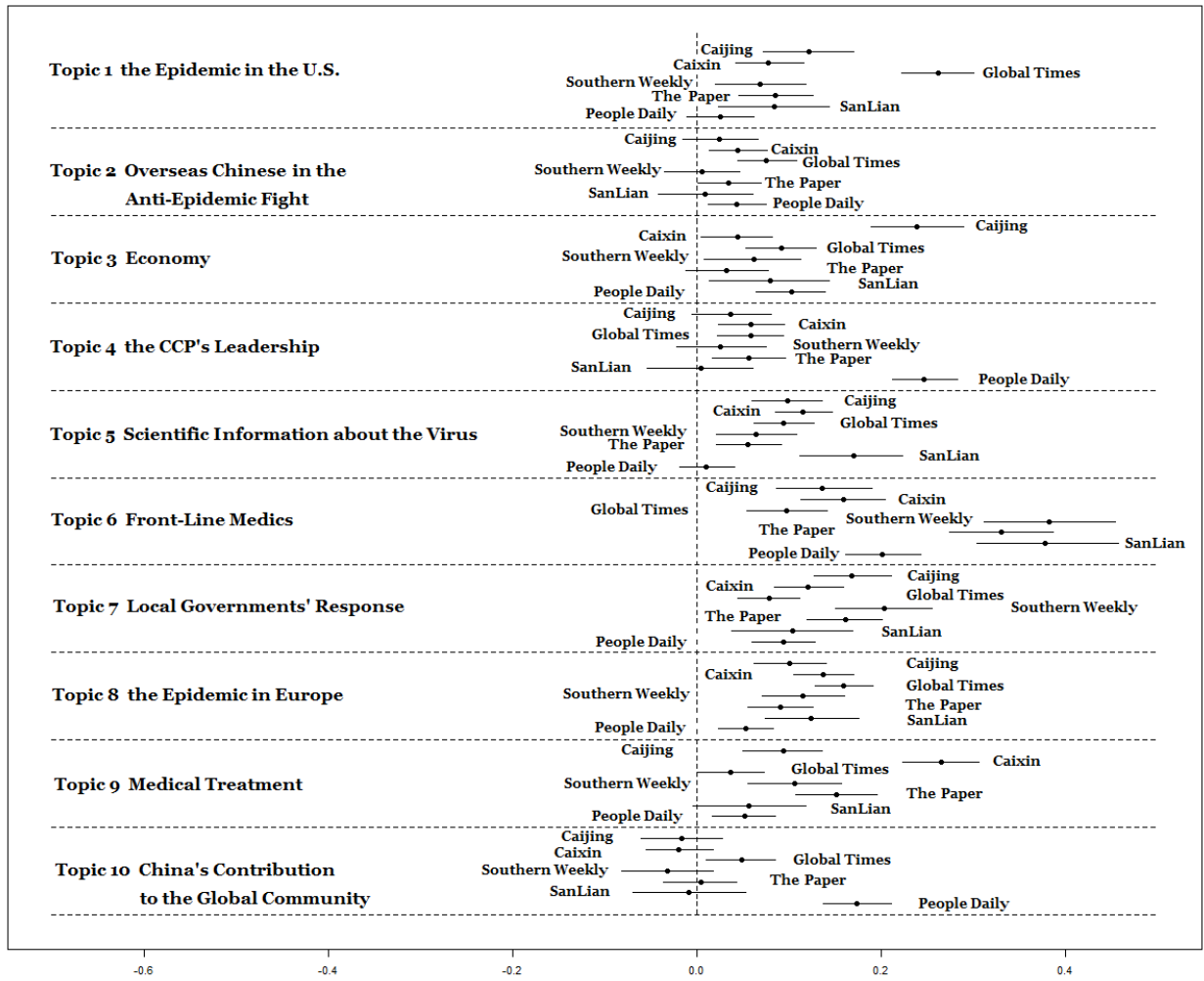# Figure A1: Topic Prevalence Contrast of Estimated Topics by All Media Outlets

Notes: this figure shows the point estimate and 95% confidence interval of the mean difference in topic proportions for each media outlet compared with the other six media outlets, respectively. In each row, top to bottom are *Caijing*, *Caixin*, *Global Times*, *Southern Weekly*, *The Paper*, *Sanlian Lifeweek*, and *People's Daily*, respectively.

