducted among high-risk groups to protect them against infection...There are many families in Wuhan like Wu Ni's who have taken an active part in research and development of the vaccine..."It's **no regret** for us, an ordinary family in Wuhan, to make some **contributions** in curbing the

pandemic," Fang said. ("Wuhan vaccine volunteers happy to join battle against virus pandemic", *China Daily*, December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

Traditional Chinese medicine is also a key controversial topic reported in the Chinese and American media. For the role of Chinese medicine, *China Daily* also gave positive publicity, as seen in Extract 19.

#### *Extract 19*

Various studies in China showed that application of TCM alone was **sufficient** to reduce fevers, symptoms and viral loads for patients at the early stages of infection. For those in severe condition, the use of TCM, in conjunction with various antiviral protocols, could **help patients recover**. ("TCM eases pandemic fears, symptoms among Chinese Americans", *China Daily*, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

Traditional Chinese medicine is described as "sufficient", "help in relieving", and accepted by other countries. In the report titled with "Official: TCM effective in treating COVID-19 patients" claimed that China has sent about 100,000 boxes of Lianhua Qingwen capsules, and Traditional Chinese medical expert teams together with prescriptions to Italy.

#### (2) Living condition

The topic of "People's Livelihood" is closely correlated to the topic of "Medical and Health". When reporting on the situation of people's livelihood in China, *China Daily* remains positive and signals the prosperity of the society, as seen in the Extract 20 and 21 below.

#### *Extract 20*

...relevant districts, based on actual conditions, have made plans and solutions to provide a diverse array of services to residents, especially those that need special services to **ensure** people's livelihoods during epidemic prevention and control. ("Xinjiang, Dalian discharge more COVID-19 patients", *China Daily*, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

#### *Extract 21*



The positive trend in preventing and controlling the epidemic in China has been constantly **consolidated** and **expanded**, and the **restoration** of normal production and daily life has been **quickened** (“Timeline details anti-pandemic response record”, *China Daily*, April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

In such reports, the Chinese government is people-centered, creating convenience for the people, and it is fully reliable and responsible. It not only tries to get the virus under control, but also tries to help the people. In the early stage of the outbreak, the government shut down the city of Wuhan and its public transport to try to prevent the spread of the virus that had already affected hundreds of people. Yet it still insisted on providing living services for residents. After the epidemic was effectively controlled, the government helped in the restoration and recovery of the society. *China Daily* noted that the government has also devoted great attention and concern to Chinese students overseas. At the same time, when it comes to reporting on the citizens of China, their sense of civic duty, national pride, mutual help and solidarity in fighting the epidemic have also been repeatedly emphasized. Examples are as follows.

*Extract 22*

And with many Chinese students in Britain having chosen to stay through the epidemic, the embassy is in **close contact** with the student community there and is **responding to their needs**. The embassy has provided Chinese students in Britain with "**health kits**" containing epidemic prevention material and guidelines. (“Pandemic poses challenge to students abroad”, *China Daily*, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

*Extract 23*

...a front-line nurse who tried to **encourage** patients by dancing and singing with them...she was impressed by people's **optimism** in the city...He had not counted on the **spirit, creativity, energy and unity** that would bring it to pass. (“Film turns lens on post-COVID Wuhan”, *China Daily*, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020)

It can be concluded that the social image constructed by *China Daily* is **cooperative** and **united**. People are **optimistic** and **allied** together, **supporting** each other and the country when facing great difficulties, and the measures of epidemic prevention and control are **effective** and **efficient**.

#### 4.3.2.2 *The New York Times*

##### (1) Medical Conditions

In terms of medical and health care, the image of China still remains mainly negative. *The New York Times*' reports on the epidemic in China are mostly concentrated in the early stages after the outbreak. "Shortage" is the most frequently used word in describing the situation of Chinese medical teams fighting the epidemic. As can be seen from the table of keywords in Table 4-3, the word "shortage" often follows personal protective equipment, testing kits, protective wear, bed and utilities, etc.

##### *Extract 24*

The city of Wuhan, where the new coronavirus originated, is struggling to get the epidemic under control, **exacerbated** by a lockdown as well as the government's **limited resources** and options. **Overwhelmed** and **understaffed**, hospitals have **turned away** many sick residents like the Zhangs, **forcing** them to go home and quarantine themselves in small apartments where they risk infecting other family members. ("Her Grandmother Got the Coronavirus. Then So Did the Whole Family", *The New York Times*, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

##### *Extract 25*

...a **shortage** of testing kits and other medical supplies, and it is not clear why more are not available. The ban on transportation means some residents have to walk for hours to get to hospitals... **Layers of bureaucracy** stand between residents and help. ("Coronavirus Pummels Wuhan, a City Short of Supplies and Overwhelmed", *The New York Times*, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020)

As shown in Extract 24 and 25, *The New York Times* directly describes the deficiencies in medical equipment, staffs and health professionals, and other medical supplies in China. The health care workers are overwhelmed. It Describes the epidemic as a "humanitarian disaster". Also, the chaotic status of medical condition is often connected with the government's mistakes. Reflecting the dereliction of the Chinese government by the poor livelihood of the people is a common technique used by *The New York Times*.

In addition to exaggerating the unstable and chaotic situation, the shortage of

equipment, and limited capacity of medical facilities in China, *The New York Times* has focused on the transparency of China's medical treatment, questioning and criticizing the number of confirmed cases in China during the public health crisis, as shown in Extract 26 to Extract 27.

