

Agenda Between the Lines: Comparing KMT Newspaper Coverage of the 1925-26 Canton-Hong Kong Strike and CCP Newspaper Coverage of the May Thirtieth Movement in 1925

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ABSTRACT

The 1925-1926 Canton-Hong Kong Strike and the May Thirtieth Movement of 1925, two large mass mobilisations in modern Chinese history, have been studied with continued interest since the past century. A particularly intriguing aspect of these movements is the partisan involvement, or more specifically, the motives of political parties—in this case, the KMT (Kuomintang) and the CCP (Chinese Communist Party). Most existing research focuses on organisational records and institutional archives, leaving partisan news use unexamined. This study analyses two newspapers *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) and *Hot Blood Daily* using frame analysis (Benford and Snow 2000), investigating the agendas and objectives of the KMT and the CCP during the strikes. I illustrate the comparisons through a mixed-methods approach, including word frequencies aggregation and fine-tuned BERTopic modelling over 2,072,209 tokens of newspaper texts and qualitative analysis of 36 representative documents from the BERTopic model output. The results demonstrate a shared goal of cultivating anti-imperialistic ideological consensus rather than finding concrete solutions for immediate problems and mobilising the public into action, as well as different agendas in terms of coalition scope, media role, and timeline expectation. Overall, this study contributes to the extant scholarship by performing a framing analysis and providing interpretations derived from media framing.

INTRODUCTION

The 1925-26 Canton-Hong Kong Strike and the May Thirtieth Movement of 1925 are two large mass mobilisations in modern Chinese history. The former lasted 16 months, during which nearly a third of Chinese workers left Hong Kong for Canton. The colonial government requested a £3 million emergency aid from the United Kingdom to sustain Hong Kong's economy (Cheng 2011; Cao and Seifert 2025). The latter captured the escalation from a single shooting in Shanghai's International Settlement to a wave of strikes and protests in China's largest industrial city, further growing into a nationwide movement through resistance and solidarity (Perry 1993; Ku 1979).

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However, such a large scale complicates the outcomes of the movements, raising questions about the potential linkage between partisan leadership and movement trajectory. The Canton-Hong Kong Strike ended inconclusively, with the Kuomintang (KMT)'s unilateral decision to call it off, leaving none of the demands in negotiation fulfilled and no compensation for strikers (Cheng 2011; Cao and Seifert 2025). Likewise, the only concrete result of the May Thirtieth Movement was the forced resignation of two Shanghai Municipal Police officials. Mixed Courts remained unreformed, victims' families were left uncompensated, and the workers returned on terms barely improved from the offer before the four months of efforts. By contrast, several strike-boycotts in early 20th century China without direct party leadership had more concrete success. For example, the 1905 Anti-American Boycott pressured Washington to be more lenient on exclusion laws (Wang 2001); the 1920 Mechanics Strike increased workers' wages by 30 percent; the 1922 Seamen Strike forced the British policemen to restore the union's sign board and the employers to increase wages by 15-30 percent (Wan 2021). The sharp contrast between these earlier strikes and the 1925-26 strikes brings attention to the leadership of the two major political parties in China's Republican Era—the KMT and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)—and makes their agendas and objectives during the strikes worth investigating.

Most existing research on the Canton-Hong Kong Strike and the May Thirtieth Movement takes an organisational approach, analysing organisational records to understand the bureaucracy of the strike committee (Chan 1975; Cheng 2011), the CCP's alliance with the Green Gang (Perry 1993), the Soviet Union's involvement via the Comintern (Elleman 1995), and the British Hong Kong colonial government's response (Wan 2021). Even in his chapter on the CCP's newspaper *The Workers' Road*, Horrocks (1994) focuses on the newspaper's organisational structure, not its framing techniques and rhetorical strategies. While existing studies on the strikes inform us what happened and what institutions did, media framing analysis allows us to see how the meaning of the strike was produced by the party and communicated to the public, a key aspect of partisan goals. Entman argues that frames in newspapers promote particular problem definitions, causal interpretations, moral evaluations, and/or treatment recommendations (Entman 1993). In practice, this happens through editors' choices of naming events, assigning blame, and explaining the development of issues (Putnam and Shoemaker 2007). Therefore, exploring journalistic decision-making is essential to understanding how political actors shape public understanding and opinion in favour of their own political ends.

The objective of this study is to fill the gap in the literature on the Canton-Hong Kong Strike and the May Thirtieth Movement by exploring and comparing the motives of the KMT and the CCP through the lens of media framing. Results demonstrate that the two parties shared the goal of fostering anti-imperialistic ideological consensus rather than mobilising the public for concrete solutions to solve immediate problems. Differences in newspaper framing reveal distinct propaganda and state-building agendas, involving coalition scope, media role, and timeline expectation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To analyse KMT and CCP affiliated news corpus on the Canton-Hong Kong Strike and the May Thirtieth Movement, I apply Benford and Snow's media framing theory on collective action frames. In this section, I will review theoretical literature on news framing in three dimensions progressively, including the significance of framing, the rise of the concept of collective action frames, and introduction to Benford and Snow's theory on collective action frames.

Framing's significance arises from the consensus among media theorists that news is not neutral. It is a social construct that provides a shortcut to help the audience interpret what exists, what happens, and what matters (Tuchman 1978). Practically, this is accomplished through framing, which refers to the creation of salience through selecting some aspects of a perceived reality that resonate with audiences' existing schemas, thereby promoting particular understandings of social events (Entman 1993). Modes of presentation, shaped by framing, form the effect of messages, rather than content alone (Scheufele and Tewksbury 2007).

In the context of social movements, framing theory traditionally focused on third party journalistic reports and their effects on social movements (Boykoff 2006; Tracy 2004), overlooking how social movement actors themselves could participate in what Boykoff calls the framing contest to gain social currency (Boykoff 2006). Hence, in the 1980s, theories of 'collective action frames'—frames leveraged by social movement actors—arose to fill in this gap. Collective action frame challenges status quo frames with new frames to construct political opportunities and strategically creates salience to facilitate actions (Bedingfield 2011; Pu and Scanlan 2012). A successful collective action frame identifies an aggrieved group with shared concerns, convinces a group that they are victims of injustice, and persuades them that action can change the status quo (Gamson et al. 1982); an effective framing scheme shares understandings of the world and of members themselves that legitimise and motivate collective action (McAdam et al. 1996). Benford and Snow consolidate a theoretical framework on collective action frames with three core framing tasks of collective action mobilisers: diagnostic framing, prognostic framing, and motivational framing (Snow and Benford 1988).

Diagnostic framing involves the identification of the cause, source, or blame of the issue, and attribution of responsibility to motivated human actors. While a consensus may be reached that a problem exists, attributional consensus of underlying cause and actors remains rare; and while movement leaders tend to present one or more causes in diagnostic frames, they usually highlight one as the most salient and primary (Snow and Benford 1988). Diagnostic frames can frequently, though not necessarily, contain an injustice component, or more explicitly adopt an injustice frame, to 'put fire in the belly and iron in the soul'¹. The attribution of injustice is critical in determining which reactions diagnostic frames induce, as injustice in general can incur a wide variety of responses, from cynicism, indignation, to resignation. Abstraction diffuses indignation, and excessive specification diminishes emotional depth and

¹ William A. Gamson, *Talking Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 32.

understanding of underlying structural constraints, making a concrete and well-calibrated attribution of injustice a critical precondition for the success of most diagnostic frames (Gamson 1992; Gamson 2022). Diagnostic frames and their attributional component are strengthened by clear and continuous construction of identity fields – ‘boundary framing’ and ‘adversarial framing’ that juxtapose the protagonists, those capable of overcoming injustice and solving the problem, and the antagonists, those causing either fundamental problems or responsible for difficulties as the movement proceeds (Hunt and Benford 1994; Benford 2022).

