

U.S. and New Zealand Media Framing of the Coronavirus Pandemic

Gustav Chu-Ling

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Abstract

How the media frame an issue is important for informing the public about the risks and associated preventative measures which need to be adopted. Furthermore, how the media frame an issue is important for informing peoples perceptions, such as perceptions about who is responsible for something, and informing views on the severity of an issue. A well-established body of scholarship have lent credence to the important role that the media have in informing the public about an array of issues. For example, the public primarily receive information about climate change and health related issues through the mass media. This same dynamic was seen in regard to the Coronavirus pandemic, where the public were informed by the media on a mysterious outbreak in Wuhan, China. This study set out to explore how media in the U.S. and New Zealand framed the Coronavirus pandemic. Two key development phases in the pandemic's genealogy are examined. The first is COVID-19 reaching pandemic status, and the second is the confirmation of a Coronavirus case in the U.S. and New Zealand. Both periods were crucial in the interest levels of global media in regard to the virus, as well as being important periods where the public heavily relied on the media for information about the origins of the virus, the transmissibility of it, mortality rate, and for information about actions at international, national and local scales which will be erected in response to COVID-19. This study employed a Framing Analysis to explore the most prominent frame used by media outlets in both nations to report COVID-19. In doing this, this thesis was able to identify the most prominent lens in which the media covered the two sample periods. This study also compared and contrasted the content focusses of U.S. and New Zealand outlets, which provide insight into what each nation prioritised as COVID-19 transitioned from an epidemic to a global pandemic, and then as the virus spread in the community. This thesis found that, in sample period one, U.S. and New Zealand framing were chiefly concerned with the consequences of the virus on different sectors of each nation's economy. Reporting of the second sample period showed differences in the frames in which each nation adopted, where U.S. outlets adopt a medical lens, and outlets in New Zealand focus on societal implications. Key conclusions of this research is that early in the development of COVID-19, the media politicised the virus, by what they focused their reporting on and how they labelled the virus as it evolved.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to thesis

This thesis explores how media in the United States (U.S.) and New Zealand (NZ) framed SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19). This research will examine how media in both nations covered COVID-19 as the Coronavirus pandemic developed from an unknown disease in Wuhan, China, to a global emergency which has had significant impacts world-wide. This research aims to reveal what the media prioritised in their coverage of the virus as it evolved and became a highly covered topic in global media. In doing this, the current thesis adds to a well-established body of work whom have examined how the media frame different issues (Gitlin, 2003; Bardhan, 2011). It is important to investigate media coverage of COVID-19 as the virus developed because this will provide insight into how the media set the tone for public understanding and perception of the virus. What the media cover and place emphasis upon is vital for what audiences deem to be important (Hart et al., 2020). Thus, this research looks at the most prominent media content focusses of U.S. and New Zealand media as COVID-19 reached global pandemic status, as well as when community transmission occurred in both nations. Both these periods were key stages in the evolution of COVID-19 and received concentrated media attention.

This study is primarily directed at providing insight into what was most covered by the media in regards to the Coronavirus pandemic. Framing literature posits that the most emphasised aspect of an issue proves to be crucial in how the public come to think about the issue and in turn impacts their (in)actions (Entman, 1993; Thomas et al., 2020). I demonstrate that what the media cover – and in turn what they don't report – proves to be an essential means by which issues – such as COVID-19, become highly politicised. The media are most crucial in times of crises, mostly when the issue is evolving and not one of local relevance. In such times, the media are paramount in setting peoples understanding and perception of the issue, the cause of the problem, and the solutions to addressing it. Therefore, this research looks all three elements; the problem (COVID-19), the cause, and the solution(s), and explores how these elements were covered in the media.

1.2 Research rationale

A detailed body of scholarship suggests that the information people receive about various issues is 'framed' (Price, et al., 1997; Nelson & Oxley, 1999; Chong & Druckman, 2007). Frames are concerned with how and why certain aspects of an issue become more prominent in media coverage (Entman, 1993). Frames bring to light ideas, themes, and content in media reporting (often at the expense of other ideas and views). Framing processes suggest that media coverage of an event impacts how people view the issue and their subsequent support for different solutions to a problem (Druckman, 2001). Chong and Druckman (2007) contend that media framing impacts how people view an issue (at least in part) by how the media reports on it; how the media selects to cover and emphasise certain aspects of that issue informs how audience members understand it. Nelson et al. (1997) suggests, "much of the public's knowledge and information about public affairs is mediated rather than direct, popular understanding of, and even opinions about, political issues may be substantially shaped by the selection and presentation of information" (p.223). Thus, how the media cover different topics is vital for how the public views the problem – and how people perceive an issue is essential for adherence and support of proposed solutions (Simonov et al., 2020; Radwan & Radwan, 2020).

The Coronavirus pandemic is an example of a framed event (Hubner, 2021; Gylfadottir et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2020). The Coronavirus pandemic has and continues to be a topic that global media have covered in great detail (The Economist, 2020). Much scholarly evidence has argued that media framing of the pandemic has been highly political (Gondwe & Chen, 2021; Motta et al., 2020). For example, early media coverage (particularly in the U.S.) referred to the Coronavirus pandemic as the 'Wuhan virus' and 'China virus' (Wen et al., 2020). Such framing of the pandemic as a Chinese issue has fuelled increased incidences of Asian-focused hate crimes in the U.S. (Croucher et al., 2021). As a result of how and what the media covered

during the early stages of the Coronavirus pandemic, the virus, became linked with China and Chinese people in public discussions¹ (Romer & Jamieson, 2020; Jamieson & Albarracin, 2020).

There has been substantial research on media framing of different issues (Bolsen, et al., 2020; Pan & Meng, et al., 2016). There has also be an abundance of literature comparing different frames that outlets from different countries have adopted to cover an issue like climate change (Luck et al., 2018). However, there is less research on the frames which the media in different socio-cultural and political contexts have employed to cover the Coronavirus pandemic (Boston University, 2022; Feyer, 2020). Although there is recognition that media framing differs between different national contexts (Gylfadottir et al., 2021), there has been limited attention given to comparing the frames used by different outlets to cover COVID-19 (in its early stages). In this research project, I attempt to (partly) fill this critical gap in the current scholarship; it is a crucial gap because existing evidence demonstrates that various media outlets and online forums failed to articulate the risks of the Coronavirus pandemic (Holt et al., 2022; Hubner, 2021; Mutua & Ong'ong'a, 2020).

As COVID-19 continued to spread globally, many media sources did not adequately cover the severity and urgency of the virus (Boston University, 2022). Instead, outlets in the United Kingdom, Germany, and the U.S., for example, opted to focus on China and the apparent failures of the Chinese government in addressing the virus. Even as COVID-19 became a global pandemic, and thus large scale international and national efforts were implemented to contain and adapt to the virus, media reporting in places like the U.S. politicised different health measures (e.g. mask-wearing) (Lipsitz & Pop-Eleches, 2020). Such reporting has led to the politicisation of the pandemic (Abbas, 2021). Therefore, this research comes about due to the recognition that how the media frame an issue is important for how people understand and unpack important matters, such as COVID-19. Secondly, the research aims to fill a gap in framing literature that has not in great detail provided theoretical insight into how different outlets in different countries framed COVID-19 in its infancy.

¹ The 'early stages' of the pandemic is often thought of as early 2020, as this was when the virus started becoming globally reported in the media and also when COVID-19 reached pandemic status (Mutua & Ong'ong'a, 2020)

1.3 Research context

The U.S. and New Zealand adopted vastly different responses to the Coronavirus pandemic. During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the U.S. government was critiqued for their inadequate and fragmented response to addressing the virus (Hubner, 2021). The media in the U.S. have also been criticised for their role in politicising the pandemic, where they focused on blaming China and were more concerned with the geopolitical background of COVID-19, instead of raising awareness of the measures needed to be taken to address the virus (Romer & Jamieson, 2020; Bridgeman et al., 2020). In this research, I examine if and how U.S. media coverage differed from media coverage of New Zealand, which is of particular interest given that the nation of New Zealand (in contrast to the U.S.) was praised (both domestically and internationally) for its COVID-19 response (especially in its early stages) (Croucher et al., 2021).

The focus on the U.S. and New Zealand boils down to the media landscape of each nation. Saturated in conspiracy theories, vaccine fears, COVID-19 misinformation, and a growing gap between expert advice and public perceptions, the media terrain of the U.S. is highly divided on many facets of COVID-19 (Su, 2021; Romer & Jamieson, 2020; Jamieson & Albarracin, 2020). Contrastingly, the media of New Zealand have been detailed as fostering healthy political discussions about COVID-19, where for the most part, they have disseminated accurate health to the New Zealand public (Sibley et al., 2020; Croucher et al., 2021; Rijs & Fenter, 2020). Due to the vast differences between the two nations and their media frames of COVID-19, this thesis seeks to explore the dominant frame both nations adopt to cover COVID-19. Through this, the current thesis contributes to literature on media framing of health issues (Su, 2021; Vraga et al., 2020) and contributes to an ever-growing body of work that positions the media as an essential avenue people come to know and understand different subjects (Entman 1993; Thomas et al., 2020). To investigate how U.S. and New Zealand media have framed COVID-19, this study employs a Framing Analysis, a heuristic tool used in qualitative research to examine media coverage of an event.

In the U.S., scientific knowledge has a detailed history of being politicised (Gauchat, 2012). Although the contestation and politicisation of scientific knowledge and advice is a global

phenomenon (Lachlan et al., 2021), Gauchat (2012) shows that, from 1974 to 2010, Americans, particularly conservatives, have declined in their trust in scientific knowledge. Moreover, contrary to the deficit model, which posits that individuals with higher educational achievements tend to trust science, Gauchat found that educated conservatives are unique because their trust in science has also declined. An influencing element outlined in the literature as impacting American perceptions of science is the U.S.'s polarised and partisanship orientated media landscape (Malik et al., 2020; Simonov et al., 2020). Of particular interest to this thesis is Fox News, a highly cited conservative outlet with a plethora of online, print and broadcast avenues in which they disseminate information (Allcott et al., 2020; Ash et al., 2020). In their research examining the *determinants of vaccine acceptance in the U.S.*, Malik et al. (2020) show that the forum and media outlet people receive or obtained their vaccine information from is vital for how they viewed the safety and usefulness of vaccines. In line with Gauchat's research, U.S. focused COVID-19 studies have consistently depicted scientific understanding of and perceptions of COVID-19 to be highly subject to political scrutiny (Allcott et al., 2020; Simonov et al., 2020; Malik et al., 2020; Jamieson & Albarracin, 2020).

The early COVID-19 numbers in New Zealand have been hailed by world media as exemplary (Thirumaran et al., 2021), and positioned by the literature as a benchmark for not only containing the virus but also how a nation's leader ought to respond to a pandemic (Cousins, 2020). Croucher et al. (2021) attribute the exemplary COVID-19 response of New Zealand to the centralised government response, and a media landscape (although not apolitical) performs a watchdog role wherein political discourse is enabled, and constructive dialogue takes place. The early success of New Zealand's COVID-19 response was enabled and maintained by accurate health information reported by the media and citizens who have complied with lockdown and social distancing rules (Sibley et al., 2020). Although the prompt and strict lockdown rules implemented by the New Zealand government have had significant economic impacts (Duncan, 2020), Fouda et al. (2020) say that the rapid transmission of the virus (in its infancy stage), and the uncertainty presented by the pandemic when it was first reported out of China, required that prompt and strict regulations be put in place.

In recent years, the New Zealand media have been called upon to play an important informative role for the public in times of uncertainty (Croucher et al., 2021; Morgan et al., 2021a). In 2010, 29 people were killed in the Pike River Mine Disaster, with most New Zealanders finding out about the disaster through the media. Furthermore, the New Zealand media were pivotal in their live coverage, informing people about precautionary measures during the 2011 Christchurch earthquake. The media were also the dominant forum people received live updates about the 2019 Christchurch terror attack (Morgan et al., 2021a). However, Morgan et al. (2021b) show that the New Zealand media coverage of COVID-19 did fall into narrations of certain demographics as helpless and tended to 'other' older people as passive and lacking agency. Henceforth, although there is a general consensus New Zealand's COVID-19 media coverage was in line with expert advice (Croucher et al., 2021; Morgan et al., 2021a), it is not a panacea and presents interesting comparisons with U.S. media framing of COVID-19 (although bearing in mind the vastly different political landscapes and media ecosystems). Comparing New Zealand's media framing of COVID-19 to U.S. framing is vital for understanding the role of the media in disseminating information about the pandemic (what is prioritised and what is not, e.g. is media coverage concerned with disseminating health information, or are reports focussed on pinpointing an institution or community as responsible?).

1.4 Research aim and objectives

The research aim of this study is to explore how U.S. and New Zealand media framed COVID-19. Based on this aim, the following objectives were established:

1. To identify and explore the most prominent frame used in U.S. and New Zealand media coverage of COVID-19
2. To explore similarities and differences in media framing of the Coronavirus pandemic by U.S. and New Zealand media

1.5 Thesis overview and structure

Chapter Two starts by outlining the concept of framing and where it stems from. It also shows how the concept has developed and evolved into a tool that media studies have utilised to examine media coverage of various issues. It then goes into the value of framing and why it has become a readily used method in literature concerned with public health communication. Chapter Two then provides examples of different frame types prevalent in media coverage of various health matters and issues such as climate change. In addition, the chapter reviews not only why framing is important for public understanding it also provides empirical and theoretical examples of framing. In the latter parts of chapter two, the Literature Review provides common criticisms of the framing concept and its empirical basis. It then concludes by outlining the abundance of research into the presence of frames in media coverage, as well as recognising that although there exists criticism of the concept – a deep pool of research has continually outlined that frames are apparent in all media coverage (and therefore, important to examine, as the media are the main forum people become aware of various issues).

Following the Literature Review, which outlines the conceptual framework of this thesis, Chapter Three outlines the methodology underpinning this study, including the methods used in this research, the data selection and coding processes, and the justification of the news outlets included for analysis. The chapter also describes the rationale behind the selected sample periods and mentions the systematic steps undertaken in the data analysis to alleviate scholars' concerns about framing and media analysis. The chapter then concludes with a positionality statement.

Chapters Four and Five present the findings of this research. Chapter Four details the findings that emerged from the analysis with results presented as key themes (and sub-themes), frames, and tables and graphs. Chapter Five subsequently positions the findings of this research against the findings and themes of framing literature in general and scholarship on COVID-19 media framing. The chapter discusses the role of the media in politicising the pandemic early in its development and presents insight into the most prominent frame used by U.S. and New Zealand media to cover the pandemic (research objective one), as well as the similarities and differences in media content and frame focusses between the two nations (objective two).

Lastly, Chapter Six reiterates the key findings of the research and positions the findings in regard to the two research objectives outlined in Chapter One. The chapter reaffirms the arguments, themes, and ideas provided throughout the thesis, and then outlines the contributions of the research to framing literature. The last section mentions some of the study's strengths, as well as the limitations of the data analysis and data collection. The Chapter rounds off with future research recommendations.

1.6 Conclusion

This thesis becomes about in light of growing recognition that how and what the media covered in the early stages of the pandemic failed to adequately convey the grandiosity of the issue. This thesis aims to reveal the main frames, themes, and topics which the media covered in two key evolution periods of COVID-19. In examining early media reporting of the virus, this research provides in an depth examination of what was covered (vital for what the public deems to be important), it also adds further weight to a growing body of framing literature which positions media framing of the Coronavirus pandemic as politicised.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

How the media frame an issue has been subject of much scholarly attention. This has only grown as COVID-19 – a highly covered topic – continued to develop and evolve into a global emergency. This chapter examines the concept of framing and provides an empirical and theoretical background into the different elements of Framing. The chapter begins with an outline of how framing has advanced and become a tool readily used in media studies. Section 2.3 then provides different examples of frame(s), followed by a detailed outline of media framing of different health matters, as well as recent work on media framing of the COVID-19 pandemic. Section 2.5 provides research which have called into question how framing effects peoples perceptions and views on an issue, and finally, the chapter then rounds off with an overview of the innate presence of framing in media coverage. It recognises that although evidence may exist contrasting the effect of frames on public opinion, frames are an embedded feature of media reporting.

2.2 Framing Analysis and the emergence of framing as a tool to examine media coverage

Framing theory stems from Goffman (1974)'s seminal *Frame Analysis* paper that suggests people organise and interpret social experiences and events through culturally-charged systems of sense making – which he refers to as a frame. Gitlin (2003) extended this and positioned framing in regard to news coverage of different events. One example he covers is the Student New Left Movement. He observed that in reporting leftist movements concerned with social inequality and opposition to the war in Iraq, the media would; 1) include details that the protests were uncoordinated and disorderly, 2) media coverage would exclude the movements from being front page news, and 3) reporting of the movement rendered the movement insignificant in terms of reach and scale – even though mass amounts of people attended. In this example, Gitlin's work connected Goffman's *Framing Analysis* to media coverage. In his book: *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making and unmaking of the new left*, Gitlin says that the public – who are passive agents receiving information from

the media – are highly predisposed to incomplete knowledge of different events due to what the media includes, excludes, and makes salient in their coverage. This indicates that what the media choose to cover (and simultaneously what they don't) impacts public perception. There is an ever-growing pool of research which adhere to the same postulations of Gitlin (2003), that the media impact public perceptions not only through is what is covered and excluded, but what the media place emphasis upon (Entman, 1993; D'Angelo, 2017; Boykoff & Boykoff, 2004). Framing, Gitlin suggested, are versions of events, which are carefully articulated and not wholly representative of the different interpretations, perspectives and views on an issue such as large scale protests.

Nelson et al. (1997) describe frames or framing processes as involving the careful packaging of different issues in news reporting, which includes how the media define an issue and subsequently solution(s) to that problem. Frames portray issues in a particular way, and according to framing theory, the adoption of certain frames allow the media to curate a topic in a way that garners higher audience engagement² (readership, viewership and clicks). Bardhan (2011) says that news framing is when media offer a particular rendition of an event or issue. One of the most commonly cited definitions of framing comes from Robert Entman (1993):

Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspect of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communication text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Framing presents two devices or tools which framing theory argues the media employ in their coverage – selection and salience (Entman, 1993, 2007), and because the media are vital for disseminating information to the public, examination of these two devices has been a subject of much scholarly focus (de Vreese, 2005; D'Angelo, 2002). In analysing media framing of AIDS and HIV, Bardhan (2001) shows that the media would often select to include a fair share of content dedicated to lesser developed nations and AIDS. An examination by Gylfadottir et al.

² Which sections 2.4 and 2.6 of this chapter allude to

(2021) on Icelandic media framing of COVID-19 found that news content was chiefly concerned with prevention and Coronavirus statistics. The researchers find that medical experts were leading the conversation and thus, the most salient aspects communicated to the public was that the disease poses a massive public health risk, and to seek medical assistance if unwell.

Framing Analysis has evolved and become a quantitative and qualitative tool to examine media coverage of different events, environmental issues and a plethora of public health matters (Foley et al., 2019; Chong & Druckman, 2007; Lee et al., 2006). The usefulness of Framing Analysis in relation to media studies is due to its close attention to the language used in media content, recognition that the way words are organised are not trivial, and because framing involves selection and salience, framing can be directional – meaning – it can dictate what conversations are had, who is involved, and how these discussions are navigated in the public and media sphere (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). The concept is also useful for examining media content because it unveils different journalistic and media norms which may alter public opinion (Chong & Druckman, 2007), such as growing recognition that public opinion is impacted by how, who, what the media cover about an issue. For instance, in their highly cited study, Boykoff and Boykoff (2004) show that the journalistic norm of presenting both sides to a story or issue impacts public perceptions. In outlining how anthropocentric climate change is covered by U.S. media, the researchers show that, despite an overwhelming scientific consensus climate change is driven by human actions, the media (in their effort to be objective), present content equally for and against human actions causing climate change. Therefore, in the public's view, anthropocentric climate change seems to be a contested phenomenon that is discussed in the literature as a 50/50 debate – when in actuality, it is not.

Recent work such as those by Foley et al. (2019) provides a 'how to guide' in which they detail the value of framing. They suggest framing enables media research that is creative in the ways in which it examines story telling in the media. Like Foley et al., de Vreese (2005) too, argues that framing is valuable because it recognises that the media are not mere circulators of information, they are dynamic and organised systems which have a significant role in informing the public. Therefore, the adoption of a Framing Analysis operates not only to highlight the different stances and positions on an issue, it also reveals moral, political, and

cultural ideas which are synergised alongside media coverage of issues such as public health matters, and anthropocentric climate change (Foley et al., 2019; Elsasser & Dunlap, 2013). Thus it is clear that a sizeable body of work has used Framing Analysis to examine how the media have covered various events and issues.

2.3 Different Frame types

2.3.1 The Economic Frame

Devoted media attention to a particular aspect of an issue is vital for salience to the public (Damstra & Vliegthart, 2018). The degree of attention by the media on certain elements of an issue affords that element varying levels of prowess and relevance to audiences. An element of an issue which is well documented in the literature as a prominent media focus in their coverage of different events and issues is economic implications (Smallman, 2015; Sandell et al., 2013). For instance, media reporting of pandemics and epidemics have become hubs for media coverage that is highly economically focused (Su et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2020). Such as the key media focus on the economic implications associated with AIDS-HIV, which is not surprising given the wide spread impacts that different diseases has had on different sectors of societies (Bardhan, 2011). A well-known media frame during a health crisis is the Economic Frame, which presents the health issue at hand from a financial view, with a focus on financial impacts/disruptions to businesses, groups, individuals, institutions, regions, and nations (Pan & Meng, 2016).

The Economic Frame indicates that the media have taken a financial lens to report a problem, event, or phenomena (Shen, 2004; Su et al., 2021). In order to disentangle early U.S. media coverage of COVID-19, Hubner (2021) examined Coronavirus content from two leading news outlets, The New York Times and The Washington Post. Hubner finds that the Economic Frame was a prominent focus by the outlets due to projections that COVID-19 would impact global and national supply chains, and due to modelling showing the stock market crashing. Druckman (2001) shows that the Economic frame influenced not only peoples feelings toward a land development project, but it also impacted the level of importance people assigned to the development. When the media devote attention solely to the benefits and or the

negatives of an issue, the receivers of their coverage are exposed to a subset of the entire issue (Shen, 2004). Empirical and theoretical research shows that devotion by the media to a particular aspect of an issue (in this case, Economical Framing), impacts what people deem to be salient, and thus it impacts their support for or against an issue, such as a land development project (Nelson & Oxley, 1999; Entman, 1993; Shen, 2004; Bardhan, 2011; Damstra & Vliegthart, 2018).

2.3.2 The Medical Frame

The Medical Frame is concerned with media reporting that is focused on treatment recommendation and whether or not media frame a health crisis as a medical and scientific issue (Stefanik-Sidener, 2013; Nelkin, 1996). This particular frame often draws attention to the disconnect between expert advice and media coverage of pandemics (Pan & Meng, 2016; Bardhan, 2011; Rajkhowa, 2020). For instance, Pan and Meng (2016) show that the Medical Frame although present in media coverage of the 2009 flu pandemic, it tended to focus on vaccine side effects and adverse impacts the flu vaccine could possibly present. Therefore, they caution against assumptions that the mere presence of the Medical frame equates to 'quality' pandemic media coverage. In their examination of media frames during different stages of a health crisis, Pan and Meng echoes similar postulations as other research and other scholarship which have outlined the Medical Frame (Smallman, 2015). For example, similar to the conclusions of Pan and Meng, Sandell et al. (2013) show that vaccine coverage in Australia (compared to Sweden) tended to focus more on the possible negative effects of vaccines and deterred the uptake of immunisation by Australians. Therefore, the presence of the Medical Frame is vital for how people view the severity of a pandemic, but it is also vital their adoption of appropriate preventive measures. Henceforth, although the Medical Frame suggests that media cover an issue through a scientific lens, this does not automatically mean 'quality' media coverage – as public health research shows.

At its core, the Medical Frame indicates the use of experts to inform media coverage (Nelkin, 1996; Entwistle, 1995; Park & Reber, 2010). The adoption or presence of the Medical lens in media reporting tends to be correlated with the adoption of preventive procedures by the

public (Jamieson & Albarracin, 2020; Wang et al., 2013; Ophir & Jamieson, 2020). Whereas a focus on Security Framing (border control and entry screening upon arrival at airports) tends to incite moral panic (Pieri, 2019). Pieri shows that in the United Kingdom, media coverage of the Ebola pandemic detached from health related reporting and focused more on national security and framing of responsibility (finding someone or an institution to blame). The Medical Frame is important in revealing not only the content of media coverage, but it illustrates the sources in which the media draw on in their coverage (Nelkin, 1996; Hubner, 2021; Dhanani & Franz, 2020, Shih, et al., 2011). As Hart et al. (2020) found, politicians were the main sources the media used to report the Coronavirus pandemic early in its development. This is argued to have politicised the pandemic as experts were not the ones to articulate the issue. Contrastingly, when medical experts and scientists were the chief sources used in media coverage, the scale of the issue and preventive measures the public should adopt were the main messages which were disseminated to the public (Gylfadottir et al., 2021). This is vitally important in raising public awareness, and increasing public backing of preventative measures – which is why the Medical Frame is important (Prati et al., 2011).

2.3.3 Framing of Responsibility

The presence of the Framing of Responsibility in media coverage suggests that reports have posited an institution, community, or an individual as either at fault, and or playing a role in exacerbating a risk (Van Gorp, 2010; Luisi, et al., 2018). Public health matters such as pandemics usher in a variety of frames, and pandemics have been a poster child for exposing the different framings media choose to adopt when covering pandemic related content (Foley et al., 2019; Entman, 1993). The immense power of media (communication) leads to Barry (2009), in the early phases of the H1N1 influenza pandemic, to posit that: “In the next influenza pandemic, be it now or in the future, be the virus mild or virulent, the single most important weapon against the disease will be a vaccine. The second most important will be communication” (p. 324). In the present day, that virulent virus Barry speaks of, is well and truly upon us. Thus, there has been significant scholarly focus on how the media have communicated the Coronavirus pandemic but also how the media include the Framing of Responsibility. In their examination of early COVID-19 communication by the media, Wen et al. (2020) found that U.S. media were complacent in their coverage of the pandemic, where

they endorsed and adopted framing which outlined that the public should avoid Chinese people. Such media coverage has received scholarly attention for deterring public understanding of the virus as one of medicine and science, to one of political and cultural discourses (Gylfadottir et al., 2021). Thus reinforcing that media coverage of public health matters often leads to news content chiefly concerned with the attribution of blame.

Be it consciously or implicitly, the Framing of Responsibility is an innate coping mechanism adopted by people (and media) during a health crisis (McCauley et al., 2013; Entman, 1993). This train of thought treads along a path paved by conscious and implicit 'sense-making' mechanisms that seeks to unpack who and what may be responsible for an issue (Thomas et al., 2020; McCauley et al., 2013). In the context of infectious diseases, Framing of Responsibility can, and does, lead to stigmatisation of minority groups (McCauley et al., 2013). During the 2009 H1N1 flu pandemic, Mexican and Latino people became subject to stigmatisation in communal and workplace settings. Furthermore, negative media frames where Mexican and Latino were posited as people to avoid and depicted as the origins of the flu pandemic, negatively impacted these communities. Although McCauley et al. (2013) mentions that the media are not solely responsible for the stigmatisation of certain peoples, Entman (1993) outlines that the media enables the manifestation of certain ideas (such as discriminatory ideologies), mostly when media frames choose to omit or place salience on certain aspects of an event over others – such as who is apparently at fault. Therefore, instead of contesting innate coping mechanisms people adopt during times of crisis, the media breeds ideologies concerned with blaming certain people and communities, which leads to stigmatisation (McCauley et al., 2013; Wen et al., 2020).

What is memorised by audiences when interacting with information is the content most emphasised (often measured by what the media devote the most attention too) (Huckin, 2002; Entman, 1993). However, when media content is devoted to reporting that suggests a certain community or people is responsible, this creates wide spread issues for addressing the risks of public health events, as conversations in the public and media domain become fixated on who is at fault (Oh, et al., 2012). Park and Reber (2012) show in their study the differing attributions of responsibility between the media and health organisations. In

examining how different health issues are framed, the researchers looked at how the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, and the American Diabetes Association framed the different issues in which they work within. They find that, contrary to media coverage which took a narrow lens in reporting health issues (focussed on individual level), the different associations primarily frame the health matters through the Medical Frame, and focussed on a societal lens to cover health issues (e.g healthcare system, institutional support, education campaigns). This is an illustration which depicts differing frame and content focusses between media coverage of an issue, and how reputable health organisations cover responsibility. Devoted attention by the media on individual responsibility neglects sociocultural, environmental, economic and political factors which enable and prolong different health issues.