*Extract 26*

The Chinese authorities have **closely guarded** the demographic details about the fatalities, creating uncertainty about who is most susceptible. (“How Many Coronavirus Cases in China? Officials Tweak the Answer”, *The New York Times*, February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

*Extract 27*

Hospitals near the center of the epidemic have been **overwhelmed**, and people with flulike symptoms have been turned away. Many cases have not been diagnosed because of a **shortage** of testing kits. (“China Clamps Down on Coronavirus Coverage as Cases Surge”, *The New York Times*, February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

During the developing and later stages of the epidemic, when COVID-19 vaccine experiments were being conducted and promoted around the world, *The New York Times* began to question the effectiveness and authenticity of the vaccine, and calling it “unproven”. (Extract 28 to 29)

*Extract 28*

China has made its **unproven vaccine** candidates widely available to demonstrate their safety and effectiveness to a country that has long been skeptical of vaccines after a spate of **quality scandals**. (“In China, people scramble for shots of unproven vaccines”, *The New York Times*, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

*Extract 29*

Unlike their Western competitors, most Chinese companies have **not disclosed data** from late-stage clinical trials that would show whether their vaccines are effective...Instead, Chinese officials have largely issued broad statements with **few details**, assuring the public that the vaccines are safe and effective. (“China Has All It Needs to Vaccinate Millions, Except Any

Approved Vaccines”, *The New York Times*, December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

At the same time, unlike *China Daily*’s view on Traditional Chinese medicine, when *China Daily* used positive words such as "sufficient" and "efficient" to describe the contribution of Tradition Chinese medicine in the epidemic, *The New York Times* reported with skepticism, questioning the standardization and regulation of Traditional Chinese medicine, as shown in Extract 30.

#### *Extract 30*

Critics say the use of such concoctions could raise concerns about patient safety... don’t **standardize** or analyze the clinical data are no match for blinded, controlled studies...Compounding the problem: There is **no standardization** for these herbs and **regulation is poor**. Traditional Chinese medicine has also been linked to the consumption of **exotic wild meats**, though it is unclear whether the eating of the meats is really **based on the practice**...Wildlife markets such as the Huanan Seafood Market in Wuhan, the site that is believed to be the origin of the coronavirus. (“In Coronavirus, China Weighs Benefits of Buffalo Horn and Other Remedies”, *The New York Times*, February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

Their news report also suggests that some ingredients in Chinese medicine is questionable, by confounding the practice with the consumption of wild animals, and even associating it with the Huanan Seafood Market (the origin of outbreak). *The New York Times* implicates Traditional Chinese medicine with unfounded claims of potential dangers, intending to demonize the practice.

#### (2) Living Conditions

On March 17, an article titled "Coronavirus Fight Lays Bare Education’s Digital Divide" opened with the perspective of ordinary people. It pointed out that the Chinese government only cares about fighting against the epidemic but dismisses the basic needs of the population living at the bottom of the society. The article implies that the epidemic has had a profound impact on the ordinary people, making their lives miserable.

At the beginning of the article, a construction worker working in neighboring province took away the only cellphone in the house, thus “the only device on which the boys can watch their school’s video lessons is 300 miles away.” The article elicits such

a point of view : “For all of China’s economic advancements in recent decades, the rudiments of connected life — capable smartphones, reliable internet — remain out of reach for large segments of the population.” The article also quoted from an educational nonprofit, “It’s a big mess, that’s all I can say,” in order to describe the hardship of living conditions and the frailty of people’s livelihood. The article uses words such as "lousy phones", "video chats are a fog of pixels", and “wobbly plastic holder” to imply that people’s lives are miserable.

In other articles, *The New York Times* presents “Parents would like to spend much time on TikTok rather than let their children to use their phones to join online classes”, to covey the point of “many parents do not care about their young ones’ schooling”. On the whole, it is obvious that there are few affirmations or positive words. It seems that everything in China's online education is bleak and dilapidated.

The living condition of Chinese people, as described by *The New York Times*, is full of suffering and tragedy: internet equipment problems always exist; rural network signals are limited; home broadband access is very expensive; online classes are disorderly. Chinese parents do not care about their children's education, while students never pay attention; teachers are helplessly disappointed. Though spoken from a seemingly objective voice, *The New York Times* always focuses on the negative side of people's living hood and is committed to describe the chaos in China.

To sum up, in the reports from *The New York Times*, because of the shortage and stretched medical resources and facilities, also the misleading by the government, China’s social image is **problematic, disordered and lacking freedom**.

### 4.3.3 Economical image

Table 4-4 Keywords in reporting economics subjects of China

Topics/Key Words	<i>The New York Times</i>	<i>China Daily</i>
Economics and Trading	uncertainty; economic damage; squeeze; cancel; suspended; called off; postponed; hindered; economic slump; free fall; shrinking; slowdown; job losses; sharp drop in stocks; shock; weak; cutting service; closed	maintain; rebound; revival; recovery; resume growth; revitalization; development; boost; second-largest economy; positive growth; increasing production efficiency; confidence; bustling trade market; sustainable; promoting; launched; survive; fiscal support; income support; job protection measures; resumption; more jobs amid

In terms of Economics and Trading, both Chinese and American media have reported on the instabilities and difficulties of China's economy during the epidemic. In both media, a large amount of data, as well as quotations from economists, merchants, and other practitioners, were cited. Both noted the fact that flight cancellations, company closures and declining stocks, have demonstrated an economy compromised by the epidemic. After the epidemic was brought under control, the media of the two countries also reported on the Chinese government's policies and measures that promoted post-epidemic recovery and fiscal support. However, the proportions of positive news from the two media differed.

*The New York Times* employed words such as "free fall" and "shrinking" to describe the adverse situation. *China Daily*, on the other hand, tends to be more optimistic. Words such as "maintain" and "survive" are used with high-frequency at the beginning of the outbreak; reports turn to use "rebound", "revival", "recovery" in later stages.