Prognostic framing proposes solutions to the problem, though sometimes partial (attacks that do not completely solve the problem) or less direct (strategies and targets of an action), as long as the actions to be taken are specified (Snow and Benford 1988). Research has suggested a correspondence between diagnostic and prognostic frames (Benford and Snow 2000). However, prognostic frames tend to be used where different movement leaders and organisations diverge the most (Haines 1996). Commonly seen in a multi-organisational discourse environment, prognostic frames often involve both an attack on the efficacy and plausibility of opponents’ prognostic frames—an effort called ‘counter-framing’, and a presentation of the rationale of remedies proposed by that SMO (Social Movement Organisation) (Benford and Snow 2000).

Motivational frames are the ‘vocabularies of motive’² that boost agency, rationale, and responsibility of audiences to act. It usually consists of four dimensions: severity, urgency, efficacy, and propriety (Benford 1993). Each dimension is indispensable in transforming consensus into action and contributes individually to the motivational effect. Severity should be foregrounded since agreeing on the existence of a problem does not entail effort to alleviate it, thus falling short in inducing practical engagement. In a competitive framing environment where various issues could arise, movement leaders need to underscore the severity of their cause as ‘supersedes and subliming all others’³ to attract and maintain participants. Nevertheless, given agreement about the severity of the problem, audiences could still postpone their actions, not believing that the undesirable consequences are immediately pending—this is where urgency frames come in. Yet, vocabulary stressing severity and urgency could also adversely demobilise participants. Since movement leaders who assume motivational framing may make audience internalise these vocabularies, they may be convinced that “ameliorative action seems highly improbable”⁴ (Snow and Benford 1988). Successful mobilisation depends partly on the shared belief that actions can actually produce change (Klandermans 1984). Hence, motivational frames of efficacy that convey the meaningfulness of participation come in useful. Finally, propriety—the articulation of the moral duty of audiences—comprises the last section of motivational frames. It is applied because, while people agree that some responsibility should be undertaken, significant discrepancies arise regarding where the obligation falls.

² Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 617.

³ Robert D. Benford, "'You Could Be the Hundredth Monkey': Collective Action Frames and Vocabularies of Motive within the Nuclear Disarmament Movement," *The Sociological Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (May 1993): 202.

⁴ David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, "Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization," *International Social Movement Research* 1 (1988): 205.

Although these four motivational frame components are necessary and complementary to some extent, together they may prove contradictory. For example, an emphasis on severity and urgency could reduce the effect of efficacy frames, as audiences suspect the possibility of reversing an already terrible situation. Maintaining efficacy frames in the long term could also be challenging, as participants may conclude their efforts have not been visibly improving the cause. These require strong propriety frames to demand action despite the status quo. Yet, propriety frames could also misfire if overdeveloped, which causes mental burnout of those excessively involved, or leads some to view the frame as superfluous. Thus, the strength of motivational frames is not only contingent upon the combination of all four tasks, but also on delivering them at an optimal balance.

In sum, diagnostic and motivational frames can be classified as “consensus mobilisation”, which cultivates agreement, and prognostic frames as “action mobilisation”, which translates ideological and emotional fervour into practical movements (Klandermans 1984). The combination of all three could be highly effective in generating success for social movements, yet existing literature has presented that varying strengths across the three core framing tasks and inadequacies of particular frames would suffice in case studies of social movements, such as in the case of social media mobilisation in Singapore’s protest on May 1, 2013 (Goh and Pang 2016).

BACKGROUND

This study applies Benford and Snow’s framework on collective actions to the mid-1920s China. This time period, marked by deep scars of imperialism, fractured political authority, and the fragile alliance between the KMT and the CCP, suits well as a case for expanding the application of collective action frames and exploring how the KMT and the CCP exploited China’s grievances to construct their own political opportunities through the media.

One of the most significant background elements for mid-1920s China is entrenched and afflicting foreign encroachment. Since the mid-nineteenth century, when the Opium Wars ended in defeat, China had suffered a series of unequal treaties and further Imperialist exploitations. Foreigners enjoyed extraterritorial jurisdiction (Cong and Mégret 2021), deprived China of tariff autonomy (Van de Ven 2014), and leased and administered some key Chinese territory (Cong and Mégret 2021). Such treaties also produced international settlements in Shanghai and Canton, which are enclaves where, despite the overwhelming majority of residents being Chinese, the Municipal Council with foreign staff collected taxes and exercised policing uncharted in the original treaties (Cong and Mégret 2021). Foreign companies, such as the Japanese and British cotton mills in Shanghai, employed massive numbers of Chinese workers with a fraction of standard wages and yet 12-hour or longer day and night shifts, and exploited children under the age of ten (Honig 1986).

External encroachment is compounded by internal political fragmentation. Following the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911, China had splintered into rival warlord cliques. After a 1924 coup, Beijing was reorganised into the Provisional Government of the Republic of China (Ch'i 1976). However, it only exercised control over a part of the country. In the south, Sun Yat-sen's KMT built a rival Nationalist Government in Canton (Wilbur and How 1989). Besides, the Chinese Communist Party was just founded in 1921. At the time, it was a small, largely urban organisation seeking political base and influence (Van de Ven 1991). This fracture was further intensified by KMT's leader Sun Yat-sen's death without an appointed successor in March 1925, which left the Canton government's leadership unsettled (Bergère 1998).

Interdependent demands brought the KMT and the CCP together amidst this fragmented political environment. The KMT, rebuffed by Western governments in securing support for national unification, sought Soviet recognition, assistance, and aid (Wilbur 1976). The CCP, on the other hand, wished to take advantage of the KMT's established influence and military force to expand its own reach (Elleman 1995). A formal alliance between the two parties, named the "First United Front", was established in 1924. As the junior party, CCP members joined the KMT individually while retaining their separate party organisation (Wilbur 1984). However, the alliance was fragile. In August 1925, KMT right wing assassinated left-KMT leader Liao Zhongkai for his staunch defence of the United Front; in March 1926, Chiang Kai-shek declared martial law in the Zhongshan Incident to curb CCP influence within the party and its army (Barrett 1982); this escalating tension culminated on 12 April 1927, when Chiang's forces killed hundreds of Communists, formally ending the First United Front (Wilbur 1984). These frictions underlined fundamental ideological and agenda discrepancies between the KMT and the CCP.

It was in this backdrop of foreign encroachment, fractured political landscape, and an uneasy alliance that, in 1925, two interrelated major events took place: the May Thirtieth Movement and the Canton-Hong Kong Strike. They gave both parties the opportunity to expand their influence amongst the public. On 30 May 1925, police under the Shanghai Municipal Council opened fire on demonstrators in the International Settlement, who were protesting the recent killing of a Chinese worker at a Japanese-owned mill and the arrest of student sympathisers on Nanjing Road (Rigby 1980). This incident sparked a wave of strikes, boycotts, and protests collectively known as the May Thirtieth Movement (Ku 1979). It was coordinated by the Shanghai General Labour Union (GLU), a body founded by the CCP that sought to expand its influence among Shanghai workers. The CCP-led labor and student unions, along with one merchant association, formed the Union of Labour, Commerce, and Education (ULCE), which issued seventeen negotiation demands to the Shanghai Municipal Council (Perry 1993). However, Shanghai's more prominent merchant organisation, the General Chamber of Commerce, insisted on its independent committee and proposed more moderate negotiation terms (Fewsmith 1985).

