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Mainstream media coverage and social media narrative about COVID-19

Mainstream media coverage

Source https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.vox.com/platform/amp/recode/2020/4/13/21214114/media-coronavirus-pandemic-coverage-cdc-should-you-wear-masks

The coronavirus pandemic has crippled America. So far, the virus has killed more than 20,000 people in the United States and has sickened more than 500,000 people. It’s clear now that the US government was woefully unprepared for the pandemic, and that’s been reflected in its messaging to the public since the start.

Despite the two-month barrage of media coverage since the first US case was confirmed, many Americans remained unconcerned about the outbreak until mid-March, when it began to disrupt their own daily lives. Many also remained unimpressed by the coverage: Among a random sample of adults interviewed for a Monmouth University poll published on Monday, only 45 percent said the media has done a good job handling the crisis—a worse rating than the 50 percent approval of President Trump’s performance. In a CBS News/YouGov poll published on Tuesday, slightly more Americans said they trust the president than they trust the media for accurate information on the virus.

Social media narrative

Source The Diplomat

In the wake of the novel coronavirus outbreak, much has been written about how China’s poor handling of the outbreak is directly connected to the regime’s lack of transparency and repressive instincts. The centralization of power under Xi Jinping leads local officials to enter a kind of paralysis, as discussed in the New Statesman and The Financial Times. Nervous about their actions being viewed as out of line with Xi, local officials opt to take no action. During the five-day period between January 21 and 25, a vacuum of limited state rhetoric and even more limited government action emerged. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) slogan “有困难找政府” (if something is wrong, go to the government) seemed to be instinctively dismissed by those at the forefront of the Wuhan outbreak. Instead, netizens tried to fill that vacuum by asking each other for help. Rather than censors deleting these posts, state media such as People’s Daily encouraged help-seeking posts among civilians, re-posting them on Weibo. Perhaps the public’s reaction to the virus on social media is proof that China’s civil society is alive and well. The five-day vacuum in both local and central government action and the coinciding explosion of a relatively uncensored civilian outcry demonstrates the impact that civil society can achieve when left to its own devices. But in China, public discourse and group organization are never left unchecked for too long. After the vacuum closed and the government’s voice stepped back into the forefront, those engaged in the online discourse soon faced retroactive repercussions justified by the charge of “spreading rumors.”