#### *Extract 31*

The Chinese economy will witness a **recovery** once the novel coronavirus epidemic is controlled, and policy tools are sufficient to **shore up growth** and help enterprises endure the difficult situation. the government is **ramping up** measures to **bolster** the economy... The Chinese economy will continue to demonstrate **strong resilience** and the government has enough policy tools ... to **maintain** stable growth momentum. ("Post-epidemic recovery expected", *China Daily*, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

#### *Extract 32*

International companies are **optimistic** about long-term business prospects in China, as the country is expected to **ride out** the economic **pressure** brought by the novel coronavirus outbreak and **maintain steady trade growth** this year. ("Companies optimistic about post-epidemic recovery as output resumes", *China Daily*, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

As can be seen from the examples above, in the *China Daily's* report, China's economic image is more **optimistic**. It focuses more on international trade and the recovery of China's economy, as well as the government's **confidence** and

**determination** to revitalize the economy with effective measures. The economic image of China is **stable**, emphasizing China's **recovery** from the epidemic.

*Extract 33*

But widespread **job losses** have shaken the public's confidence after the country **shut down** vast swaths of the economy to contain the outbreak. Many are **less willing** or able to **spend**. The country's workers will face **further challenges** in coming months as a **global economic slowdown**, triggered by the pandemic, **reduces** the world's **demand** for the smartphones, appliances, clothes and other goods churned out by China's factories. ("China's Economy Faces Another Hurdle: Darkened Movie Theaters", *The New York Times*, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

*Extract 34*

It is anxious to tame the coronavirus outbreak that raged through the country before it spread abroad, putting its economy in **free fall**. Bringing in people from abroad, the government believes, invites further spread. Yet China's image is at stake. Beijing has portrayed itself as an increasingly powerful force on the global stage economically, politically and militarily. ("Coronavirus Strands China's Students, in a Dilemma for Beijing", *The New York Times*, April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020)

From Extract 33 and 34, it can be conducted that *The New York Times's* attitude is relatively conservative. It concerns that reopen the market in China is questioning, and implies the recovery comes with huge cost. Also, the country may face challenges in the future, due to the global economic downturns. It has shaped a "**booming**" but "**problematic**" economic image for China.

#### 4.3.4 Analysis of the causes of differences

##### 4.3.4.1 Differences between core interests and core values

In 2020, the sudden outbreak of COVID-19 epidemic has accelerated the "Fundamental Change" of the world, making a tremendous impact on people's livelihood, the global economy, and even geopolitics. Economic activities fluctuated sharply; debts have risen significantly; the vulnerabilities of the financial market have

been exposed; the epidemic prevention and vaccine distribution have brought changes in the relationships between countries and regions. The COVID-19 epidemic is much more than a simple issue of medical science; it has ramifications for global politics.

China's epidemic prevention and control has affected the core interests of the United States. China's outstanding achievements in its prevention have challenged the United States' hegemony in the world. What is certain is that when national interests collide, Western media, in this case *The New York Times*, will definitely abandon their facade of "objective and fair" news and stand directly to protect the interests of their own country. On the surface, it seems that it is about the conflict between two representative media from China and the United States upholding different viewpoints and attitudes; behind the scenes, it is about campaigns between the two political powers.

According to Mario Cavolo, the expert on business diversity, "There is a very specific, and intentional, and coordinated cold war anti-China coordinated campaign. It's the western version, the United States version of propaganda." It is the prejudice and hostility of U.S. authorities towards China that make the media, acting as a "gatekeeper", affected by politics.

China and the United States stand for totally different positions, in terms of political system, human rights system, and national values. National value is a concept compounded with the basis of the country's core values, which permeate the country's institutional systems. American values are centered on liberalism, which can be seen in American culture and society, also in policies issued on economy and diplomacy. The U.S. believes that freedom and democracy are the eventual form of social evolutions. When it comes to China's political system, the United States arrogantly believes that China is in the process of developing towards the ultimate "liberal democracy," rather than treating it as another equally valid political system.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic has also highlighted a clash between the values of different countries. The United States have applied a double standard in dealing with international issues during the epidemic; it constantly criticizes China's "authoritarian" while gradually moving towards unilateralism and hegemonism. It seeks to exert its preponderant influence in the international stage. In diplomacy, the United States also reveals a pride in its own "liberal and democratic" system, as well as suspicion and total negation of the communist system.

#### **4.3.4.2 Differences in communication concepts**



Charles Hutzler, the Senior News Editor of The Wall Street Journal used to claim that: "Controversial news can help increase the sales of newspapers, and news that does not cause controversy will soon be forgotten." The senior American journalist Marvin Kalb also criticized that American news has fallen into the era of "media-politics" (Duan, 2007).

The tendency of the media being politicized has become more apparent, and the news media have become the tools utilized by groups with vested interests. The proportion of truly "hard news" is getting smaller, and the content of news reports is usually not the public information that readers should know, but sensational "soft news" such as scandals that aim to be eye-catching and attention-grabbing for the public. Based on this phenomenon in news operation, *The New York Times* reporters often focused on exposing the dark side of Chinese society and criticizing the government when reporting on the COVID-19 epidemic in China.

On the other hand, news media of China, as the informal mouthpiece of the Communist party and the people, as much as it plays a role in supervising public opinion, its important function is to guide public opinion. Even international English-language newspapers like *China Daily* follows the tradition of "basic publicity" and commentary tone.

According to Mario Cavolo, the Vice President of Scott PR China, a method that the western media would use is called "burying the lead", which is to use headlines with a negative tone to start off a report with an accusation. The tonality of the coverage tends to be negative rather than neutral when they utilize this technique, and as a result, automatically diminishes China. In contrast, *China Daily* adopts a relatively plain narrative methods in news reporting. Its purpose is to present a positive image of China's political system, human rights and democracy in the reports. To a certain extent, the differences in communication concepts have also led to diverse outcomes in media reporting methods, the topics being concerned, and reporting tendencies.