The May Thirtieth incident spread nationwide, and especially in Canton, and grew into the 16-month Canton-Hong Kong Strike. On 23 June 1925, a demonstration in solidarity with Shanghai was met with gunfire from British and French forces when passing the Shakee concession (Wan 2021). This Shakee Massacre enabled the KMT in Canton to mobilise for the Canton-Hong Kong Strike-Boycott. In total,

approximately 250,000 Hong Kong workers left the colony for Canton, and trade in Hong Kong halved (Cao and Seifert 2025). The boycott was led by a quasi-governmental Strike Committee with both KMT and CCP members. It operated with its own courts, relief services (Cheng 2011), and picket corps to blockade shipping to Hong Kong (Horrocks 1994).

DATA COLLECTION

To explore how the KMT and the CCP took advantage of the political opportunities provided by the Canton-Hong Kong Strike and the May Thirtieth Movement through media framing, I collected two primary partisan newspapers at the time: *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition)⁵ and *Hot Blood Daily*⁶. The main reasonings for the source choices are data availability, partisan affiliation, and geographical base. *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) was selected because it is KMT's propaganda mouthpiece and Canton is the oldest and most established revolutionary base of the party; *Hot Blood Daily* was selected because it is a CCP-affiliated newspaper dedicated to mobilisation during the May Thirtieth Movement, and because the newspaper is based in Shanghai, the CCP's organisational birthplace. Such choices could acutely reflect framing patterns and motives of the KMT and the CCP behind journalistic coverage. The sources for raw data are the Fanyun Historical Literature Database for *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition), and Anna's archive for *Hot Blood Daily*.

My pipeline to collect *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) mainly consists of web-crawling. To ensure relevance of any data crawled, I first used the advanced search function in Fanyun Historical Database with keywords like "Hong Kong" and "Strike"⁷ and limited the period to between May 31, 1925, and October 10, 1926. I then reviewed the 10 most relevant and 10 least relevant search results, ensuring that the strike mentioned is specifically the Canton-Hong Kong strike. I also included all news articles mentioning these keywords only in the text, not the title. To ensure the data focuses on the Canton-Hong Kong Strike rather than other irrelevant reports that can appear on the same newspaper pages, I filtered newspaper clippings only. The clippings are minimal rectangular cuts of newspaper pages that contain the strike-related text, so involvement of other reports is kept at minimum to minimise contamination in the later topic modelling pipeline. The database also offered a text files option for the clippings, which allows me to forgo the OCR conversion for *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) corpus. I then used the Python WebCrawler to scrape newspaper clippings from text files from Fanyun Historical Database. I collected 1,877 newspaper clippings, which contain 1,800,990 tokens, for this study.

For *Hot Blood Daily*, I downloaded a compiled version of the newspapers published during the period of the May Thirtieth Movement. OCR helped to convert them from PDFs to machine-readable text files: Poppler rasterised the PDFs into images, then the text-specific polygon detector DBNet divides newspapers into multiple OCR-compatible sections. Within each box, I used a vertical projection profile

⁵ 《民国日报》[The Republican Daily News]广州版 [Canton edition].

⁶ 《热血日报》[Hot Blood Daily]

⁷ “香港”[“Hong Kong”], “罷工”[“Strike”]

to compute the sum of foregrounded pixels per x-coordinate to identify the columns of text. Then, the algorithm proceeds to assign the reading order by taking advantage of nodes built through labelling the coordinates of the edges of the boxes of sections and columns. In this way, the program is able to read in the traditional order: read each section of the newspaper, read the columns of text from right to left, and finally read each column from top to bottom. I selected the Paddle OCR model as it is considered one of the most advanced for traditional Chinese OCR, which has been challenging given the reverse reading order and special alignment of the texts. Only using Paddle OCR would result in completely messy and unreadable texts. The OCRed newspapers can involve a considerable number of mistakes, including incorrectly identified characters and overlooked characters. Therefore, I used the ChatGPT API into the pipeline to enable correction of those identified mistakes before outputting the text files. In total, I collected 100 pages of the newspaper, which contains 271,219 tokens of text, to be analysed in this study.

In the newspapers collected, text files are not arranged in neat paragraphs, sometimes featuring extremely long paragraphs with no separation in between, and sometimes showing a sentence separated into several lines. Therefore, I used Python blended with the DeepSeek API to standardise texts into meaningful documents in the BERTopic pipeline. I instructed DeepSeek AI to read the text files, assemble the identified disjointed sentences, and separate each into reasonable paragraphs based on the meaning, while not exceeding the maximum limit of characters. Additionally, I chose DeepSeek AI because it has more familiarity with the Chinese language than the "ChatGPT-4o" model. Without this step, the vectors representing the documents in the BERTopic modelling would link irrelevant documents and assign them to the same cluster.

METHODOLOGY

Textual data of the two newspapers separately go through a quantitative pipeline consisting of the word frequency metric and the topic modelling metric. I combined these two approaches because they cross-validate results to illustrate framing strategies of the KMT and the CCP. The word frequency metric tallied and ranked word occurrences in descending order of frequency. This offers an immediate, interpretable baseline to illustrate the concept of salience in media framing theory, since frequency is a relatively unmediated proxy for salience. In comparison, the topic modelling metric clusters documents into topics based on their thematic similarities and outputs distinctive keywords and representative documents of each topic. Technically, I implemented the BERTopic model, which is a semi-supervised method that converts text units into transformer-based embeddings and applies the HDBSCAN algorithm to identify coherent themes based on the cosine similarities between the vectors of each text unit. This approach complements the word frequencies baseline by highlighting salience defined semantically and contextually, grouping related text units that shape similar narratives but do not share enough surface vocabulary, which the word frequencies metric tends to overlook.

I chose the BERTopic model over other topic modelling methods due to its more accurate topic generation and informative keyword representation per topic. BERTopic incorporates the semantic relationships

between text units with transformer-based embeddings, which allows it to capture contextual nuances and dynamically determine the number of topics by leveraging clustering algorithms like HDBSCAN. This outperforms other topic modelling methods in topic division accuracy, such as the Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) model, which adopts a bag-of-words approach and requires the researcher to specify the number of topics in advance. Furthermore, BERTopic combines contextual embedding with c-TF-IDF (Class-based Term Frequency–Inverse Document Frequency), which evaluates the importance of each word within a topic relative to the larger corpus by rewarding words that appear frequently in the same topic and down-weighting words and phrases that are common across all topics. Therefore, it identifies significant keywords and phrases that more informatively represent each topic than traditional topic modelling methods.

However, to optimise topic modelling results catering to this study's data, I modified the default Python implementation of the BERTopic model in three dimensions: ensuring meaningfulness of topic division, enhancing interpretability of keyword and phrases selection for each topic, and improving adaption to the traditional Chinese language.

To ensure that BERTopic produces meaningful topic division, I fine-tuned the pipeline in three ways. First, the refined code uses the "by-sentences" function to split each document into embeddings, i.e., each newspaper edition, into disjoint chunks of sentences. This ensures that documents are not strictly segmented by punctuation. Otherwise, embedding units would be too small, making them meaningless for informing topic similarity since contexts of embedding would be ignored. Through trying different minimum thresholds with a small sample of one corpus, I set a minimum of 1/10 of total text units in the text corpora as a reasonable threshold. Second, I set a minimum threshold for the number of text units per topic based on the size of the sub-corpora to prevent the default implementation from generating a large number of topics with very few units. Third, the refined BERTopic code uses the "reduce topics" function to merge highly similar topics based on the cosine similarity between the representative keywords of each topic.