2.3.4 The Behavioural Frame

Citizen behaviour during a pandemic is often a central focus of the media (Wang et al., 2013; Thomas et al., 2020). Effectively, the Behavioural Frame is concerned with how media cover the (in)actions of people throughout a pandemic (Thomas et al., 2020). Like other frame types, the adoption of the current frame is indicative of how, who, and what the media have covered about an issue. The adoption of the Behavioural Frame is impactful because it reveals how the media have outlined citizen responses, and it functions to pinpoint individual level impacts that different events have on citizens (Thomas et al., 2020). However, the adoption of this frame can shift from focussing on individual or small scale impacts to media coverage which devolves government and institutional responsibility (Oh et al., 2012; Liu & Kim, 2011). For instance, Lee and Basnyat (2013) say that “in a race against time, media frames play a critical role in shaping the public’s understanding of highly contagious viral disease ... and (shapes the) behavioural reactions that impact prevention, containment, treatment, and recovery” (p.120). Thus, if the media adopt too much of a Behavioural Frame focus, it deters from coverage which holds governments accountable for how they have (or have not) responded to a crisis (Oh et al., 2012).

2.4 Framing of health issues

The media are a central figure in disseminating health-related information (Wang, et al., 2013). In previous pandemics and epidemics such as the Ebola crisis, the media were essential in communicating the risks associated with the virus (Dalrymple et al., 2016). During the peak of the Swine Flu crisis, the public were informed about transmission and mortality mainly through the media (Pan & Meng, 2016). However, as framing research shows, media coverage tends to impact how people perceive an event due to what they focus on in their reporting (Van Gorp & Vercruyse, 2012). Staniland and Smith (2013) show how the flu frames employed by the media during the 2009 flu pandemic directly impacted how people viewed the severity of the issue and the management responses that individuals and communities took on the ground. In reviewing flu frames in various studies, Staniland and Smith show that framing is important for how people perceive and unpack information, such as information on preventative measures.

A considerable amount of literature highlights the critical role that the media play in informing the public about a range of health issues, including infectious disease and cancer (Naeem et al., 2020; Wen, et al., 2020). In particular, the media have provided a wealth of coverage on infectious disease outbreaks, such as the 2014 Ebola outbreak, the 2009 H1N1 flu outbreak, the AIDS-HIV pandemic, and the COVID-19 pandemic (Dalrymple et al., 2016; McCauley et al., 2013; Bardhan, 2011; Thomas et al., 2020). However, framing research shows that the ways in which public health information is conveyed in the media often times does not match the actual scale and urgency of an issue (Nor & Zulcali, 2020; Morgan et al., 2021a). During the early surges of COVID-19 cases in the U.S., and subsequent implementation of social distancing and encouragement of people to stay at home in responses to increasing cases, Simonov et al. (2020) shows that the U.S.'s largest cable channel, Fox News, took an opposing stance to that of advice offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In their quasi-experimental design aimed at estimating the effect Fox News coverage had on peoples adoption of health measures, such as staying home, Simonov et al. found that Fox News viewers are less likely to adhere to health measures due to the political commentary of several hosts who staunchly voiced their opposition to different health measures. Although the media are essential in communicating public health information, the literature on the

shortcomings of media coverage of important health matters continues to grow (Vasterman et al., 2005; Allcott et al., 2020; Bursztyn, et al., 2020).

Crisis communication by mass media does not always align with 'what needs to be known' (Kitzinger & Reilly, 1997; Morrison et al., 2021). This is to say, the media tend to focus on, and place emphasis upon events and stories which garner the most views and clicks (Su et al., 2021). Furthermore, Morrison et al. (2021) argue that things which become headline news or 'newsworthy' often focus on embellished retelling of an event or crisis. Focussing on why some risks are covered more than others, Kitzinger and Reilly (1997) outline the selective processes involved. They say that the social and cultural appeal of a risk/issue increases the likelihood it will be headline news. In comparing three different case studies (Stem Cell Research, False Memory Syndrome, and the Mad Cow Disease), the researchers show that the 'air time' each topic received varied. Stem Cell Research, because of its associated complexities and scientific jargon, received far less coverage in comparison to the other two case studies. False Memory Syndrome received high media reporting because it is concerned with childhood trauma: with some headlines titled as *'therapy of danger: how this sick girl came to believe that her loving parents abused her'* (Kitzinger & Reilly, 1997). Lastly, because of its potential danger to humans, the Mad Cow Disease was also highly covered by the media. These examples are indicative of how health issues are often communicated and framed in the media, where there is an emphasis on issues and aspects that garner public interests (Su et al., 2021).

2.4.1 The Coronavirus pandemic

The Coronavirus pandemic has received highly politicised media coverage (Abbas, 2021; Tsao et al., 2021). The politicisation of different facets of the pandemic has been a focus of various fields of research. For example, media studies show that early U.S reporting of the virus were not concerned about public health regulations and guidelines, or what preventive measures people should be taking (Romer & Jamieson, 2020). Media coverage in the U.S was found to be more concerned with ascribing blame for the disease onto China and Chinese people (Wen et al., 2020). Labels such as "Chinese virus" narratives dominated media coverage in the USA, which Su et al. (2021) argues led to western viewership of the virus as one chiefly associated

with China, and helped spread misinformation about the origins of the virus. Limited media coverage was on how to slow and or stop the transmission of COVID-19. Yet, during a pandemic such stories are vitally important to ensuring that people are kept informed about public health requirements (such as mandatory self-isolation), and medical information about the disease (such as over 65 years old being more vulnerable) (Bridgman et al., 2020). As Su et al. (2021) argues, in order for COVID-19 (a health crisis) to be successfully addressed, the media needed to adopt facts-based narrations of the health issue, this then fosters the adoption of preventive measures by the public (Ghio et al., 2021). However, the sheer scale of unchecked claims about the origins of COVID-19, the cures for the disease, and widespread conspiracy theories about who is responsible for the virus outbreak, led to a public health matter becoming saturated in political and cultural ideologies early in its development (Naeem et al., 2020).

Early media coverage of the Coronavirus pandemic cultivated public understanding and perceptions which was more concerned with geopolitical issues than the underlying health implications of the pandemic (Calvillo et al., 2020). According to Hart et al. (2020), the media set the tone for how the Coronavirus would be discussed and viewed by the public. In their media analysis following COVID-19 reaching pandemic status, Hart et al. finds that a significant portion of coverage in the U.S. quoted and drew upon politicians to inform their coverage. Johnson (2020) says that how the media portrayed the Coronavirus in its early stages created a ripple effect in how different facets of the virus became perceived. Research has shown that preventative measures (social distancing and mask wearing) have been highly politicised in regard to their usefulness and in terms of mandates (such as whether mask wearing should be mandated) (Lipsitz & Pop-Eleches, 2020). Matamoros and Elias (2020) shows that COVID-19 vaccines and vaccinations in general have become highly polarised due in part to the way the media have framed it (Meadows et al., 2019; Cossard et al., 2020). Such as reporting which suggested COVID-19 vaccines were rushed and have not gone through clinical trials. A continually growing body of work extends this theme and suggests that the media have been an integral part in why different facets of the Coronavirus became synergised with political and cultural ideologies. This is because the media were the central means in which people came to understand the virus, which at first, was a distant matter. Due to the evolving nature of the virus and its associated uncertainties, the public relied heavily

on the media for information (Rutten et al., 2021; Ghio, et al., 2021; Wibhisono, 2020). However, the dominant political lenses the media (particularly in the U.S) adopted in their coverage, deterred Coronavirus discourses from evidenced-based and public health recommendations, to politically-charged motifs (Bridgman et al., 2020).

Global media coverage of the Coronavirus pandemic has been largely critiqued as failing to equip the public with appropriate knowledge of preventative measures, and actions to adopt in light of the pandemic (Wen et al., 2021; Romer & Jamieson, 2020). The short-comings of media coverage of the Coronavirus pandemic is well documented in the literature; a systemic review by Lin et al. (2020) shows that media coverage of COVID-19 vaccines incited public panic due to media headlines suggesting vaccination processes have been rushed. Despite detailed criticisms of how the media responded to the pandemic in its infancy, Pulido et al. (2020) found that although more false information was found on online sources than information deemed to be factual, information which was accurate in articulating the Coronavirus received more interaction in terms of retweets³. Pulido et al. however, recognise that their study offers contrarian findings; as larger examinations such as those by Vosoughi et al. (2018) found that not only does misinformation spread more than factual content, ill-informed information reaches a deeper audience and receives more interaction than medically based content. Continued failures of the media (mostly in the U.S), and fragmented government responses to the Coronavirus pandemic, leads Horton to suggest:

“The story of COVID-19 in the United States is one of the strangest paradoxes of the whole pandemic. No other country has the concentration of scientific skill, technical knowledge, and productive capacity possessed by the U.S.. It is the world’s scientific superpower bar none. And yet this colossus of science utterly failed to bring its expertise successfully to bear on the policy and politics of the nation’s response.” (Horton, 2020, as cited in Hubner, 2021, p. 112).

Media coverage of the Coronavirus pandemic in its early stages was crucial for not only raising public awareness about the transmissibility and mortality of the virus, but it impacted public risk perception of COVID-19 (Rajkhowa, 2020). This is significant because international,

³ A measure several papers examining online coverage of the Coronavirus pandemic adopt as well, as it indicates that people are actively engaging in the material which is tweeted (Bridgman et al., 2020; Brennen et al., 2020).

national, and regional lockdowns were (and still are) dependent upon citizens' compliance (Sibley et al., 2020). Trust and adherence to advice by government agencies, scientists, and law enforcement are important procedural actions during the COVID-19 pandemic utilised for disease control, however the media politicised some of these measures. As framing and public health research suggests, the politicisation of health matters is influential because this impacts public risk perception – which in turn impacts adoption of health measures (Rutten et al., 2021; Radwan & Radwan, 2020; Foley et al., 2019).

Media politicisation of scientific and health issues are not new (Nelkin, 1996; Gauchat, 2012; Abbas, 2021). Medical and scientific events, topics, and phenomena, are rarely just that, they are multi-dimensional and highly complex issues which garner considerable media and public attention (Su et al., 2021). A focus on political and economic characteristics of an issue does not mean that media coverage has failed to inform the public, nor does it mean media coverage of an issue has been negative (Gauchat, 2012). As Stefanik-Sidener (2013) posits, focussing on the impacts and consequences of an issue is important for providing the public information about the wider implications of health issues, and also to increase policy support for solutions to important health issues. Challenges however arise when media organisations (editors, journalists, broadcasters) select a topic and choose to place emphasis on a particular aspect of that topic in a way that resonates with their audiences (Romer & Jamieson, 2020; Anspach & Carlson, 2018; Tangcharoensathien et al., 2020). Therefore, media coverage of events is often sensationalised, and focussed on sub-topics of an issue which radiates with certain audiences and has sociocultural significance (Moon & Lee, 2020). In the context of COVID-19, online outlets adopted coverage which focussed on vaccine safety and scepticism about the mortality of COVID-19, which aided in growing health misinformation (Radwan & Radwan, 2020). The essays by online sites that COVID-19 presents minimal risks or that vaccines have been rushed (therefore unsafe) leads to Radwan and Radwan showing that such frames can incite panic and prolong collective efforts to addressing COVID-19 transmission. The power of frames lies in its ability to impact how people perceive and or receive the content of an issue covered by the media – specifically, when issues covered by the media are subject to scientific jargon and knowledge rarely accessible by lay peoples, framing by the media of an issue governs peoples understanding of a phenomenon (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).

2.5 Framing: A contested concept

The framing effect is a phenomenon which posits that the way media frame something, impacts how people perceive it (Lecheler & de Vreese, 2018). In an empirical study by Nelson and Oxley (1999), they depict the framing effect. The researchers randomly assigned participants into two groups; each group were provided a newspaper article covering a land development dispute. However, each groups news article emphasised either an Environmental Frame (biodiversity loss), or an Economic Frame (job generation and economic gain). Nelson and Oxley show that the participants in the Economic Framing condition were more likely to be in favour of the land development than those in the Environmental condition. This is because of two key characteristics of framing Entman (1993) outlines – selection and salience. In each condition (or frame group) in the Nelson and Oxley study, the newspaper article provided to participants only included information concerned with either the Environmental or the Economic Frame (selection). Subsequently, the most salient information – based on what the article emphasised and focussed on the most – was that the land development would cause environmental harm, whereas the Economic Frame focussed on the benefits of the development for the surrounding community. The research is used as an example which depicts the framing effect phenomena, because how the news articles covered the land dispute impacted peoples support for it.

There is however, contention in the literature that framing research ignores the plurality of peoples experiences, and the multitude of factors and forces which impact how people view different issues and events (Jurkowitz & Mitchell, 2020; D’Angelo, 2002). In exploring the framing effect concept, Lecheler and de Vreese (2018) say that the apparent effect framing has on media consumers is overstated. This is because people don’t just rely on the media for information (Shen, 2004). The media are a crucial element informing people about an array of issues, but public health and Information seeking scholarship show that it’s not just the media which people use for information (Lachlan et al., 2021; Lewis, 2017). Scholarship show that lay people often seek information from their families in regard to health issues and information on treatment for different illnesses, and often times the information provided by relatives proves to be a strong indicator in determining whether people adopt a practice or

not (Lu et al., 2020). For example, lay people use non-clinical sources such as their family and friends to learn and discuss what a healthy life style is, such as the long-term health benefits of eating fruits and vegetables (Lewis et al., 2012). This therefore differs to the assertion of framing literature which has posited that public health understanding and treatment uptake of the public is dependent on the most prominent frame adopted by the media (Shen, 2004; Sandell et al., 2013; Staniland & Smith, 2013).

A nagging issue for critiques, in regard to framing effects, is the assertion by some researchers that the most prominent frame in a news article proves to be the one to most influence peoples opinion (Van Gorp & Vercruyse, 2012; Lecheler & de Vreese, 2018). Although there is evidence that the most emphasised frame plays a part in what people take away from media coverage of an issue (Shen, 2004; Foley et al., 2019), there is a wealth of scholarship which argue for many different factors which impact peoples perception and reception of media information (Papageorge, et al., 2021; Malik, et al., 2020; Allcott et al., 2020). For example, the type of outlet people use impacts the quality of the health information in which they receive (Simonov et al., 2020), social media and conservative outlets have been readily depicted as avenues which do not present accurate health information (Bursztyn et al., 2020; Jurkowitz, 2020; Andersen, 2020). Peoples political views and media use⁴, are also important factors which may impact how people may perceive media coverage of an event (Anspach and Carlson, 2018). These examples are not to say that framing does not have an effect on public opinion – it plays a part, but the extent to which it impacts public opinion is highly debated (Lecheler & de Vreese, 2018).

There are various criticisms of framing research which exists in the literature (Van Gorp, 2010). The land dispute example mentioned at the start of this section provides insight into key assumptions that many framing studies make. In the Nelson and Oxley (1999) study, two key criticisms are pointed out about how framing impacts peoples opinions. Firstly, Druckman (2001) says that they did not provide participants with accompanying resources on the land dispute. This fails to recognise that people don't just rely on a single article to learn about an

⁴ People become increasingly incline to interact with media and sources which mirror their world views, this use of media is referred to in the literature as media echo chambers (Anspach and Carlson, 2018)

issue, nor do people solely rely on the media for information – as information seeking literature attests too (Lachlan et al., 2021; Lewis et al., 2012). The second critique, offered by Druckman and others, is that the Nelson and Oxley study assumes that frames don't compete with one another, or that media coverage of an issue – like a land dispute – cannot entail the presence of multiple frames (Chong & Druckman, 2007). Druckman (2001) contends, “my point is not to say that framing effects are irrelevant or unimportant, but rather that they should be understood as a conditional phenomenon” (Druckman, 2001, p. 64). In a study by Pan and Meng (2016), they depict the conditional and evolving nature of framing. The authors find that framing changed depending on the stage in which the Swine Flu crisis was in. In the early stages of the virus, the media focussed on the political implications and socioeconomic impacts of the crisis (Societal Frame). In the latter stages of the virus, media framing adopted a Medical lens to highlight treatment responses to the virus. This highlights a core worry Druckman has about framing – the possible ‘effect’ framing can have on public perception is conditional and changes when people have access to more information (Druckman, 2001; Chong & Druckman, 2007). Henceforth, there exists questions about the research design of the land development study and its replicability, as well as the extent framing alters or informs public perception.

2.6 The media and framing: why framing is important

The media in its various forms and types is agreed to be a crucial location in which ideas culminate, and then circulate (Gitlin, 2003; Foley et al., 2019). Historically, the media have synonymously been associated with print and broadcast media (Schudson, 2002; Usher, 2014). This has now largely become inclusive of online media (Allcott & Gentzow, 2017; Ophir, Jamieson & Jamieson, 2020; Su, 2021; Garret, 2011). Print and broadcast media continue to be central forums people come to know about different events and issues, however, the widespread reach of online networks such as twitter, Facebook and YouTube have been a topic of much research focus (Mutua & Ong'ong'a, 2020; Rooke, 2021; Tsao, et al., 2021). Such as a study by Vosoughi et al. (2018) on the spread of information online. They find that Information declared by fact-checking organisations to be false or misleading spreads faster than information examined as being correct. Additionally, the information shown to be false and or misleading were depicted by Vosoughi et al. as reaching a wider

audience. Which aligns with a wealth of scholarship indicating that social media is a space where misinformation proliferates (Gozzi et al., 2020; Bright, 2017). In an ever evolving and customised media and social media world, people are more inclined to follow and listen to views which mirror theirs (Anspach & Carlson, 2018). The media landscape, due in large part to social media – is a highly diverse terrain. With this diversity, research has indicated that misinformation about various important public health matters, and issues such as climate change, have become a prominent feature of online discourses (Jiang, et al., 2021; Evanega, et al., 2020; Elsasser & Dunlap, 2013).

Journalistic and media norms are attributed as exacerbating the prominence of frames (Shih, et al., 2011; Lazer, et al., 2018). In outlining some of the restraints and challenges the media encounter in covering evolving issues with incomplete evidence and or developing medical knowledge, Wibhisono (2020) says the media are tasked with an important role in spreading awareness about mitigating efforts which the public needs to adopt to limit or contain the impacts of an infectious disease. This coincides with Borah (2011)'s postulation that framing research needs to consider how frames are produced, and why one frame may be adopted over another. Along similar lines, Bursztyn et al. (2020) says that because the media encounter challenges with reporting dynamic issues like the spread of a infectious diseases, it is important to recognise that a frame may be a product of the unknown or the uncertainty surrounding different facets of an issue. However, as Boykoff and Boykoff (2004) argues, due to media norms and practices – scientific issues become events saturated in political discourses.

Although there is contention in the literature about the framing effect or the extent to which framing impacts public opinion, the presence of frame(s) in the media is undoubted. In a systemic review by Ghio et al. (2021), *What influences peoples responses to public health messages for managing risks and preventing diseases*, they find that across the literature, framing is important not only in regard to informing people of risks, it is vital for how people understand, perceive, and either adhere to pre-cautionary measures or not. In examining media framing of climate change, Nisbet (2009) suggests that climate change communication has tended to adopt a technocratic approach in how climate information is disseminated from

scientists to the media. This is to say, many scientists assumed that media regurgitation of scientific evidence of anthropocentric climate change would translate into public perception that view the issue as one of great urgency. Like decades of public opinion research however, Nisbet finds that public opinion is divided along a partisan line (Price et al., 1997; Shen, 2004; Druckman, 2001), and media in its various forms and political alliances have fragmented the way climate change is communicated. For example, instead of news reporting focused on the importance of the issue, reports by U.S conservative media outlets downplayed the impacts of climate change, and thus, instead of the issue as one requiring urgent action (as scientists hoped), consumers of these media sources do not view climate change as an important matter. This aligns with scholarship outlining conservative media and think tanks (politicians and commentators), as key influencers of republican opinion on matters such as climate change (Nisbet, 2009; Elsasser & Dunlap, 2013). Further elucidating not only the presence of frames in media reporting, but illustrating why framing is important in public understanding of various issues.

Framing Analysis posits that news content are systems of organised material that “indicate the advocacy of certain ideas and provide devices to encourage certain kinds of audience” understanding of different topics (Pan & Kosicki, 1993, p. 55-56). Thus, how the media have framed different events and phenomena has been subject of much scholarly attention (Stefanik-Sidener, 2013). Basnyat and Lee (2015) says that due to the important role the media plays in setting the tone for how the public perceives different subjects, it is important to analyse the content in which the media portray in covering issues such as public health matters. Along similar lines, research has shown that lay people mostly rely on the media for information during important health matters as such as infectious viruses, for instance during the H1N1 flu pandemic (Vigso, 2010). However, as framing theory posits, media coverage often promote certain ideas, voices, and facets of an issue over others. In outlining the differences between medical journal content and media coverage of medical issues, Nelkin (1996) shows that journalistic norms of storytelling resulted in medical issues becoming sensationalised events concerned with ‘new scientific breakthrough’ coverage, and ‘a scientific first’ narratives. Taking it a step further, Moon and Lee (2020) has indicated that online media has taken sensationalised medical coverage to heights. Attributed to the immediacy in which information becomes available online, Moon and Lee, along with Usher

(2014), show that because online networks do not adhere to journalistic standards, they become forums saturated in misinformation as they are not regulated nor obligated to adhere to certain standards (in comparison to their counterparts, print and broadcast media). This presents monumental challenges for health-related issues, with Roozenbeek et al. (2020) show casing that false information about COVID-19 resulted in bleach becoming a perceived remedy, ongoing conversations surrounding who was behind COVID-19, and surges in anti-vaccination movements – fuelled misinformation.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has drawn upon a range of framing literature to illustrate the abundance of work which has examined media coverage of various matters. By drawing upon a diverse body of scholarship, this chapter highlights the presence of frames in media reporting and why media frame s matter for public understanding. In an information saturated environment, where the flow of information is rapid, the media often do not have the complete facts (nor the air time) to report all the different views, angles, and perspectives of an issue. With this in mind, the chapter outlined how the media covered various events and issues, and it shows that the angles and content focusses of the media have fallen short on raising public awareness of important facets of a problem – such as a health mater. Historically, the media in its various forms, types, and forums have opted to focus more on one aspect of an issue over another – and research shows that this is often due to the complexity of an issue, and whether or not the story would garner interests (by way of clicks, readership, etc.). Thus, how the media cover an issue which is subject to public anonymity due to its evolving and complex nature is vital. As the Literature Review covered, there are many historical examples of the important role of the media in informing the public about the risks of an issue. One recent example is COVID-19 in its early stages, where the media were essential in communicating the development, and progression of, what was then, an outbreak in Wuhan, China. The next chapter outlines the methodological approach and methods used in this research to examine U.S. and New Zealand media coverage COVID-19.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an outline of the research methodology and the methods of this thesis. It outlines the research method of this thesis and how it seeks to address the two research objectives outlined in Chapter One. In order to address the research objectives of this thesis, this research employs a Framing and Thematic Analysis to examine COVID-19 media articles from U.S. and New Zealand outlets. In the latter parts of the chapter, it covers how the current thesis addressed some of the systemic data analysis issues which framing research can often encounter. It draws on other framing research to strengthen the methods and approach of this thesis. The subsequent section then discusses the importance of positionality and the need for me to recognise the influencing role I play in the data collection, analysis, and reporting of the key findings of this research.

3.2 Methodology

To explore the research objectives outlined in Chapter One, I employ a qualitative research methodological approach in my study due to its capacity to identify themes, draw out covert meanings and illuminate critical ideas across diverse data sets (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2017). As scholars including Ezzy (2002) and Ocheng (2009) demonstrate, a qualitative approach paves the way for the researcher to examine data in its socio-economic, political, cultural, and environmental contexts. Qualitative methods provide researchers with the opportunity to explore subjective value-laden issues and identify peoples plurality of realities and experiences (Ezzy, 2002). As Ochieng (2009) argues, qualitative research is a particularly valuable approach because it recognises that a particular issue entails a plethora of invested interests and contrasting perspectives. Henceforth, due to COVID-19's complex and multi-faceted nature (Radwan & Radwan, 2020; Romer & Jamieson, 2020), a qualitative research approach was necessary to adopt for this research project.

Qualitative research is the most appropriate approach for this thesis because it allowed me to analyse my data (news articles on COVID-19) in context. The qualitative methodological approach I adopted which centred on Framing and Thematic Analysis of media articles, allowed for the exploration of the most salient frame used in U.S. and New Zealand media framing of COVID-19 (research objective one), and also for analysis of similarities and differences in U.S. and NZ media framing of the Coronavirus (research objective two). A qualitative approach was useful in revealing what the media prioritised in their coverage of the Coronavirus, and helped draw attention to the lack of attentiveness of the media to certain aspects of the virus (Krippendorff, 1989).

Qualitative data analysis generally employs an inductive and or deductive approach. As Thomas (2006) outlines, the inductive approach is a systematic procedure that analyses themes emerging from the raw data. In contrast, a deductive analysis involves applying general theories or pre-selected codes or models to raw data (Thomas, 2006). In this study, I used both inductive and deductive data analysis approaches as it allowed me to examine my qualitative data (media sources) through different lenses and identify important frames and sub-themes. This follows on from the work of Joffe (2012), who maintains that inductive and deductive approaches together can produce high-quality qualitative research. In unison, an inductive and deductive approach helped reveal the most salient frames in the media coverage of COVID-19. Furthermore, the strategies enabled subthemes and frames to emerge, this is vital for an evolving complex issue like COVID-19 (Matthes & Kohring, 2008). In media studies and framing research, inductive and deductive data analysis have been employed (see Van Corp & Vercruysse, 2012). Framing Analysis (as shown by framing research i.e Van Corp, 2010), presents pre-defined criteria which it considers when analysing media framing. These pre-defined criteria (which will be explored later in this chapter) guided the Framing and Thematic Analysis of this thesis, and fulfilled the inductive element of this project. However, Framing Analysis also allows for subthemes to emerge from the data, therefore fulfilling the deductive component of this research project.

3.3 Methodological approach

3.3.1 Frame Analysis

Framing Analysis is a standard heuristic tool used in qualitative research to examine media framing of different issues and is used in my study (Thomas et al., 2020; Foley et al., 2019; Entman, 1993; Matthes & Kohring, 2008). First put forward by sociologist Erving Goffman (1974), Frame Analysis holds that the construction of social reality is informed by frames, which are organisational mechanisms that individuals use to make sense of experiences (Goffman, 1974). Goffman maintains that individuals organise, interpret and understand social reality through frames or framing. Following Goffman, Gitlin (2003) takes the concept of framing and links it to news media. Gitlin argues that framing inherently influences social reality – peoples perceptions – because framing is the exposure of people to fragmented pieces of incomplete information. Therefore, people are susceptible to ill-informed views on different issues because of what the media includes and excludes in their coverage. D'Angelo (2002, 2017) outlines that Framing Analysis seeks to understand how frames emerge and are concerned with how frames are communicated. Framing Analysis reveals how media have covered an event or issue (Entman, 1993). Be it examining the language used and/or the dominant themes and motifs the media employ to cover a phenomenon, Framing Analysis has become a tool readily used in qualitative media research (de Vreese, 2005; Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

An example of the usefulness of a Framing Analysis in revealing key focuses of the media is outlined in a study by Foley et al. (2019). Foley et al.'s Framing Analysis identified latent meanings present in media representation of diabetes. They highlighted how the media focused primarily on individual-level responsibility as the cause of diabetes and under-represented (and under-reported) societal factors which contribute to diabetes (including socio-economic and genetic factors). Furthermore, Foley and colleagues similarly employ a Framing Analysis to explore how the media represent health issues (Foley et al. 2019; Foley et al., 2020). They demonstrate that media framing of illicit drug use as a health matter – an issue of social concern – resulted in members of the public (readers/viewers of media) perceiving the matter of illicit drug as one of social responsibility⁵. However, when the press framed illicit drug use as law and order (drug users as criminals and a threat to society), public

⁵ Emphasis on safety and treatment of drug users

attitudes shifted (perceived as criminals who threatened societal norms). The work of Foley and others demonstrates how different health-related issues are depicted in the media and how framing plays a critical role in how people understand and unpack important issues (Foley et al., 2020).