Figure A2: The Coverage on Frontline Medics by Media Types Over Time (Raw Data)
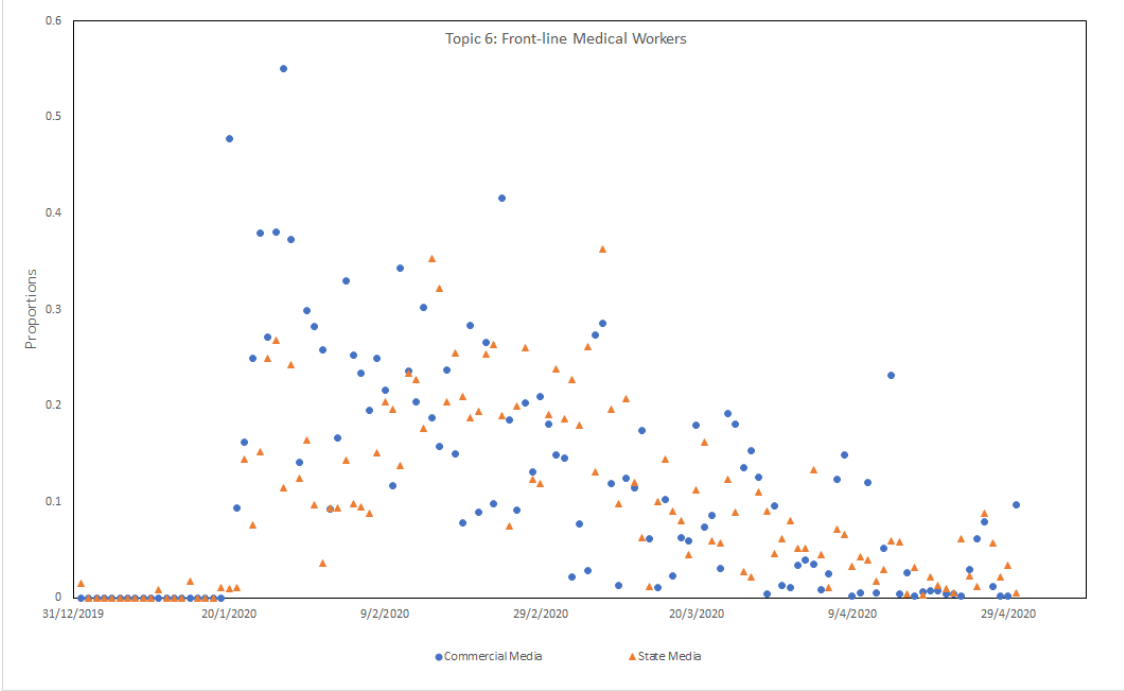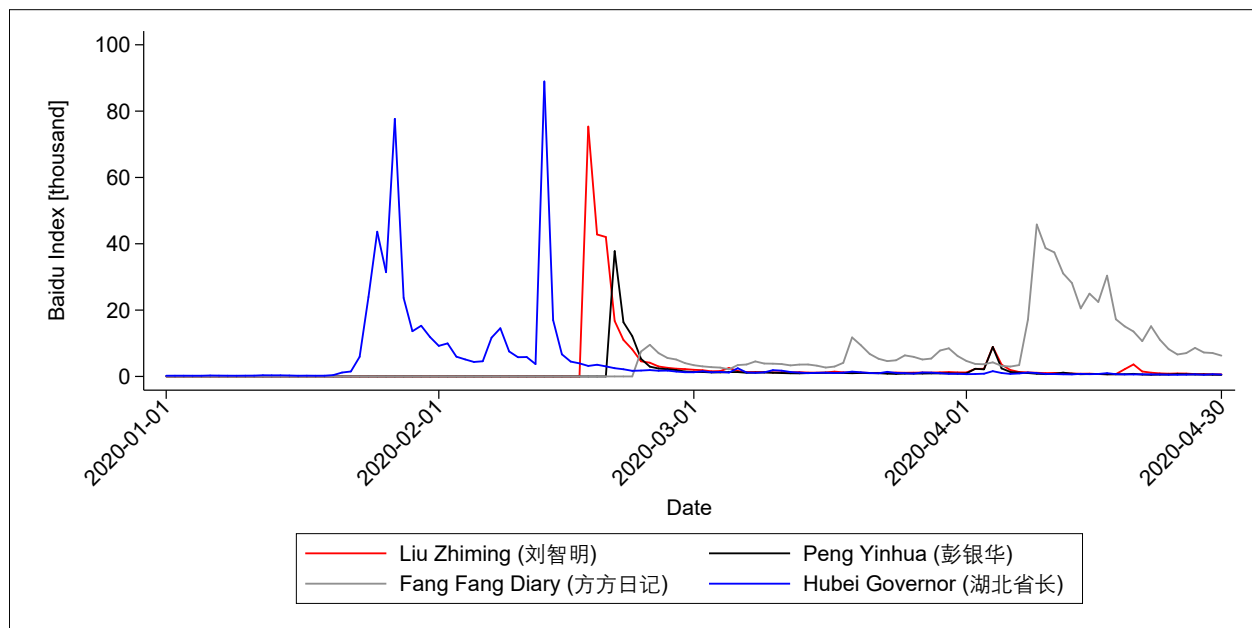
Figure A3: The Baidu Index of Heroic Medics and Controversial Matters


Notes: the figure plots the Baidu Index of four keywords from January 1 to April 30, 2020.