Beyond the meaningfulness of topic division, I also made several modifications to ensure the c-TF-IDF keywords and phrases extracted from each topic are sufficiently informative of the topic's theme. First, before the pipeline selects keywords and phrases, I used an n-gram method for $n = 1$ to 3 to capture contiguous sequences of n words, rather than treating each word in isolation. This helps the model identify fixed expressions that are precise and interpretable. Second, during the selection of keywords and phrases, words with only one character are excluded from c-TF-IDF, since they can yield high c-TF-IDF scores and occupy a significant proportion of the keywords in each topic but rarely convey any substantial meaning. Third, I also excluded stopwords, which are common words that carry little semantic value. I downloaded four stopword lists from GitHub: the Chinese Stopword List, the Harbin Institute of Technology Stopword List, the Sichuan University Machine Intelligence Laboratory Stopword Dictionary, and the Baidu Stopword List. Niche stopwords, such as time-related and journalism-related stopwords, are LLM-generated and appended to the list. Then, a translation code converted the whole list of stopwords from simplified Chinese into traditional Chinese with the Python library OpenCC to match

the corpus. To ensure the stopwords list caters to my dataset, I performed the topic modelling multiple times to manually select the unwanted keywords and added them to the stopwords list. I lowered the minimum clustering size to 30 and increased the number of keywords selected to 50 to increase removal effectiveness during this process. Fourth, before displaying the key words and phrases, Maximal Marginal Relevance (MMR) is used to re-rank them in each topic. It chooses the most relevant word to the topic and iteratively selects additional words that are most relevant to the topic while minimally similar to the words already chosen. This ensures diversity among the keywords representing each topic.

Lastly, I refined the pipeline by modifying it to handle traditional Chinese text more effectively. First, before executing topic division, the refined code incorporated a multilingual embedding model to transform traditional Chinese text into more accurate vectors. Second, before c-TF-IDF selection of top words and phrases, the code uses Python library jieba for Chinese text segmentation, splitting continuous character strings into meaningful word units.

After implementing the refined BERTopic model with the above modifications, I interpret the results of the entire pipeline qualitatively under Benford and Snow's theory on collective action frames. The two corpora, *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) and *Hot Blood Daily*, are analysed separately in the Results section before comparison in the Discussion section. The analysis of each is achieved through progressively examining model outputs of the word frequency aggregation, which provides preliminary baseline of salience; themes of the top six topics produced by BERTopic, which indicates emphasis in content distribution; and each topic's three representative documents selected by BERTopic, which showcases the typical language style, argumentation pattern, and detail presentation of each topic. Within each of these three dimensions, I uncover framing patterns by assessing the strength of the three core framing tasks named by Benford and Snow, including diagnostic frames, prognostic frames, and motivational frames.

RESULTS

The Republican Daily News (Canton edition) Results Analysis

Word frequency

For *The Republican Daily news* (Canton edition) corpus, I start by analysing the word frequency aggregation results as a baseline, using the three core framing tasks proposed by Benford and Snow. A word cloud of the 40 most frequent words is shown by Figure 1.

encourage the delegation to rally around partisan authorities regarding solutions. Additionally, the vague and evocative traits of the prognostic when it addresses the general audience can be seen less as an explicit proposal of a solution than a reinforcement of motivational frames and hence weakens the prognostic frame individually.

The motivational frame fulfils all four components: severity, urgency, efficacy, and propriety. Severity and urgency are sufficiently conveyed through ‘压迫’ (oppression). This specific word choice characterises the imperialists’ affliction on them as harsher than synonyms such as ‘exploitation’, ‘control’, and ‘pressure’. Similarly, ‘情形’ (situation), which in Chinese connotes evolving dynamics, may imply repeated description of the serious status quo. Meanwhile, the efficacy frame is represented by words ‘各界’ (all institutions) and ‘解决’ (solve), which are used frequently and vaguely. Considering efficacy components in latter analysis of topic distribution and representative documents, however, I discover that efficacy frames are in use, but difficult to detect by the word frequency metric, as it emphasises varied depictions and statistics of an economically devastated Hong Kong. This reveals that (a) an overall assessment of efficacy frames would not be weak and (b) heterogeneous forms of the efficacy frames could imply that the partisan agenda or focus of the strike is less on a movement in a particular time, tackling a particular issue, or striving for a particular achievement. Its purpose might be constantly reinforcing readers’ confidence to be anti-imperialistic. Lastly, the propriety component is strong by employing revolutionary terms, ‘革命’ (revolution), ‘同胞’ (compatriots), which instill a sense of mission and justice in supporting the partisan cause. Besides, particular terms of national identity prompt that the obligation falls on every citizen and foster motivation through fellowship, such as ‘中国’ (China), ‘国民’ (Chinese citizen), ‘全国’ (the entire nation), ‘民族’ (ethnicity), and ‘工友’ (coworkers)

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Topic distribution

The topic distribution of *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) and its similarity matrix across its 15 topics are demonstrated in Figure 2 and Figure 3, respectively. The five columns show the following information of each of the six largest topics from left to right: rank based on size, number of text units, c-TF-IDF keywords/phrases in Chinese, c-TF-IDF keywords/phrases in English, and my manually written summary after reading keywords/phrases and representative documents. I will analyse the three core framing tasks of Benford and Snow sequentially.

Topic number	Topic Count	Keywords/phrases (Chinese)	Keywords/phrases (translated)	Topic Description
0	1460	[香港政府, '交通', '封锁', '返省', '轮船', '损失', '商人', '货物', '出口', '恐慌', '沙面', '华人', '货物', '问题', '断绝', '磋商', '入口', '澳门', '港督', '搭客', '情形', '英人', '广东', '方面', '商业', '交涉', '商务', '接济', '纠察队']	Hong Kong Government', 'transportation/traffic', 'blockade', 'return to the province (Guangdong)', 'steamships', 'losses', 'merchants', 'goods/cargo', 'exports', 'panic', 'Shameen (foreign concession in Guangzhou)', 'Chinese people', 'goods/cargo', 'problem/issue', 'severed/cut off', 'negotiations/consultations', 'imports', 'Macau', 'Governor of Hong Kong', 'passengers', 'situation/circumstances', 'Englishmen/British people', 'Guangdong', 'side/aspect', 'commerce/trade', 'negotiations/dealings', 'commercial affairs', 'relief/supply assistance', 'picket corps'	Effect of the strike on British Hong Kong colony; Implementation of the strike; confrontations with British officials; sinful conducts of imperialists around the world
1	871	[主席, '开会', '联合会', '党部', '主任', '委员会', '协会', '学生', '中央', '党部', '会议', '本会', '组织', '全国总工会', '团体', '广东', '议决', '散会', '一人', '议决', '十二', '开会理由', '妇女', '筹备', '决议', '执行', '巡行', '出席', '演说']	'Chairperson', 'convene meeting', 'federation/union', 'party branch', 'director', 'committee', 'association', 'students', 'Central Party Headquarters', 'meeting/conference', 'this association', 'organization', 'National General Labour Union', 'group/organization', 'Guangdong', 'resolution passed', 'adjournment', 'one person', 'resolution passed', 'twelfth', 'reason for convening', 'women', 'preparatory work', 'resolution', 'execute/carry out', 'parade/procession', 'attendance', 'speech']	A variety of conferences and gatherings, e.g. organizational planning meetings and funerals of important figures.
2	676	[反革命, '打倒', '军阀', '吾人', '成功', '帝国主义', '压迫', '努力', '势力', '军队', '廖先生', '本党', '起来', '主义者', '不是', '总理', '国民党', '运动', '军人', '平等', '联合', '就是', '知道', '基督', '世界', '奋斗', '敌人', '国主义者', '自由', '力量']	'counter-revolutionary', 'down with', 'warlords', 'we/our people', 'success', 'imperialism', 'oppression', 'strive/effort', 'forces/power', 'military forces', 'Mr. Liao (Zhongkai)', 'our party', 'rise up', 'imperialists', 'is not', 'the Director-General (Sun Yat-sen)', 'Kuomintang', 'movement', 'military personnel', 'equality', 'unite', 'that is', 'know/understand', 'Christianity', 'world', 'struggle', 'enemy', 'imperialists', 'freedom', 'strength']	Military plans against counter-revolutionaries/warlords; rallying support for the Revolutionary Army; imperialist oppression; condemning Christianity.
3	361	[主义者, '军阀', '帝国主义', '五卅', '运动', '中国人', '条约', '民族', '平等', '中国国民', '压迫', '平等条约', '反帝', '中国', '势力', '主义的', '屠杀', '国主义者', '战争', '惨案', '打倒', '反抗', '帝国主义', '自从', '起来', '就是', '知道', '武力', '利用']	'Imperialists', 'warlords', 'imperialism', 'May Thirtieth (Incident)', 'movement', 'Chinese people', 'treaty', 'nation/people', 'equality', 'Chinese people', 'oppression', 'equal treaties', 'anti-imperialism', 'China', 'forces/power', 'imperialism', 'imperialistic', 'massacre', 'imperialists', 'war', 'tragic incident/massacre', 'down with', 'resist/resistance', 'imperialism', 'ever since', 'rise up', 'that is', 'know/understand', 'armed force', 'exploit/utilize'	the May Thirtieth Incidence and Shameen Incidence; Imperialist oppression through unequal treaties; national awakening and call for unity
4	352	[余人, '协会', '纠察队', '商民', '商民协会', '惠州', '情形', '前往', '六月', '委员会', '全体', '县长', '局长', '贵会', '二千', '刘公素', '扣留', '第一', '贵局', '上工', '办理', '中山', '农民', '此款', '公安局', '转来', '相应', '等语', '蒋军长', '广东']	'some persons/number of people', 'association', 'picket corps', 'merchant citizens', 'Merchant Citizens Association', 'Huizhou', 'situation/circumstances', 'proceed to', 'June', 'committee', 'all members/entire body', 'county magistrate', 'bureau chief', 'your association', 'two thousand', 'Liu Gongsu', 'detained/hold', 'first', 'your bureau', 'return to work', 'handle/manage', 'Zhongshan', 'peasants', 'hereby addressed to', 'Public Security Bureau', 'forwarded from', 'accordingly', 'the aforementioned', 'Commander Chiang (Kai-shek)', 'Guangdong'	military organization and movement; military and institutional enforcement of the strike e.g. picket corp; handling of labor and public-order incidents; mobilization of merchants and peasants in Guangdong
5	337	[英国, '煤业', '矿工', '煤矿', '英帝', '英国大', '世界', '本家', '欧洲', '矿主', '国主义', '英政府', '利润', '英帝 国主义', '工资', '一九二', '各国', '减少', '伦敦', '工业', '工业', '同盟', '剥削', '损失', '因为', '德国', '资本帝', '国际', '全世界']	'Britain/England', 'coal industry', 'miners', 'coal mines', 'British imperialism', 'the great British (strike)', 'world', 'capitalists', 'Europe', 'mine owners', 'imperialism', 'British government', 'profits', 'British imperialism', 'wages', '192-(year)', 'various nations', 'reduction/decrease', 'London', 'industry', 'industry', 'alliance/coalition', 'exploitation', 'losses', 'because', 'Germany', 'capital imperialism', 'international', 'the whole world'	British Imperialism and exploitation; British coal miners' suffering and protests; alliances of the workers across the globe