3.3.2 Thematic analysis

Alongside a Framing Analysis of U.S. and New Zealand media, I also employed a thematic analysis. Foley et al. (2019) too used both Framing and Thematic analysis, as the two methods provided valuable yet differing insights into how media frames shifted regarding their diabetes coverage. A thematic analysis is advantageous because it helped alleviate subjectivity concerns scholars have about framing research (Van Gorp, 2010). Thematic analysis allowed me to compare my results and methodological approaches to papers such as those by Thomas et al. (2020) and Marling and Kasper (2021), as my research objectives mirror theirs. Thomas et al.'s study showed the effectiveness of thematic analysis as a methodological approach. Their framing and thematic analysis found that COVID-19 media coverage in Australia became heavily dominated by a focus on business disruptions and less on the virus's lethality (a key focus early on in media coverage). A thematic analysis, in this case, helped highlight how topics the media focus on change over time in terms of what is given 'air time'.

Thematic analysis operates as a method for "identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning ('themes') within qualitative data" (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p.297). An invaluable feature of thematic analysis is the ability of the qualitative method to allow the research question of the thesis to guide the study. The raw data may not all be relevant to the research question, and a thematic analysis enables the research question to evolve as the coding and theme development procedures mature (Clarke & Braun, 2017). When a research topic is highly contested, the voices heard and critical discussion points often reflect the views of those in positions of power (Ezzy, 2002). With that being said, Braun and Clarke (2012) argue that thematic analysis devolves the centralisation of discussions on a particular topic and functions to highlight meaning(s) in a text that is manifest (explicit) and latent (underlying or

covert). This is useful for this thesis because a thematic analysis taps into manifest and latent content embedded in qualitative data – such as those in media studies.

3.4 Data Selection Techniques

The U.S. media outlets that I analyse in my thesis are CNN Wire, the Public Broadcasting Service's (PBS) News Hour and Fox News.com. Jurkowitz (2020) notes that U.S. residents who identified themselves as political conservatives (supporters of the Republican Party) were more likely to watch and trust the reporting of Fox News (than other media sources, including CNN). Whereas U.S. residents whose political beliefs were aligned with political liberalism (supporters of the U.S. Democrat Party) were more likely to watch CNN news (television), read CNN online news reports, and coincidentally trust its reporting. Indeed, I elected to analyse CNN and Fox News as they represent two different audiences (who possess distinct political ideologies), and because most U.S. adults relied on these two media outlets as their source of information about COVID-19 (see Jurkowitz, 2020). I decided to concentrate on only media sources accessible online rather than those that were only showed on television or in print form, this is due to the relative ease of accessing online articles. I collected and analysed materials from CNN Wire, which provided the same content as the CNN television channel, but possessed a more significant digital presence. I likewise examined only Fox News's online website (Fox News.com). I did not examine the other parts of Fox media company (as it was too diverse and was not explicitly focused on news coverage). In addition to the two privately owned media companies, I also selected to analyse PBS's News Hour, a Federal Government-owned media outlet, in the hope of exploring the diversity of news media reporting in the USA. The Pew Research Center observes that PSB's NewsHour is "middle ground" between Political Liberals and Conservatives in the U.S., with people from across the political spectrum professing equal trust for PSB news coverage (Pew Research Center, 2020).

In New Zealand, in contrast to the U.S., a media outlet's audience is not necessarily divided by strict political party affiliations or worldviews (Croucher et al., 2021). Accordingly, when I came to select New Zealand media outlets' I decided to choose outlets that were widely read (or watched) and easily accessible (provided online access). I picked two private-owned outlets (the New Zealand Herald and Stuff News) and one government-owned outlet

(Television New Zealand's One News) that many members of the New Zealand public read/watched and trusted as reliable sources of information. These outlets possess high readership, and present content covering international, domestic and local news (Ray Morgan, 2020; Te, 2020).

The articles collected for analysis were limited to U.S. and New Zealand media articles accessed directly through the respective media outlet(s) and through Factiva (an electronic database). Although Factiva is an extensive database that holds ample articles from a vast array of media outlets, some of the search terms outlined in table 3.1 below yielded no results (no articles). In this occurrence, the articles were then collected from the respective outlet directly. The examined material was limited to news articles only (i.e. images and videos in the news articles were not considered for examination). As this thesis was concerned with how U.S. and New Zealand media have framed COVID-19, the focus solely on news articles narrows the focus specifically on the content of the news coverage and less on material that does not provide insights into media framing COVID-19⁶. Due to the large volume of articles published about COVID-19 in both nations, the array of different media platforms available, and the different media types, it was necessary to limit the sample size to a small number of media outlets and a manageable number of reports. The articles were selectively sampled from two critical periods in the development the Coronavirus pandemic. The sampling was limited to 20 articles per period, and the articles were only considered for examination if they were published within two weeks of the key sample period (see table 3.2)⁷. The first pivotal development phase of the Coronavirus this thesis focuses on was the declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic by the WHO (Nor & Zulcafli, 2020); this was a significant period because it sparked international media and public interest in the virus (Zhu et al., 2020). In total, this thesis performed a Frame and Thematic Analysis on 240 news articles.

The second sample set (of media articles) was from the day the first COVID-19 case were announced in each country. In New Zealand, the first case was confirmed on the 28th of

⁶ Some articles were solely scripts for speeches given by politicians, and presented no annotations to accompany these scripts, hence such articles were excluded from examination as they do not present any relevant insights or content on media framing.

⁷ The sampled articles were limited to 20 randomly selected articles per outlet – per sample period (table 2). The articles were randomly selected using a random number generator.

February 2020 (Ministry of Health, 2020). Therefore, I only selected news reports from the three New Zealand news outlets (New Zealand Herald, One News, and Stuff News) that fall within this period. The first case was confirmed in the U.S. on the 21st of January 2020. The CNN Wire, Fox News.com, and PBS’s News Hour articles focus on this crucial stage in COVID-19’s development (Hauck, 2021).

Table 3.1: Search term(s) used to obtain news articles on Factiva and from online media outlets

	<u>Sample period one:</u> Announcement of COVID-19 as a global pandemic 'Global Pandemic'	<u>Sample period two:</u> Confirmation of first COVID-19 case 'Coronavirus AND confirmed case'
CNN Wire Fox News.com News Hour		
New Zealand Herald One News Stuff News	'pandemic' and 'New Zealand AND pandemic.'	'COVID-19 AND case' and 'confirmed case' and 'Coronavirus case'

Table 3.2: This thesis collected data from U.S. and New Zealand news outlets

	<u>Sample period one:</u> Announcement of COVID-19 as a global pandemic by the WHO	<u>Sample period two:</u> Confirmation of first COVID-19 case
U.S. news outlets: CNN Wire Fox News.com News Hour	The 11th of March – the 24th of March 2020	The 21st of January – the 3rd of February 2020
New Zealand news outlets: New Zealand Herald One News Stuff News	The 11th of March – the 24th of March 2020	The 28th of February – the 12th of March 2020

The approach I adopted to collect and sample media sources closely follows the methods and rationales of other media studies, most notably Motta et al.’s (2020) work that explored conservative media coverage of the pandemic, and examined whether media reporting about COVID-19 changed as pandemic developed.

3.5 Data Analysis and Data Coding

3.5.1 Framing Analysis and coding

My research design and analysis draw upon recent studies who have establishing various criteria and parameters for framing research⁸. Particularly, Thomas et al.'s (2020) study, which employed three framing categories to analyse Australian media coverage of COVID-19 (table 3.3). These three framing categories are each made up of four frame components, which can be thought of as what constitute a frame. The current research also draws upon the framing parameters (and frame measuring questions) Zhang (2021) outlines in their study on media framing of the Coronavirus pandemic (table 3.4).

Table 3.3: Frame Analysis and their four frame components (adapted from Thomas et al. (2020))

	Causal attribution	Moral evaluation	Problem definition	Treatment recommendation
Medical	Person to person contact Sneezing/coughing	Who should be vaccinated first? Who gets a ventilator?	No Vaccine No compliance to lock down rules	Quarantine Medical advice
Behavioural	Unsanitary actions by people Disregard for mask-wearing	Individuals risking whole communities	Perception of some individuals that COVID-19 is not lethal	Self-isolation Legal enforcement
Societal	Spread of virus Pandemic	Panic buying at supermarkets	Job losses Economic impacts	Pay cuts Postponing events

Table 3.4: Frames and their measuring questions (adapted from Zhang, 2021)

Frame	Four Frame Components (with guiding questions that were used to guide analysis and identify frames)			
	Causal Attribution	Moral Evaluation	Problem Definition	Treatment Recommendation
Medical	Does the outlet cite a scientist or medical professional to back a claim about the virus's origins? Does the outlet provide medically supported evidence about what is causing the spread of the virus?	Does the outlet cite a scientist or medical professional to outline issues concerning who should be given a ventilator? And or problems concerning what is right or wrong	Does the outlet cite a scientist or medical professional regarding coverage concerned with the impacts of the virus on domestic issues?	Does the outlet cite a scientist or medical professional to report on measures that have, will, and should be taken to address the Coronavirus?

⁸ Such as what makes a frame and how to conduct examination of media content using Framing Analysis.

Behavioural	Does the outlet suggest that a group of people and or an individual is to blame for the spread/exacerbation of the virus?	Does the outlet cover the actions of people or institutions as harmful to the health of the wider community?	Does the outlet cover content related to the actions or behaviors of people deemed to be problematic? Does the outlet cover how the virus has impacted individuals or communities?	Does the outlet mention actions and measures people should adopt and adhere to in response to the development of the Coronavirus?
Societal	Does the outlet suggest that an institution or government(s) are responsible for the spread/exacerbation of the virus?	Does the outlet cover Societal level issues concerning the scale of the Coronavirus? Does the virus talk about what is right and wrong about the actions of governments and institutions?	Does the outlet present insight into National level discussions prominent in the U.S. and NZ regarding the impacts of the virus?	Does the outlet cite efforts that have and or will be taken to address the spread and exacerbation of the virus?

Firstly, using Nvivo, a qualitative data analysis software, I performed a Frame Analysis on the raw data (all the articles from the different news outlets, and the two sample periods). Guiding the analysis were the measuring questions outlined in Table 3.4, each article from the different news outlets, and the two sample periods, were coded based solely on the text of the article (images and videos were not analysed). Unlike Foley et al. (2019), who only coded the most salient frame in a text, this thesis coded the different articles and passages in these articles to the most salient frame, and to the secondary and least prominent frame (aligns with the work of Zhang, 2021). My approach recognises that media reporting of the Coronavirus pandemic is conflicting. At a single time, an article or passage of text may present a reference to all three frames and to the different frame components. The adoption of different analytical strategies, used by Foley et al. (2019) and Zhang (2021), allowed me to do three key things: 1) revealed the latent meanings and frames within different articles; 2) outline the key features of the most salient frame adopted; and 3) to explore similarities and differences in the U.S. and New Zealand media framing of COVID-19.

For this thesis, I used the four key frame components and their measuring questions to identify the presence of three prominent media frames (Medical, Behavioural, and Societal). This parallels the seminal work of Entman (1993), who shows that the four frame components are what constitute a frame. In line with past and more recent work, this thesis identifies the Medical, Behavioural, and Societal Frame by coding news content in accordance with the four frame components (guided by the measuring questions described in table 3.4) (Thomas et al., 2020; Entman, 1993; Matthes & Kohring, 2008). Drawing on the methods, approaches and research design of various seminal and recent research, allowed me to neutralise the elusiveness of frames (Maher, 2001). Maher outlines that framing research often encounter issues of how to measure the presence and or prominence of a frame in different texts (such as news articles, reports, videos, and blogs). To address the difficulty of measuring frames outlined by Maher (2001), the current thesis uses previously adopted research design methods and adopts a thematic analysis which has been detailed as useful for addressing vagueness synonymous with framing research (Foley., et al. 2019). Further, this thesis adopted coding mechanisms which have been applied to Australian media framing of COVID-19 (see Thomas et al. 2020). Through the adoption of established coding parameters, the current thesis minimises the elusiveness of frames as it works with pre-defined frames that help hone the focus of this research on relevant themes, ideas, and motifs in U.S. and New Zealand media coverage of the Coronavirus pandemic.

3.5.2 Thematic analysis

After I concluded my Framing Analysis, I conducted a thematic analysis (which draw on the approach of Foley et al. 2019). As my analysis progressed, under each frame component, different themes, and key discourses relevant to the different frame components emerged. For example, my initial analysis found that CNN (in sample period one) focused on the impacts of the Coronavirus on different facets of society. However, as my analysis of the CNN media articles progressed, I observed that this theme (societal impacts of the pandemic) was evident throughout both sample periods. I therefore classified these relevant articles under the Societal frame (Problem Definition component), and noted that CNN focused a large portion of its reporting on the economic impacts and disruptions of the virus⁹. A thematic analysis in

⁹ This is similar to Zhang (2021) who outlines a focus by the media on economic losses or consequence

this case allowed for the expansion of the frame type and components, beyond merely the broad label of Problem Definition. A thematic analysis therefore elucidated the presence of a frame type and frame component, revealing latent meanings embedded in the news articles.

3.6 Positionality

Qualitative methods are often critiqued for being too subjective and or too reliant on the researchers own predispositions (in comparison to quantitative approaches); yet, subjectivity is always part of the research process (irrespective of whether it employs qualitative or quantitative or mixed research methods) (Ezzy, 2002; de Vreese, 2005). In framing research, since the researcher plays the critical (and always subjective) role of determining the research aims, questions, objectives, and methods, which includes what media outlets and sources are included or excluded, and what frames are noted, it is difficult to avoid subjectivities which shape framing research and research in general (Van Corp, 2010). Indeed, Van Corp warns that framing research can be too reliant on the researchers own pre-conceived views of a frame and or event. This means that a researcher may identify a frame in the raw data that is only identifiable to them (from their point of view) and another researcher exposed to the same data would not be able to identify that same frame. Yet, such accusations of bias and warnings about the lack of intellectual rigor is similarly made against other qualitative research approaches (including ethnography and discourse analysis) (Ezzy, 2002). Against this background, I recognise that all Framing Analysis (including this thesis) is shaped by the subjectivities of the researcher(s) (Vreese, 2005; Van Corp, 2010; DAngelo, 2017; Matthes, Kohring, 2008). Thus, I am aware that there is (or could be) issues with replicability of my results.

I recognise that my own use of media, and position as a student researcher renders me somewhat of an outsider in terms of how I encounter frames and media framing in my own life. I rarely use media outlets for information, whereas social media is a forum in which I regularly use and rely on for information. My position as a student researcher has granted me some experience in conducting research, specifically media examination, as my honours dissertation looked at media coverage of climate change. However, in my honours dissertation, a key finding was that conservative outlets tend to adopt contrarian views in

their coverage. Therefore, there could be pre-existing views I possess which may automatically render Fox News content as incorrect or misinformed. In saying this, I made every effort, (fully recognising that my personal experiences, knowledge, and values shape the research process), to ensure that the coding parameters of my thesis are not just confined to my own imagination but are broadly relevant. I endeavoured to do this through the use of pre-selected criteria to analyse the raw data (deductive coding), followed by thematic analysis (inductive coding) (approaches which recent framing research have followed, see Hubner, 2021; Thomas et al., 2020; Foley et al., 2019). In the hopes of minimising subjectivity and vagueness intrinsic to Framing Analysis and measurement of frames, this thesis adheres to Pan and Kosicki (1993)s call for framing research to systematically identify frames and rely less on the researcher as the mode of identification. My research does this by adopting coding mechanisms and frames deriving from the seminal work of Entman (2007), which were applied by Thomas et al. (2020) to Australian media framing of COVID-19.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined and discussed the methodological approach and methods of this research. To address the research objectives of this thesis, this research utilises a Framing and Thematic Analysis to provide insight into how the media in the U.S. and New Zealand framed COVID-19. The data of this thesis – news articles – was obtained from Factiva, an electronic data base, and when search terms yielded no results articles were directly sourced from the news outlet. The chapter discussed some of the limitations of Framing, and then outlined some of the mechanisms and steps which can be taken to address these limitations. The chapter then went into the value of using a Thematic Analysis, and how this strengthens the analysis of the research. The chapter then rounded off with a positionality section.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the findings from the Framing and Thematic Analysis of U.S. and New Zealand media articles. As covered in Chapter Three, the data was collected from Factiva and the news outlet(s) directly. The current chapter firstly covers sample period one, which is concerned with how U.S. and New Zealand media framed the WHO's announcement of the Coronavirus virus as a global pandemic. The chapter then reports the findings of sample period two, concerned with U.S. and New Zealand media framing of the first COVID-19 in their own respective nations.

Due to the different time periods this thesis examined, as well as differing media outlets included for analysis, the results (in terms of themes and topics) were highly diverse in some instances. The chapter uses descriptive graphs, tables, and diagrams to portray the diverse media content focusses across both sample periods (in both nations). The chapter uses the three main frame types (Medical, Societal, and Behavioural) as key headings, it also uses the frame types and their components as sub-themes (Causal Attribution, Moral Evaluation, Problem Definition, and Treatment Recommendation). In doing this, it presents the findings in an orderly fashion which (1) shows the most prominent frame found in the analysis of each nation and outlet (research objective one), and (2) it paints a picture of some of the similarities and differences in frame and content focusses between the U.S. and New Zealand media (research objective two).

In reporting the main findings of the analysis, not all frame components were found in U.S. and New Zealand media framing of COVID-19. This means that after a Framing and Thematic Analysis was undertaken, as well as the use of the frame measuring questions outlined in Chapter Three, the frame component was deemed non-existent in an articles coverage. Which is not uncommon nor surprising in framing literature (see Foley et al., 2019). When providing specific examples of where a quote or theme stems from, this thesis has abbreviated the article, the outlet and sample period to make to easier to portray where an article comes from (outlet), as well as the sample period it is from. For example, if referring

to an article by CNN in sample period one, this thesis has denoted this article as CNN1A1¹⁰ (see appendix 1, table 1). Each section of this chapter first starts by presenting the results from the analysis of U.S. outlets, and then the findings for the outlets in New Zealand. The same format is repeated in the presentation of results for sample period two.

4.2 First Sample period: Announcement of COVID-19 as a global pandemic by the WHO

4.2.1 The United States media coverage of the Coronavirus pandemic in its early stages

4.2.1.1 CNN Wire

In the two-week sample period of this thesis, from 11 to 24 March 2020 following the WHO announcement of COVID-19 as a global pandemic, a vast majority of articles by CNN used a Societal Frame (95 per cent). Whereas (30 per cent) used a Behavioural Frame and (25 percent) adopt a Medical Frame (Figure 4.1). The Societal frame therefore clearly dominates CNN's coverage of COVID-19 becoming a global pandemic. Table 4.1 outlines the most prominent frame adopted by CNN Wire to cover the announcement of COVID-19 as a global pandemic by the WHO. The table is determined by the volume of content coded to a particular frame (which a Framing Analysis revealed). The table parallels those used in framing studies by Foley et al. (2019) and Thomas et al. (2020).

Number of articles referring to frame

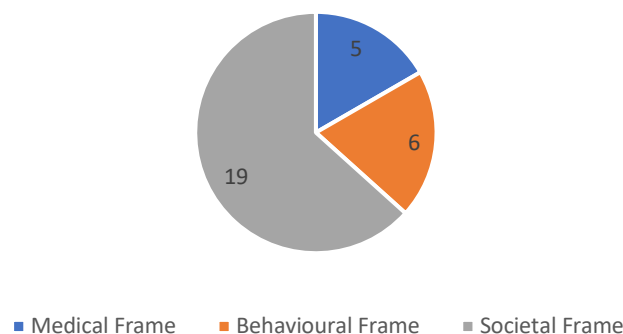


Figure 4.1: Number of articles referring to each frame from CNN Wire

¹⁰ CCN1A1 means that the article is from CNN sample period one and the article number is article 1 – indicated by 'A1' in the abbreviation

Table 4.1: Prominence of each frame in CNN Wire articles¹¹

Medical Frame	Behavioural Frame	Societal Frame

Table 4.2 below illustrates the different frame types, frame components, and their prominence in CNN’s coverage of the first sample period of this thesis. The Societal frame, and the frame components of Problem Definition and Treatment Recommendation, are most noticeably apparent in CNN’s coverage. This suggests that as the Coronavirus became more globally known, CNN’s coverage hone in some of the impacts the virus could have on different facets of society. A prominent Treatment Recommendation focus indicates that CNN – in response to the virus becoming a global issue – became increasingly concerned with efforts taken to address and mitigate the spread of the Coronavirus.

Table 4.2: Frame types, framing components and their prominence in CNN articles¹²

	Causal attribution	Moral evaluation	Problem definition	Treatment recommendation
Medical	Pre-existing health issues meet COVID-19			Working out Follow CDC guidelines
Behavioural	Panic buying Disregard for social distancing			Buy only what you need Refrain from attending large gatherings
Societal	Trump administration Geopolitics Political failures Science vs politics	Who is given a platform? Politicians or medical experts?	Job losses Economic impacts Disruption to infrastructure Experiences of migrants Disruption to events and sports games Business impacts	Learn from past pandemics and administrations Trump administration needs to be better prepare COVID-19 requires collective efforts Need to follow CDC guidelines

¹¹ The shading of the cells in the table alludes to the prominence of each frame (Light gray = few mentions in articles, Black = Very frequent mention).

¹² The white shading refers to the prominence of the frame component and indicates the component is uncommon and or non-existent, light gray refers few instances where the component was mentioned, dark gray alludes to commonly mentioned, and black indicates very frequently mentioned.



Behavioural Frame: actions of people and politicians

Under the Behavioural frame, CNN focuses their Causal Attribution on the actions of people in spreading the virus as well as how different people responded to the pandemic. These include people panic buying goods, which puts added pressure on supermarkets to replenish its quickly stocks (CNN1A18). Blame for spreading COVID-19 (framing of responsibility) is directed at people who attended large gatherings and ignored the advice of experts (CNN1A13). Republican Senators spreading (mis)information about the virus and endorsing conspiracy theories about COVID-19 are also outlined as a Causal Attribution by CNN (CNN1A16).

The Medical Frame: navigating a global pandemic

Five CNN articles make a Medical Frame reference. The articles outline the impacts of COVID-19 on peoples health and present expert advice on how to combat health concerns. The uncertainty of COVID-19 early in its development and subsequent naming by the WHO as a global pandemic presented many issues for people unaware of COVID-19's symptoms. For example, CNN1A1 covers that the National Basketball Association (NBA) were on edge when a player presented Coronavirus symptoms. Medical professionals therefore led the way in regard to how the NBA ought to operate now that the Coronavirus was a global pandemic. Similarly, articles 15 and 18 highlight the growing presence of medical professionals as advisors to how life amidst a pandemic should be navigated (see appendix 1, table 1). Article 15 alludes to how instrumental medical professionals were in ensuring that only essential services remained open, and resulted in Gamestop, a video game store, becoming increasingly criticised for remaining open when health experts advised against it. CNN also

adopted a Medical Frame to counter misinformation stated by Liberty University President, Jerry Falwell on Fox News. Mr Falwell stated on Fox News regarding COVID-19 that:

"It's just strange to me how so many are overreacting. The H1N1 virus of 2009 killed 17,000 people. It was the flu also I think. And there was not the same hype. It was — you just didn't see it on the news 24/7. And it makes you wonder if there's a political reason for that. It's, uh. You know, impeachment didn't work. And the Mueller Report didn't work. And Article 25 didn't work, so maybe now this is their next — their next attempt to get Trump" (Cillizza, 2020, p. 1).

Article 2 counters the claims of Falwell by drawing on the plethora of experts including Dr. Anthony Fauci, head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, to show that COVID-19 is projected to surpass the infection and mortality rate of the H1N1 virus.

Societal Frame: Causal Attribution and the political landscape of the pandemic

Relevant to research objective 1 of this thesis – concerned with the most dominant frame adopted by different media outlets to cover COVID-19 – my analysis of sample period one finds that the Societal Frame is the most dominant frame used by CNN to cover COVID-19 becoming a global pandemic. A prominent Societal Frame and Causal Attribution focus by CNN underscores a strong political emphasis in their coverage. For instance, of the six articles that allude to the Causal Attribution component, all six outline the Trump administration as playing a role in heightening the risk of COVID-19 and prolonging the presence of the virus. Viewed as a barrier to addressing and minimising the risk of COVID-19, the Trump administration are depicted by CNN1A7 as failing to adequately address the sheer scale of the pandemic.

"His instincts led him to downplay the seriousness of the threat once again on Wednesday, undermining the predictions of his own top health officials standing behind him, and fueling concern over his administration's ability to coordinate a response to a complicated problem" (Diamond et al., 2020, p. 1-2).

“As recently as last week, Trump was telling confidants that he doesn't foresee the virus making a big impact in the U.S.. And on Wednesday he repeated his belief that it could be slowed by warmer weather, despite no evidence to support the claim” (Diamond et al., 2020, p. 2).

Societal Frame – Causal Attribution: U.S political figures

CNN1A12, published on the 12th of March 2020, a day after the announcement of COVID-19 as a global pandemic, shows that the Trump administration adopted the term ‘foreign virus’ to refer to COVID-19. The adoption of the foreign virus term was met with growing criticism with some arguing that the term presents xenophobic undertones. CNN1A20 also covers other prominent U.S political figures who attribute and adopt terms such as ‘foreign virus’ to describe COVID-19. Mike Pompeo, Secretary of State, is outlined by article 20 as referring to the COVID-19 as the ‘Wuhan virus’. Rather than cover the statements by former president Trump and other U.S political figures as legitimate discussion points, CNN outline the dangers embedded in the terms used by prominent U.S leaders. For instance, article 20 countered the label ‘China virus’ by incoming chief of staff, Mark Meadows, by drawing on the CDC who argued strongly that such terms are wrong and should not be used. Furthermore, drawing on historians such as Nukhet Varlik, CNN1A4 outlines that, historically, during pandemics and epidemics, the use of labels describing a virus as a product of a certain place or people tends to lead to exclusionary ideologies. For instance, Article 4 of CNN’s coverage of sample period one outlines that “from the plague to SARS, whenever an outbreak spread, racism and xenophobia weren’t far behind” (Shoichet, 2020, p. 1). Therefore, rather than Wuhan or China being blamed for COVID-19, CNN outlines that U.S political figures are the ones who must shoulder the burden of the pandemic due to their inability to address COVID-19 and raise necessary public awareness of the virus to combat its spread and minimise its impact.

The ripple effect of dismissive COVID-19 ideologies by U.S political figures leads article 2 of CNN’s pandemic coverage to state that it is paramount public safety takes center stage instead of a focus on ratings. Due to the public nature in which some U.S politicians named the pandemic as the ‘China virus’ even when experts at the CDC strongly advised against it, the main Causal Attribution covered by CNN regarded the actions and words of political U.S

leaders. Politicians, predominantly conservative political figures, are depicted as failing to adequately address the complexity of COVID-19, and rather than mitigate against the impacts of the virus, some of the conservative leaders aided in growing public disinformation about COVID-19.

“Look, I understand that promoting voices like Falwell's insisting Coronavirus isn't that big a deal and is being unnecessarily hyped by the media will rate well for Fox News. But putting someone who says things that are both wrong and incredibly irresponsible on the air in the midst of a global pandemic is beyond the pale. This isn't about ratings. This is about public health and safety” (Cillizza, 2020, p. 2).

Societal Frame: Moral Evaluation

CNN articles with a reference to the frame component Moral Evaluation focus on the sheer scale of COVID-19. An example showing the frame component of Moral Evaluation is the focus of article 18 on prioritising where and who food should go to amidst the pandemic. Article 18 outlines that:

“over time, and if the situation persists, some food could be diverted from certain vendors to others. Food that had been shipped to corporate and university cafeterias, cruise lines, airlines and restaurants could instead be sent to grocery stores and retailers” (Wiener-Bronner, 2020, p, 2).

Morris Cohen, professor of operations, information and decisions at Pennsylvania University, is quoted as saying “there will be spot shortages caused by panic buy(ing)” (Wiener-Bronner, 2020, p, 1). The Moral Evaluation component revealed that CNN focus on the large scale impacts COVID-19 could have on the food system (supply vs demand) and subsequent impacts this could have on prioritisation of where and who food goes to.

Societal Frame: Problem Definition - Disruptions caused by COVID-19

A plethora of disruptions have been caused by COVID-19. The reports from CNN in sample period one highlight the many impacts COVID-19 has had on businesses, infrastructure,

peoples income/economic prosperity, and on sporting events such as the Olympic games due to travel restrictions (CNN1A1, CNN1A19).