Figure A4: The Coverage on the Epidemic in Europe by Media Types Over Time
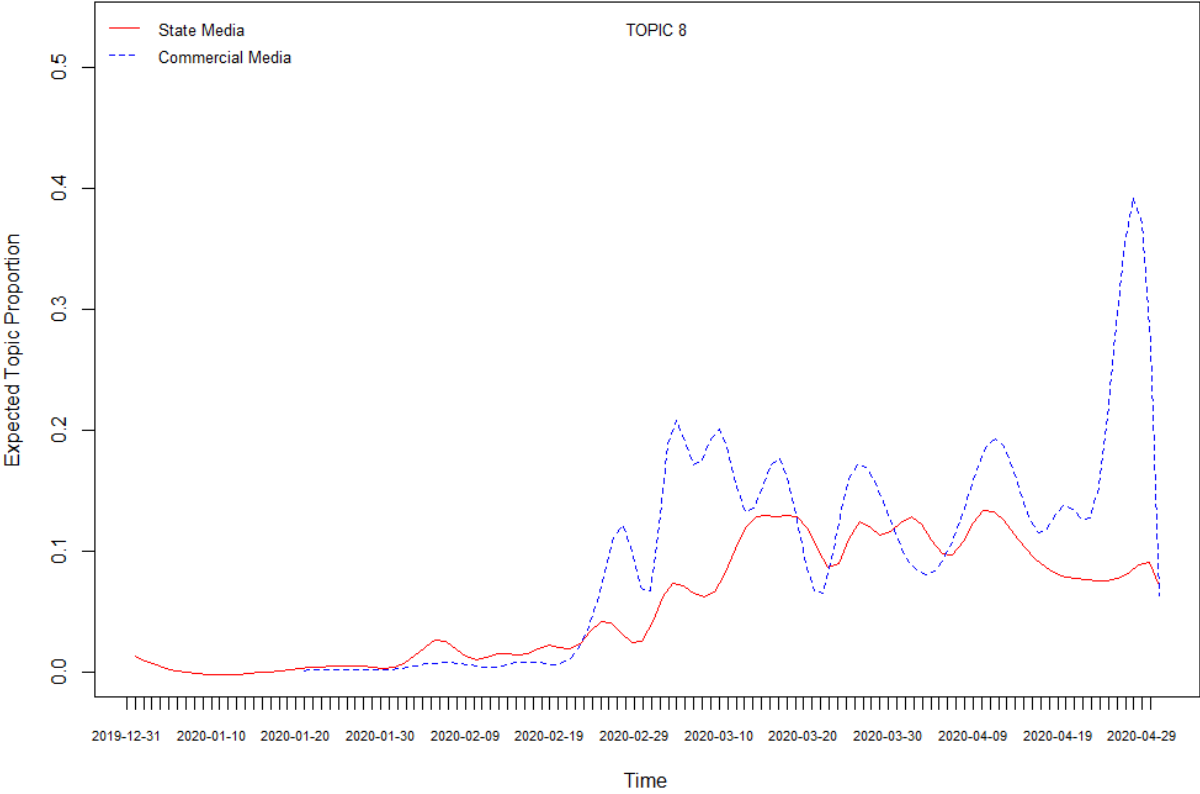

Notes: the figure shows the changing prevalence of media coverage on the European epidemic from January 1 to April 30, 2020. The red line represents state media, the blue line represents commercial media.