Figure 2: Six most frequent topics generated by BERTopic model for *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) corpus

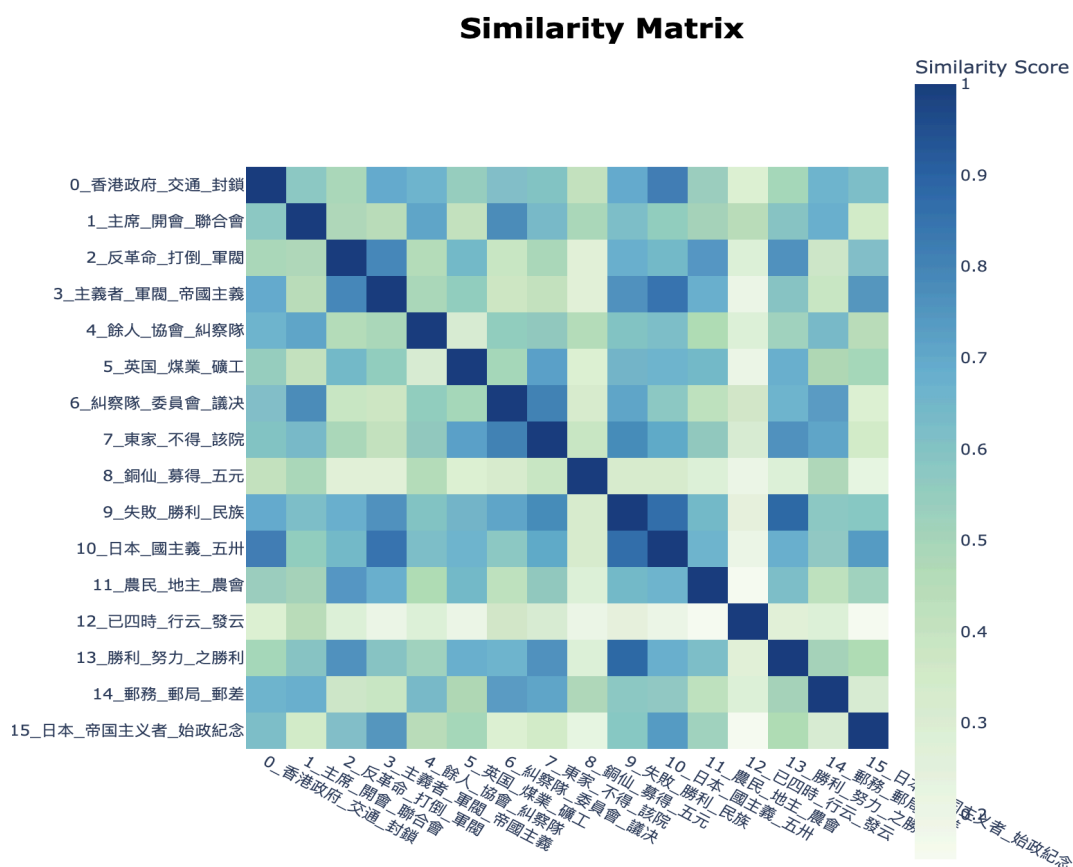


Figure 3: Similarity matrix across 15 topics in *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition)

The diagnostic frames under the topic distribution dimension are in rich forms, all directed towards the same target — imperialist oppressors. Although T2 did identify warlords as part of the cause, the media had long focused on imperialism as the root cause (Wang 2012): the imperialists/colonisers were responsible for the immediate insecurity and instability of HK (T0), they were the cause for their by-products (warlords) (T2), they were the cause of deaths of Chinese protestors (T3), they were the cause of workers sufferings through unequal treaties (T3), and they were also the long-term and wide-range cause for workers' sufferings across the globe (T5). Imperialism thus serves as the underlying master frame underpinning all issues addressed in subtopics.

Similar to the word frequency dimension analysis, prognostic is either vague or unapproachable for the wider public. For example, T0 can imply the prognostic of workers leaving Hong Kong and settling in Canton through the depiction of panic and economic devastation in HK. However, such illustrations do not contain keywords calling for explicit action but rather emphasise the effects. Hence, the main function is emotional rather than action-oriented: It enriches the efficacy dimension in a motivational frame by leading the strikers to believe their aggression inflicts pain on the imperialists. Besides, the prognostic in T4 seems to suggest the reliance on military leadership of the KMT since it is capable of maintaining order and combating injustice, with neither explicit presentation of solution nor public engagement.