- Closure of businesses deemed unessential resulted in mass unemployment (CNN1A16)
- Unprecedented impacts on the industrial food system (CNN1A18)
- Large scale disruptions to the public transport system, such disruptions have not been seen since public transport was halted after the September 11 terror attacks (CNN1A3)

Societal Frame – Problem Definition: Experiences of migrants and Immigrants

The presences of the Problem Definition frame component illustrates that CNN present a focus on some of the dominant discourses occurring in the U.S. as the Coronavirus grows exponentially in regard to infection. Under the current frame component, CNN reports on how Immigrant works and communities may become even more reluctant to seek medical help due to increased presence of Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) during the pandemic (CNN1A11). CNN also cover exclusionary rhetoric growing in the U.S. that paints migrants as not American or ‘American enough’ (CNN1A4, CNN1A12). Article four outlines a number of scholars who depict that during times of crisis, specifically during pandemics, migrants face considerable levels of ridicule. Marie Myung-Ok Lee, a writer from Columbia University, outlines that:

“You could have been here since the Chinese Exclusion Act. You could be third or fourth generation,”... but you’ll always be seen as a foreign invader and have somebody assault you on the subway saying you have the Coronavirus” (Shoichet, 2020, p.3).

Societal Frame: Treatment Recommendation

Limiting spread of the Coronavirus: My analysis finds that under the Treat Recommendation frame component, CNN cover the actions/inactions of businesses in relation to limiting the spread of the Coronavirus. For instance, article 19 criticises the National Collegiate Athletic Association when they declared they were continuing with their tournament despite concerns

for athlete and staff safety. GameStop, a video games store, too is outlined as failing to adhere to calls for their closure – when they looked to capitalise on the pandemic by virtue of people becoming more home bound.

Inadequate government response: CNN1A17 states that the Trump administration were ill-equipped to address an outbreak. Despite rising cases of COVID-19 globally (prior to the WHO's global pandemic announcement), Trump assured the U.S public that *"it's going to be just fine"* (Hill, 2020, p. 1-2). The inaction of the Trump administration is shown by CNN as failing to learn from history and past pandemics and fueling the rapid development of COVID-19 in the U.S due to the inactions of his administration(CNN1A17, CNN1A4).

"Trump's leadership team failed to ready the nation, despite explicit warnings of the need to do so. Trump weakened the National Security Council's pandemic focus, allowed the Department of Interior's pandemic plan to gather dust and botched the development of a viable testing system" (Hill, 2020, p. 2).

Article 19 covers increasing concerns of citizens that their leaders are sending mixed messages on what they can and cannot do. With COVID-19 becoming a global pandemic, people reported being confused about what they ought to do during the crisis. For example, CNN1A19 shows that people were encouraged to go out and support local businesses but were also told not to congregate, citizens were told to stockpile on essential foods, and yet they were criticised for panic buying. Furthermore, details emerged that containment zones (areas where COVID-19 cases were high), had no barriers or restrictions of who goes in and out of these zones.

"The Trump administration failed to replenish the nation's medical stockpiles that had been depleted during a previous pandemic in 2009 and never sufficiently restocked after. In addition, it has advocated for cuts to the CDC. And the decision to build military hospitals to increase medical capacity has lagged. Given the inadequate response so far, it's not surprising the nation is now at risk of sinking to its knees" (Hill, 2020, p.2).

4.2.1.2 PBS NewsHour

PBS’s NewsHour uses the Societal Frame most often in its coverage of COVID-19 becoming a global pandemic. All 20 articles by NewsHour refer to the Societal Frame (Figure 4.2 and Table 4.3), 15 percent refer to a Behavioural Frame and 50 percent refer to the Medical Frame.

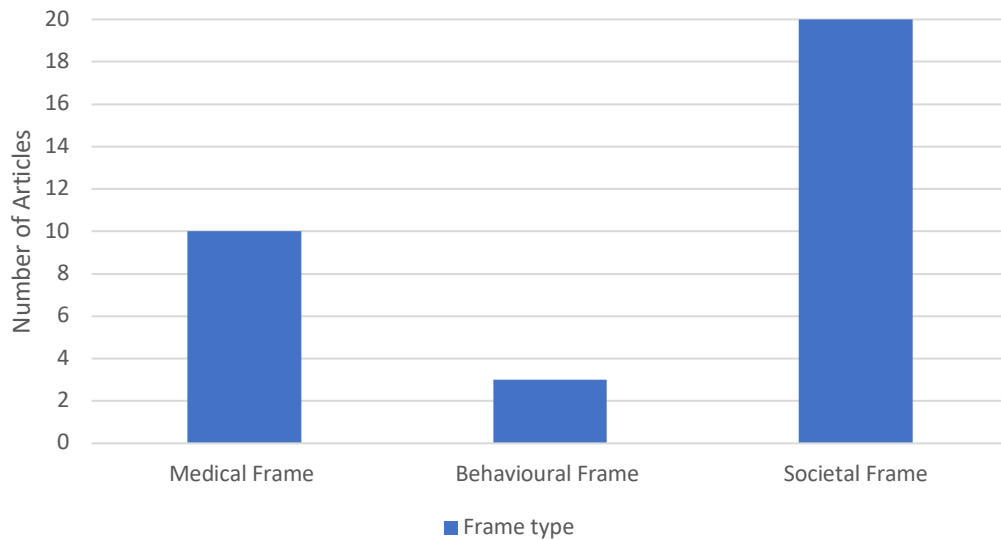


Figure 4.2: Number of articles with a reference to each frame type

Table 4.3: Prominence of each frame component in the coverage of sample period one by NewsHour

	Causal attribution	Moral evaluation	Problem definition	Treatment recommendation
Medical	Slow U.S response to COVID-19 testing		COVID-19 stems from nature	Need to get tested Self-isolation Be aware of COVID-19 symptoms Social distancing Efficient and effective testing approaches
Behavioural			Need for government support Impact on election voting	Impact on peoples lives Personal stories

Societal	Political factors The U.S's COVID-19 response Trump administration	How much money should people receive in COVID-19 support packages?	Impact of COVID-19 on events Economic impacts Financial support United States political landscape Multi-faceted impacts of Coronavirus domestically and internationally	Limits on large gatherings Stay at home Social distance Travel restrictions Switch of schools and organisations to online forums Government support
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Behavioural Frame

For the Behavioural Frame, there is a focus on the Problem Definition and Treatment Recommendation frame components (see Table 4.3), and an absence of the other frame components (Causal Attribution and Moral Evaluation). This indicates that NewsHour in their reporting of the Coronavirus, focus on national issues and the impacts the virus could have on different communities. NewsHour describes how the pandemic could influence peoples ability to vote in the 2020 Presidential election, and draws attention to personal stories of actions people have taken to keep safe now that COVID-19 is a global pandemic.

Medical Frame: Causal Attribution – Slow U.S response to COVID-19 testing

NewsHour's use of the Medical Frame utilises the Causal Attribution sub-frame in its reporting on the U.S.'s response to COVID-19, which it deems ineffective (NewsHour1A10, NewsHour1A15). Article 10 outlines how testing is vital to provide information for public health professionals about the scale of the outbreak and what strategies need to be adopted. However, the report notes that there is not enough tests being performed, and the rate of testing in the U.S. is vastly lower than other countries such as China and Japan (NewsHour1A10). The Trump administration is critiqued for its failure to supply funding and support for testing. Sabrina Sholts, a biologist, declares "science is not leading" the U.S. Federal Governments response to the pandemic, a view shared by Anthony Fauci and others (Barajas, 2020, p. 1). (NewsHour1A15).

Medical Frame: Treatment Recommendation

A significant number of NewsHour coverage (30 percent) focuses on the health impacts of the virus, which fits within the sub-frame Treatment Recommendation. Articles report on growing concerns about the increasing number of people infected globally with COVID-19, as well as the uncertainty about the symptoms and progression of the virus (not everyone shows signs or gets severely ill). Newshour also provides coverage that draws on medical professionals and public health officials, who are interviewed and quoted for information about the spread of the virus as well as prevention and containment methods (NewsHour1A11, NewsHour1A15, NewsHour1A17).

Societal Frame: Causal Attribution – Geopolitics and United States COVID-19 response

News Hour's sample period one coverage uses a Societal Frame, with the sub-frame of Causal Attribution focusing of the USA's geopolitical relationships with other countries (NewsHour1A5, NewsHour1A19). A Societal Frame and Causal Attribution focus concerned with geopolitical relationships suggests that NewsHour attribute blame to governments for exacerbating COVID-19 risks. Article 19 for instance, reports on tensions between Iran and the USA. The article outlines how fractured geopolitical affairs have impacted the availability and importation of medicine to fight the virus – putting people at risk of not being able to access much needed medication.

“Who in their right mind would trust you to bring medication? Possibly your medicine is a way to spread the virus more” Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (Goodman, 2020, p. 1).

Other articles focus on the shortcomings of the U.S governments response to COVID-19 and how this poses risks to different communities. These critiques include the governments failure to provide COVID-19 information to non-English speaking populations. The response of the United States government is criticised by NewsHour as failing to coordinate efforts internally to mitigate against the spread and lethality of COVID-19, as well as inequitable public education campaigns (not supplying information in languages other than English) (NewsHour1A12, NewsHour1A19) (NewsHour1A10).

Societal Frame: Problem Definition – a ripple effect across the U.S.

NewsHour’s coverage of sample period one focusses on the financial impacts of the virus as well as the need for important events to be rescheduled or cancelled (which also results in financial losses). NewsHour outline how the pandemic has resulted in rising rates of unemployment, food and financial insecurity, and increasing need for government support (NewsHour1A5 and NewsHour1A14).

Societal Frame: Treatment Recommendation

Out of 20 articles from the first sample period, nine articles from NewsHour refer to preventive measures (45 percent). Coverage includes discussion of a vaccine being only being months away, as well as individual actions to prevent the spread of the virus (washing your hands, practicing social distancing, staying home and wearing mask) (NewsHour1A12, NewsHour1A15).

4.2.1.3 Fox News.com

In their coverage from the 11th to 24th March 2020, Fox News.com predominantly frame the announcement of the Coronavirus as a global pandemic through the Societal Frame (Figure 4.3). All the articles from Fox News refer to the Societal Frame, and two articles make a Medical Frame reference, and one article refers to the Behavioural Frame, the latter two frames were the least prominent frames (Table 4.4). The predominant focus of Fox News on the Societal Frame entails a focus on the apparent role of China and the World Health Organisation in spreading and exacerbating the risks of the virus.

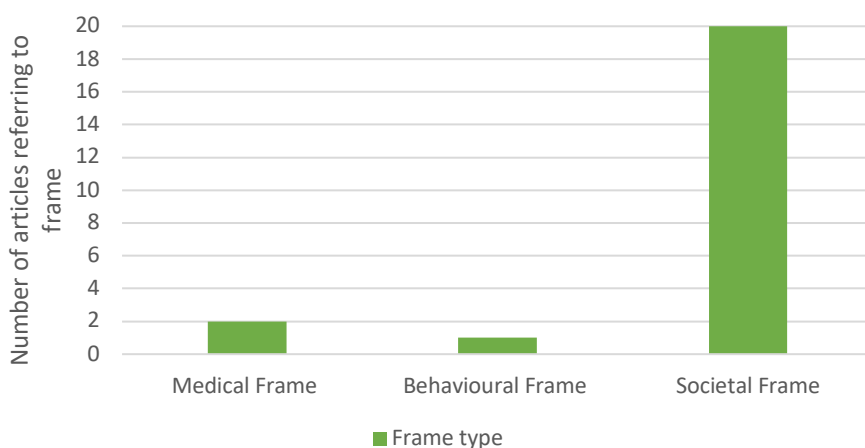


Figure 4.3: Number of articles referring to each frame type

Table 4.4: Least referred to frames by Fox News.com and the frame component

Frame type	Frame Component (Treatment Recommendation)
Medical Frame	Two articles make reference to the Medical Frame. Article 19 outlines the postponement of sporting events to limit the possibility of outbreaks if fans were to attend, this decision was informed by public health authorities. Article 2 highlights the influential role that the CDC played in informing decisions about limiting travel restrictions and informing the public about areas in the U.S and nations globally to avoid due to high levels of Coronavirus cases.
Behavioural Frame	The only instance where Fox News includes a Behavioural Frame reference is the inclusion of U.S surgeon General Jerome Adams who suggests the actions of people will determine whether the U.S can fight the Coronavirus (FoxNews1A17). Adams says that people need to stay home if the U.S are to address the spread and development of COVID-19 nationally.

Societal Frame: Causal Attribution – the World Health Organisation and the geopolitical backdrop of the pandemic

“The problem is that China’s complacency at the beginning of the outbreak helped create the crisis. The WHO accelerated it” (Chakraborty, 2020, p. 3).

45 percent of Fox News articles outline the Chinese as responsible for the development of the Coronavirus. In reference to Coronavirus efforts by China and the WHO, Fox News.com argues global efforts to prepare for the virus were delayed because China suppressed information and then the WHO failed to hold China accountable (FoxNews1A15, FoxNews1A11).

Table 4.5: Causal Attribution identified in the analysis of Fox News.com

Key theme	Causal Attribution	Article #
Chinese cover-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of transparency by China • Silencing of doctors and health professionals early in the development of the Coronavirus • Failure to report unknown spread of disease which now is known as COVID-19 	FoxNews1A11 FoxNews1A15 FoxNews1A20

China's propaganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tweets by Chinese representatives suggesting the U.S is responsible for COVID-19 • Continued efforts by China to paint themselves as global leaders in fighting COVID-19 • Coordinated efforts by China using different platforms to mitigate their role 	FoxNews1A20 FoxNews1A14 FoxNews1A16 FoxNews1A4
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Along with the Chinese, the WHO is identified by Fox News.com as the Causal Attribution responsible for the rapid development of the Coronavirus (FoxNews1A11). Article 11 accuses the WHO, specifically its director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, of suppressing vital information early in the development of the Coronavirus. Director General, Tedros, is outlined as being complacent in holding China accountable for any wrongdoing. Fox News attributes Tedros apparent lack of criticism of China to the relationship of China and the WHO and also China's relationship with Ethiopia – the Director General's home country.

Societal Frame: Moral Evaluation

Under the Moral Evaluation sub-frame, Fox News link the Coronavirus to Christianity. FoxNews1A1 posits that "God is in the middle of everything – the good and the bad – and yes, even COVID-19" (Daly, 2020, p. 2). The presence of the Moral Evaluation sub-frame in relation to religion indicates that Fox News view the Coronavirus becoming increasingly global as an issue of religious significance and not just one of science and politics.

Societal Frame: Problem Definition

A key issue discussed by Fox News is the economic disruptions caused by COVID-19. Following the declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic, article 13 shows a focus on the impacts of the Coronavirus on the stock market and subsequent investing uncertainty associated with long-term investments (FoxNews1A12, FoxNews1A13). The large-scale economic pressures brought on by the pandemic is covered by Fox News as key problems which will need to be addressed by the U.S government (FoxNews1A18).

Societal Frame: Treatment Recommendation

My analysis finds that under the frame component Treat Recommendation, Fox News focus on preventive measures (table 4.6) and on financial support available for people and businesses (FoxNews1A13). Article six highlights that as markets continue to fluctuate and businesses struggle to stay afloat as the Coronavirus runs rampant, the Trump administration is preparing payments and tax reduction to help individuals and small business (FoxNews1A6).

Table 4.6: Preventive measures identified by Fox News.com

Preventive measures
<p>Travel restrictions: The U.S implemented national and international travel restrictions/bans to combat the spread of the Coronavirus (FoxNews1A13). Nations with high counts of COVID-19 cases were barred from entering the U.S, with such measures employed globally in nation such as China and New Zealand (FoxNews1A).</p>
<p>Social distance: Article 9 outlines that peoples new norm whenever out in public spaces needs to be adhering to social distancing rules.</p>
<p>Collaborative action: The complexity and scale of COVID-19 is argued by article 17 to therefore requite collaborative action across different agencies in the U.S and aboard. Trump and his administration are quoted in article 7 as encouraging more coordinated efforts with China and other developed nations in hopes that such efforts would minimise the risks posed by COVID-19.</p>

4.2.2 New Zealand media coverage of the Coronavirus pandemic early in its development

4.2.2.1 The New Zealand Herald

The New Zealand Herald covered the announcement of COVID-19 as a global pandemic predominately through the Societal Frame. Of the 20 articles from the Herald included for analysis, 18 (90 percent) refer to the Societal Frame. Many of the articles center their discussions on the impacts COVID-19 has had on different facets of New Zealand society, while others detail political discourses surrounding the New Zealand governments handling of the pandemic.

Number of articles referring to frame

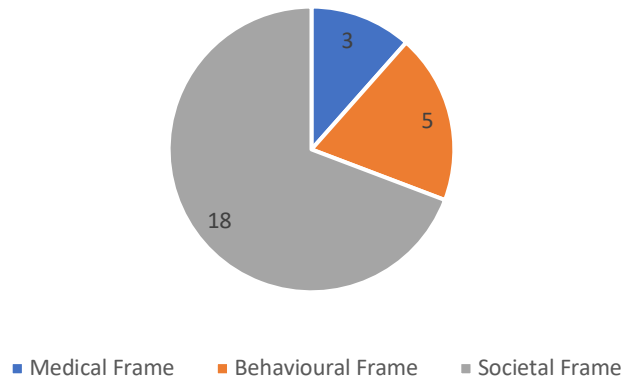


Figure 4.4: Number of articles referring to frame type

Behavioural Frame

My Framing Analysis reveals that of the 20 articles examined from the New Zealand Herald in sample period one, five articles make a reference to the Behavioural Frame. The actions of an Australian couple who travelled to New Zealand whilst (the husband) awaited Coronavirus testing results is a key theme which my analysis coded to the Behaviour frame (Herald1A13). His actions were met with wide scale criticism when he was confirmed New Zealand's first COVID-19 case.

In the face of then – a unknown virus – which has just been announced as a global pandemic, the New Zealand Herald cover how the uncertainty of the virus resulted in panic buying and adoption of behaviours people normally do not practise – such as hoarding (Herald1A12).

Medical Frame: Treatment Recommendation

From the three articles which refer to the Medical Frame, all three fall under the Treatment Recommendation frame component. The articles cover some of the change in norms which need to take place for sporting events to continue (Herald1A16). Reference to the Medical Frame is also made by article four which outlines some of the decisions to cancel events to limit the possibility of an outbreak, such preventive measures were adopted due to the advice of experts from the CDC and the WHO (Herald1A5, Herald1A4).

Societal Frame: Problem Definition

The New Zealand Herald's use of the Societal Frame includes discussions around the financial impacts of COVID-19 and the cancellation and postponement of sporting events due to the Coronavirus. These discussion points were classified under the Problem Definition component, as this component is concerned with media content relevant to each nation (either the U.S. or New Zealand). Thirty percent of articles outline the financial impacts caused by COVID-19. Article 11, for instance, reports on NZ governments decision to close NZ's international borders to travellers (with the exception of NZ citizens or permanent residents) as a method to reduce new cases of COVID-19 arriving in the country; the article argues that the governments border closure was made with little thought to the economic consequences on NZ businesses.

Societal Frame: Treatment Recommendation

The content in the NZ Herald relevant to the sub-frame of Treatment Recommendation hones in on the actions and policies of the NZ Government to reduce the spread of COVID-19 within the country (specifically strategies of the ruling Labour Party). The New Zealand Herald describes the NZ governments response as prompt, well-coordinated and effective (Herald1A5, Herald1A9), with Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern depicted as a strong and effective leader. Apart from a single article that questions some of government decisions, such as restrictions on physical contact with members of extended family, the majority of NZ Herald coverage of the Labour Governments response to COVID-19 is in a positive light (see appendix 1, table 4).

Preventive actions to take to keep yourself and community safe is a key focus of the NZ Herald under the frame component of Treatment Recommendation. Early on in COVID-19's development, the Herald focusses on how sporting events held in New Zealand and concerning New Zealand teams, were required to minimise fan interaction, limit audience sizes, and teams were made aware of the risks of travelling (Herald1A16). Some of the key preventive actions which the Herald covers is the prompt actions to restrict travels domestically and internationally by the New Zealand government (Herald1A19), mandatory self-isolations, cancellation of sporting events, encouragement of mask wearing, washing of

hands under warm water, working remotely, avoiding large crowds, and only travelling for essential purposes (Herald1A2, Herald1A9, Herald1A7).

4.2.2.2 TVNZ One News

TVNZ's One News frames their discussion of COVID-19 as a pandemic predominantly through the Societal Frame (see Figure 4.5). Whilst the Behavioural and Medical Frames are less prominently covered. In their Societal Framing, One News does not adopt a Causal Attribution framing component, and instead use a Moral Evaluation. For instance, reports question who is an essential worker (such as supermarket staff versus café workers), or what is an essential service (supermarkets versus UberEats) (Moral Evaluation). Societal frame discussions relevant to the component Problem Definition, include business disruptions, closures of schools, and economic assistance. In the Treatment Recommendation component, there is a focus on combating misinformation about COVID-19.

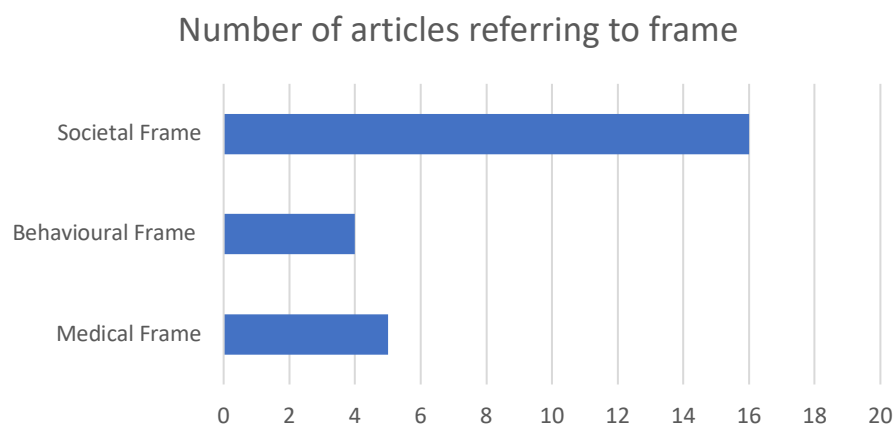


Figure 4.5: Number of articles referring to each frame type

Behavioural Frame: Treatment Recommendation

One News articles relevant to the Behavioural frame focus on what people can do to keep themselves and others safe, such as adhering to social distancing and adopting strict hygiene practices (OneNews1A13; OneNews1A9). In addition to positive behaviors, which reduce the risk of disease transmission, One News also draws attention to negative behaviors that heighten the risk of the virus spreading. These include Article 19 that quotes actress Evangeline Lilly who states she and her family will not adopt social distancing nor stay home and adhere to travel restrictions.

Medical Frame

The Medical Frame is evident in One News reporting by the use of medical experts to inform their article content. For instance, the announcement of NZ's first COVID-19 case is covered by drawing on the expertise of health professionals working in the labs that are testing for COVID-19. Articles 11, 13, and 19 similarly interview medical professionals and staff from Ministry of Health who outline that every measure is being taken to ensure the NZ public's safety.

Societal Frame

The Moral Evaluation sub-frame is evident in my analysis of One News through their coverage outlining which services are essential and can remain open, and coverage of services which must close (depending on alert level¹³). Against this backdrop, Article 15 outlines how workers' unions and members of the public criticised a pizza chain's plan to stay open when they were not deemed essential (Level 4).

Much of One News coverage relevant to the sub-frame of Problem Definition focuses on how businesses are negatively impacted by the pandemic and measures designed to reduce the economic damage of both the virus and infectious disease control measures (OneNews1A7; OneNews1A18). Some of the articles cover how individuals and businesses may seek government assistance in the form of financial relief package to address some of the stresses caused by the pandemic (OneNews1A12, OneNews1A17).

Under the Treatment Recommendation sub-frame, ten articles refer to preventive measures and national measures to prevent, contain and limit spread of the virus. Several articles focus on the NZ governments national alert systems (OneNews1A1, OneNews1A5, OneNews1A6). They outline the different 'levels' of the alert system that aim to identify COVID-19 cases, isolate infectious people, and restrict the transmission of the virus through the implementation of different regulations (which includes but is not limited to; restrictions on travel, social and economic activities, and school closures) (OneNews1A8, OneNews1A7).

¹³ Nationwide regulatory system implemented by the New Zealand government to address the outbreak of COVID-19

4.2.2.3 Stuff News

In my analysis of Stuff News, I find that the most dominant frame is the Societal Frame (95 percent of the articles make a reference to this frame), followed by the Medical Frame (65 percent), and Behavioural Frame (35 percent).

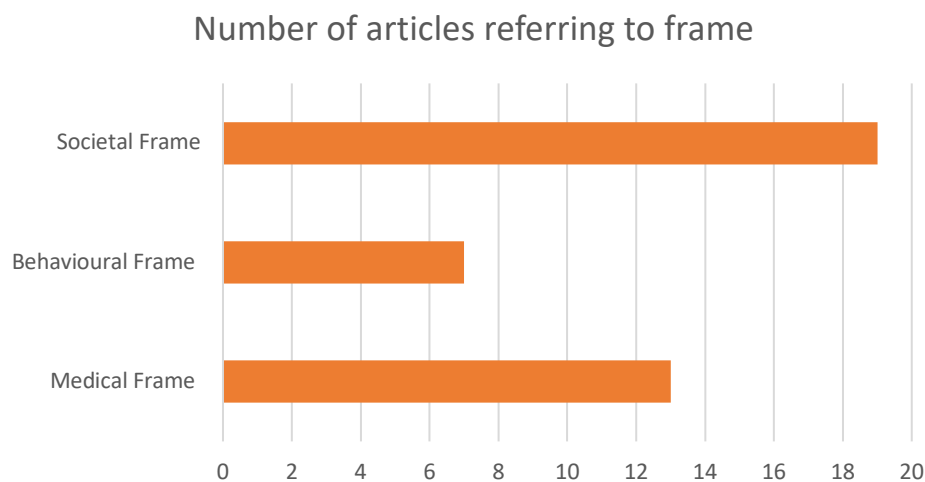


Figure 4.6: Number of articles referring to each frame

Behavioural Frame

Stuff News present discussions relevant to COVID-19's impact on peoples lives and day to day norms, which fits within the Behavioural Frame. Articles cover how people are adopting more cautious behaviors to keep themselves safe (StuffNews1A18). For instance, the lives of so-called 'doomsday preppers' (whose choices to prepare for disasters) are described as being alternative or extreme prior to the pandemic, are now key sources of information about how people should prepare for lockdowns (StuffNews1A9).

Medical Frame

The Medical Frame is evident in Stuff News' reporting by their focus on the work of medical staff working in the COVID-19 space, to provide support and advice on how COVID-19 impacts peoples health (See Table 4.7).

Table 4.7 Stuff News reporting relevant to three of the four frame components under the Medical Frame

	Key discussions
Moral Evaluation	Article 4 outlines that “health experts are so worried by the lack of Coronavirus planning for Māori by the government”, the article raises questions about who is involved in planning efforts in regard to addressing COVID-19 (Parahi, 2020, p. 2). It draws attention to the lack of representation and involvement of Māori in decision-making which significantly influences them. Some of the critiques toward the New Zealand government are led by health experts and Māori leaders.
Problem Definition	With the WHO’s pandemic declaration, article 10 covers that with the announcement, there needs to be proactive responses by governments to limiting the spread of the virus but also preparing “hospitals ready to handle an influx of patients” (Keogh, 2020, p. 3). Stuff News further highlight the scale of COVID-19 which has and will impact nations in the long run. They center their Problem Definition discussions around some of the uncertainty about COVID-19 and how contagious it is, Stuff also draw attention to ill-informed notions by governments seeking to eradicate the virus in a matter of weeks (StuffNews1A10, StuffNews1A19).
Treatment Recommendation	In article 17 by Stuff News, they outline how medical centers have placed restrictions and new regulations over how medical professionals will interact with patients during the pandemic. For instance, the Ellerslie Medical Centre, have suspended walk-in services and have placed a hold on accepting new patients. Off the back of medical experts, article 10 and 12 shed light on some of the symptoms people should be on the lookout for to spot early symptoms of COVID-19. Lastly, Stuff presents an outline of the role experts are playing in alleviating public uncertainty and addressing misinformation about the Coronavirus such as COVID-19 being the flu.