Figure A5: Sentiment Analysis of Chinese Media Coverage on the Epidemic in the U.S.
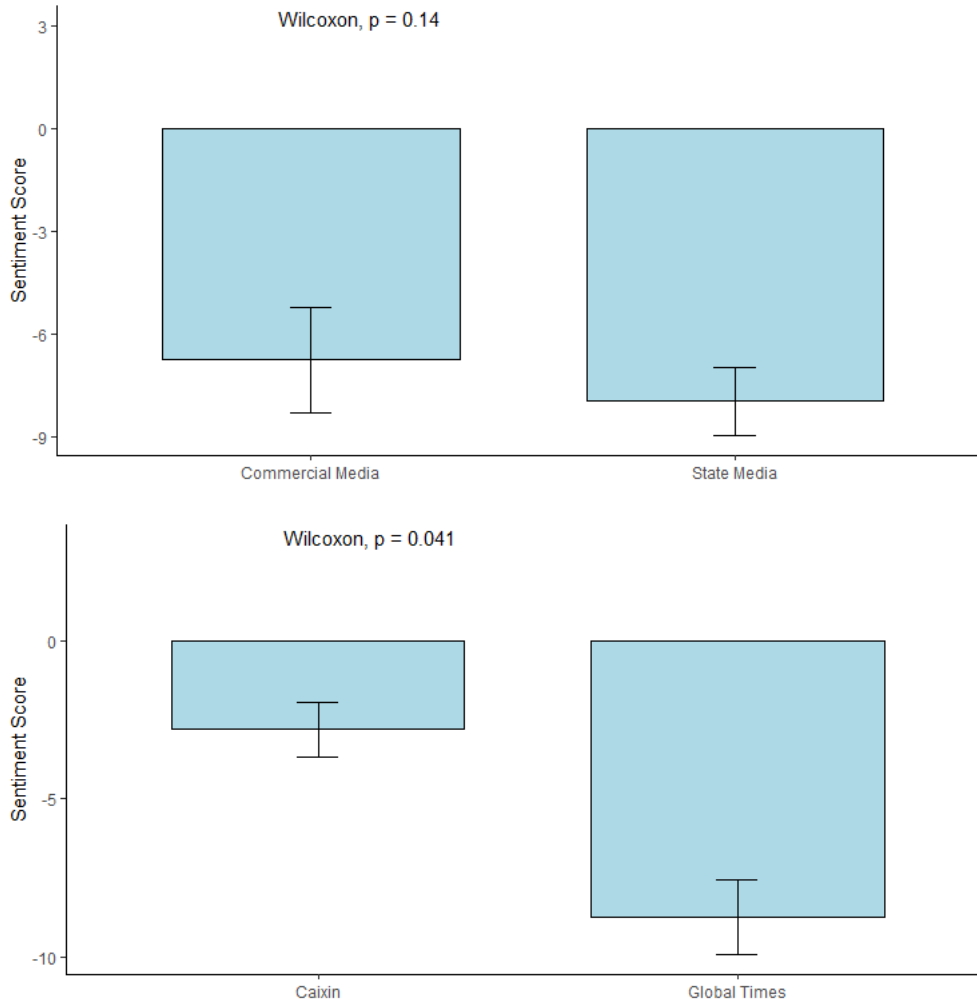
Notes: As newspaper reports are typically long and noisy, they are unsuitable for sentiment analysis. For example, some articles first report the U.S. government's poor performance and then extol China's policies. The overall sentiment of such an article could be highly positive, failing to capture the negative tone toward the U.S. government. To overcome this concern, we begin by selecting all the articles related to COVID-19 in the U.S. We then locate sentences that include words such as "the U.S." or "Trump" and only use these sentences, along with the sentences immediately before and after, for the sentiment analysis.

Figure A6: Top 20 High-Frequency Negative Words in *Global Times* & *Caixin*'s Coverage on the Epidemic in the U.S.
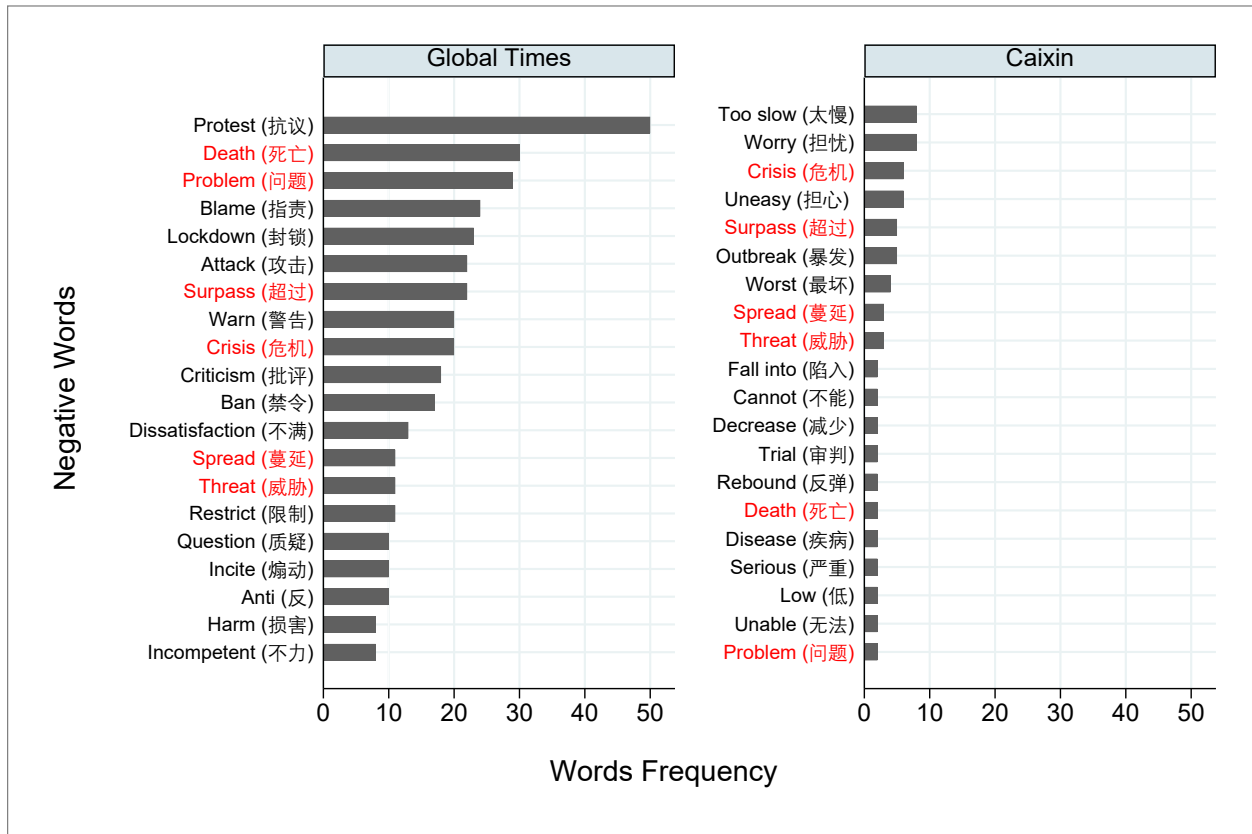
Notes: the figure displays top 20 high-frequency negative words used by *Global Times* and *Caixin* in covering the epidemic in the United States. The size of bars to the right of each negative term represents its frequency. Six words are used in common, which are marked in red.