The motivational frame is consolidated in all four dimensions. The salience of severity and urgency components are demonstrated by the newspaper's themes of three large topics: T2 kept reminding readers of the presence of warlords, counterrevolutionaries, and their oppression; T3 builds a semantic field of Imperialistic exploitation through frequent mentioning of unequal treaties and the May Thirtieth Massacre; T5 highlights severity and urgency by broadening the destruction of Imperialistic practices to a global scale. The efficacy dimension of motivational frames is represented in T0 by the economic devastation of Hong Kong caused by Chinese workers' departure. Lastly, the propriety is two-fold: (a) The content of topics convey that people should support a legitimate and capable government: T5 showcases KMT's international vision; T4's focus on military organisation demonstrate its maintenance of order and coping with injustice; T2 emphasises KMT had strong military forces and use it to cope with injustice. (b) The content of topics convey that people should rise up for the sufferings of their comrades: T3 reminds readers of the protestors killed in May Thirtieth incident and all forms of imperialist oppression; T5 points to comrades around the world, thereby amplifies and elevates the duty to rising for comrades around the world.

Representative documents

On top of the word frequency baseline and topic distribution implications, a close analysis of 18 most representative original text units of *The Republican Daily News (Canton edition)*—three for each BERTopic generated cluster—reveals further insights about the three core framing tasks in KMT press. In this sub-section, I will first explore three prominent features—Imperialism-centred narrative, scope

extension, and use of language—to evaluate the strengths of diagnostic and motivational frames. Interpretations of the prognostic frame will be placed last.

1. Construction of an Imperialism-centred narrative

The Republican Daily News (Canton edition) sets forth Imperialism as the single most prominent culprit of China's current situation; an Imperialism-centred narrative is thus formed where other events are woven in as evidence, often not objectively. For example, the Shakee Massacre, where British and French troops opened fire on Chinese demonstrators in support of the May Thirtieth Movement, was represented as the cause and justification of the strike-boycott. The Shakee Massacre is also brought up as a reminder of Imperialist oppression on Memorial Days: 'Today marks the one-year anniversary of the 'Shakee Massacre.' In this sorrowful commemoration, we reflect deeply on our grief. We can only temper our sorrow and increase our efforts.' However, this emphasis on the Shakee Massacre is an exaggeration of the role Imperialists played in initiating the strike, as mobilisations of the strike-boycott by the United Front started days prior to the Shakee Massacre (Cao and Seifert 2025). Since only an inadequate number of workers had left Hong Kong in protest by then, the framing of the Shakee Incident as the cause of the outbreak of strike-boycott is a deliberate attempt by KMT Canton to exploit the Imperialist threat to inflame a wider response.

Furthermore, the murder of Liao Zhongkai, a leader of KMT left wing in Canton, who ardently supported the First United Front, is blamed on the Imperialists: 'Unfortunately assassinated by a hired killer in the pay of imperialism — it is clear that the imperialists seek to poison not only Mr. Liao, but intends to eliminate all the revolutionary leaders of the Nationalist Government in one sweep, so as to carry out their conspiracy to destroy the National Revolution'⁸. In fact, most historians believe the murder was executed by the KMT right wing—an embodiment of internal disunity due to discrepancies regarding cooperation with the CCP in the United Front (Barrett 1982). Failure of negotiations was attributed to Imperialists as well: 'it is obvious that they lack sincerity in ending the strike'⁹. Meanwhile, sources point to the Strike Committee, given their objective to prolong the strike, as the conditions they propose are so severe that they leave no room for bargaining at all (Cheng 2011).

This creation of an Imperialism-centred narrative made both the diagnostic and motivational frames of *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) more salient. The diagnostic frame pointing to Imperialism is inflated and exaggerated as multiple weakly relevant events are misattributed in part to Imperialism. This leaves the impression on audiences that, whereas a variety of causes may explain the current misfortunes of China, which prompt the strike, Imperialism is the overarching root cause. Meanwhile, the severity and urgency components of motivational frames are amplified by enriching the range of harms,

⁸ 廖先生殉难周年纪念宣传大纲 ["Propaganda Outline for the First Anniversary Memorial of Mr. Liao Zhongkai's Martyrdom"], 民国日报 [The Republican Daily News], Canton ed., 19 Aug. 1926, p. 10.

⁹ "香港政府对解决省港罢工问题之阴谋" ["The Hong Kong Government's Scheme Regarding the Resolution of the Canton-Hong Kong Strike"], 民国日报 [The Republican Daily News], Canton ed., 21 June 1926, p. 3.

including immediate ones, that Imperialism could bring to Chinese society and the Chinese people's daily lives.

2. Scope extension and escalation of the Imperialism rhetoric

A second feature that helps evaluate the diagnostic and motivational frames is the escalation of Imperialism from a practical threat to contemporary China to a global enemy and an ideological rival. First, the newspaper enumerates the harms of Imperialism across the globe. A wide array of protests against Imperialism are cited: 'The building up of the strike of the textile workers in Lancashire and the miners in Sheffield, the general strike of the railway workers in British Columbia, and the general strike of the textile workers in India — all of these fought back forcefully against British Imperialism'¹⁰. Moreover, the newspaper draws parallels between anti-imperialist movements in China with those within Britain: 'During this great strike in Britain, the coal miners were the first to rise up, followed in turn by the transport workers, the metal industry workers, the printing workers, and the chemical workers'¹¹. The coverage of British strikes conveys that not only workers in other countries are protesting against Imperialism, but also those in the Imperialist countries themselves. The rhetorical escalation of Imperialism is not just geographic – it extends from an economic concept to a political one and then tied to the cultural aspect. For example, Imperialism is presented to be not only an economic or political threat, but also one that permeates into other aspects of public life such as religion: 'Christianity is a tool for international Imperialism to invade and oppress weak and small nations – a tool that kills without drawing blood'¹².

The escalation and extension of Imperialism, both geographically and culturally, strengthen the saliency of the diagnostic and motivational frame. The adversarial framing in the diagnostic frame is amplified by pinpointing that the imperialist affliction is not only in terms of political and economic aspects, but also in every aspect of public life. In terms of motivational frames, the severity component is heightened by drawing the scope of affliction, including China as well as the rest of the world. The propriety component is also more salient as worldwide resistance against Imperialism allegedly supports its moral legitimacy to act and engages Chinese workers in a global alliance of the oppressed, where fellowship demands action.

3. Use of language

The newspaper's use of language—which could only be analysed in the representative documents dimension but neither word frequencies nor topic modelling—offers insights into the KMT's handling of diagnostic and motivational frames as well. It uses inflammatory, aggressive, and deliberately provocative

¹⁰ "大英帝国主义之崩溃(一)" ["The Collapse of British Imperialism (Part 1)"], 民国日报 [The Republican Daily News], Canton ed., 14 Oct. 1926, p. 6.

¹¹ "掘帝国主义的祖墓援助英国大罢工" ["Digging Imperialism's Ancestral Grave to Support the British General Strike"], 民国日报 [The Republican Daily News], Canton ed., 7 June 1926, p. 2.

¹² "反基督教总同盟告全国同胞" ["The National Anti-Christian League's Announcement to All Compatriots"], 民国日报 [The Republican Daily News], Canton ed., 8 Jan. 1926, p. 7.

language. First, the terms to address Imperialists and their followers are extremely derogatory. The newspaper dehumanises Imperialists: ‘兽性的帝国主义者’ (beast-like Imperialists), ‘England is nothing more than a machine, extracting capital and raw materials from the colonies and semi-colonies’¹³. Their supporters are scolded for disloyalty: they are named as ‘traitors of the Chinese race’, ‘running dogs’, etc. Second, rhetorical questions are used to assert the validity of the newspapers’ narratives and arguments: ‘Christians speak endlessly of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Yet in reality, it is nothing of the sort. Who shot and killed Chinese people in the May Thirtieth Massacre? Was it not the imperialists? Who was it that monopolised lawsuits in the interior and shielded local ruffians? Was it not the missionary priests?’¹⁴, ‘With massacres continuing in every place — do the imperialists still regard our China as a nation? Do they still regard us Chinese as human beings?’¹⁵. Apart from derogatory terms of address and rhetorical questions, the tone is imperious: ‘The Hong Kong government has already been in a state of extreme panic over this, yet it remains unrepentant,’¹⁶ ‘It is extremely obvious that the Nationalist Government have sincere intention to comply with both domestic and foreign public opinion and strive for a resolution’¹⁷.