#### **4.3.4.3 Differences in cultural and social environment**

Other than the political system and communication concepts, China and the United States have many differences in their perceptions of many issues, due to the discrepancies in history, culture, and ideology. According to Hofstede's intercultural model, in terms of Individualism vs. Collectivism dimension of national culture. The

U.S. represents a culture of Individualism, emphasizing "Individual identities are independent"; in western literature, there are "praises more to those people who rely on themselves, and less to those satisfy the others"; in their movies, "they specially describe heroes who resist the system". China, on the other hand, advocates for collectivism, which believes that individuals are "interdependent" and pay more attention to the relationship between themselves and others (Sun, 1994). "In specific human rights issues, the United States pays close attention to democracy and rights of individuals in China today (such as freedom of speech, religion, individual political space, etc.), while China has repeatedly emphasized that "the right to survive is the most basic human right", and insists on promoting human rights with development (Shao, 2004). As a result, at the time that COVID-19 is raging, the United States criticizes human rights in China, while China constantly emphasizes the country's "achievement in medical assistance" and that "the basic rights of the people are guaranteed."

With the influence of Confucianism and traditional culture of China, which has the key principles of harmony and peace, and values more on humanity, benevolence, humanness and selflessness. The news reports from *China Daily*, as a results, are relatively more positive when reporting on the epidemic. On the other hand, with the influence of the concept of "liberty" and "democracy" of America, the news outlets tend to be more independent and focus more on originality. *The New York Times*, in this case, is more critical.

In order to achieve the independence and neutrality required by the journalism profession, news outlets will claim that they are not affected by any political forces, but it is apparent that they are not completely shielded from such influences in reality. *The New York Times* keeps claimed to be prudent and neutral. However, as the representative media of the United States, under the current situation, with tense Sino-US relations, it is almost impossible to maintain absolute neutrality.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion

From the chapters above, it can be clearly seen that *The New York Times* and *China Daily* stand for totally different positions when reporting the COVID-19 epidemic in China. In this Chapter, the researcher will summarize and draw a conclusion about the findings, state the limitations of present research, and provide suggestions for further research.

### 5.1 Major findings

Through statistical analysis, it is possible to grasp more clearly the characteristics and differences of *The New York Times* and *China Daily* when reporting on the pandemic of coronavirus in China. The research questions raised in the previous chapters have been answered.

#### Answer to RQ1:

In *The New York Times*, the top topics that received the most attention in the reports are: Domestic Politics, Medical and Health, Environment and People's Livelihood, Human Rights System, Economics and Trading, and International Relations. In these reports, the Chinese government remains authoritarian and suppressing, dismissing human rights of the public. *The New York Times* questioned the transparency of the government and criticized China's freedom of press, freedom of speech and other human rights issues. The political image of China created is tough, arbitrary, and ambitious.

Due to the emergence of the novel coronavirus, a large number of people in China had been infected or died from the virus, causing many social problems, including the shortage of medical resources. During the early stages of the epidemic, *The New York Times* reported China's social image as chaotic, disordered and lacking freedom. Meanwhile, on economics, its reporting attitude is more comprehensive. *The New York Times* has reported on the "recession" of the economic, but also endorsed China's recovery from the epidemic, though implying that it comes with huge cost. It has shaped a "booming" but "problematic" economic image for China.

#### Answer to RQ2:

As presented in the above analysis, *China Daily* and *The New York Times* differ

greatly in their selection of topics related to China. Generally speaking, the topics that *China Daily* pays the most attention to are Medical and Health, Economics and Trading, and International Relations. The overall reporting perspective is positive.

*China Daily* presents China's political image as responsible and friendly, by focusing on the Chinese government's principle of being "people-oriented" and engaging in international assistance, such as sharing experiences and healthcare supplies with other countries during the epidemic. The social image of China is united, cooperative and harmonious. The achievement of epidemic prevention and control is outstanding. People are allied to support each other and the country in the face of great difficulties. The economic image of China is stable, emphasizing China's recovery from the epidemic and continual alleviation of poverty. The concept of building a community with a shared future for mankind has been repeatedly emphasized in such reports. *China Daily* tends to convey to the world the positive aspects of China's battle against the virus, so as to create a better image of the country on the world's stage.

#### **Answer to RQ3:**

From the statistics of sampling results, the number of reports of the two media correlates to the spread of COVID-19 timeline and roughly presents the same trend. Both *The New York Times* and *China Daily* are based on timely news, in terms of reporting genres.

Generally speaking, from the analyses and discussions in previous chapters of this thesis, the media of China and the United States have different focuses on the coverage of China's COVID-19 epidemic. Overall, *China Daily* has a greater number of reports that related to the epidemic in China than *The New York Times*; *China Daily*'s reports focus on positive or neutral positions when reporting, while *The New York Times* concentrate more on the troubles during the epidemic to express its negative comments on China. Per report, *China Daily* has fewer sources of quotation, and its content is relatively simple; in contrast, *The New York Times* has more diversified sources; *China Daily* often focuses on the development of events, while *The New York Times* focuses on the society's response to the events. When it comes to Reporting Attitudes, the two news outlets provide drastically different viewpoints. *China Daily* applies more positive vocabulary, whereas negative words are employed more often in the reports by *The New York Times*.

*China Daily* and *The New York Times* have strengthened China's positive and negative image by focusing on specific topics, using different words to describe them,

and expressing different attitudes. They each presented a completely different national image of China in the international community.

## 5.2 Implications

As the epidemic has become a pandemic that has grown to be increasingly concerning around the world, it has become a political issue. In the process of collecting information, this study also found several negative reports in *China Daily* on the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States. The diplomatic relationship between the two parties has transformed into mutual accusations and smear campaigns in the media.

Through repeated reports of and emphasis on a wide range of negative news reports on politics and human rights, *The New York Times* intends to guide the public opinion towards a negative impression of the epidemic situation in China. In their reports, Chinese government has concealed cases, and the initial anti-epidemic effort is unfavorable; its actions have led other countries to underestimate the risks of the coronavirus, and ultimately resulted in the spread of the epidemic. *The New York Times* extensively reported on the public outpour of grief over the death of the doctor Li Wenliang, who was deemed a national hero for ringing the alarm about the virus in the early days of the outbreak, while accusing Chinese media of hiding relevant stories. By rendering the “whistle-blower” a symbolic figure, it seeks to create a dark and biased image of the Chinese government as suppressing the truth.