Societal Frame

Stuff News cover an array of issues relevant to the Societal frame and its component (sub-frames). Under the Moral Evaluation sub-frame, article four outlines the exclusion of Māori viewpoints in COVID-19 strategies. Under sub-frame Problem Definition, Stuff News refer to a myriad of issues surrounding the impacts COVID-19 on NZ. For example, the short-term impacts of cancelling of flights due travel restrictions as well as the short and longer-term impacts on the housing market (StuffNews1A20), immigration (StuffNews1A16), and the economy (Volweiller, 2020, p. 3).

Stuff News reporting that employs the Treatment Recommendation sub-frame, focuses on addressing misinformation and discusses NZ’s responses to past pandemics and measures to prevent COVID-19. For instance, Articles nine and 12 highlight myths about the Coronavirus, and provides information to the public to combat misinformation. Other articles focus on how the NZ governments response to COVID-19 was informed by the lessons learnt from past

experiences of pandemics and viruses (StuffNews1A1, StuffNews1A3). Geoffrey Rice, Professor of History at Canterbury University, is quoted in one article:

“Our Pandemic Plan has worked well, and the government has done all the right things to contain this threat. This is in great contrast to 1918, when we had no plan, no antibiotics and a Health Department that was pathetically understaffed and hopelessly complacent” (Mitchell, 2020, p. 8).

The NZ governments requirement that people arriving in the country from overseas self-isolate for 14 days is evidence of preventive measures designed to limit the spread of the virus (StuffNews1A19). From the 11th to the 24th March 2020, most articles from sample period one in my analysis of Stuff News, praise the NZ governments efforts to limit the impacts of the virus.

4.3 Second sample period: Confirmation of first COVID-19 case in each nation

4.3.3 United States

4.3.3.1 CNN Wire

In their coverage of sample period two, from the 21st January to 3rd February 2020, CNN Wire predominantly frame the first U.S. case of COVID-19 through the Medical Frame. Over the two week time period this thesis analysed, I find that CNN primarily focuses on the frame components of Causal Attribution and Treatment Recommendation. The frame component of Problem Definition – under the Medical Frame type – was one of the least covered. Under this component, CNN2A12 discusses some of the stresses medical institutions have experienced due to COVID-19. The Societal Frame is the second most adopted frame by CNN during sample period two, with 80% of reporting referring to the Societal Frame and 70% of articles primarily adopting the frame component of Treatment Recommendation. The Behavioural Frame is the least referred to frame, with four articles (20%) alluding to peoples behaviors. With all the framing types, not all frame components were covered by CNN Wire.

For instance, in the Behavioural Frame, the frame components of Causal Attribution, Moral Evaluation and Problem Definition are all not covered by CNN's coverage of sample period two. Furthermore, in the Medical and Societal Frame, there is no reference by the former to the frame component of Moral Evaluation. The latter is not inclusive of the Problem Definition component.

Behavioural Frame: Treatment Recommendation

Relevant to the Behavioural frame and frame component of Treatment Recommendation, CNN cover the actions of a man meant to be in quarantine who tried to flee a base that housed American citizens who were evacuated out of Wuhan due to increasing COVID-19 cases. The inappropriate actions of this individual is covered by CNN as feeding into the anxiety of many Americans regarding the increasingly prominent presence of COVID-19 in the U.S. (CNN2A17).

In response to growing fear amongst the public about COVID-19, CNN Wire covers preventive measures which the public should adopt to keep safe and limit the possibility of virus transmission. CNN2A14 and CNN2A17 outline precautionary measures such as taking personal responsibility when feeling ill to stay home and when in public to practice good hygiene.

Medical Frame: Causal Attribution

The United States first COVID-19 case is covered by CNN as an issue of immediate concern. In response to the first case, CNN outline details about the person of interest – their age, travel history and how they have may have been exposed to the virus (CNN2A11; CNN2A13). CNN's coverage of the first U.S. case of COVID-19 predominantly draws on information released by the CDC. CNN frames the first case through a medical lens in which they cover the state of the Coronavirus in the U.S., risk of community infection, and provide medically backed and medically informed information about the first Coronavirus case – causal factors leading to first case (CNN2A15).

Table 4.8: Causal Attribution identified in examination of CNN Wire relevant to the Medical Frame

Causal Attribution	Key CNN Wire discussions of Causal Attribution
Community transmission	News out of China that the Coronavirus can be spread from person to person is outlined as a key Causal Attribution (CNN2A1; CNN2A18). The confirmation by the CDC that person to person transmission has now occurred in the U.S. is outlined by CNN as a major cause for concern for the public and the U.S. government (CNN2A7; CNN2A11).
Medical uncertainty	Early in COVID-19's development, initial reports suggested that the virus was unlikely to lead to human transmission (CNN2A6). However, as more became known about COVID-19, article 14 published on the 1 st of February 2020 outlines the CDC saying, "at this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably this virus is spreading between people" (Yan, 2020, p. 3). Be it the possibly of person-to-person transmission, or the ease in which the Coronavirus spreads, many medical uncertainties early in COVID-19's development are covered by CNN as Causal Attributions.
Origin of virus	In the early stages of COVID-19, finding the origin of the virus was a key focus area, and thus, CNN focuses on the origin of the virus (CNN2A12). Determining where the virus stemmed from is covered by CNN as crucial to tracing how the virus has been able to infect people (CNN2A11).

Medical Frame: Treatment Recommendation

In sample period two of this thesis, the Treatment Recommendation frame component is the most commonly employed component by CNN. In this period, 70% of CNN Wire articles cover a vast array of preventive measures. This is indicative of the growing national and international concern (at the time) of large scale outbreaks – now that the U.S. had confirmed their first case. A prominent focus by CNN on preventive measures that individuals need to adopt in light of the United States' first case, as well as their focus on national/global efforts that have and will be taken to mitigate and adapt to COVID-19, suggests that their framing of sample period two is mainly concerned with how the virus ought to be contained and mitigated against. As such, CNN focus on the actions which individuals may adopt to limit the spread of the virus (CNN2A14), as well as a focus on large scale efforts (e.g screening passengers at airports and travel restrictions) which have been adopted in light of advice by the CDC to address the pandemic (CNN2A4; CNN2A15).

Societal Frame: Causal Attribution

"There are now fears, however, that efforts to contain it are too late, hampered by a slow-moving Chinese bureaucracy which failed to put sufficient measures in place in time" (Griffiths & Gan, 2020, p. 1).

Article six of CNN's sample period two coverage shows that they attribute blame to China for the Coronavirus. CNN cover that China were slow to respond to the virus, and their apparent lack of transparency led to the exacerbation of the virus in other nations due to inability of nations to prepare. Early on in COVID-19's development, my analysis shows that six out of 20 articles refer to the Coronavirus as the 'Wuhan virus' and declare that deaths from COVID-19 were a consequence of Wuhan, the nation of China as a whole, as well as Chinese Governments response to the virus (that is declared as ineffective) (CNN2A1; CNN2A11; CNN2A9).

Societal Frame: Moral Evaluation

Two dominant themes arise from CNN's sample period two coverage: through the lens of Moral Evaluation, my analysis finds that CNN Wire focuses on moral panic due to misinformation and moral panic due to the uncertainty of COVID-19. CNN2A10 outlines the concerns of authorities about the spread of misinformation online (about disease transmission and treatments). The upswing in misinformation follows on from the announcement (by the WHO and CDC) of the U.S.'s first confirmed COVID-19 case. Additionally, two articles (CNN2A16 and CNN2A17) describe the rising panic amongst populations due to the increasing number of people infected with the virus overseas, uncertainties about the virus (transmission, treatments, government responses), and the spread of COVID-19 misinformation.

Societal Frame: Treatment Recommendation

In response to the first case of Coronavirus in the U.S., and increasing cases of COVID-19 globally, CNN focus prominently on actions that have and are going to be taken to combat the spread of the virus. These include efforts to ensure that COVID-19 is not spread through air travel and the emergency evacuation of U.S. citizens from Wuhan. CNN2A1 covers how flights from the U.S. to China are being cancelled or halted until further notice. Other articles describe health screening being introduced at U.S. airports (CNN2A15), and the increase in resources allocated to Coronavirus efforts as the U.S. Federal Government declare COVID-19 as a public health emergency (CNN2A5).

4.3.3.2 PBS NewsHour

Sample period two is covered by Newshour mainly through the Societal Frame. Eighty-five per cent of articles focus on this frame type and frame components of Causal Attribution, Problem Definition, and Treatment Recommendation. The frame component Moral Evaluation was not found by my analysis of Newshour's coverage of the U.S.'s first COVID-19 case. Closely following the Societal Frame, the second most referred to frame is the Medical Frame, covered by 80 percent of PBS articles. Fifteen per cent of articles focus on the Behavioural Frame – specifically the frame component of Treatment Recommendation.

Behavioural Frame: Treatment Recommendation

Panic buying as well as increased demand for personal protective equipment are key focusses of NewsHour relevant to the Behavioural Frame. In response to COVID-19 cases increasing, NewsHour2A11 describes people panic buying goods and supermarket shelves being empty as supermarkets struggle to restock their shelves (NewsHour2A17). In another example of NewsHour's inclusion of the Behavioural Frame, NewsHour2A8 outlines passenger protests of a man from Wuhan on the same flight as them:

“On a flight from Amsterdam to China, frightened passengers protested when they realised that a man from Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak, would be on the plane” (Koenig et al., 2020, p.1)

Medical Frame: Causal Attribution

My analysis of sample period two unveils that NewsHour covers how a large outbreak of COVID-19 in the U.S. could emerge because of the simultaneous presence of the virus alongside the seasonal influenza (NewsHour2A17). NewsHour2A14 argues that each year thousands of deaths in the U.S. are caused by influenza (it reports that influenza-related deaths are higher than COVID-19-related deaths). Therefore the Coronavirus is something that could interact with and worsen flu-related morbidity and mortality rates. NewsHour also identifies increased community transmission as another issue of concern amongst medical experts (NewsHour2A10; NewsHour2A14). Community transmission coupled with the flu season and the medical uncertainties surrounding COVID-19 are key Causal Attributions throughout the coverage of sample period two by NewsHour.

Medical Frame: Treatment Recommendation

NewsHour outlines a vast array of preventive measures. These include what infection control measures are being implemented overseas (before the U.S.'s first confirmed case) and those that could be enacted in the U.S. once community outbreaks occur. NewsHour's coverage of preventive measures focuses on domestic responses due in light to growing global cases of COVID-19 (table 4.9).

Table 4.9: Table of prominence showing most frequent preventive measures identified in my analysis of NewsHour from sample period two

Preventive measure	NewsHour discussion of measure
Self-isolation	NewsHour discuss that a key preventive measure to limit not only the spread of the Coronavirus, but limit possibility of infection is to self-isolate (NewsHour2A13; NewsHour2A14)
Travel restrictions	The second most covered preventive measure by NewsHour is travel restrictions, this is to limit those going into the U.S. and also limit those travelling to nations with high numbers of COVID-19 infection (NewsHour2A4; NewsHour2A4).
Airport screening	To mitigate and adapt to the ever-developing nature of COVID-19, NewsHour depicts growing airport screening aimed at limiting spread of virus by address probable cases early (NewsHour2A1; NewsHour2A7)

Societal Frame: Causal Attribution

The first Causal Attribution identified in my thematic analysis of sample period two shows that NewsHour attributes blame to China for their apparent inaction or slow action at the start of the Coronavirus pandemic. The news agency reports that China's control on information about the virus is a consequence of China's communist government. NewsHour further argues that the lack of transparency about COVID-19 from China paralysed and delayed global preparation to address the pandemic (NewsHour2A15; NewsHour2A20).

Another Causal Attribution found in my analysis is a focus by NewsHour on some of the uncertainties about different facets of COVID-19 (such as infectiousness of patients and incubation period) which were difficult to comprehend early in COVID-19's development (NewsHour2A11; NewsHour2A15). These uncertainties are outlined in NewsHour as central to the spread of the virus. Lastly, 55 per cent of articles outline a Causal Attribution to community transmission, pointing out that the risk to the American public remains low,

however, now that the U.S. has recorded its first case – it is paramount that the community remains ready in the case of an outbreak (NewsHour2A10; NewsHour2A15).

Societal Frame: Problem Definition

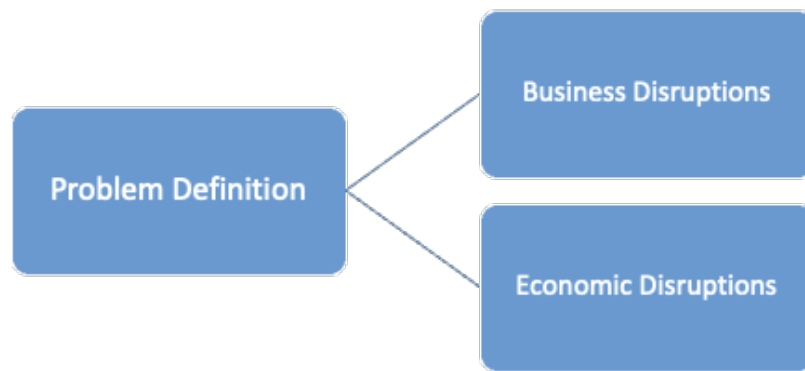


Figure 4.7: Key Problem Definition discussions by NewsHour identified in my analysis

NewsHour cover the potential and forthcoming challenges business in the U.S. and globally will experience as the Coronavirus limits production, trade, and supply of goods and services (NewsHour2A12). From Fast-food restaurants to airlines, grocery stores and numerous businesses in the tourism sector, NewsHour focuses on the impacts COVID-19 has and will have on companies (NewsHour2A19). Be it the stock market, the value of national currencies, and or global debt, NewsHour2A12 outlines some of the key economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of the U.S. economy.

Societal Frame: Treatment Recommendation

Sixty percent of NewsHour articles focus on preventive measures. NewsHour focuses its coverage on how the U.S. could reduce large scale COVID-19 outbreaks in response to the U.S.'s first case. For instance, NewsHour2A15 outlines that airport screening will play a more prominent role in preventing the virus from spreading. Several articles detail how the U.S., like many other nations, have implemented travel restrictions in and out of the U.S. (NewsHour2A19). These preventive measures being implemented in the U.S. (screening of travellers and restricting flights from China) are outlined as the most efficient and effective measures to combat the exponential growth of cases.

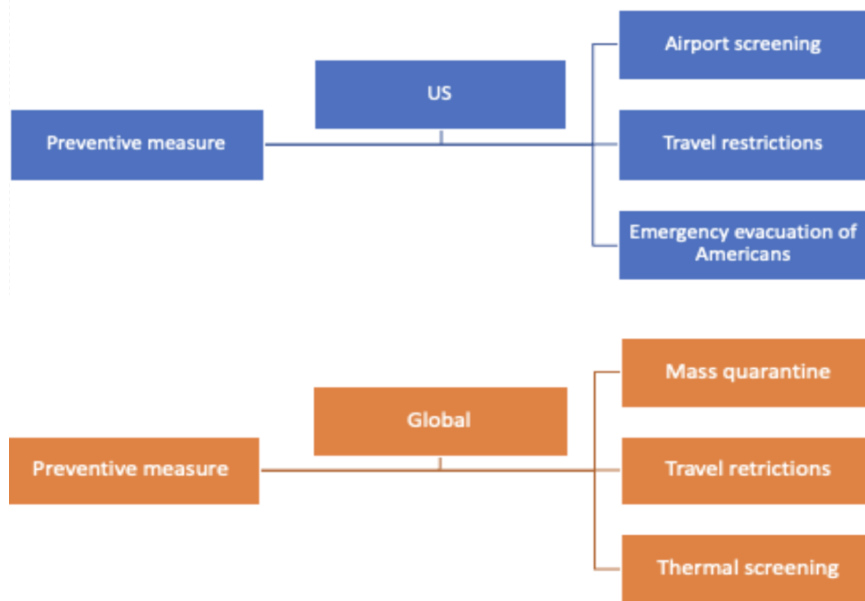


Figure 4.8: U.S. and global preventive measures identified in the analysis of NewsHour

4.3.3.3 Fox News.com

The primary frame type adopted by Fox News in their sample period two coverage is the Medical Frame. My Framing Analysis finds that only two of the four frame components (in the Medical Frame) are covered by Fox News: Causal Attribution and Treatment Recommendation. Ninety percent of articles examined in this thesis from Fox News.com refers to the Medical Frame. My analysis yields that the Behavioural Frame – the focus on peoples actions and behaviors during a pandemic – is not covered by Fox News in sample period two. However, the Societal Frame is covered by Fox News, with 75 percent of articles outlining a societal focus of the United States first COVID-19 case. The two main frame component focuses of Fox News are Causal Attribution and Treatment Recommendation.

Medical Frame: Causal Attribution

Early in COVID-19's development, much uncertainty surrounds different facets of the virus. Fox News's Causal Attribution focus on the unknowns about the virus; such as origins of the virus and how it became transmissible to humans (including locating animal hosts and the place of original of the outbreak) (FoxNews2A15). These unknowns are depicted by Fox News

as causing the spread of the virus and thus has resulted in the U.S. reporting its first case of COVID-19 on 21st January 2020 (FoxNews2A5; FoxNews2A9).

Table 4.10: Causal Attribution identified in examination of Fox News.com relevant to the Medical Frame

Causal Attribution	Causal Attribution discussions by Fox News.com
Community transmission	The announcement by the CDC of the U.S.'s first COVID-19 case and subsequent person-to-person community transmission of the virus is identified by Fox News as a key Causal Attribution to spreading the virus (FoxNews2A1). Developments out of China and information released by the WHO that an infected individual can spread the virus to numerous others, and knowledge that infection rates are exponential – is a key concern of Fox News identify as the U.S. deal with its first COVID-19 case (FoxNews2A3; FoxNews2A19; FoxNews2A20).
Medical uncertainty	A key uncertainty regarding COVID-19 identified by Dr. Nancy Messonnier, from the CDC, and covered by Fox News is how infectious patients are before showing symptoms. This is identified as a key 'lag time' and issue which is depicted by Fox News as a Causal Attribution contributing to the spread of the virus (FoxNews2A2).
China	Fox News includes the input of medical analyst Dr. Marc Siegel who attributes much blame to the apparent slow and 'reckless' response of China to the Coronavirus. Siegel says that China were far too slow in responding to reports of an infection virus making people ill, and thus FoxNews2A6 attributes blame to the Chinese.

Medical Frame: Treatment Recommendation

As a result of growing concern about the development of COVID-19 globally and news that the U.S. has now confirmed a Coronavirus case, 60 per cent of Fox News.com articles outline measures that have and will be taken to mitigate and adapt to the rapid development of COVID-19. One action covered in FoxNews2A11 is identifying the virus's origin and ensuring that flights from either Wuhan or China are cancelled, or the passengers self-isolate upon arrival in the U.S.. The CDC and other health organisations have informed these measures, and therefore, these Fox News discourses are coded to the Medical Frame. Another measure erected in response to the first case in the U.S. is increased screening at airports to ensure those arriving have no symptoms of COVID-19 and are aware of quarantine procedures they must follow (FoxNews2A20).

Societal Frame: Causal Attribution

Fox News critiques China's response to the Coronavirus through the Causal Attribution frame (FoxNews2A5). FoxNews2A5 accuses Chinese authorities of turning a domestic health issue

into a global pandemic due to their underreporting of "the number of cases" and understating the "risks of the new Coronavirus" (Farber, 2020, p. 1).

Societal Frame: Treatment Recommendation

Table 4.11: Preventive measures identified in my analysis of Fox News from sample period two

U.S. preventive measures	Global preventive measures
The development of vaccines to combat COVID-19 is identified by Fox News.com as a key preventive measure which needs collaboration across different government agencies (FoxNews2A2; FoxNews2A13). The confirmation of the first Coronavirus case in the U.S. – Fox News states, requires that a vaccine is developed to ensure that the U.S. is able to return quickly to some sort of normality.	At the beginning of COVID-19's development, Fox News focus on the measures other nations are taking and assess the feasibility of such measures in the U.S., for example, they cover "China expands its unprecedented lockdown of 39 million people to contain the reach of the pneumonia-like virus" (Casiano, 2020, p. 1).
To ensure the safety of Americans, and to limit the possibility of community outbreaks of the Coronavirus, Fox covers national efforts which have and will be implemented to minimise the spread of COVID-19 – this being airport screenings and cancellation of flights to and from China (FoxNews2A3; FoxNews2A4; FoxNews2A9).	Fox covers that in response to the virus, transport from and to areas of interest such as Wuhan have been cut off from other regions in China (FoxNews2A; FoxNews2A10), such measures the U.S. are looking to implement as well.

4.4.4 New Zealand media

4.4.4.1 The New Zealand Herald

The most prominent frame referred to by the New Zealand Herald is the Societal Frame. In covering New Zealand's first confirmed COVID-19 case, 85 percent of articles under the Societal Frame focus on an array of impacts that COVID-19 will have on the New Zealand economy and different businesses – these discussions were coded to the Problem Definition component. The Medical Frame – covered by 40 percent of articles – is the second most covered frame type. Whereas the Behavioural Frame – the focus on the actions and behaviors of individuals amid a pandemic – is covered by 15 per cent of articles (figure 4.9).

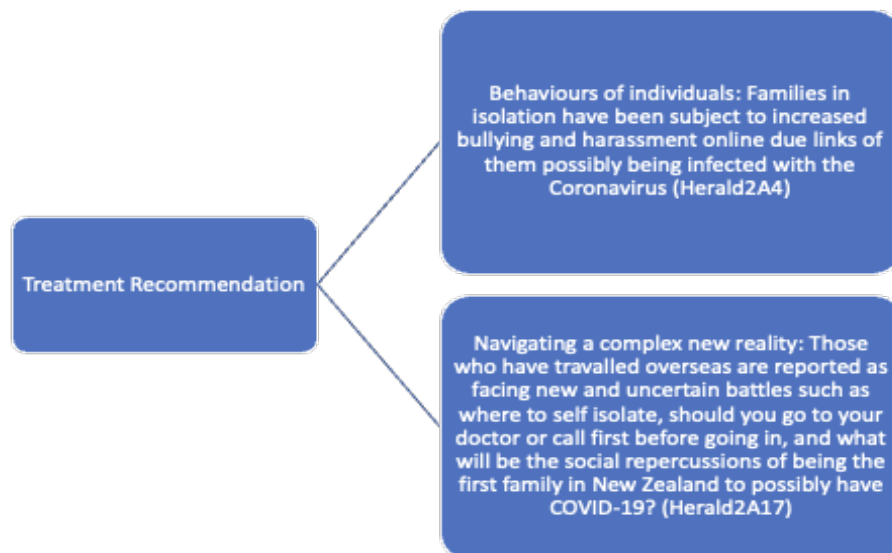


Figure 4.9: A focus by the New Zealand Herald on the actions and behaviours of people whilst COVID-19 becomes ever more present in Aotearoa

Medical Frame: Causal Attribution

Against the background of New Zealand confirming their first COVID-19 case, the Herald present a prominent focus on the increased measures to contain the virus in Aotearoa – such as contact tracing. Article 15 outlines the Health Department’s scramble to locate and contact (track and trace) passengers who travelled on various domestic flights alongside the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in New Zealand. The country’s Director-General of Health, Ashley Bloomfield, and the Ministry of Health are reported as suggesting that there is only a tiny chance that the first COVID-19 case will result in a broader spread of the virus (a community outbreak), however, the difficulty of tracing down those who may have been infected by New Zealand’s original case is outlined by the Herald as a Causal Attribution (Herald2A4; Herald2A8).

Medical Frame: Problem Definition

Context-specific discussions which the New Zealand Herald report under the Problem Definition frame component include a focus on the scale of COVID-19 and how prepared New Zealand are to the virus (Herald2A19). The Herald also discusses concerns of health care workers who question the ability of the New Zealand healthcare system to withstand large community outbreaks as New Zealand record their first case (article 3).

Medical Frame: Preventive measures

The Herald outlines some of the logistical challenges that COVID-19 presents for New Zealand. These include the Ministry of Health's plan to trace those deemed to be close contacts of people who test positive for the virus. The process of tracking and tracing close contacts – the outlet reports – as time-consuming and requires all involved parties to provide pinpoint accurate details (which may not always be the case) (Herald2A15). The newspaper also describes the travel bans (based on the advice of medical experts) being introduced for travelers from nations (China, Iran, and Italy) that are experiencing high COVID-19 infection rates (Herald2A14). Article 19 lastly reports on the collaborative works of different government agencies and various professions attempting to raise awareness about COVID-19 within New Zealand and provide practical advice for New Zealanders on how they can stay safe and prepare for an outbreak.

Societal Frame: Causal Attribution

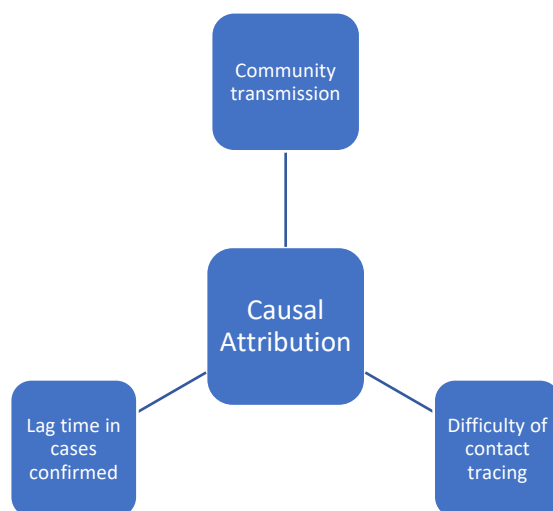


Figure 4.10: Key themes identified in the analysis of the New Zealand Herald under the frame component of Causal Attribution

Despite only recording one confirmed case of COVID-19, sustained community transmission is outlined as a primary Causal Attribution (Herald2A15). The long process of contact tracing and lag time in confirming a positive Coronavirus case are two other Causal Attributions that the Herald cover (Herald2A4; Herald2A10).

Societal Frame: Problem Definition

Out of the 85 percent of articles that make a Societal Frame reference, 70 percent (14) of those articles were coded under the Problem Definition component. The prominent focus of the Herald on this component indicates that they have discussed the impacts of the Coronavirus on New Zealand and have outlined what a confirmed case means for different sectors of Aotearoa's society. For example, Herald2A5 urges businesses to prepare for COVID-19 and to plan for long periods without customers in person. Additionally, the Herald outlines some of the 'cushioning' which the government intends to provide for people who may lose their jobs and face economic hardships due to COVID-19. The central focus of the Herald under the frame component of Problem Definition is the immediate and long-term impacts that COVID-19 will have on New Zealand.

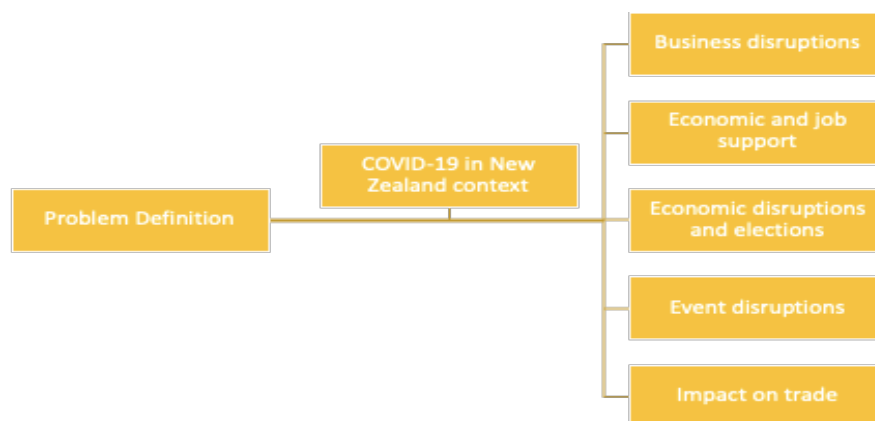


Figure 4.11: Problem Definition discussions by the Herald in light of growing presence of COVID-19 in Aotearoa

Societal Frame: Treatment Recommendation

In my analysis of sample period two, I identify that the Herald covers the various preventive measures which will be introduced to address a wide spread outbreak. Herald2A6 reports on how many retirement villages are working with different sectors to formulate plans about managing the risk of the virus spreading amongst retirement villages. These include the potential for visiting residents of retirement villages to be restricted and the need to ensure strict infection control procedures and wearing of protective equipment amongst staff. The newspaper notes that the rate of severe illness and death amongst the elderly is higher than

younger generations (based on COVID-19 morbidities and mortalities in China, India, and Iran) and therefore argues that such actions are vitally important to save lives.