Figure A7: The Baidu Index of Three Terms Related to the Epidemic
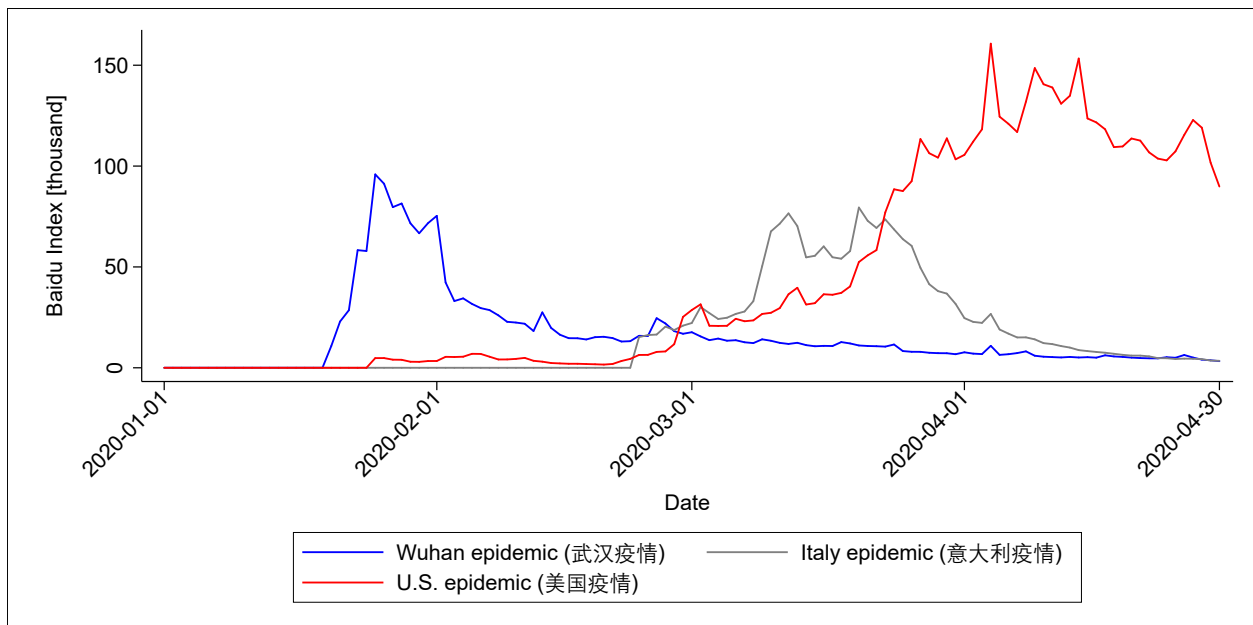
Notes: the figure plots the Baidu Index of the "U.S. epidemic," "Wuhan epidemic," "Italy epidemic," from January 1 to April 30, 2020.