While China is seeking international cooperation and dealing with the public health crisis, the country’s response to the coronavirus has been described as “botched”, showing “China’s governance failure”, and exposing “deep flaws” in China’s political system. It is true that China could have acted better in terms of information transparency and timely quarantine at the beginning of the outbreak, but under completely unknown conditions, China has done an extraordinary job compared with other countries (even if there were gaps in data due to insufficient detection capabilities). In the reports by *China Daily*, China has exceeded in reporting in terms of transparency. From the “pneumonia of unknown source” to the “Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Pneumonia”, the government released public announcements and kept updating the number of new cases, deaths, and recovered cases. When accusing China of not being transparent, *The New York Times* dismisses the fact that China has not hidden the situation of Wuhan but provided reliable

information consistently.

*The New York Times'* focus on the whistleblower is misleading, as if the epidemic would not break out had he been heard. However, the effect of whistleblowing is limited and not enough to reverse the ravaging spread of the epidemic. Only lockdown and quarantine measures helped to stop the spread and saw actual effects of control. The epidemic could have been worse without the city being locked down; without the construction of shelter hospitals such as Huoshenshan; without the national medical staff rushing to help the Hubei province. For the world, the 1.4 billion of Chinese people are all the whistle-blowers.

Chinese media is in a vulnerable position in international communication. It would be valuable to examine how the role of the media should be played to effectively clarify misunderstandings, dissolve hostilities, and improve China's discursive power in the international community. This article puts forward the following suggestions to fight against bias:

First, improve cultural dissemination, enhancing our confidence in the path, theory, system, and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It is necessary to emphasize Chinese characteristics, upholding and developing external publicity and promotion, such as Confucius Institutes, corporate going global, etc.

Second, the media should express Chinese content with special ways of expression. The proposal of "a community with a shared future for mankind" shows that the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics has moved from China to the international arena. From the perspective of media communication, it is necessary to use international conventions to explain Chinese affairs and issues, focusing on introducing the position of China within a western paradigm of thinking and expression, and as a result, reflecting China's diplomatic policy of peace and friendship.

Third, as can be seen from the analysis, *The New York Times* is more diversified in terms of information sources and quotations, which also reflects the professionalism and balance of its reporting. *The New York Times* has shown an objective attitude to an extent, by using more quotations from officials, experts, groups and individuals, making the reports more reliable and persuasive. In terms of the length and reporting genres of news article, *The New York Times* has more newsletters and commentaries. It conducts a relatively more comprehensive exploration in social issues, guiding the public's attention, and even promotes the development of relevant policies and measures. These successful experiences are worth learning for Chinese media, improving the initiative of

agenda setting, and achieving the purpose of dissemination.

According to this study, it can be seen that reports from Chinese and American media are significantly different when reporting on the same issue - the epidemic. Reports from *China Daily* has shortcomings, placing "basic publicity" in an excessively high position. It focuses more on the effort and effects of epidemic prevention and control. The agenda setting is not as proactive, and it is more difficult to conduct an in-depth exploration of relevant facts.

In addition, the Chinese government and media could confront criticism and skepticism from *The New York Times* and other western media in an objective but humble manner. Rather than simply fighting back on negative reports of "demonization", the government and the media can utilize them as an opportunity to promote social progress and solving real problems rationally. It is possible to establish a benign mode of communication and interaction, and a mechanism for dealing with negative coverage by the international media. Consequently, the country is neither shut down nor ossified; it not only safeguards the national interests of China, but also promotes world peace.

### 5.3 Limitations

This article conducts a relatively comprehensive and detailed analysis of the report text, intending to accurately reflect the differences in the reporting methods and attitudes of *China Daily* and *The New York Times*.

However, this research is limited by the researcher's resources, time, personal energy and level of capacity; due to these factors, there is possibility of error in the coding scheme, the validity of the coding, and sample size. This paper takes the reports from 2020 as the research object, and draws a phased conclusion. There is still room for continuous improvement and supplementation of the conclusion in the future. A similar study can be done on other samples or on wider population, which is possible to increase reliability.

Also, the assessment of reporting attitude is likely to be subjective. As a Chinese citizen, the author perceives and interprets the reporting attitudes from the perspective of the Chinese. As a result, there may be bias in the coding process. With the certain presuppositions for China's national image, the objectivity of the research may be affected to a certain extent.

Furthermore, in this article, the researcher focused mainly on the textual content of the media, but failed to analyze the relationship between the media agenda and the audience agenda. In the news production system, the complete process of broadcasting includes production of text and content, dissemination, perception, and feedback from the audience. Since no public opinion survey was conducted, the reception of the media's presentation of national image has not been tested from the public's perspective. The researcher was not able to discuss how the audience framework interacts with the media framework. It is not possible to clarify the effective path of the news framework more comprehensively and convincingly. Such research content can be enriched in the future.

In addition, a similar study can be conducted on other international news outlets, regarding news pieces as the research object, and make a comparative analysis of different countries.