4.4.4.2 TVNZ's One News

My analysis of One News yields that the Societal Frame is the most adopted frame used to cover New Zealand's first case of COVID-19 (figure 4.12). Eighty-five per cent of reports focus on (both current and potential) impacts of the Coronavirus on New Zealand, including political and business impacts. The Medical Frame is the second most referred to frame by One News, which predominantly focuses on the preventive measures that could be taken to mitigate the spread and extent of the virus in New Zealand. Under the Moral Evaluation component in the Medical Frame, One News covers peoples increasing anxieties and feelings of uncertainty about the virus and the reality of living during the COVID-19 pandemic. Three out of the twenty articles examined in this thesis from One News present a Behavioural frame focus, with discussions focusing on peoples shopping habits after the announcement of New Zealand's first Coronavirus case and the need to combat the spread of misinformation about the virus online.

Number of articles referring to frame

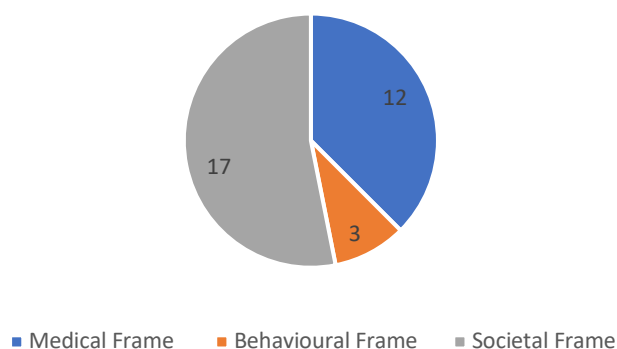


Figure 4.12: Number of articles referring to each Frame type

Behavioural Frame: Treatment Recommendation

Although citizen behavior amid a pandemic is often a focal point of media coverage (Thomas et al., 2020), the reporting from One News does not prominently focus on peoples behaviors.

A small amount of One News reports draws attention to increasing levels of demand by New Zealanders in regard to acquiring protective equipment (e.g facial masks). OneNews2A10 for instance, describes how "since the announcement of New Zealand's first confirmed case of Coronavirus, google searches for masks have spiked", and stores nationwide have struggled to keep up with customer demands (p.1). As the Coronavirus became more of a concern in New Zealand, OneNews2A12 outlines that people were worried about the potential that they will suffer online harassment if it becomes known they are infected.

Medical Frame: Causal Attribution

Drawing on information provided by the Ministry of Health, One News covers major issues surrounding how the COVID-19 outbreak is likely to occur in New Zealand, including community transmission and the need for contact tracing of new cases (OneNews2A8; OneNews2A15). At the time of New Zealand's first case being identified, it was unclear how many people were infected with the virus in the country. Thus, One News reports on the uncertainties about the spread of the COVID-19 (as a Causal Attribution). It quotes public health experts who argue that it is inevitable that the Coronavirus will result in community outbreaks in New Zealand (OneNews2A17).

Medical Frame: Treatment Recommendation

The limited medical knowledge at the time about COVID-19 meant uncertainties about virus transmission, prevention controls, and treatments in New Zealand. Director-General Ashley Bloomfield, at the time of Aotearoa's confirmation of the Coronavirus, says masks are "not very effective" (Macfarlane, 2020, p. 1). At the time, scientists did not know that facial covers could help reduce the spread of the virus as they did not realise that COVID-19 was an airborne virus (OneNews2A10). Despite these uncertainties, One News covers an array of infectious disease control measures that New Zealanders are (or would need to) undertake to address COVID-19. These include the deep cleaning of planes (if passengers are confirmed to be infected with the virus) and self-isolation for those who test positive for COVID-19 (OneNews2A12; OneNews2A8).

Societal Frame: Causal Attribution

One News shows that New Zealand communities are worried about the virus and its effects (OneNews2A18). The confirmation of New Zealand's first case heightened fears among people of large scale outbreaks (due to first confirmed case travelling on domestic flights) (OneNews2A1). In terms of One News' use of the Causal Attribution frame, this is directed at failures of the airport screening system to detect New Zealand's first case of the Coronavirus, and prevent the infected person from travelling on domestic flights.

Societal Frame: Problem Definition

One News discusses how businesses are likely to face disruptions due to COVID-19. OneNews2A19 outlines Air New Zealand's decision to drastically reduce the number of flights it offers because of COVID-19 travel restrictions being implemented nationally and globally. Under the frame component of Problem Definition, One News also discusses economic support and economic disruptions that businesses and the whole of New Zealand will experience because of COVID-19 (OneNews2A17). Article 17 focuses on the immediate and long-term economic impacts of COVID-19 – this is against the news of NZ's first confirmed case. Lastly, my thematic analysis finds that OneNews2A17 focuses on elections and the role that COVID-19 will play in who people vote for. One News covers how the global pandemic is likely to be a critical factor that people consider when they vote in national elections (such as the 2020 national election).

Societal Frame: Treatment Recommendation

Regarding the developing COVID-19 situation in New Zealand, One News covers the actions that will be implemented to fight the spread of the Coronavirus (table 4.12).

Table 4.12: Key Treatment Recommendation themes identified in my analysis of One News during sample period two

Treatment Recommendation	One News discussion of Treatment Recommendation
Preventive measures	The prompt and strict preventive methods implemented by New Zealand is well documented by One News (OneNews2A6; OneNews2A15), such as travel bans and self-isolation protocols. However, OneNews2A11 sheds light on some of the

	limitations of some methods. For example, airport screening, where New Zealand's first case slipped through undetected.
Actions of businesses	OneNews2A4 covers outrage which some people felt towards a car dealership who made light of the Coronavirus situation in New Zealand and proposed that people by cars now that they cannot use public transport.
Actions of politicians	OneNews2A5 covers a back and forth between Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and opposition leader of the National Party Simon Bridges, in which, Bridges critiques the Labour government and proposes that they not have specific plans to address COVID-19 (mostly now that it is in New Zealand). The National Party deputy, Paula Bennet, also critiques the governments response to COVID-19, this time pointing out that Ardern has not been transparent nor has been open about the COVID-19 situation in New Zealand (OneNews2A9).

4.4.4.3 Stuff News

Of the twenty articles examined in sample period two from Stuff News, the Societal Frame is the most referred to frame, with 95 percent of articles making a Societal reference. Sixty-five percent of articles make a medical reference, and 20 percent of reports allude to the Behavioural Frame. Across all the frame types, there is a focus by Stuff News on the impacts that COVID-19 will have on New Zealand communities, different job industries, and lastly, the challenges which the Coronavirus presents now that New Zealand has a confirmed case.

Behavioural Frame: Treatment Recommendation

Stuff News outlines the confirmation of New Zealand's first case as resulting in increased panic buying. StuffNews2A19 outlines a message by suppliers and store owners urging people to remain calm as stores nationwide experience significant spikes in demand for different goods.

Medical Frame: Causal Attribution

Two key themes arise in my analysis of sample period two regarding the Causal Attribution component. Firstly, Stuff News attribute blame to uncertainties that surround probable cases – those awaiting tests results will not have a confirmation for a number of days. Stuff News outlines this as causing anxiety amongst members of the public who may be close contacts (StuffNews2A4). Drawing on medical experts, another critical Causal Attribution covered by

Stuff News is the need to raise public awareness of the differences between COVID-19 and other similar viruses, such as the flu and the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) (StuffNews2A1; StuffNews2A13). This is because COVID-19 presents similar symptoms to the flu and SARS. Thus people may not be aware they are symptomatic of COVID-19.

Medical Frame: Problem Definition

Under the frame component of Problem Definition, Stuff News discusses critical issues brewing in New Zealand as a result of the first Coronavirus case in the country; addressing misinformation about COVID-19, and health professionals playing catch up due to the evolving nature of the pandemic (e.g transmission rates and mortality). StuffNews2A15, drawing on a plethora of experts from different fields, outlines the growing need for experts to be active in online spaces. This is to address the increasing prominence and spread of conspiracy theories about COVID-19. Lastly, Stuff News detail that the confirmation of New Zealand's first case means that a variety of agencies and professionals need to be ready for the worst. For example, health professionals in Canterbury were covered by Stuff News as concerned about the virus even though it had not yet reached the region (StuffNews2A12).

Medical Frame: Treatment Recommendation

Stuff News during sample period two (under the Treatment Recommendation component) focuses their coverage on the preventive measures which have been and will be taken to combat COVID-19. Half of the articles I have analysed present a focus on preventive measures. Some of these measures include the collaboration of different agencies to prepare the Canterbury region in case of a Coronavirus case in the Christchurch community¹⁴ (StuffNews2A12).

Societal Frame: Causal Attribution

My analysis finds three vital Causal Attributions in the coverage of sample period two by Stuff News (relevant to the Societal frame). The first attribution outlined by Stuff News is the unknowns regarding Coronavirus; specifically, the infection rate of the virus¹⁵, and person-to-

¹⁴ Who at the time had not yet confirmed a case in the region

¹⁵ Which early in COVID-19's development was not well understood

person transmission (StuffNews2A18). The elusiveness of the virus and its infection rate, therefore, is outlined by Stuff News through the Causal Attribution frame (StuffNews2A3).

Societal Frame: Problem Definition

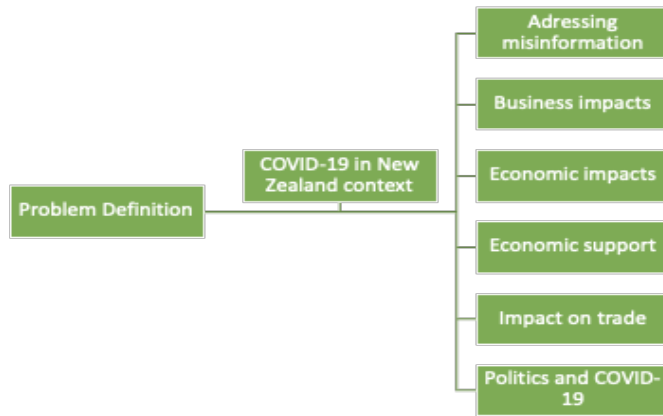


Figure 4.13: Problem Definition discussions found in the analysis of Stuff News

Firstly, my thematic analysis finds that StuffNews2A10 addresses some common conspiracy theories about COVID-19. Article ten draws on various experts to counter the growing prominence of conspiracy theories about the origin of the virus as New Zealand confirms their first case. Stuff News also cover the impacts that COVID-19 has and will continue to have on businesses across the country, with some businesses such as the New Zealand owned company Zoono sanitizer seeing record numbers of sales, and others, such as the tourism industry experiencing record low customer interest (see figure 4.13) (StuffNews2A14; StuffNews2A17).

Societal Frame: Treatment Recommendation

Two key themes arise in my analysis of Stuff News under the Societal Frame and frame component of Treatment Recommendation. Firstly, I find that Stuff News includes critiques of the Labour governments response to COVID-19. StuffNews2A16 outlines critiques by members of the National Party who argue that airport screenings "should cover all affected countries, not just China", this criticism has been raised in light of New Zealand's first case slipping through airport screening processes undetected (Wilson & Gullery, 2020, p. 5). Secondly, StuffNews2A17 says that the Labour government has been too technocratic in its approach – neglecting public awareness campaigns for macro level preventive measures.

Another critical theme identified in my analysis is that Stuff News focuses on preventive measures taken overseas to address cases of COVID-19. Stuff News in their coverage covers preventive measures implemented overseas and assess their feasibility in New Zealand. For example, StuffNews2A1 outlines 'cluster control' mechanisms, which were implemented in China with great success. This mechanism tests masses of people and isolates those who symptomatic. In line with other nations implementing travel restrictions, Stuff News cover that the New Zealand government, in response to New Zealand's first case, have and will continue to tighten travel restrictions as the Coronavirus becomes more prominent in Aotearoa (StuffNews2A5; StuffNews2A7).

4.8 Chapter summary

The chapter explored the findings from the Framing and Thematic Analysis. It reported on the most prominent Frame used by U.S. and New Zealand media to cover two key evolution periods of COVID-19. The Chapter outlined what media in both nations covered and placed emphasis upon as the virus became a global emergency, and also when the pandemic had infected people in the community (in both nations). The findings suggest that the Societal Frame was the most adopted Frame in sample period one, whereas the Medical Frame was most prominent in U.S. coverage of sample period two (all New Zealand outlets primarily use the Societal Frame to cover both sample periods). The following chapter builds upon the findings outlined in this chapter and positions my findings in the wider framing literature ecosystem.

Chapter 5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I draw together the evidence and analysis from Chapter Four to reflect on and address the research objectives outlined in Chapter One. The chapter explores how U.S. and New Zealand media framed COVID-19, and reflects upon how media coverage in both nations politicised the pandemic – a feature of global media coverage of the Coronavirus virus that is now well detailed in the literature.

The chapter examines how the selected media sources in the U.S. and New Zealand framed the pandemic in regards to the two sample periods. Accordingly, the following section identifies some of the key frame focusses of the media in their reporting of both periods. Section 5.2 further elaborates on the most dominant frame found in my analysis, and positions my findings against the backdrop of wider COVID-19 framing literature. Section 5.3 then dives into the politicisation of the pandemic, and how my results adhere to common themes found in other framing and public health communication research. Section 5.4 examines the second sample period of thesis and depicts how crucial community virus transmission is in the growth and 'grounding' of an infectious disease. Finally, the last section covers how important framing is in setting the tone in regards to what is known about a disease, such as COVID-19, and illustrates the influential role that framing has on who/what is thought of as to blame for the virus. The section also explores how framing impacts perceptions of and adherence to preventative measures.

5.2 Framing the pandemic: U.S. and New Zealand media

Central to this research was exploring the most dominant frame used by U.S. and New Zealand media to cover the Coronavirus pandemic. The results in chapter 4 demonstrate that the most prevalent frame in both sample periods is the Societal Frame. Under this frame, my analysis finds that both the U.S. and New Zealand media coverage chiefly concentrated on the impacts of the virus on each nation's economy, including the disruptions being (or

predicted to be) experienced by different sectors of the economy as well as preventive measures that were being (or could be) used to address these impacts. In reporting the confirmation of COVID-19 case(s) in the U.S. and New Zealand, my analysis yields that U.S. outlets (particularly CNN and Fox News) primarily adopt the Medical Frame in their coverage. In this frame, CNN and Fox News mainly employed a Causal Attribution component, which reflected their focus on the causes and factors that contributed to the spread of the virus. The Causal Attribution component was also tied to reporting on preventive measures (relevant to the Treatment Recommendation component). In New Zealand, the confirmation of their first case is primarily covered through the Society Frame, with content concerned with the political and business implications of the virus. The diversity in the coverage of U.S. and New Zealand outlets is indicative of the evolving nature of the pandemic early in its conception (Marling & Kasper, 2021). It mirrors an ever-growing pool of research outlining media framing the pandemic as diverse and often inconsistent in their focus(es), such as the salience afforded by the media to the idea that COVID-19 was engineered¹⁶. The continued use of terms such as 'Wuhan virus' to label COVID-19 when organisations such as the CDC advised against its use – this thesis denoted these critical themes under the Societal Frame.

The Societal Frame is often an indication that media coverage has neither drawn upon medical personals or health organisations to inform their reporting of a health issue (Thomas et al., 2020). Its presence reveals that media coverage has not been on health related topics – rather media reporting has devoted attention to the consequences and impacts of a health issue on society and the economy (Pan & Meng, 2016; Su et al., 2021). This however does not equate to negative nor misinformed framing of a health issue (Stefanik-Sidener, 2012). The presence of the Societal Frame can reflect the media playing a watchdog role in holding governments accountable for their (in)action in addressing a health matter (Tsao et al., 2021). In the case of my analysis, the Societal Frame encompasses an array of content relevant to national and international responses to the virus and critiques of government responses to the Coronavirus pandemic. For example, in sample period one, 95 per cent of CNN articles cover the Societal Frame, and in line with the Causal Attribution component, some of these articles argue that former U.S. President Donald Trump is mainly at fault due insufficient

¹⁶ Thorough investigations have yielded no evidence suggesting the virus was engineered (WHO, 2021)

efforts to ready the U.S. regarding COVID-19 preparedness. Contrastingly, outlets in New Zealand were far less critical of government efforts in comparison to U.S. media coverage of the Trump administration. This aligns with recent work showing the U.S. media ecosystem as divided and highly polarised (Jurkowitz, 2020). Lastly, my findings add further weight to a growing body of scholarship that depicts the New Zealand media setting as one which fosters healthy political discussions (Craig, 2021), and during the early stages of the Coronavirus pandemic, clearly articulated to the public the scale of the issue (Croucher et al., 2021).

My findings align with past work suggesting health issues are often conveyed in mainstream media as 'special stories', and that the first two weeks of coverage are highly intense (Vasterman & Ruigrok, 2013). The 'special' nature of health issues such as pandemics, Vasterman and Ruigrok argue, is tied to their global nature and the multiple biophysical, socio-cultural, political, and economic impacts in which pandemics have historically possessed. Consistent with the literature, this thesis, in its analysis of the first sample period, finds that the U.S. focuses on the Coronavirus's unprecedented scale. For instance, CNN covers the grandiose impacts the virus has had on the food system, and NewsHour covers how the pandemic has further exposed the fractured geopolitical relationships between the U.S. and nations like China and Iran. My findings, however, in sample period two differ from those of Evanega et al. (2020), who found that Fox News included reports in their coverage of the Coronavirus pandemic that not only downplayed the severity of the pandemic but referred to the virus as a Democrat Party hoax. In contrast to earlier research that the conservative outlet Fox News downplayed the scale of the Coronavirus pandemic, this research finds that Fox News primarily employed the Medical Frame to cover the confirmation of the U.S.'s first case. This difference in finding may be due to differences in sample period focusses and also the fact that my analysis concentrates on the first two weeks after the confirmation of the U.S.'s first case, a highly intense period in media coverage (Vasterman & Ruigrok, 2013).

A critical phase in the development of media interest in the Coronavirus pandemic (and other infectious diseases more generally) is the confirmation of a case within the media outlet's geographical (typically nation-state) boundaries (Eichelberger, 2007). My findings highlighted that the confirmation of the first case of COVID-19 in both national contexts (the U.S. and

New Zealand), resulted in a wealth of media reporting that employed either the Societal or Medical Frame. Like other existing studies on media coverage of health issues, U.S. media reports were informed by and heavily reliant on government and scientific institutions, organisations, and scientific or public health experts (Shih et al., 2011). Across most reporting in the U.S., I observed that when news organisations were seeking to communicate information about COVID-19 transmission and cases, an institution or person in a position of authority (be it a government official or a medical expert) was nearly always quoted (this differed to the New Zealand context). Therefore, in sample period one of this thesis, the medical lens was a unifying feature and theme throughout U.S. media outlets I examined (research objective two).

In line with the Societal Frame, my Framing Analysis shows that in response to the confirmation of a Coronavirus case in the country, outlets in New Zealand were mainly concerned with the impacts of the virus on businesses and the economy. This contrasts U.S. coverage of sample period one of this thesis. In New Zealand, each outlet emphasises short-term and long-term disruptions of the virus. In contrast, outlets in the U.S. – which primarily adopt the Medical Frame – focus on how to best mitigate and adapt in light of confirming their first COVID-19 case. The focus by New Zealand outlets on Coronavirus disruptions in the economy could be attributed to the strict and prompt government response in New Zealand (Mazey and Richardson, 2020), which is framed as impactful in preventing widespread transmission, but detrimental to a vast array of businesses such as the tourism industry. U.S. outlets' mitigation and adaptation focus could result from the exponential increase of cases shortly after the confirmation of their first (Ghio et al., 2021; Clark & Nickels, 2020). The sheer scale of COVID-19 and the rapidness with which the virus swept across the U.S. could explain the differences in coverage.

5.3 Politicisation of the Coronavirus pandemic

The politicisation of COVID-19 was a key theme I identified in chapter 4, paralleling previous works that showcase media reporting of health issues as saturated in politics (Entwistle, 1995; Nelkin, 1996; Vigso, 2010) and recent scholarship which depicts media framing of the Coronavirus pandemic as deeply entrenched in political discourses (Gondwe & Chen, 2021;

Abbas, 2021). A wide range of literature (historians, public health researchers and media scholars) highlight how health issues, especially infectious disease, were (and still are) frequently politicised by politicians and journalists (Bashford, 2006; Mutua & Ong'ong'a, 2020; Roozenbeek et al., 2020; Sibley et al., 2020). In response to the Coronavirus pandemic and regarding the role of the media in politicising a health issue, Ogbodo et al. (2020) argue that "as an institution saddled with the responsibility of disseminating information, mass media wields strong influence in shaping public opinion and decision making" (p. 257). The authors provide criticisms of how the media framed the Coronavirus pandemic. They say that media coverage was focused on ascribing blame for the pandemic (both the origin and global spread of the virus) to the nation of China, which was similarly noted in the articles I analysed (this will be covered more in this section). Although politicisation of an issue, as Gyfadottir et al. (2021) note, is not an inherently negative trait of media reporting, it can nevertheless deter from media coverage based on evidence and inclusion of expert opinions, to polarised and conflicting media coverage. Thus, political ideologies take precedence instead of public understanding of health issues as one of science and medicine. This can enable the proliferation of unfounded claims and exclusionary ideologies which posit a specific community as responsible for the origin and spread of a disease (Zeng, 2020).

As covered in chapter 2 (Literature Review), section 2.3.3, a common framing feature in media coverage of health issues is the Framing of Responsibility (Thomas et al., 2020). In past pandemics, this frame became synonymous with discriminatory rhetoric that would pinpoint subsets of people and communities as responsible for the genesis and spread of different viruses (McCauley et al., 2013). An example of the Framing of Responsibility is the endorsement by U.S. politicians of terms such as 'China virus' or 'Wuhan virus' to refer to the COVID-19 global pandemic (Bolsen et al., 2020). Chapter 4 illustrated that only NewsHour in the U.S. context predominantly framed sample period two through the Societal Frame in the current thesis. At the same time, CNN Wire and Fox News adopt the Medical Frame primarily. However, in line with Pan and Meng (2016) and with Sandell et al. (2013), who say that the adoption of a particular frame does not equate to 'quality' health media reporting or media coverage that is focused on evidenced-based discussions, my analysis, for example, illustrates that under the Medical Frame – Fox News express contrarian views and include perspectives largely dismissed by an array of academics and organisations. For instance, in article 15 by

Fox News in sample period two, one of the contrarian views allude to the slow response of China in addressing COVID-19 – a perspective dismissed by the WHO, which said that China (from the start of the virus) were quick to respond and continuedly put into place effective large-scale measures to address COVID-19 (Ogbodo et al., 2020).

My analysis found that in the U.S., all outlets included in my sample sets emit varying degrees of politicisation of the Coronavirus pandemic. For instance, CNN Wire, in my analysis of sample period one, articulates strong concerns over the Trump administration's (in)ability to see the U.S. through COVID-19. CNN reports declared that Trump and his administration were neglectful in adhering to health advice provided by health professionals regarding the most appropriate actions for addressing the pandemic. Analysis of PBS's NewsHour reveals that; NewsHour, under all three frame types (Medical, Behavioural, and Societal), present a political viewpoint. For example, under the Medical Frame, the outlet covers that the U.S. were slow in responding to the threat of the Coronavirus, and the government were ineffective in facilitating large scale COVID-19 testing (see also Motta et al., 2020). This finding in my analysis was also evident in a study by Jamieson and Albarracin (2020). They posit that the U.S. government was highly fragmented in communicating the Coronavirus crisis.

Media outlets in New Zealand included for analysis also demonstrate varying degrees of politicisation of the Coronavirus pandemic. In response to the WHO's declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic (sample period one of this thesis), The New Zealand Herald covers (to a lesser extent in comparison to U.S. outlets) that the Coronavirus restrictions implemented by the New Zealand government (social distancing) need to be re-evaluated due to impacts of the measure on how people can greet each other. Along similar lines, the announcement of COVID-19 as an issue of global concern by the WHO is reported by TVNZ's One News through a Societal Frame focus – where the outlet focuses prominently on the disruptions of the virus on businesses and subsequently the 'relief packages' made available to companies by the New Zealand government. The same theme of governmental support for companies and the economy, which I observed in TVNZ's One News media coverage of COVID-19 within the New Zealand context, has been noted by the literature as a central media theme prominent in media coverage of the current pandemic (Ogbodo et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2021; Aljanabi; 2021). This indicates that even in COVID-19's infancy (from a global perspective), the

sheer scale of the pandemics' projected economic impact was of significant concern for different industries in New Zealand. Lastly, my analysis of Stuff News showed that they draw attention (under the Societal Frame and frame component Moral Evaluation) to the lack of Māori views and perspectives included about the most appropriate measures to adopt concerning pandemic strategies. This aligns with the point Gylfadottir et al. (2021) makes about politicisation, where they suggest that politicisation of an issue does not inherently mean negative or ill-informed media coverage. In this case, the focus by One News on the lack of indigenous input into COVID-19 strategies – depicts the informative and watchdog role of the media in disseminating public health information (Croucher et al., 2021).

Like the U.S. outlets included for analysis in sample period two, the outlets of New Zealand present a political lens that centers on the impacts the virus may have on different areas of New Zealand's society. However, contrary to the outlets of the U.S. in sample period two, where 90 percent of all U.S. articles make a Medical Frame reference, all three outlets from New Zealand primarily adopt the Societal Frame to cover the second sample period. As Thomas et al. (2020) find, when a nation confirmed their first case of COVID-19 or when a country experiences increased instances of the virus, the media primarily focus on the mediate and probable long-term effects of the Coronavirus. My analysis likewise finds that the outlets of New Zealand in sample period two focus predominantly on the impacts of the virus. As confirmed cases of the virus started to increase in New Zealand, all three outlets present coverage that focus on or around the frame component Problem Definition. Such a focus indicates that the outlets focus their coverage on context-specific discussions¹⁷ (Matthes & Kohring, 2008; Thomas et al., 2020). For example, the outlet reports on the impacts of the virus on New Zealand businesses, such as those in the tourism sector, where the number of flights offered by Air New Zealand significantly decreased. They also report on how places like Canterbury, which at the time of the article had not recorded Coronavirus case, needed to prepare for the inevitable arrival of the virus. All these discussions are innate to the New Zealand context and provide insight into the political lens adopted by the media to cover the pandemic.

¹⁷ This is to say, the outlets present content solely concerned with either the US and or New Zealand.

My findings are consistent with framing literature positing that media framing of COVID-19 contributed to the politicisation of the Coronavirus pandemic (Roozenbeek et al., 2020; Sibley et al., 2020; Eichelberger, 2007; Abdel-Rahem & Alkhamash, 2021). My analysis not only reveals the different frame(s) adopted by the media during their coverage of COVID-19, it also highlights the prominent focus of the outlets examined on aspects of the Coronavirus which fuel political discussions, which have been highlighted as deterring pandemic discussions concerned with evidence to discussions informed/driven by fear and misunderstanding (Gylfadottir et al., 2021).¹⁸ The results of my Framing and Thematic Analysis demonstrate that the media in the U.S. and New Zealand in both sample periods contributed varying degrees of politicisation regarding COVID-19. This is consistent with recent literature outlining media coverage of the pandemic as fragmented and often too reliant on the voices of politicians in communicating the Coronavirus pandemic (Matamoros & Elias, 2020). The primary reliance on politicians as sources of Coronavirus information may steer public perceptions toward political viewership of the pandemic and less focus on the virus as a health issue that warrants chief articulation by health professionals (Rutten et al., 2021).

5.4 The Coronavirus in the community: A crucial development phase

Virus transmission is a vital development stage that garners considerable media coverage (Ophir et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2013). Reynolds and Seeger (2020) state that different kinds of crises manifest different public responses and different media coverage. For example, a disaster like a flood may result in people stockpiling food, water and other supplies, with media coverage often focusing on residents drinking bottled water instead of tap water due to the risk of becoming sick from contaminated water. In contrast, the researchers observe that public health emergencies (such as COVID-19) garner media coverage concerned with mitigation, adaptation, and raising public awareness of associated risks to specific groups (e.g. the elderly, and immunocompromised people), as well as increased media attention on virus transmission in the community (Oh, et al., 2012). In line with this positioning of media

¹⁸ It is not surprising, due to the role of the media in informing the public about the spread and impacts of the virus – that my analysis yields a prominent political focus. As Gylfadottir et al. (2021) depicts, it is the media's responsibility to inform the public about an array of facets regarding the Coronavirus – thus, it is not entirely surprising that the outlets examined in my thesis present a political lens to frame COVID-19.

coverage of virus transmission, my analysis also yields a prominent focus by the media on reducing risk and raising awareness of preventive measures. This is evident through the prominent adoption of the Treatment Recommendation frame component in sample period two of this thesis, suggesting that the outlets included for analysis present content concerning mitigation and adaptation efforts. These findings coincide with crisis communication and framing literature outlining transmission as a critical phase in media interest in infectious diseases (Liu et al., 2008; Reynolds and Seeger, 2020; Dalrymple et al., 2016).