Figure A8: Distribution of Topics Across Censored Media Coverage

Top Topics

Topic 3: 殡仪馆, 火神山, 交叉感染, 村委会, 雷神山, 居委会, 民政局, 农民工, 老百姓, 志愿者

Label:
the miserable condition of
the ordinary people

funeral parlor, Huoshenshan Hospital, cross-infection, village committee, Leishenshan Hospital, neighborhood committee, Civil Affairs Bureau, rural migrant worker, civilian, volunteer

Topic 1: 李文亮, 基因测序, 张继先, 南京路, 高通量, 真实情况, 江学庆, 中西医结合, 病原学, 主任医师

Label:
content related
to Li Wenliang

Li Wenliang, gene sequencing, Zhang Jixian, Nanjing Road, high-throughput, the real situation, Jiang Xueqing, intergrated Chinese and Western medicine, Etiology, chief physician

Topic 2: 组成员, 可防可控, 广东省, 周先旺, 生产能力, 土耳其, 专家组, 实验室, 国家卫健委, 新闻周刊

Label:
discussing the
responsibility

group member, preventable and controllable, Guangdong Province, Zhou Xianwang, productive capability, Turkey, expert group, laboratory, National Health Committee, Newsweek

| 0.0 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 1.5 | 2.0 |

Expected Topic Proportions

Notes: For each topic, the figure displays proposed topic label and the top 10 frequent and exclusive words. The size of the bars to the left of each topic represents expected proportions of each topic in the censored commercial media coverage.

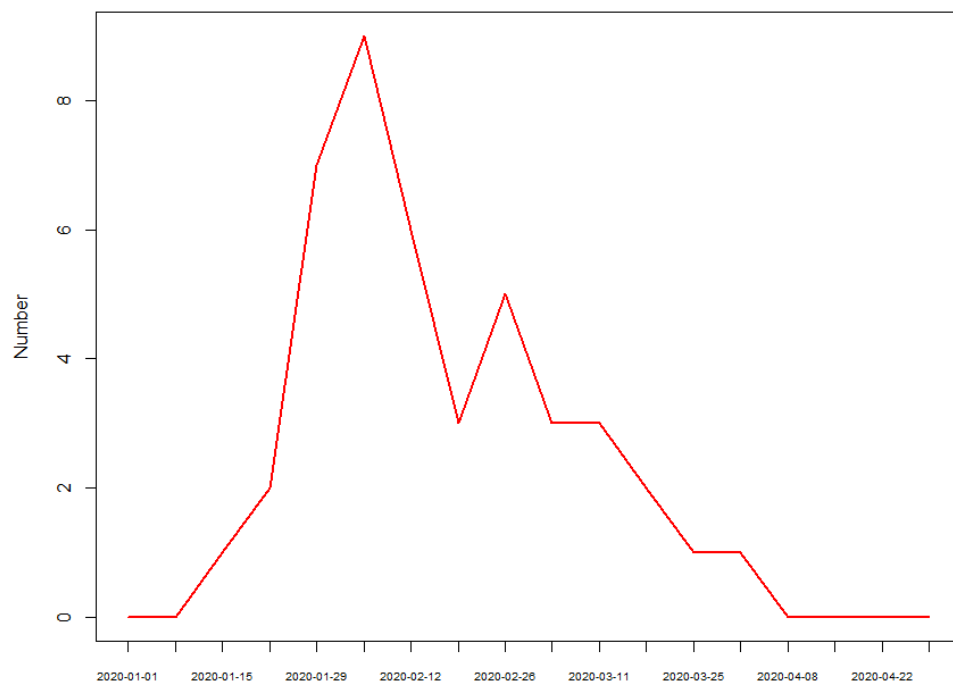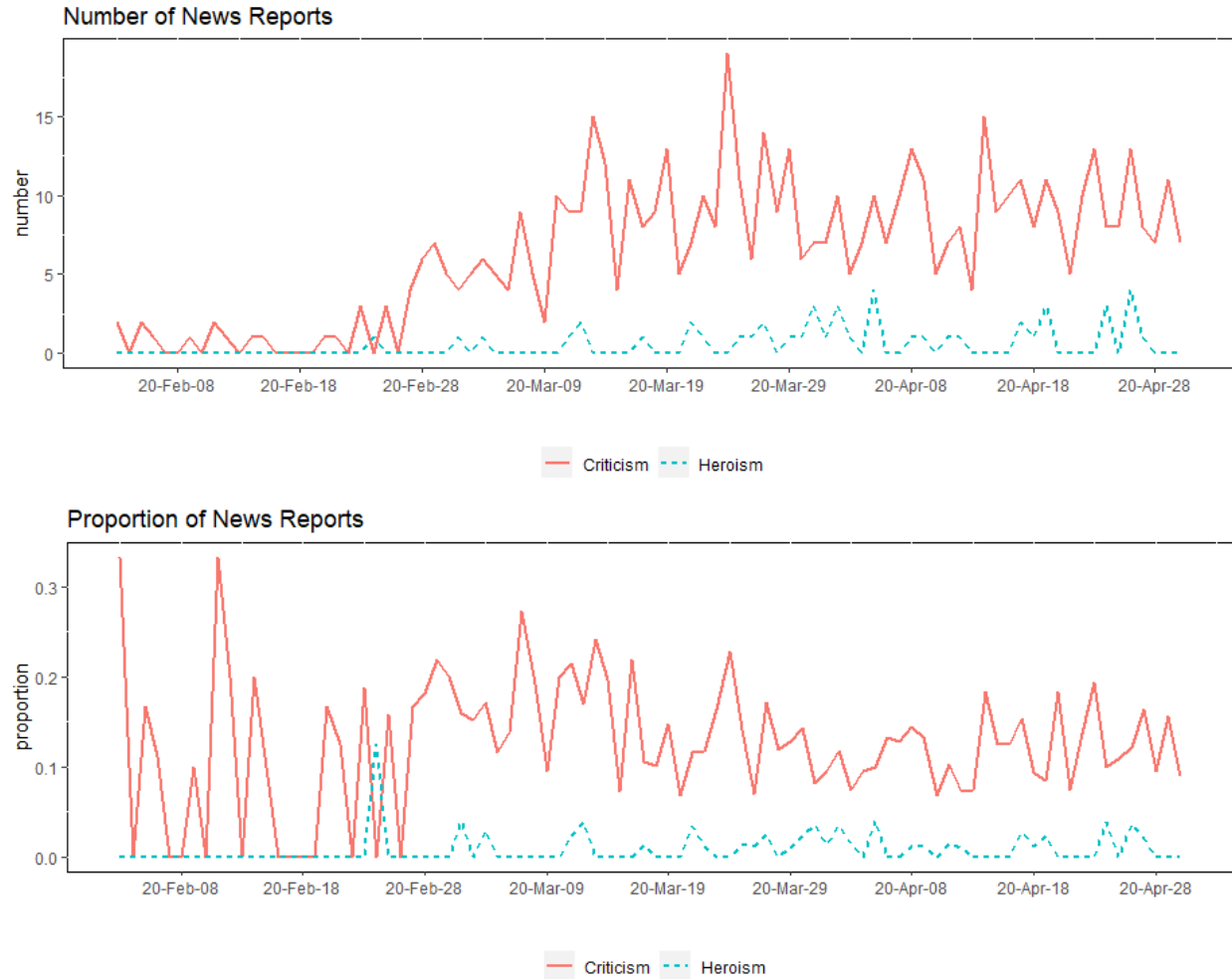**Figure A9: Number of Censored News Reports over Time (Weekly)**