## References

- Cao, R. F., & Wu, F., & Wu, X.Y., [曹荣芳、吴飞、吴新宇], 2011, 北京奥运会中美媒体议程设置比较研究, 《成都体育学院学报》(2): 16-27。
- Chen. L. [陈丽], 2011, 《中西方媒体建构中国国家形象的比较研究》。未出版的硕士论文, 上海交通大学, 上海。
- Chen, L. D. [陈力丹], 1999, 《新闻理论十讲》。上海: 复旦大学出版社。
- Chen, Y. [陈阳], 2009, 《大众传播学研究方法导论》。北京: 中国人民大学出版社。
- Cheng, M. L. [程曼丽], 2008, 论“议程设置”在国家形象塑造中的舆论导向作用, 《北京大学学报(哲学社会科学版)》(45): 162-168
- Dai, C. Z. [戴长征], 2014, 《〈中国日报〉国家形象建构研究(1981-2013)》。未出版的博士论文, 上海大学, 上海。
- Du, K. [杜康], 2019, 《中美媒体对中美贸易摩擦报道的比较研究》。未出版的硕士论文, 湖北大学, 武汉。
- Duan, B. [段勃], 2019, 《以石为错: 中美调查性报告比较研究》。北京: 中国涉华科学出版社。
- Feng, T. [冯韬], 2015, 受众: 改变西方媒体对中国形象负面影响的因素, 《湖北社会科学》(5): 191-195。
- Ge, H. W. [葛厚伟], 2020, 基于语料库的《纽约时报》涉华新冠肺炎疫情报道的话语分析, 《重庆交通大学学报(社会科学版)》, 20(06): 108-116。
- Guan, W. H. [管文虎], 2000, 《国家形象论》。成都: 电子科技大学出版社。
- Guo, Z. Z. [郭镇之], 1997, 关于大众传播的议程设置功能, 《国际新闻界》(3): 18-25。
- He, Z. Q. [何正权], 2020, 疫情期间自媒体传播特点及发展方向, 《中国报业》(15): 38-40
- Li, M. X. [李明芯], 2019, 基于内容分析法的中国国家形象建构探析——以《人民日报》国际新闻评论栏目“钟声”为例, 《视听》(3): 198-199
- Liu, J. [刘娟], 2020, 疫情期间的融媒体传播特点分析, 《视界观》(7): 142。
- Liu, P. [刘朋], 2009, 《国家形象的概念: 构成、分歧与区隔》。北京: 中国传媒大学出版社。
- Luan, Y.M., & Zhang, Y. Q. [栾轶玫、张雅琦], 2020, 新冠肺炎疫情报道中的信息呈现与媒体表现, 《新闻战线》(3): 12-15
- Luo, Y. [罗奕], 2019, 他者眼中的中国形象——基于东盟国家大众媒体涉华报道的舆情分析, 《传媒》(4): 79-82。
- Peng, Z. J. [彭增军], 2012, 《媒介内容分析法》。北京: 中国人民大学出版社。
- Wang, J.Q. [王嘉琪], 2020, 《潜在的媒介偏见: 美国主流媒体的华为报道研究》。未出版的硕士论文, 暨南大学, 广州。
- Wang, R.Z., & Xu, C. [王润泽、徐诚], 2020, 意识形态偏见与西方媒体涉港报道的选择框架, 《中国记者》(1): 34-38。
- Xu, M. H., & Wang, Z. Z. [徐明华、王中宇], 2016, 西方媒介话语中中国形象的“变”与“不

- 变”——以《纽约时报》十年涉华报道为例，《现代传播》（12），56-61。
- Xu, X. G., [徐小鸽], 1996, 国际新闻传播中的国家形象问题《新闻与传播研究》(02), 36-46。
- Xue, T., & Zhang, R. M. [薛涛、张荣美], 2017, 西方媒体涉华报道中的“傲慢与偏见”——以两起恐袭事件报道为分析样本，《现代传播》（1）：163-165。
- Xue, K., & Yu, M. Y. [薛可，余明阳], 2008, 国家形象塑造中的媒体角色——以汶川地震报道为文本，《国际新闻界》(11): 58-64
- Yan, Y. [严宇], 2014, 西方媒体报道中的中国形象塑造，《西部广播电视》（3）:30-31。
- Yang, M.M. [杨苗苗], 2015, 《华盛顿邮报》上的中国形象研究，新疆：新疆师范大学，1-51。
- Zhao, H. [赵泓], 2019, “他塑”与“自塑”：论中国形象的构建，《电影文学》（2）：18-20
- Zhao, X. Y. [赵心宇], 2021, 《人民日报》新冠肺炎疫情报道的话语分析，《传媒论坛》. 4(03): 29-31。
- Barzilai-Nahon, K. (2008). Toward a theory of network gatekeeping: A framework for exploring information control. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 59, 1493-1512.
- Berelson, B.(1952). *Content Analysis in Communication Research*. New York: Free Press.
- Boulding, K.E.(1969). *The Image: Knowledge in Life and Society*. New York: University of Michigan Press.
- Chen, H. & Zhu, Z. & Qi, F. & Ye, Y. & Liu, Z. & Sun, M. & Jin, J. (2020). Country Image in COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study of China. *Journal of Latex Class Files*, 14(8), 1-12.
- Dearing, J. W., & Rogers, E. M. (1996). Agenda-setting. *Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage*.
- Fürsich, E. (2010). *Media and the representation of others. International Social Science Journal*, 61(199), 113-130.
- Haarman, L. & Lombardo, L. (2009). *Evaluation and Stance in War News*. London: Continuum.
- Jones, T. (2021, June 12). *Coronavirus and race (and not Trump) dominate the 2021 Pulitzer Prizes*. Poynter. <http://www.poynter.org/commentary/2021/coronavirus-and-race-and-not-trump-dominate-the-2021-pulitzer-prizes/>.
- Kiesling, S. F. (2005). *Intercultural Discourse and Communication: The Essential Readings*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell
- Kunczik, M. (1997). *Image of Nations and International Public Relations*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Littlejohn, S. W. (2002). *Theories of Human Communication, 7th Edition*. Albuquerque, New Mexico: Wadsworth.
- Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public opinion*. New York: Macmillan.
- Liss, A. (2003). Images of China in the American print media: A survey from 2000 to 2002. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 12(35), 299-318.
- Martin, J. R. & White, P. R. R. (2005). *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English*. London: Palgrave MacMillan
- McCombs, M. & Shaw, D. (1972) The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 36, 176-187
- McCombs, M. (2011). The Agenda-Setting Role of the Mass Media in the Shaping of Public Opinion. *University of Texas at Austin*. Retrieved 2011, from [https://www.infoamerica.org/documentos\\_pdf/mccombs01.pdf](https://www.infoamerica.org/documentos_pdf/mccombs01.pdf)