The confirmation of an infectious disease case and or the presence of it in the community proves to be a 'grounding' moment in the genealogy of a disease, where a threat often perceived to be a distant risk becomes 'closer to home' (Wang et al., 2013). Events of public health concern such as outbreaks of diseases have a detailed history as instances heightening risk perceptions (Radwan & Radwan, 2020; Kitzinger & Reilly, 1997). Historically, and in the present day, the media¹⁹ are the central means the public is informed about the infection, mortality, and scale of an outbreak (Liu & Kim, 2011). For example, during the 2003 SARS outbreak, broadcast and print media were instrumental agents in informing the public about proper protection procedures to reduce infection, as well as informing the public about locations of interests and infection rates. Contemporarily, social media has become a crucial part of the media landscape, informing the public about various issues – including the Ebola crisis in 2014 (Dalrymple et al., 2016). Thus, it is clear that transmission and transmissibility of different viruses have been well documented in the literature – a body of research this thesis adds further weight to.

The dynamic nature of the Coronavirus pandemic since its inception in 2019 illustrates a difficult yet important role the media have in informing the public about infection and community transmission (Ghio, 2021). Its inception in Wuhan, China, COVID-19, formally known as SARS-CoV-2, was met with unprecedented global media coverage scrambling to find details about the infectiousness of the virus, as well as the mortality of the disease (Wen, et al., 2020). Like Zhang (2021), who depicts media coverage early in COVID-19's development as emitting politically charged frames, as well as focusing on the uncertainties surrounding

¹⁹ Print, broadcast, and social media

the virus, my analysis found that in both the U.S. and New Zealand, the sheer uncertainty regarding different characteristics of the Coronavirus often paralysed and halted preventive measures. This is a central theme that U.S. and New Zealand media share in their coverage of sample period two²⁰. Article 15 by Fox News suggests that because experts were unaware that the virus could jump from animals to humans, there could have been far more cases than initially reported (see appendix 2, table 3). Thus preventative measures may not be as effective (or strict enough). One News, article 17, quotes Finance Minister, Grant Robertson, who alluding to the increasing cases of COVID-19 and possible impacts of the virus, suggests:

“The government is preparing for the worst-case scenario.”

The findings of my analysis mirrors a well-established body of work which argues that virus transmissions is a vital phase of a disease which garners heightened media interests (Marling & Kasper, 2021). My analysis sheds light on how the confirmation of the first COVID-19 in each nation was covered. It depicts media coverage of this period as focused on the impacts and uncertainty of the virus, themes differing from those of Thomas et al. (2020), who found that the confirmation of COVID-19 cases in Australia proved to be insufficient in garnering media attention.

My analysis finds that New Zealand media mainly frame the second sample period of this thesis through the Societal Frame. Under this frame, all outlets and a sizeable volume of their content were primarily coded to the frame components of Problem Definition and Treatment Recommendation. This indicates a focus by New Zealand outlets firstly on the disruptions that COVID-19 has and will have across different industries in New Zealand. Secondly, it suggests that as New Zealand confirmed their first Coronavirus case, media attention presented content increasingly concerned with measures that will address the Coronavirus pandemic. This coincides with the findings of Wang and Mao (2021), whose Framing Analysis found that as transmission occurs in the community, media interests increase in relation to the different impacts of the virus. “The number of newspaper articles remained low until 20 January 2020. Zhong Nanshan announced that there was the person to person transmission in the evening

²⁰ A key finding and theme relevant to research objective two of this thesis – similarities and differences in US and New Zealand media framing.

on 20 January 2020” (p. 99).²¹ The increased media attention on Coronavirus transmission was accompanied by heightened recognition that media reports contributed to increased prejudice against Asian people (Jamieson & Albarracin, 2020). This is due to the use and presence of exclusionary ideologies, which positioned Asian people as to blame for the Coronavirus pandemic. For example, Fox News is detailed by Evanega et al. (2020) as fanning the wild fire spread of COVID-19 misinformation across the USA. This is due to their inclusion of reports which suggested that the Coronavirus was merely a political ploy by those on the left. This is a key difference which Croucher et al. (2021) depicts about the New Zealand media landscape in comparison to the decentralised, politically polarised media terrain of the USA. New Zealand media are more likely to foster constructive political discussions, and are less likely to cultivate or energise ideologies based on unfounded claims about the origins of the virus, nor who is to blame for the pandemic. My findings too illustrate the centralised media landscape of New Zealand. My analysis yields very minimal mention of China and or Chinese people as at fault, whereas, all U.S. outlets included narrations that China is partially to blame.

5.5 Setting the tone: The importance of media framing of health issues

5.5.1 Defining the issue

Highly dynamic and evolving issues such as infectious diseases necessitate that the media clearly articulate the scale of the issue (Ghio et al., 2021). This is because the public are heavily reliant on the media for information on preventive measures in regard to the virus, and so too are medical professionals who need the media to accurately portray the scale of the issue to mitigate and contain large scale outbreaks²² (Teasdale & Yardley, 2011; Basnyat & Lee, 2015). What the media cover in the early stages of viruses, as well as during the peak(s) of infectious diseases are paramount for public uptake of preventive measures. Furthermore, how the media cover treatment, such as vaccines, are essential for eliminating the spread and

²¹ Zhong Nanshan is the head of the Chinese National Health Commission

²² The media – social media included – have a deep reach to the public and are able to disseminate information quickly, thus, medical professionals are accustomed to relying information using the media (Thirumanran et al., 2021).

presence of viruses (Matamoros & Elias, 2020). Thus, it is essential that the media frame the issue accordingly. When the media do not define the issue as one of public health, Rajkhowa (2020) finds that this can impact public compliance and adherence to preventive measures. For instance, the primary adoption of the Security Frame, containment and closure of borders, by the United Kingdom in response to the Ebola pandemic incited panic, and led to public perception of the issue as one of mere security risks instead of a public health matter (Pieri, 2019). This has implications for mitigation and adaptation efforts reliant on public compliance (Mazey & Richardson, 2020). Thus, how the media defines a health issue is vital for setting the tone on the health risks a disease poses to the public, as well as impacting public backing of preventive efforts (Prati & Pietrantoni, 2011).

The media are essential in communicating the details of health issues, often these issues are needed to be reported with incomplete or evolving facts (Wibhisono, 2020). In a difficult position, the media need to articulate, define, and inform the public about an issue that is constantly changing by the minute (Gray et al., 2012). The Coronavirus pandemic early its conception exemplifies this challenging task the media encounters in reporting health issues. Due to medical uncertainty at the time, the media, going off advice by medical professionals such as Anthony Fauci, informed the public that mask wearing was ineffective at stopping transmission (Escandon et al., 2021; Abbas, 2021). As more became known about the Coronavirus, such as infection rates, research outlined mask wearing as an effective means of protecting yourself and others around you (Lin et al., 2020). However, due to earlier postulations of masks as ineffective, the seed had been planted that this was a measure the public did not need to adopt. This has implications for adoption of preventive measures by the public, mostly those who rely on social media for COVID-19 information (Tsao et al., 2021). As the Jiang et al. (2022) shows, false and or misleading claims on social media tend to reach a deeper pool of people than claims factually based. Therefore, although the progression of the Coronavirus has meant expansion of scientific knowledge about appropriate health measures, early communication of masks as ineffective continued to spread online – due to the unchecked nature of social media (Cossard et al., 2020).

What is salient to the public in regards to a health crises is influenced by how the media define the issue (Bolsen et al., 2020). This in turn impacts public perception of the issue (Lin et al.,

2020). Media framing can be susceptible to defining a complex issue as one of individual responsibility. In such cases, the media render an issue – such as obesity – to framing suggesting the issue is idiosyncratic of sociocultural factors (Foley et al., 2019). When health issues such as obesity are covered in the media, Foley et al. finds that the onus is often on the individual as responsible. Defining a complex issue in this way neglects sociocultural factors, as well as environment elements which impact peoples ability to obtain healthy foods year-round. Rutten et al. (2021) contends that defining an issue as separate to their sociopolitical environments ignores the influential role that peoples surroundings has on them and their decisions, perceptions, and actions. My analysis differs to research such as Foley et al.'s which finds that complex health issues are covered in the media as individual matters. Chapter 4 of this thesis shows that outlets in the U.S. and New Zealand cover the Coronavirus as an issue of national and international concern, and thus, there is a significant focus by the outlets on national preventive measures. Significant focus is on large scale efforts which have and or will be adopted to address the spread of the Coronavirus, and there is minimal focus on the Behavioural Frame – peoples individual actions. These key findings position themselves in alignment with literature outlining the media as useful in relaying information about preventive actions which aim to combat, contain, and eliminate infectious viruses (Yu et al., 2021; Craig, 2021).

5.5.2 Who is to blame?

In reporting infectious diseases, framing research suggests that the cause and or the origin of the virus often takes precedence in media coverage of a public health event (Wang & Mao, 2021; Bolsen et al., 2020). According to framing literature, when an issue has a Problem Definition, not too long after, the frame component of Causal Attribution follows close by (also referred to in the literature as Framing of Responsibility) (Entman, 1993). Although there is overlap between the former and latter in their use in framing scholarship, they essentially concern who, and or what the media posit as responsible (be it wholly or partially) in respect to different health issue causes (Thomas et al., 2020). To raise awareness of the origins of the H1N1 Swine flu virus which crippled Mexico and other parts of the world, the media popularised coinage of ideas linking the virus to Mexican pig farms (McCauley et al., 2013). The coinage of this sparked widespread discrimination and exclusion of the Latino community

in workplaces and schools for example. Which indicates that who the media link a virus to impacts how the public perceive the risk and who is deemed to be at fault. Therefore, who the media link a virus to – in terms of causation – impacts the discussions which are associated with infectious diseases.

To adopt the Causal Attribution frame component is give an unfamiliar, somewhat ‘invisible’ issue a face (Wagner et al., 2011). According to literature on the Coronavirus pandemic concerned with who the media have framed as responsible for COVID-19, those of Asian ancestry have been a common theme covered as a Causal Attribution (Bolsen et al., 2020). The Pew Research Centre (2021) finds that discrimination against Asian people has increased since the Coronavirus pandemic, this is highly prominent in the USA. Like research which suggests that the media frame the Coronavirus as a Chinese issue and or a result of Chinese people (Naeem et al., 2020; Wen et al., 2020), my analysis shows that all U.S. outlets include commentary that infer such sentiments. For example, in sample period one, Fox News outlines China as negligent in their response to addressing COVID-19 (see article 11 in appendix 1, table 3). In sample period two, six CNN articles refer to the Coronavirus as the ‘Wuhan virus’, such terms have been dismissed by the CDC and other health organisations. The adoption/presence of the Causal Attribution frame in media coverage serves to articulate the risk of a health issue to the public²³ (Wibhisono, 2020). However, its presence also threatens to derail infectious disease discussions based on evidence, towards discourses driven by politics. Thus, my findings align with an increasing corpus of research detailing media framing of the current global pandemic as riddled in political underpinnings, such as their focus on attributing blame to China and inclusion of discriminatory ideologies toward Asian people in their coverage (Wen et al., 2020).

The second research objective of this thesis is concerned with commonalities and differences in U.S. and New Zealand media framing of COVID-19. I find, and so too does Thirumaran et al. (2021), that in New Zealand, the media did not attribute blame to a nation nor community as the cause for the Coronavirus. Rather, the media were prominently concerned with the

²³ Such as where the virus is from and thus for people to avoid travelling there

government response to the virus. Far from apolitical nor immune to global criticism²⁴, the media landscape in New Zealand is generally considered to foster healthy political discourses (Fleerackers et al., 2021; Hanfer & Sun, 2021). Scholarship on New Zealand media coverage of the Coronavirus, offers that the media landscape is centralised and disseminates Coronavirus information with minimal political undertones (Croucher et al., 2021; Thirumanran et al., 2021). Along the same line of thought, my analysis too finds that New Zealand outlets did not in any detail adopt the Framing of Responsibility in their coverage. This contrasts an increasing body of scholarship where the media in the U.S. have been heavily criticised their framing of the COVID-19, which often times, insinuated, even when Coronavirus cases were exponentially growing, that the virus was merely the seasonal flu, vaccines were unsafe, and included content framing China as responsible (Romer & Jamieson, 2020; Motta et al., 2020; Jamieson & Albarracin, 2020). Furthermore, research early in the conception of COVID-19, show that U.S. media employed political undertones in their coverage by suggesting China had manufactured the virus. There was no evidence then, nor now, that COVID-19 was manufactured (WHO, 2021).

5.5.3 What are the solutions?

Framing research shows that the 'solution' to a health issue is a focal point in media coverage of pandemics (Mutua & Ong'ong'a, 2020; Nwakpu et al., 2020). The solution media cover range from preventative measures, to personal actions and practices people should adopt to stay safe, as well as vaccinations (Ghio et al., 2021; Matamoros & Elias, 2020). My analysis yields that in both sample periods, all outlets in both nations focus prominently on COVID-19 preventive measures. Jo and Chang (2020) suggest that "a public health crisis is an event in which people see the governments capacity clearly" (p. 9). The capacity of governments Jo and Chang cover is a prominent theme that my analysis likewise finds throughout my results. In the two sample periods this thesis examined, every media outlet I analysed also included a large amount of media reports that described different preventive measures that were (or could be) employed by individuals, businesses, and governments. These include strategies to

²⁴ An article published by Al Jazeera in July 2020 argued that the New Zealand media endangered the public by their apparent lack of transparency and attacks on political figures who questioned government responses to the virus (Johnson, 2020)

prevent the virus from being transmitted, illness and death, and socio-economic disruptions caused by the pandemic. In a similar vein, Gylfadottir et al. (2021) found that the media emphasised the efforts made to prevent the spread and lethality of COVID-19 (particularly in the early stages of the pandemic). Thus, my analysis aligns with an ever-growing body of framing literature on COVID-19 outlining media reporting of the pandemic as focused on discussions concerning how government(s) have responded to the Coronavirus pandemic (Jo & Chang, 2020; Tsao et al., 2021; Gray et al., 2012).

A prominent focus by the media on preventive measures in relation to health issues adheres to the historically significant role of the media in disseminating public health information (Dalrymple et al., 2016). The media have historically been a means to which the public have come to know about a vast array of important public health matters (Cissel, 2012). My analysis echoes Moehler and Singh (2011)'s point that media framing of issues primarily concerns how governments have (and or have not) addressed an issue. Therefore, it is unsurprising that differences emerge in U.S. and New Zealand media framing of government responses to the Coronavirus pandemic. In the U.S., the government were highly critiqued for their (mis)handling of the Coronavirus (Su, 2021). Critics point to the lack of coordination and collaboration amongst different government agencies in preparing large scale efforts to address the Coronavirus pandemic in its early stages. Likewise, my analysis shows that the government were criticised by CNN and NewsHour for their inability to clearly portray to the public the risks associated with COVID-19 (see article 7 by CNN and article 12 by NewsHour in appendix 1, tables 1 and 2). Fox News on the other hand, does not posit that the U.S. governments handling of Coronavirus was inadequate. In New Zealand, addressing COVID-19 was in general a centralised and prompt approach (Craig, 2021; Hafner & Sun, 2021). The literature, as well global and national media, cover the New Zealand approach as exemplary in addressing the Coronavirus in its early stages (Baker et al., 2020).

5.6 Chapter summary

The Chapter explored how U.S. and New Zealand media framed COVID-19. It built upon the results of Chapter Four to explore the ways in which the media politicised the pandemic. The discussion highlighted the most prominent frame found in the analysis of the different outlets

from the U.S. and New Zealand. It revealed that the Societal Frame seemed to be a unifying frame in media coverage in both nations. However, there were content and frame differences between the two nations and the focusses of their outlets. Overt differences were seen in the predominant presence of the Medical Frame in U.S. sample period two coverage, and a prominent focus by New Zealand outlets on the Societal Frame. The chapter also discussed the sociopolitical and cultural background of both nations as a possible explanation for the difference in Framing. The chapter rounded off by further elucidating the relevance of framing and how it is influential in what is known about an issue, as well as determining the actors deemed to be at fault, and the actions which need to be adopted to address the issue. The next chapter will outline the key findings of this research, and explore the key conclusions of this thesis.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This research emerged out of recognition that the way the media cover an issue is important for how the public come to think about an issue, ascribe meaning to it, and either adhere to preventative measures or not. The media plays a role in how people perceive an issue and thus it impacts whether people either adopt precautionary measures, or it can lead to the politicisation of health measures. This research partly fills a gap in framing literature which has not in great detail compared media framing of COVID-19 by different media outlets across differing sociopolitical and cultural contexts. This thesis addresses this gap by revealing the most prominent frame used in U.S. and New Zealand media reporting of the Coronavirus pandemic in its early stages. The research also compared similarities and differences between media framing of both nations to reveal differing media priorities in what was covered about COVID-19. Due to the unknown nature of COVID-19 in its infancy, the public were and still are heavily reliant on media reporting to make sense of the issue. Therefore, it was important that early communication of the media be explored, a central aim and function of this thesis.

The current chapter firstly revisits the research objectives of this research outlined in Chapter One. Sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 then report on some of the key findings of my analysis in regard to each research objective. The last two sections cover the key contributions of this thesis to framing research, as well as the key conclusions of the paper. Subsequently, the last section provides some of the strengths/limitations of the thesis, and also future research recommendations.

6.2 Revisiting the research objectives

The following sections will reinforce the key findings of this thesis in relation to the two research objectives outlined in Chapter One.

6.2.1 Objective one

To identify and explore the most prominent frame used in U.S. and New Zealand media coverage of COVID-19.

As I outlined in Chapter Three of this thesis, identifying a frame in media content can often be an elusive process (Maher, 2001). This is because a media article and a passage within an article can be coded to multiple frames. However, I drew upon and employed framing types and components previously used to examine COVID-19 (see Thomas et al. 2020), in doing this, the analysis process could closely follow prior research and their approaches. In using and following the approaches of other framing research, such as the employment of measuring questions which function to identify the presence and the prominence of a frame (Zhang, 2021), I was able to systemically address the elusive nature of identifying frames. This enabled the current research to achieve its first research objective; identifying and exploring the most prominent frame used in U.S. and New Zealand media coverage of COVID-19.

In covering COVID-19 reaching pandemic status, my analysis found that in both nations, and across all the outlets included for examination, the Societal Frame was the most prominent. It was found that, although variations existed in terms of media content focus, the Societal Frame was the most frequently used frame. Variations existed in U.S. media outlets and the main themes in which they focused on, the same was found for the outlets in the New Zealand context (although less overt). The data revealed that under this frame, U.S. outlets focus on national and global efforts employed to address the virus, and the implications of the pandemic on the geopolitical relationship of the U.S and China, as well as content which critiqued the U.S. governments response to the Coronavirus pandemic. Outlets in New Zealand focused on the consequences that the pandemic will have on the nation's economy and the various detrimental impacts that COVID-19 has had on businesses. They also present a prominent focus on preventative measures erected by the government in response to the virus. Noteworthy, was that across all the outlets from the United States, I observed that they made sentiments inferring China as negligent and slow to address COVID-19.²⁵ This finding is of particular interest and importance because a vast array of research on the Coronavirus pandemic have too alluded to the same themes as prominent in U.S. media coverage (see Wen et al., 2020). All in all, the Societal Frame, which suggests that media coverage focus on

²⁵ Such sentiments, as well as labels like 'Wuhan virus' have been largely dismissed by the CDC and other health organizations

the societal implications and consequences of an issue, proved to be the most prominent frame found in the analysis of sample period one.

In the second sample period of this research, two dominant frames were found. In covering the nation's first COVID-19 case, CNN and Fox News mostly employ the Medical Frame, whereas the content by NewsHour primarily cover virus transmission through the Societal frame. In line with the Medical Frame, CNN and Fox News drew upon experts and health organisations to inform their coverage. However, as I outlined in Chapter Four, and as Sandell et al. (2013) previously suggested, the Medical Frame does not always indicate that health communication has been accurate. This was evident in the findings of this thesis, where Fox News focus on attributing blame to China and their responses to COVID-19 in its early stages. In the New Zealand context, the nation's first COVID-19 case was primarily covered through the Societal Frame. The outlets in New Zealand significantly focus on the impacts and projected impacts of the virus on various sectors and areas of New Zealand's economy. These findings are in line with work which indicate that increasing virus transmission often leads to media coverage which is concerned with the short and long-term impacts of an infectious disease (Thomas et al., 2020; Wang & Mao, 2021; Wang et al., 2013).

6.2.2 Objective two

To explore similarities and differences in media framing of the Coronavirus pandemic by U.S. and New Zealand media.

As outlined throughout chapter five, there were many similarities between U.S. and New Zealand media framing. A major commonality I found was that both nations in sample period one mainly employed coverage which framing literature denotes as the Societal Frame (Thomas et al., 2020). The Societal Frame is important for informing the public about the impacts and future implications of an event, thus it is somewhat unsurprising that the Societal Frame proved to be prominent. This is because past research on the Swine Flu found that media coverage focused on the socioeconomic and political disruptions of the virus (Pan & Meng, 2016). In recent Coronavirus pandemic research, it was found that media content primarily disseminated information concerning the economic and business disruptions of COVID-19 early in its development (Mazey & Richardson, 2020). Therefore it is not unexpected that the Societal Frame was one of the most common frames adopted. Another

unifying theme in media framing in the U.S. and New Zealand was the prominent adoption of the frame component Treatment Recommendation in all media outlets. In both sample periods, all outlets across both nations detail the various measures which have and or will be adopted to contain and address the impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic. This aligns with an ever-growing pool of research on COVID-19 which finds that preventative measures are a focal point in media coverage of the pandemic (Rajkhowa, 2020; Yu et al., 2021; Craig, 2021).

Distinct difference between U.S. and New Zealand media framing concerned how the outlets in both nations covered the origins of the virus, how the Coronavirus pandemic was labelled, and who was outlined through the Framing of Responsibility. In covering the Coronavirus as a global pandemic, my analysis found that U.S. outlets either mentioned China as a Causal Attribution, or referred to the pandemic as the Wuhan virus and China Virus. Such content was not found in my analysis of New Zealand media outlets. However, there were internal differences in U.S. media focuses. In contrast to Fox News, which readily assigned blame to the Chinese government, CNN and NewsHour were less extensive in their framing of the pandemic as a Chinese issue.

Another key difference in U.S. and New Zealand media framing of the COVID-19 pandemic was that in sample period two, all outlets in New Zealand frame the confirmation of their first COVID-19 case through the Societal Frame. Whereas, U.S. outlets frame period two through the Medical (CNN and Fox News) and Societal Frame (NewsHour). As Chapter Five, section 5.2, of this study covered, this difference in framing could be attributed to the differences in the rise of cases in the U.S. and New Zealand. In the United States, cases grew exponentially as a result of fragmented preventative measures in the U.S. (Clark & Nickels, 2020), however the strict and prompt COVID-19 measures of New Zealand (early in the virus development) was able to contain the exponential growth in community transmission. The growth of cases in both nations thus could be an explanation as to why differences in sample period two framing emerged, where New Zealand outlets cover the economic disruptions of the virus, and U.S. media focus on the Medical Frame (measures to mitigate and adapt to the virus).

6.3 Key conclusions and contributions of this research

A central finding of this thesis is that all outlets included for examination emitted varying degrees of politically-charged framing of the Coronavirus pandemic. This does not inherently suggest that U.S. and New Zealand media coverage were negative or misinformed (see Chapter Five, section 5.3). However, it does reveal that media framing has opted to focus more on the impacts and geopolitical background of COVID-19 instead of health based information. My analysis adheres to past and recent examination which showed that despite a political lens being necessary to inform the public of the economic and sociocultural disruptions of an infectious disease, such as COVID-19, a political lens can and does deter from medically informed discussions to politically incentivised discourses about who is responsible, and who should be held accountable (Thomas et al., 2020; Bolsen et al., 2020). Additionally, because framing can be directional, impacts how, what, and who is involved in discussions of an issue, politically focused media framing can result in conflicting coverage that does not focus on a health matter as one of science and medicine, but one filled with claims about blaming a group of people as responsible (Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Zeng, 2020).

The prominent focus of early media coverage of COVID-19 on the political and economic impacts of the virus is important because it shows what was prioritised by the media in response to the virus. The political lenses adopted by all media outlets in both nations is not a new feature of media coverage of health issues. It is a historically apparent and innate feature of the media and their role in disseminating information (McCauley et al., 2013). Against this backdrop, this thesis contributes to literature on COVID-19 which position media coverage of the pandemic as politically focussed, and contributed to the politicisation of COVID-19 (Roozenbeek et al., 2020; Sibley et al., 2020; Gondwe & Chen, 2021; Abbas, 2021). It further contributes to literature which has looked at early media coverage of the pandemic and examined how the media set the tone for how the pandemic would be covered as it progressed (Hart et al., 2020). The media set the tone for how the pandemic would become discussed, by their framing of the issue as one linked to the Chinese, and their focus on sociocultural elements of the pandemic (e.g. vaccine safety, effectiveness of lockdowns and mask wearing, see Matamoros & Elias, 2020; Romer & Jamieson, 2020; Motta et al., 2020). As more recent work has shown, now that COVID-19 is an intricate part of global society,

there are still talks about the origins of the virus, as well as media coverage of the effectiveness of different preventative measures (Tsao et al., 2021; Escandon et al., 2021; Abbas, 2021). This study set out to address a critical theoretical gap in the literature, which is on how different sociopolitical media and national landscapes framed COVID-19. It adds weight to growing research which outline that media framing differs across different sociopolitical and cultural media backdrops (Gylfadottir et al., 2021). Which is an important contribution because it provides insight into the role of the media in impacting public support for different preventative measures, and the role of the media in politicising different aspects of the pandemic.

6.4 Strengths/Limitations and future research

A key strength of this study is that it looked at what the most prominent frame U.S. and New Zealand media used to cover two key development stages in COVID-19's global growth. Framing literature posits that the most prominent frame in media coverage is important because it reveals the lens or angle in which the media have used to coverage an event, and it signifies to audiences importance, due to the volume and frequency of content on a particular aspect of an issue. Focusing on the most used frame by U.S. and New Zealand media allowed this study to hone in on the different sub-topics in which the media focused on as COVID-19 became a global pandemic, as well as when the Coronavirus reached U.S. and New Zealand shores (community virus transmission). Investigating the most prominent media content focusses as COVID-19 continued its exponential growth in scale and impacts, allowed this thesis to explore how the media set the tone for the politicisation of the pandemic. Another strength of this thesis is that it compared media coverage of two nations with different sociopolitical and cultural responses to COVID-19 in its infancy. The current study looked at how the different media systems in both the U.S. and New Zealand covered the pandemic, two nations and media landscapes which have been detailed as contrasting in their attribution of responsibility, as well as their use and reliance on medical and scientific knowledge to inform COVID-19 readiness. In focusing on two nations with differing media and sociopolitical backdrops, this study was able to reveal the most prominent frame each nation focused on when COVID-19 reached pandemic status and when the first case of the virus were confirmed in each nation. In doing this, it adds to a wealth of public health and framing

literature which position the media as a central figure in politicising the Coronavirus pandemic (Ogbodo et al., 2020; Abdel-Rahem & Alkhamash, 2021; Rutten et al., 2021).

This study however is not without its limitations. There is a wealth of framing research which has looked at the tonality of media coverage, which argues that the tone the media use in covering an event is vital for how the public come to perceive that issue (Guenduez et al., 2016; Damstra & Vliegthart, 2018). Mutua and Ong'ong'a (2020) found that the prevalent use of alarmist tones such as 'deadly virus' by western media to cover COVID-19 could be a gateway for differences in public perception of the virus (i.e differing risk perception). Thus a limitation of the current study is that it did not examine the tones of media coverage in U.S. and New Zealand media framing. This would have been useful in revealing whether or not media content emphasised the pandemic as a risk, which would have presented insight into how media communication of the virus differed in regard to public risk perception as a result of how and what the media portrayed about COVID-19.