The inflammatory and aggressive language strengthens both diagnostic and motivational frames. The derogatory address towards Imperialists and their supporters adds fuel to the adversarial frames in the diagnostic, and the rhetorical questions ensure that the response provoked by the issue is not cynicism or resignation but indignation. Regarding the propriety component in the motivational frame, the rhetorical question and unequivocal tone make resistance seem unquestionable, and the terms of address towards the enemies trigger fear among the audience that failing to respond to mobilisation would result in themselves regarded with the same terms.

Finally, prognostic frames are not saliently covered in the representative documents, as no particular representative document addressed public actions or concrete solutions against imperialists. Rather, the solution message KMT Canton was trying to convey could be implied by the contents of the diagnostic and motivational frames. They collectively provide legitimacy to the party’s current work and agenda: the seriousness of imperialistic threat justifies prolonged and large-scale mobilisation, and the emphasis on Chinese identity and Imperialists as enemies demands compliance with the party on behalf of the Chinese

¹³ "大英帝国主义之崩溃(一)" ["The Collapse of British Imperialism (Part 1)"], 民国日报 [The Republican Daily News], Canton ed., 14 Oct. 1926, p. 6.

¹⁴ "反基督教总同盟告全国同胞" ["The National Anti-Christian League's Announcement to All Compatriots"], 民国日报 [The Republican Daily News], Canton ed., 8 Jan. 1926, p. 7.

¹⁵ "华侨协会敬告同胞书" ["Overseas Chinese Association's Solemn Announcement to Compatriots"], 民国日报 [The Republican Daily News], Canton ed., 22 June 1926, p. 6.

¹⁶ "香港政府对解决省港罢工问题之阴谋" ["The Hong Kong Government's Scheme Regarding the Resolution of the Canton-Hong Kong Strike"], 民国日报 [The Republican Daily News], Canton ed., 21 June 1926, p. 3.

¹⁷ "香港政府对解决省港罢工问题之阴谋" ["The Hong Kong Government's Scheme Regarding the Resolution of the Canton-Hong Kong Strike"], 民国日报 [The Republican Daily News], Canton ed., 21 June 1926, p. 3.

Agenda Between the Lines: Comparing KMT Newspaper Coverage of the 1925-26 Canton-Hong Kong Strike and CCP Newspaper Coverage of the May Thirtieth Movement in 1925

people and institutions, Chinese and foreign, which thickens the diagnostic frame around the main cause of anti-imperialism.

The prognostic frames are almost absent, with the caveat of a brief mention of the main bodies carrying out the action: the Shanghai General Labour Union (工会) and Union of Labour, Commerce, and Education (联合会), which are both CCP-backed organisations leading the strike. Hence, in the word frequency baseline, the prognostic frame appears to largely focus on partisan actors themselves.

The motivational frames are comprehensively present. Severity and urgency are embodied by words such as ‘whole nation’ (全国), which suggests the entire country be involved in the struggle against Imperialism, ‘oppress’ (压迫), which indicates an illegitimate and powerful form of subordination, and ‘massacre’ (屠杀), which points out urgent life danger and the extent of cruelty. ‘All social circles’ (各界) helps support the efficacy component as it points to the strike’s engagement of people across different socio-economic backgrounds. Finally, the propriety component is amplified in two ways. Inclusive references such as ‘we/us’ (我们), ‘compatriots’ (同胞), ‘everyone’ (所有人) places the responsibility on every individual unconditionally; emphasis on shared ethnic identity is built up from ‘Chinese people’ (中国人) and ‘ethnic group’ (民族), which bind everyone to the shared ethnic cause and justify the need to contribute.

Topic Distribution

The topic distribution of *Hot Blood Daily* and the similarity matrix across its 15 topics are demonstrated in Figure 5 and Figure 6, respectively. The five columns show the following information of each of the six largest topics from left to right: rank based on size, number of text units, c-TF-IDF keywords/phrases in Chinese, c-TF-IDF keywords/phrases in English, and my manually written summary after reading keywords/phrases and representative documents. The three core framing tasks of Benford and Snow will be analysed sequentially.

Topic number	Topic Count	Keywords/phrases (Chinese)	Keywords/phrases (translated)	Topic Description
0	118	[大洋, '工商', '大会', '被捕', '各校', '商界', '各地', '表示', '六月', '学生', '加入', '联合会', '收回', '联合会', '五月', '开市', '开市', '上工', '如下', '议决', '情形', '不准', '成立', '工作', '总工会', '良心', '决定', '侮辱', '英日', '主席']	silver dollars · industry and commerce · mass rally · arrested · various colleges · business community · various localities · express/state · June · students · join · federation · recover/reclaim · federation · May · reopen for business · reopen for business · return to work · as follows · resolved · situation · not permitted · establish · work · General Labor Union · conscience · decide · insult · Britain and Japan · chairman	The movement's organizational and administrative operations: itemizing demands and conditions, updates on strike status, arrests, and shop closures/reopenings, and constant naming of the coordinating bodies and leaders.
1	94	[禁止, '平等 条约', '领事 裁判', '裁判', '工商', '十三', '中国人', '禁止 外国', '撤退', '收回', '领事 裁判', '取消 领事', '废除', '应当', '中国境', '会议', '工商 学联合会', '学联合会', '驻华', '公堂', '租借地', '治罪', '禁止 外国人 中国境', '外国人 中国境', '可敬者', '航行', '禁止 外国人', '根本', '修改']	prohibit · unequal treaties · consul · consular jurisdiction · jurisdiction · industry and commerce · thirteen [demands] · Chinese people · prohibit foreign · withdraw · recover/reclaim · abolish consular jurisdiction · abolish the mixed court · abolish · should · Chinese territory · conference · Federation of Workers, Merchants, and Students · Student Federation · stationed in China · Mixed Court · leased territory · Yu Qiang [comprador merchant leader] · prohibit foreigners in Chinese territory · foreigners in Chinese territory · matters worth congratulating · navigation · prohibit foreigners · fundamental · amend	This topic centers on concrete legal-diplomatic demands to oppose foreign intervention in Chinese territories: abolishing consular jurisdiction and the mixed court, revising unequal treaties, prohibiting foreign encroachment on Chinese territory, and reclaiming leased concessions.
2	85	[烈士, '贵会', '起来', '自己', '现在', '通些', '执事', '自杀', '工商', '什么', '主人', '只好', '希望', '那些', '本会', '帝国主', '十分', '努力', '自救', '商界 方面', '一样', '流血', '自然', '苦力', '不少', '不幸', '生存', '好像', '四万万人', '一题']	martyrs · your association · rise up · oneself · now · these · [unclear] · suicide · industry and commerce · what · master/owner · have no choice but to · hope · those · this association · imperialism · very · strive · [unclear] · business community · same/alike · bloodshed · naturally · coolie/laborer · quite a few · misfortune · survival · seem/as if · the four hundred million [Chinese people] · [unclear]	This topic converts martyr's individual sacrifice and bloodshed into a call to collective action
3	80	[日本, '日本政府', '十秒', '南京路', '资本家', '本家', '二人', '中国人', '日本 资本家', '风潮', '武装', '路上', '报纸', '日本 本家', '一样', '五册', '反对', '青会', '日人', '抗议', '英日', '财产', '印刷', '官僚', '战队', '英美', '公堂', '中国民', '暴动', '罢工']	Japan · Japanese government · cotton mill · Nanjing Road · capitalists · capitalist(s) · two people · Chinese people · Japanese capitalists · tide · armed forces · on the street · newspaper · Japanese capitalist(s) · same/alike · [May 30th] · oppose · Qingdao [Tsingtao] · Japanese person(s) · protest · Britain and Japan · property · printing · bureaucrat(s) · troops · British and American · Mixed Court · the Chinese nation · riot · to labor/work	Precise labour dispute incidents resulting in physical confrontations between the oppressed and the Japanese / British capitalists and governors.
4	72	[吾人, '工厂', '工商', '总工会', '经济', '结果', '工作', '报告', '联合会', '上工', '穷鬼', '学联合会', '惨状', '工商 学联合会', '十三', '却是', '开市', '承认', '宣言', '开会', '绝交', '改良', '国主义', '配者', '报道', '不是', '中国人', '一条', '商会', '工商 联合会']	we [formal register] · factory · industry and commerce · General Labor Union · economy · result · work · report · federation · return to work · slander · Student Federation · amend · Federation of Workers, Merchants, and Students · [thirteen demands] · yet/turns out to be · reopen for business · recognize · declaration · hold a meeting · sever relations [boycott] · improve · imperialism · journalist/reporter · newspaper office · is not · Chinese people · one article/clause · chamber of commerce · Federation of Workers and Merchants	Documentations of organizational work by the Shanghai General Labour Union and Union of Labor, Commerce, and Education (ULCE): meetings, declaration, reports, and communication with the Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce.
5	67	[损失, '最终 胜利', '最终', '可以 得到 最终', '得到 最终', '可以 得到', '一致 要求 可以', '要求 可以 得到', '要求 可以', '一致 要求', '胜利 一致 要求', '最终 胜利 一致', '胜利 一致', '可以 希望', '希望', '坚持', '这样', '多杀 几个', '多杀', '中间 可以', '深坑', '一大部分', '希望 结果', '可以 希望 结果', '中间 可以 希望', '不济', '交涉 中间', '交涉 中间 可以', '失去']	loss · final victory · final · can obtain final [victory] · obtain final [victory] · obtain [final outcome] · unanimous demand [can obtain] · demand [can obtain] · demand · can obtain · unanimous demand · victory, unanimous [demand] · final victory, unanimous[ly] · victory, unanimous[ly] · can hope · hope · persist/hold firm · this kind of · kill a few more · kill more · in the midst, can [obtain] · deep pit/abyss · a large portion · hope for a result · can hope for a result · in the midst, can hope [for a result] · not good enough/ineffective · in the midst of negotiations · in the midst of negotiations, can [obtain] · lose	Topic 5 emphasizes the importance of and calls for perseverance through two reasonings: persistence in resistance would eventually bring victory and significant betterment, while giving up is unwise as the long-term cost of remaining in a subjugated position far outweighs the short-term losses of striking.