- Ochs, E. (1993). Constructing social identity: A language socialization perspective. *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 26(3): 287–306.s
- Peng, Z. (2004). Representation of China: An across time analysis of coverage in *The New York Times* and Los Angeles Times. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 14(1),53-67.
- Shoemaker, P. (1991). *Gatekeeping*. London: Sage.
- Shoemaker, P. J., & Vos, T. (2009). *Gatekeeping Theory*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Silver, L. R. (2017). China in the Media: Effects on the American Opinion. *Publicly Accessible Penn Dissertation*. Retrieved January 1, 2016, from <http://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/2017>
- Singer, Jane B. (2003). Campaign contributions: Online newspaper coverage of Election 2000. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*. 80: 39–56.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1988). *News as Discourse*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Wang, J. (2008) The Power and Limits of Branding in National Image Communication in Global Society. *International Political Communication*, 14(2),9-24
- White, David Manning (1950). The "Gate Keeper": A Case Study in the Selection of News. *Journalism Quarterly*. 27 (4): 383–391
- Xu, X. (2000). National Images in International News Communication (in Chinese). *Anthology of Communication Studies (II)*, Nanjing: Nanjing Normal University Press,22-42.
- Yang, Y. E. & Liu, X. (2012) The 'China threat' through the lens of us print media: 1992-2006. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 21(76),695–711
- Zhang, L. (2010). The rise of China: Media perception and implications for international politics. *Journal of Contemporary China*, 19(64), 233-254

## Appendix I Coding Scheme

### 1. Classification of Reporting Genres

- ☐ News consist of brief news reports that emphasize timeliness and highlight the most updated and important news facts;
- ☐ Newsletters consist of relatively long, less time-sensitive but more detailed reporting;
- ☐ Commentaries consist of articles where reporters, experts or scholars in related fields comment and analyze a certain social phenomenon or hot topic;
- ☐ Interviews consist of reporters' interviews with relevant people on a specific issue;
- ☐ Others consist of reporting that cannot be classified into the above categories, including speech drafts, specific policy documents, etc.

### 2. Topics of Reports (Please note the modification related to the topics)

- ☐ Domestic Politics: News reports on China's political situation, policy promulgation, political meetings, leadership activities, etc.
- ☐ Medical and Health: News reports on vaccine research and development, medical conditions, medical care protection, epidemic control and prevention, etc.
- ☐ Economics and Trading: News reports on labor employment, enterprise development, economic construction, financial investment, etc.
- ☐ Environment and People's Livelihood: News reports on people's living conditions, social security, environmental protection, etc.
- ☐ Human Rights system: News reports on freedom of the press, freedom of speech, democratic system, etc.
- ☐ Art and Sports: News reports on art exhibitions, sports activities, traditional culture, cultural exchanges, etc.
- ☐ International Relations: News reports on international exchanges, international trading, international cooperation, and diplomatic concepts, etc.
- ☐ Science and Technology: News reports on big data, network technology, technological development, website and APP operation and promotion, etc.
- ☐ Others: News reports other than those mentioned above.

### 3. Tendency of the Whole Reports

- ☐ Positive: The attitude, content and tendency of news reports are positive. Reports present a feeling of caring, anti-discrimination, recommendation, affirmation, including support, praise, expectations. The overall attitude towards the news event is positive or affirmative.
- ☐ Neutral: The news reports are objective and calm, without showing obvious compliments or negative tendencies. In the description, the tone has no bias towards the event, or is mixed with positive, negative or more than one different tone.
- ☐ Negative: News reports focus on exposing criticism, and the general tone is negative. Criticizing vocabularies are used in the content, including discrimination, moral judgment, vilification, etc., and news events are reported negatively.

### 3. Quotations

#### (1) Quotation Sources in the Report

- ☐ Government or International Association
- ☐ Non-governmental Organization
- ☐ Business Circle
- ☐ Academia (including medical professions)
- ☐ Media
- ☐ Ordinary People
- ☐ Others

#### (2) Regions of the Quotation Sources in the Report

- ☐ China (excluding Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan regions)
- ☐ Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan regions
- ☐ United States of America
- ☐ European Countries
- ☐ Other countries or regions (please note)

## Appendix II Time Line of the Epidemic

Date	Event
9-Jan	WHO Announces Mysterious Coronavirus-Related Pneumonia in Wuhan, China
21-Jan	Chinese Scientist Confirms COVID-19 Human Transmission
23-Jan	Wuhan Now Under Quarantine
31-Jan	WHO Issues Global Health Emergency
10-Feb	China's COVID-19 Deaths Exceed Those of SARS Crisis
10-Mar	President Xi Jinping went to Wuhan to inspect the prevention and control work at the critical moment of fighting COVID-19
11-Mar	WHO Declares COVID-19 a Pandemic
17-Mar	no new suspected domestic cases. Hubei Province had seen no new confirmed cases for 13 consecutive days.
26-Mar	President Xi Jinping delivered a speech titled "Working Together to Defeat the COVID-19 Outbreak" at the Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit.
28-May	US COVID-19 Deaths Pass the 100,000 Mark
22-Jun	Study Suggests 80% of Cases in March Went Undetected
7-Jul	US Surpasses 3 Million Infections, Begins WHO Withdrawal
8-Sep	AstraZeneca Halts Phase 3 Vaccine Trial
14-Sep	Pfizer, BioNTech Expand Phase 3 Trial
21-Sep	Johnson & Johnson Begins Phase 3 Vaccine Trial
28-Sep	Global COVID-19 Deaths Surpass 1 Million
2-Oct	Trump, First Lady Test Positive for COVID-19; Trump Enters Hospital
19-Oct	Global Cases Top 40 Million
4-Nov	US Reports Unprecedented 100,000 Cases in 1 Day
18-Nov	Pfizer, BioNTech Vaccine Is 95% Effective
23-Dec	US Buys More Pfizer Vaccine