Figure A10: *The New York Times'* COVID-19 Coverage

Notes: The two graphs show the number and proportion of news reports on front-line medics (represented by the dotted line) and the criticism of the Trump Administration (represented by the solid line). In contrast to Chinese media, which devoted a considerable amount of attention to frontline healthcare heroes (Figure 4), the *New York Times* ran a limited number of stories about the heroic performance of frontline medics. While the articles on this topic are estimated to account for roughly 20% of the total number of COVID-19 reports in the Chinese media at the peak, the proportion of the *New York Times* articles on this topic is well below 10%. In terms of the criticism of the Trump administration, the proportion of *News York Times* articles on this topic hovered around 20% from late February to mid-March. On March 20, 2020, the cumulative number of confirmed COVID-19 cases exceeded 10,000, indicating that the epidemic had become serious in the U.S. After mid-March, the *New York Times* covered a variety of COVID-19-related issues instead of focusing on criticizing the Trump administration. As such, the proportion of news reports criticizing the Trump administration declined after mid-March, although it remained in the range of 10% to 20% in April. In contrast, it was not until mid-March that the Chinese media began to pay close attention to the COVID-19 outbreak in the U.S. As discussed in the manuscript, the epidemic was nearly under control in China by this time. The Chinese media used the poor performance of the U.S. to highlight China's "victory" in the fight against COVID-19. For example, the Chinese media emphasized that China "outperformed" the U.S. in public health management (see footnote 25). The proportion of Chinese media reports on this topic was well above 20% in April (see Figure 5). For the details of data collection, see Table A2 and its notes.