Another limitation of the study is the small sample size of articles included for examination, and the short sample period lengths of the analysis. Although a diverse set of media outlets were examined in this thesis, the small sample size – which was useful in keeping the analysis to a manageable size – meant that the current study could only provide a somewhat fragmented picture of media framing of COVID-19 in both sample periods. In addition, the sample period lengths were only concerned with the first two weeks of each key development period. This means that as COVID-19 developed into a global health crisis and therefore became an intricate part of global society, my analysis would miss the media reporting of how the pandemic status of COVID-19 would have long-term effects, as articles were only considered for examination if they fell within a two week window. The small sample size and short sample period length means that the current research could not compare how media frames changed over time, and whether or not content focusses shifted as COVID-19 became a more established part of many societies. Comparing media frames over an extended period would present interesting insights into how, what, and who the media used to inform their coverage of the pandemic, this would have allowed this study to not only compare media frames in the U.S. and New Zealand, it would have enabled my analysis to present insight into how media framing changed or evolved as the pandemic matured.

Due to in depth comparative insights in which longer sample periods could provide to framing studies, future research should look at media coverage over an extended period. This would provide insight into the most prominent frame(s) in which the media employ over different stages of an event, like a public health matter. Longer sample periods would provide a more holistic picture of how the media have portrayed an issue, what is covered in their content, and who is included or drawn upon in reporting. In doing this, it ties together what the media have prioritised in their coverage. In addition to extended sample periods, framing research also needs to diversify the media outlets and forums in which they examine. This is because online forums have rapidly grown and become equal to, if not above mainstream media as the central means in which the public relies on for information (Cossard et al., 2020). Although research into online media and their dissemination of health information is growing, Reynolds and Seeger (2020) argue that experts need to become more active in online networks, which have been detailed as spaces where public health misinformation proliferates. Lastly, it is important that research looks into how a variety of media types²⁶ cover health matters such as COVID-19, as all media types have been shown to have fallen short in their pandemic coverage. Examining different media types would allow for comparison of similarities and differences in media framing, which could in theory allow for sources of misinformation to be addressed.

6.5 Concluding remarks

The purpose of this research was to provide insight into how U.S. and New Zealand media framed COVID-19. It did this by implementing two research objectives which were geared toward revealing the most prominent media frame used by outlets in each nation to cover the pandemic, and by also exploring the similarities and differences in media content focus in both nations. It recognises that the sociopolitical and cultural landscape of both nations are vastly different, and therefore, it was unsurprising that there were stark differences in media coverage. For example, U.S. outlets were more critical of their government in regards to how they responded to COVID-19. U.S. outlets were also more likely to adopt the Framing of Responsibility to blame either an institution, government, or subset of people as the cause

²⁶ Such as privately owned media, government outlets, right wing and left wing media, and online forums

and or exacerbator of COVID-19. In the New Zealand context, such media content focus was not found by my analysis. This research has argued that media communication early in COVID-19's development did not adequately portray nor cover what needed to be known about the virus (mostly in the U.S. context). The focus by the media on sociopolitical and cultural aspects of the virus instead of public health information led to the politicisation of the pandemic.

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Appendix 1 – U.S. and New Zealand sample period one articles

Table 1: CNN sample period one articles

Outlet	Article title and author(s)
CNN article 1	NBA suspends its season after player tests positive for Coronavirus (Close & Jackson, 2020)
CNN article 2	Jerry Falwell Jr. needs to stop talking about the Coronavirus. Like, now (Cillizza, 2020)
CNN article 3	America's public transit systems are going to need a bailout, too (McFarland, 2020)
CNN article 4	Throughout history when outbreaks spread, racism and xenophobia weren't far behind (Shoichet, 2020)
CNN article 5	How to stay fit when the gym is closed and you are stuck at home (Jampolis, 2020)
CNN article 6	Chris Cillizza's winners and losers from Super Tuesday II (Cillizza, 2020)
CNN article 7	Trump stumbles in first efforts to control virus response as fear spreads and markets fall (Diamond et al., 2020)
CNN article 8	Lady Gaga delays album release, says she was going to do a surprise set at Coachella (Gonzalez, 2020)
CNN article 9	How do I effectively exercise and stay active now that my gym has closed or I'm quarantined? (Jampolis, 2020)
CNN article 10	Olympic teams and athletes want the 2020 games postponed (Silverman & Close, 2020)
CNN article 11	13 changes to the US immigration system during the Coronavirus pandemic (Alvarez, 2020)
CNN article 12	Trump calls Coronavirus a 'foreign virus' in Oval Office address (LeBlanc, 2020)
CNN article 13	A new novel imagines a global pandemic that kills millions. Its author has been called prescient before (Burke, 2020)
CNN article 14	Donald Trump would like everyone to say 'thank you' for his Coronavirus actions (Cillizza, 2020)
CNN article 15	GameStop says it's an essential business. Employees are outraged (Liao, 2020)
CNN article 16	How Richard Burr and Kelly Loeffler became political villains in the Coronavirus saga (Cillizza, 2020)
CNN article 17	Trump's complete failure of imagination is costing America lives and treasure (Hill, 2020)
CNN article 18	How grocery stores restock shelves in the age of Coronavirus (Wiener-Bronner, 2020)
CNN article 19	What an America -- or a world -- without sports looks like (Bass, 2020)
CNN article 20	US summons Chinese ambassador over Coronavirus conspiracy theory (Atwood & Cohen, 2020)

Table 2: NewsHour sample period one articles

Outlet	Article title and author(s)
NewsHour article 1	USDA fights to purge food stamps recipients despite pandemic (Khalil, 2020)

NewsHour article 2	As the world confronts the Coronavirus, a note from our Executive Producer (Just, 2020)
NewsHour article 3	8 books to read in the time of the Coronavirus (Vinopal, 2020)
NewsHour article 4	Getting Coronavirus updates in Spanish is mixed bag in U.S (Galvan & Cano, 2020)
NewsHour article 5	Virus marches on in Italy, Iran, US; medical supplies Shrink (Barry & Jordans, 2020)
NewsHour article 6	Only essential staff and limited family permitted at NCAA tournaments (Russo, 2020)
NewsHour article 7	What trends are researchers seeing with the Coronavirus? (Sreenivasan, 2020)
NewsHour article 8	Treasury proposal: Deliver \$500 billion to Americans starting April (Mascaro, 2020)
NewsHour article 9	Defense Sec. Mark Esper on mobilizing the U.S. military to fight COVID-19 (Woodruff, 2020)
NewsHour article 10	The reason U.S. COVID-19 numbers aren't higher? Not enough tests (Santhanam, 2020)
NewsHour article 11	Croatia quake injures 17 amid partial Coronavirus lockdown (Bandic, 2020)
NewsHour article 12	What to watch in the Biden-Sanders debate (Bush, 2020)
NewsHour article 13	Biden, Sanders to debate against backdrop of global pandemic (Pace, 2020)
NewsHour article 14	Reports from states holding 2020 Democratic primaries amid pandemic (Woodruff, 2020)
NewsHour article 15	I toured this exhibit on epidemics before the Coronavirus pandemic shut it down (Barajas, 2020)
NewsHour article 16	How the novel Coronavirus is upending American politics (Weissert, 2020)
NewsHour article 17	'Bigger than any one of us': Biden, Sanders take on pandemic (Pace & Jaffe, 2020)
NewsHour article 18	Mississippi is latest state to delay elections amid pandemic (Pettus, 2020)
NewsHour article 19	Virus fuels calls for sanctions relief on Iran, Venezuela (Goodman, 2020)
NewsHour article 20	Amid COVID-19, a new push for telehealth to treat opioid use disorder (Rohrich, 2020)

Table 3: Fox News sample period one articles

Outlet	Article title and author(s)
Fox News article 1	Jim Daly: Where is God during the Coronavirus pandemic? (Daly, 2020)
Fox News article 2	US has restricted travel to and from these countries amid Coronavirus pandemic (Casiano, 2020)
Fox News article 3	Here's why Christian scholars who study end times say this is not the end of the world (Parke, 2020)
Fox News article 4	Chinese Foreign Ministry suggests US Army to blame for Coronavirus pandemic (Betz, 2020)
Fox News article 5	Virgin Voyages postponing inaugural trip as a result of global Coronavirus outbreak (Clarke, 2020)
Fox News article 6	Trump announces travel ban from Europe amid growing fears of Coronavirus (Rambaran & DeMarche, 2020)

Fox News article 7	Defense Secretary Esper on China's handling of Coronavirus outbreak: 'They need to be more transparent' (Author Unknown, 2020)
Fox News article 8	Trump targets China for Coronavirus outbreak, says 'the world is paying a big price' (Shaw, 2020)
Fox News article 9	Kourtney Kardashian shares Bible passage suggesting God would punish evil world with an 'epidemic' (Roberto, 2020)
Fox News article 10	Pompeo and Iran's Ayatollah Khamenei trade jabs over COVID-19, rumors and aid (Chakraborty, 2020)
Fox News article 11	China's relationship with WHO chief in wake of Coronavirus outbreak under the microscope (Chakraborty, 2020)
Fox News article 12	Sanders confuses Coronavirus for Ebola as Biden botches swine flu reference at debate (Miles, 2020)
Fox News article 13	Dave Ramsey's financial advice amid Coronavirus pandemic: Don't get off roller coaster in middle of ride (Kaplan, 2020)
Fox News article 14	State Department responds after Chinese ambassador says it's 'crazy' to blame Coronavirus on US military (Phillips, 2020)
Fox News article 15	China recasts itself as global Coronavirus response leader as US, Europe struggle (Chakraborty, 2020)
Fox News article 16	Gingrich on China blaming US for Coronavirus spread: More lies from a 'dictatorship' (Author Unknown, 2020)
Fox News article 17	WHO chief warns Coronavirus pandemic is 'accelerating' (Casiano, 2020)
Fox News article 18	White House takes steps to protect health care workers from Coronavirus, hours ahead of president's Oval Office address (O'Reilly, 2020)
Fox News article 19	Coronavirus outbreak forces Seattle's pro sports teams to switch up game plan (Gaydos, 2020)
Fox News article 20	How China can be held legally accountable for Coronavirus pandemic (McKay, 2020)

Table 4: New Zealand Herald sample period one articles

Outlet	Article title and author(s)
New Zealand Herald article 1	Viv's mobile basin (Author Unknown, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 2	Highlanders back the Highlanders returned from Argentina yesterday to an enforced (Author Unknown, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 3	History's pandemics lost on young (Moremon, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 4	Piha Pro first Kiwi sports event postponed (Reive, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 5	Staycation will offset tourist cut (Author Unknown, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 6	Pandemic a reminder of priorities (Author Unknown, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 7	Getting through virus together ... alone (Author Unknown, 2020)

New Zealand Herald article 8	'Madness' to continue rental inspections (Gibson, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 9	Not a time for point scoring (Author Unknown, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 10	Trials begin of virus vaccine (Author Unknown, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 11	Bridges fails the Coronavirus test (Hooton, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 12	Mastering the fine art of acceptance (Author Unknown, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 13	Couple: Attacks have been heart breaking (Author Unknown, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 14	Read all about it: Books drive-through (Author Unknown, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 15	Games at Mt Smart look out of the question, and even the Warriors' future in (Reive, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 16	Black Caps play on to the sound of silence (Anderson, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 17	Redundancy — it's not personal (Fleming, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 18	Sports bodies brace for possible funding cuts (Clever, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 19	'A recession is inevitable' (Walls, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 20	Can Fonterra and our farmers carry us through Coronavirus? (Fox, 2020)

Table 5: One News sample period one articles

Outlet	Article title and author(s)
One News Article 1	Coronavirus: New Zealand's alert levels explained (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 2	Coronavirus: What you need to know about schools (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 3	Dancing in the Coronavirus pandemic: Students offered to 'dance alone', digital classes to avoid close contact (Barraclough, 2020)
One News Article 4	'Start coming home now,' Winston Peters urges 80,000 Kiwis abroad (Whyte, 2020)
One News Article 5	'Be kind' - Jacinda Ardern urges people to support one another as Coronavirus alert system level rises (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 6	Coronavirus 'alert system' to be introduced for New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern announces (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 7	Tourism boss pleads for mental health support as industry buckles under Coronavirus outbreak (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 8	Coronavirus: What you should prepare in case you need to self-isolate (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 9	Student Volunteer Army mobilising once again to help strangers amid Coronavirus pandemic (Williams, 2020)

One News Article 10	Tonga closes border to flights and cruise ships in response to Coronavirus (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 11	Wellington cafe closes its doors after Australian man with Coronavirus visited (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 12	Countdown offers jobs to hospitality industry workers, as Coronavirus sees supply chain demand spike (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 13	How to cut your risk of getting or spreading Coronavirus (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 14	Science educator Nano girl stops the spread of some Coronavirus myths (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 15	Domino's offering free pizzas to senior citizens during Coronavirus self-isolation (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 16	Inside the New Zealand labs conducting tests for Covid-19 (Sherman, 2020)
One News Article 17	'We need more' - Governments \$25 weekly benefit increase amid Coronavirus not enough, advocates say (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 18	Hospitality sector braces for four week hibernation, with many business fearing they won't re-open (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 19	'Not for this family' - Actress Evangeline Lilly refusing to practice social distancing (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 20	Watch: Jeremy Wells shares his 'revolutionary' home school tips (Author Unknown, 2020)

Table 6: Stuff News sample period one articles

Outlet	Article title and author(s)
Stuff News article 1	Remembering the Spanish Flu (Hindmarsh, 2020)
Stuff News article 2	Coronavirus: Gamers can teach others about how to survive social distancing in pandemic (Palumbi, 2020)
Stuff News article 3	'Pathetically understaffed and hopelessly complacent': Lessons from Black November (Mitchell, 2020)
Stuff News article 4	Coronavirus: New pandemic group says Māori 'left out' of planning (Parahi, 2020)
Stuff News article 5	Coronavirus: Six alternative ways to safely greet others during the pandemic (Deguara, 2020)
Stuff News article 6	Coronavirus: Contiki suspends all tours of Europe, UK, Middle East and Asia (Deguara, 2020)
Stuff News article 7	Coronavirus: When a wedding and a pandemic collide (Harvey, 2020)
Stuff News article 8	Coronavirus: What to do if a natural disaster strikes during a pandemic (Leaman, 2020)
Stuff News article 9	Coronavirus: Meet the Kiwis ready for anything amid the pandemic (Fallon, 2020)
Stuff News article 10	Coronavirus: What does declaring a pandemic for Covid-19 mean? (Keogh, 2020).
Stuff News article 11	Coronavirus: Police plan for spike in family violence (Ensor, 2020)

Stuff News article 12	Coronavirus: Meet the Kiwi doctor answering America's questions about the pandemic (Newman, 2020)
Stuff News article 13	Keep calm and step away from the toilet rolls (Volweiller, 2020)
Stuff News article 14	Coronavirus: Emirates adds thermal screening, cancels some flights due to pandemic (Forrester, 2020)
Stuff News article 15	Coronavirus: Kiwi in Amazon jungle had no idea about pandemic (MacManus & Martin, 2020)
Stuff News article 16	Coronavirus: What to do if your visa is due to expire (Clent, 2020)
Stuff News article 17	Medical centres place new restrictions on patients over Coronavirus fears (Clent, 2020)
Stuff News article 18	Coronavirus: Running a supermarket as pandemic prep-buying changes gear (Mather, 2020)
Stuff News article 19	Coronavirus: Pandemic will take months to contain, says diseases expert (Author Unknown, 2020)
Stuff News article 20	How will the Coronavirus pandemic impact the NZ commercial property market? (Steeman, 2020)

Appendix 2 – U.S. and New Zealand sample period two articles

Table 1: CNN sample period two articles

Outlet	Article title and author(s)
CNN article 1	This is where Wuhan Coronavirus cases have been confirmed worldwide (Cheung, 2020)
CNN article 2	CDC confirms first US case of Wuhan Coronavirus (Cohen, 2020)
CNN article 3	More Americans to be evacuated from Wuhan as about 200 are monitored for Coronavirus at California base (Lah & Karimi, 2020)
CNN article 4	Five key developments this week as Coronavirus spreads in the US (Karimi, 2020)
CNN article 5	US government declares the novel Coronavirus a public health emergency and suspends entry for foreign nationals who visited China (Cohen, et al., 2020)
CNN article 6	Six dead, 300 infected as China confirms Wuhan virus can be spread by humans (Griffiths & Gan, 2020)
CNN article 7	First case of person-to-person transmission of Wuhan virus in the US confirmed (Howard, 2020)
CNN article 8	US travel restrictions go into place Sunday evening to combat Coronavirus spread (And one, 2020)
CNN article 9	The US has at least 11 confirmed cases of Wuhan Coronavirus, which has killed more than 360 people in China (Maxouris & Yan, 2020)
CNN article 10	Five key developments on the spread of Coronavirus in the US this week (Karimi, 2020)
CNN article 11	What we know about the Coronavirus cases in the US (Andrew, 2020)
CNN article 12	Wuhan Coronavirus death toll rises to 56 as healthcare workers say medical supplies are running out (Xiong, et al., 2020)
CNN article 13	New report on first US case of novel Coronavirus details mild symptoms followed by pneumonia (Nedelman, 2020)
CNN article 14	The deadly new Coronavirus is starting to spread in the US. Here's how to protect yourself (Yan, 2020)
CNN article 15	First US case of Wuhan Coronavirus confirmed by CDC (Cohen, 2020)
CNN article 16	An American who was evacuated from Wuhan was placed in Coronavirus quarantine after trying to flee California base (Lah & Karimi, 2020)
CNN article 17	US evacuees from China to be held at California military base for 3 days as Coronavirus outbreak grows (Lah & Karimi, 2020)
CNN article 18	This is where Wuhan Coronavirus cases have been confirmed worldwide (Cheung, 2020)
CNN article 19	There are now 11 confirmed cases of the Coronavirus in the US (Maxouris, 2020)
CNN article 20	Airport screenings for Coronavirus increase around the world (Cripps, 2020)

Table 2: NewsHour sample period two articles

Outlet	Article title and author(s)
NewsHour article 1	More nations join China in responding to new Coronavirus (Author Unknown, 2020)
NewsHour article 2	WATCH: WHO assesses global health strategy for novel Coronavirus (Santhanam, 2020)
NewsHour article 3	Chinese city shuts down flights and trains to stop Coronavirus from spreading (Moritsugu, 2020)
NewsHour article 4	U.S. novel Coronavirus cases rise to 11, CDC reports (Santhanam, 2020)
NewsHour article 5	First U.S. human-to-human spread of novel Coronavirus confirmed (Santhanam, 2020)
NewsHour article 6	Novel Coronavirus is a global public health emergency, WHO declares (Santhanam, 2020)
NewsHour article 7	U.S. gets 1st case of new virus that caused an outbreak in China (Johnson & Stobbe, 2020)
NewsHour article 8	Delta, American and United suspend flights between U.S., China (Koenig, 2020)
NewsHour article 9	Outbreak cases from new virus rises to 440 in China, with 9 dead (Author Unknown, 2020)
NewsHour article 10	New China virus details show challenge for outbreak control (Marchione, 2020)
NewsHour article 11	China quarantines 18 million people to stop novel Coronavirus (Moritsugu & Wang, 2020)
NewsHour article 12	How novel Coronavirus could affect the global economy (Frazee, 2020)
NewsHour article 13	With growing Coronavirus outbreak, is China's massive quarantine the right response (Brangham, 2020)
NewsHour article 14	Why 'sustained transmission' of novel Coronavirus is what would concern U.S. officials (Author Unknown, 2020)
NewsHour article 15	What we know about China's deadly Coronavirus outbreak — and what we don't (Author Unknown, 2020)
NewsHour article 16	Suspected U.S. cases of novel Coronavirus rise, CDC says (Santhanam, 2020)
NewsHour article 17	'How China is responding to 'breakneck' spread of novel Coronavirus (Author Unknown, 2020)
NewsHour article 18	Track the spread of novel Coronavirus with this map (Author Unknown, 2020)
NewsHour article 19	U.S. advises against traveling to China because of novel Coronavirus (Moritsugu, 2020)
NewsHour article 20	China says 170 people have died from novel Coronavirus (Moritsugu, 2020)

Table 3: Fox News sample period two articles

Outlet	Article title and author(s)
Fox News article 1	Second person-to-person Coronavirus transmission reported in US, CDC says (Farber, 2020)
Fox News article 2	Dr. Amesh Adalja: Coronavirus - addressing the potential of pre-symptomatic spread (Author Unknown, 2020)

Fox News article 3	Hong Kong halts trains from mainland China as Coronavirus spreads (Author Unknown, 2020)
Fox News article 4	Esper approves DoD housing for US Coronavirus quarantine after eighth case confirmed (Dedaj & Givas, 2020)
Fox News article 5	Coronavirus vaccine in 'early stages' as focus turns to China's transparency (Farber, 2020)
Fox News article 6	Dr. Marc Siegel sounds alarm over China's 'reckless' and 'really scary' response to Coronavirus (Halon, 2020)
Fox News article 7	Coronavirus outbreak in China shuts Hong Kong Disneyland (Hollan, 2020)
Fox News article 8	First case of China-linked Coronavirus reported in US, federal officials say (Farber, 2020)
Fox News article 9	British Airways suspends all flights to China amid Coronavirus fears (Aaro, 2020)
Fox News article 10	Coronavirus death toll rises to 41 in China, more than 1,200 sickened (Casiano, 2020)
Fox News article 11	Texas A&M student tested for possible Coronavirus exposure, had traveled to China (Givas, 2020)
Fox News article 12	India recommends homeopathy for Coronavirus prevention (Hein, 2020)
Fox News article 13	'Contagion' climbs iTunes movie charts as Coronavirus outbreak spreads (Author Unknown, 2020)
Fox News article 14	As Taiwan deals with 10 Coronavirus cases, China 'unblocks' communications channels (Rambaran, 2020)
Fox News article 15	How does Coronavirus compare to SARS and MERS outbreaks? (Miles, 2020)
Fox News article 16	CDC works to provide Coronavirus testing capabilities across US (Betz, 2020)
Fox News article 17	HHS Secretary Azar on Coronavirus: 'We will take all ... measures necessary to protect the American public' (Kaplan, 2020)
Fox News article 18	Germany confirms first Coronavirus case (Author Unknown, 2020)
Fox News article 19	Canada's first Coronavirus cases are confirmed in husband and wife: officials (Farber, 2020)
Fox News article 20	Coronavirus cases in Arizona, California push US tally to 5 (Author Unknown, 2020)

Table 4: New Zealand Herald sample period two articles

Outlet	Article title and author(s)
New Zealand Herald article 1	Kiwis, it's time to holiday close to home (Author Unknown, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 2	Fonterra has 'robust' Covid-19 response (Fox, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 3	Kiwi virus cases stand at one as two people test negative (Henry, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 4	Fourth Coronavirus case under suspicion (Boyle, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 5	Employers prepare for Covid-19 (Fleming, 2020)

New Zealand Herald article 6	Retirement chiefs' task force keeping tabs on virus spread to help safeguard... (Gibson, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 7	What happens when someone is suspected of having Coronavirus? When someone first... (Author Unknown, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 8	'The world seems to be on very shifting sands' (Howie, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 9	Outbreak: BNZ says first-half recession 'probable' (Rutherford, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 10	PM: Go out unless you feel unwell (Tan, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 11	Bachelorette a study of complex — and sensitive — Kiwi nitwits (Unkown author, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 12	Pilot denied haircut as Coronavirus fear grows (Kirkness, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 13	Getting through virus together ... alone (Author Unknown, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 14	Test results due today on possible patients (Cheng, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 15	Scramble to reach all on flights (Russell & Cheng, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 16	Virus Labour's handy scapegoat (Unkown Author, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 17	'I lay awake all night playing the scenarios over (Author Unknown, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 18	A new kind of shock Covid-19 (Unkown Author, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 19	Govt ramps up response to virus (Moodie, 2020)
New Zealand Herald article 20	Coughing commuter told off (Henry, 2020)

Table 5: One News sample period two articles

Outlet	Article title and author(s)
One News Article 1	Air NZ orders 'deep clean' after Coronavirus victim flew on one international, two regional flights (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 2	Wellington iwi restricts hongi as Aotearoa records second Coronavirus case (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 3	Jessica Mutch McKay: Coronavirus will be on Kiwis' mind at election 2020 (Mutch McKay, 2020)
One News Article 4	2 Cheap Cars defends Coronavirus advert as 'light-hearted' jab at 'heavy issue' (Barraclough, 2020)
One News Article 5	'PM accuses Simon Bridges of 'scaremongering' with 'irresponsible' Coronavirus criticism (Kenyon, 2020)
One News Article 6	'Deport Kiwis but keep Australians' - Jacinda Ardern's fierce message about Australia's deportation policy (Author Unknown 2020)
One News Article 7	Korean Airlines suspends services between Seoul and NZ amid Coronavirus outbreak (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 8	Fifth case of Coronavirus Covid-19 confirmed in New Zealand (Author Unknown, 2020)

One News Article 9	Bennett questions Govt's handling of Coronavirus after details on third confirmed case not given for hours (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 10	Face masks fly off shelves as worried Kiwis rush to stock up (Macfarlane, 2020)
One News Article 11	PM, Health Minister insist airport Coronavirus screening has been 'aggressive' (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 12	Second Coronavirus case confirmed in New Zealand; Air NZ passengers and two schools notified (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 13	Health officials confirm New Zealand's second Coronavirus case (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 14	Watch live as Ministry of Health front media after first case of Coronavirus confirmed in New Zealand s (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 15	Two people being tested for Coronavirus in NZ 'close to suspected case definition' - Ministry of Health (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 16	Jacinda Ardern encourages Kiwis to stick to normal life in wake of first Coronavirus case (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 17	Government may dip into 'rainy day' fund if Coronavirus worst-case scenario plays out, Finance Minister says (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 18	'Don't panic' – Health officials call for calm over Coronavirus case (Baker Wilson, 2020)
One News Article 19	Air New Zealand slashes flights, cuts CEO's salary amid Coronavirus travel slump (Author Unknown, 2020)
One News Article 20	Over 50 hospital staff stood down after treating 'probable' Coronavirus case in Auckland (Author Unknown, 2020)

Table 6: Stuff News sample period two articles

Outlet	Article title and author(s)
Stuff News article 1	Coronavirus: New Zealand must learn from China's success in managing Covid-19
Stuff News article 2	Coronavirus: Cult blamed for spread in Korea also active in NZ (Block, 2020)
Stuff News article 3	Coronavirus: In the US, Covid-19 may have spread undetected for weeks (Achenbach, Mettler, Sun & Guarino, 2020)
Stuff News article 4	Coronavirus: If you wake with a runny nose, the Ministry of Health wants you at home (Manch & Witton, 2020)
Stuff News article 5	Coronavirus: NZ's first case has been confirmed - so what happens now? (Forrester, 2020)
Stuff News article 6	Coronavirus: Auckland man lives in self- isolation after first Covid-19 case confirmed (Forbes, 2020)
Stuff News article 7	Coronavirus: Showing symptoms but tests refused at Wellington Hospital (Hunt & Woolf, 2020)
Stuff News article 8	Coronavirus: 43 Waitematā DHB hospital staff put in isolation over probable case (Martin, 2020)

Stuff News article 9	The Detail: 'Moral panic' is worse than Coronavirus, says scientist (Chang & Brett Kelly, 2020)
Stuff News article 10	Coronavirus: Debunking the baseless virus conspiracy theories in NZ (Block, 2020)
Stuff News article 11	Coronavirus: Medical centre's briefing on patient was 'too little too late', worker says (Forbes, 2020)
Stuff News article 12	Canterbury doctors checking 3ve people a day for Coronavirus symptoms (Lewis, 2020)
Stuff News article 13	How deadly is the Coronavirus compared to other outbreaks? (Deguara, 2020)
Stuff News article 14	Kiwi sanitiser Zoono tests 99.99% effective against Coronavirus, sales increase five-fold (Nadkarni, 2020)
Stuff News article 15	Coronavirus: Your questions to the experts answered (Deguara, 2020)
Stuff News article 16	Prepping for a pandemic: plans afoot at Waikato schools, councils, rest homes (Wilson & Gullery, 2020)
Stuff News article 17	Coronavirus could make or break Jacinda Ardern's Government (Malpass, 2020)
Stuff News article 18	Coronavirus vs the flu - how the two illnesses compare in NZ (Author Unknown, 2020)
Stuff News article 19	Coronavirus: Retailers confident of supply chain despite 'panic' supermarket shopping (Author Unknown, 2020)
Stuff News article 20	China's Coronavirus shutdown takes its toll on New Zealand exporters (Carroll, 2020)