## **Appendix III Sample Reports from *The New York Times* and *China Daily***

### **Title: China May Be Beating the Coronavirus, at a Painful Cost**

By Qin, A. (2020, March 9 21:43:18). from *The New York Times*. number of words: 1912. URL: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/07/world/asia/china-coronavirus-cost.html>

...For more than five weeks, the typically bustling hub of universities, commerce and transportation has been transformed into a collection of ghost towns as the virus has ravaged communities, ensnared entire families and infected thousands of medical workers. China's experience combating the virus has also highlighted the risk of family transmission if hospitals run out of beds and testing kits, as they did in Wuhan, where for weeks, many who were sick were sent home and infected their relatives. Roadblocks have sealed off cities, public transportation has been shut down and private cars have been mostly banned from the roads. In Wuhan, restrictions on individual movement have been stepped up in recent weeks, with residents now mostly barred from leaving their homes. Among residents in Hubei, there are signs that anger and frustration are mounting. Chinese social media sites are flooded with posts from residents saying they have lost their jobs because of the extended lockdown, making it difficult to make payments on mortgages and loans. Others have described food shortages in their communities.

On Thursday, in a rare public rebuke of the government, disgruntled people in a residential community in Wuhan heckled high-level officials as they walked through the neighborhood on an inspection. "Fake! Everything is fake!" shouted one resident at the delegation, which included Sun Chunlan, a vice premier leading the central government's response to the outbreak. The state-run People's Daily newspaper later said that the accusations were aimed at local neighborhood officials who had "faked" delivery of vegetables and meat to residents. Ms. Sun ordered an immediate investigation into the issue. Wang Zhonglin, the party secretary of Wuhan, announced plans on Friday to teach the city's residents to be grateful to the party, a move that was quickly met with derision and anger on Chinese social media. Relationships are also fraying as families are forced to live for extended periods in confined spaces. Guo Jing, a feminist activist in Wuhan, said she and other volunteers had fielded a number of requests for help from residents reporting physical abuse by their family members at

home. “Under these circumstances, it’s really difficult for them to find help during the epidemic,” said Ms. Guo. “It’s so difficult to leave the house.” Fang Fang, a writer who has been keeping a widely read — and often-censored — online journal of life in Wuhan, said that the lockdown was exacting a psychological toll on residents. “Ordinary people have no source of income and lack a sense of certainty even about when they’ll be able to go out,” she wrote in a recent entry. “When you can’t feel the ground or you lose control over a situation, it’s easy to lose the most basic sense of security.” Outside of Hubei, China wants to fire up its economy, but local officials are also under immense pressure to take no risks in order to reduce the number of infections. Even as provinces have lowered their alert levels for the virus, many companies are choosing to err on the side of caution. Some have even faked electricity consumption rates in order to hit stringent back-to-work targets, according to a recent report by Caixin, an influential Chinese magazine...

### **Title: Taiwan Natives Provide Help During the Pandemic**

By Zhang, Y. (2020, November 25). From *China Daily*. number of words: 1818. URL: <https://epaper.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202011/25/WS5fbd8d8ca31099a234352064.html>

The outbreak of COVID-19 in the Chinese mainland earlier this year touched the hearts of people on both sides of the Taiwan Straits. In their own way, many people in Taiwan were involved in the prevention and control work, helping to deal with the difficulties alongside mainland residents.

To learn more, China Daily spoke with three people from Taiwan about their experiences during the outbreak.

Hsueh Ying-tung, 46, from Tainan, Taiwan, movie director in Wuhan, Hubei province

...The sudden outbreak of the novel coronavirus meant we had to cancel plans to shoot our first feature film...I chose to stay in the place I had started my own business because I had confidence in the mainland's ability to combat the outbreak. I stayed home, in line with the government's instructions, but I frequently contacted my family in Taiwan via the internet to keep them informed about my situation. Instead, we had to do something positive to distract ourselves, such as writing songs, reading books or watching movies....In the first song, I called on people not to spread rumors, but to stay



home and stick together. The second one praised the brave people who came to Wuhan from different places to fight the disease, including medical workers, bus drivers and many strangers who provided assistance.

The third piece was written after the death of Li Wenliang, the eye doctor in Wuhan, to express my respect for him. I wrote the fourth song ahead of the lockdown being lifted. At the time, I saw on the TV that the number of new confirmed cases was falling every day, and everyone was very excited to witness success in the battle.

From time to time, people shouted "Come on, Wuhan!" from their windows. They did it instinctively, and I was greatly inspired and moved. It was a really complicated feeling...

## 个人简历 在读期间发表的学术论文与研究成果

### 个人简历:

汪臻，女，1993年1月1日生。

2014年6月毕业于加拿大女王大学，获文学学士学位。

2014年12月入职于中铁工程设计咨询集团有限公司线站院，

2015年3月于对外经济贸易大学攻读对外语言学与应用语言学专业硕士研究生，

2021年5月入职于中国铁路投资集团有限公司。

### 已发表的学术论文与研究成果:

[1] 汪臻. 山东省某铁路物流基地货运量预测探析. 基层建设, 2019年, 11期。

[2] 汪臻. 加拿大华裔学生文化适应性调查分析. 中外交流, 2019年, 48期。

[3] 汪臻. 从北京市疫情防控看中国传统文化优越性. 好日子, 2020年, 4期。

[4] 马爱英, 汪臻. 声强测量在高铁声屏障检测中的应用研究. 铁道科学与工程学报, 2020年, 10月刊。