Table A1: Estimated Ten Topics and Top Words by STM

Topic	Topic Labels	Top 10 Words
1	The epidemic in the United States	特朗普，美联储，民进党，蓬佩奥，西雅图，台当局，共和党，福克斯新闻，民主党人，加利福尼亚州 Trump, Fed, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), Mike Pompeo, Seattle, the Taiwan authorities, the Republican party, Fox News, Democrats, California
2	Overseas Chinese in the anti-epidemic fight	绥芬河，中资企业，赵智刚，符拉迪沃斯托克，留学人员，非洲人，布基纳法索，满洲里，道孚县，马尼拉 Suifenhe, overseas Chinese enterprises, Zhao Zhigang, Vladivostok, overseas Chinese students, African, Burkina Faso, Manzhouli, Daofu County, Manila
3	Economy	小微企业，熔喷布，零部件，一季度，现金流，万亿元，富士康，外贸企业，人民银行，二季度 small & micro businesses, meltblown, components, the first quarter, cash flow, trillion, Foxconn, export-oriented enterprises, People's Bank of China, the second quarter
4	The CCP's leadership	广大党员，各级党委，孙春兰，指示精神，群防群治，高高飘扬，堡垒作用，坚决贯彻，咬紧牙关，人民军队 all CCP members, party committees at all levels, Sun Chunlan, the spirit of instructions, mass prevention and mass treatment, flying high, the role of fighting bastions, resolutely implement, bite the bullet, people's army
5	Scientific information about the virus	穿山甲，ace，石正丽，果子狸，活疫苗，核苷酸，biorxiv, ratg, mma, 抑制剂 Manidae, ace, Shi Zhengli, gem-faced civet, inactivated vaccine, Nucleotide, biorvix, ratg, mma, inhibitor
6	Front-line Medical workers	刘智明，百步亭，吴俊叶，心理咨询，彭银华，李珊珊，洪山体育馆，王兴园，郭征利，黄文军 Liu Zhiming, Baibuting community, Wu Junye, psychological counseling, Peng Yinhua, Li Shanshan, Hongshan Stadium, Wang Xinyuan, Guo Zhengli, Huang Wenjun
7	Local governments' response	特区政府，宝坻区，百货大楼，服务区，泉州市，林鸿潮，杨金锵，大理市，黄雅曦，立法会 SAR government, Baodi District, department store, service area, Quanzhou City, Lin Hongchao, Yang Jinqiang, Dali City, Huang Yaxi, Legislative Council
8	The epidemic in Europe	约翰逊，伦巴第，意大利政府，贝加莫，马德里，nhs，贫民窟，西班牙政府，鲍里斯，威尼托 Johnson, Lombardy, the Italian government, Bergamo, Madrid, NHS, slum, the government of Spain, Boris, Veneto
9	Medical treatment	igg，临床表现，igm，第六版，普通型，合并症，王玮帆，焦雅辉，司法厅，假阳性 igg, clinical manifestations, igm, the sixth version, normal type, complication, Wang Weifan, Jiao Yahui, department of justice, false positive results
10	China's contribution to the global community	人类命运共同体，二十国集团，团结合作，世界人民，战略伙伴，中日韩，积极评价，全球治理，大国担当，金砖国家 A community with a shared future for mankind, G20, unity and cooperation, people worldwide, strategic partner, China-Japan-South Korea, praise, global governance, the responsibility of a major country, BRICS

Table A2: The Filtering Criteria for the New York Times Articles

COVID-19 Related	Topics	Key Adjectives or Nouns
	Medical Workers	Hardworking
	Frontline Workers	Brave
	Healthcare Workers	Honor
COVID-19	Frontline Heroes	Sacrifice
Coronavirus	Healthcare Heroes	Heroic
Pandemic	Trump	Mismanagement
Epidemic	Trump Administration	Mistake
	the White House	Failed/Failure
		Worse
		Damage
		Lies

Notes: We use a three-layer keyword filtering approach to collect the related *New York Times* articles from January to April 2020. First, we collect COVID-19 news articles that contain at least one of the following terms: "COVID-19," "coronavirus," "pandemic," and "epidemic." Second, to locate news articles on healthcare heroes, we search for news reports with at least one of the following terms: "medical workers," "frontline workers," "healthcare workers," "frontline heroes," and "healthcare heroes." To avoid missing related articles, we also search for the names of medics covered by U.S. media outlets and find about 10 such medical workers, such as Kious Kelly, Danny Kim, Michael Fowler, and Christopher Morris. We include the *New York Times* articles that mention the above names. We require articles on the Trump administration to include at least one of the following terms: "Trump," "the Trump administration," and "the White House." Third, to eliminate articles unrelated to extolling the heroic behavior of frontline workers, we retain articles with at least one of the following adjectives: "hardworking," "brave," "honor," "sacrifice," and "heroic." Similarly, we eliminate articles that do not contain any of the words commonly used to criticize the Trump administration, such as "mismanagement," "mistake," "failed/failure," "worse," "damage," and "lies."