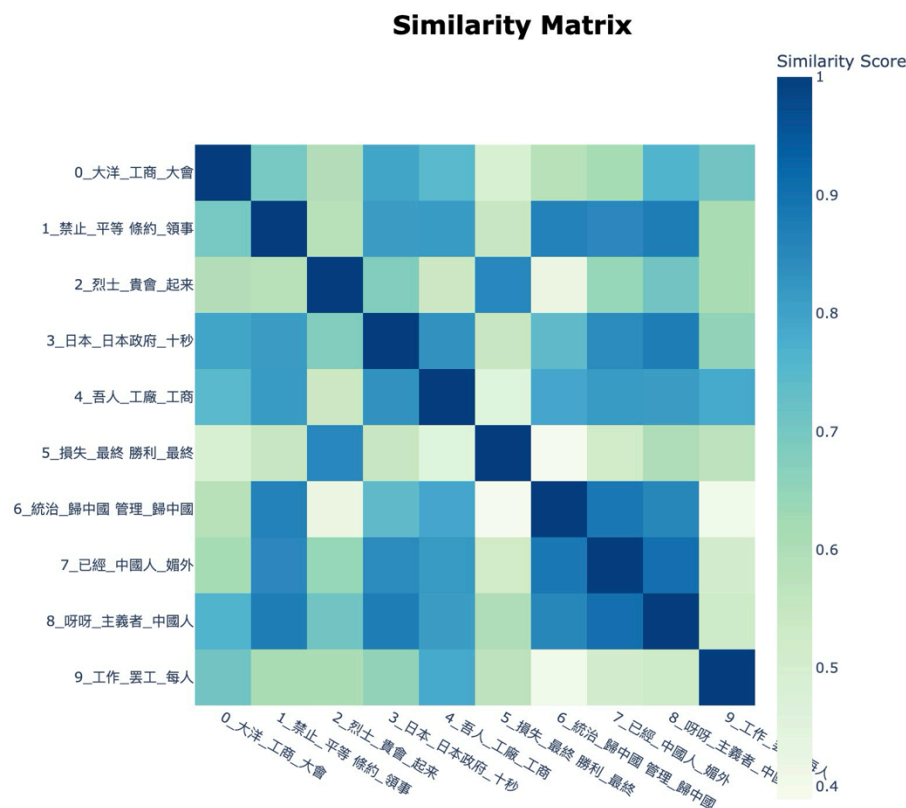
Figure 5: Six most frequent topics generated by BERTopic model for *Hot Blood Daily* corpus

Figure 6: Similarity matrix across 15 topics in *Hot Blood Daily*

1. Diagnostic frames

An analysis of the topic distribution of *Hot Blood Daily* reveals strong diagnostic frames. First, various adversaries to the anti-Imperialism cause have been characterised as culpable agents. For example, c-TF-IDF keywords in T3 identify ‘Japanese government’, ‘Japanese capitalists’, and ‘British and American’. In T4, the high frequency of the terms ‘amend’ and ‘thirteen demands’ refers to the Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce, which, at the time, trimmed ULCE’s original seventeen demands, and this extended the rivals beyond foreign power to include institutions conceding to them. This broadening of antagonists thickens and substantiates the diagnostic frame: by constructing a totalizing indictment against whoever hinders the anti-imperialist cause, the blame stops being thinly directed against a narrow type but incentivises readers to comprehensively follow the cause of anti-imperialism.

Furthermore, the clarity and intensity of the diagnostic frames are enhanced in two dimensions: timeframe and scope of crimes. Timeframe-wise, adversarial framing is powerful as the antagonists are presented to be accountable for everything from the longest-term grievance to the shortest-term threat. T0 constantly updates on new arrests and insults to demonstrate imperialists as the cause of continued oppression and struggles of the strikers; T4 identifies the Imperialists as the cause of immediate threats as well due to its



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semantic field of lethal confrontations formed by ‘riot’ (暴动), ‘Nanjing Road’ (南京路), ‘armed forces’ (武装), and ‘troops’ (战队). The diagnostic frame also blames the antagonists for a large scope of crimes, from the most abstract to the most concrete: T1 highlights the institutional and jurisdictional problem of foreign interference in China, conveying that adversaries caused legal harms that could not be simply condoned by temporary punishment, apology, or compensation after the May Thirtieth Incident; T3 complements T1’s structural consequences with specific effects of armed repression, portraying the culpable agents as disrupting Chinese life in both overt and covert ways.

2. Prognostic frames

The prognostic framing in *Hot Blood Daily*’s topic distribution is weak because it is not explicitly advocating for concrete solutions. Any prognostic is either an abstract calling for action or being specific but not calling for action. T1 articulates demands such as abolishing consular jurisdiction, abolishing Mixed Courts, and prohibiting foreigners from entering Chinese territory. These are targets of the prognostic, but there is no emphasis on specific strategies and procedures to reach those targets. T2 calls for generic actions such as ‘rise up’ (起来) and ‘strive’ (努力), without guidelines for concrete actions. Although in T3, ‘unrest’ (风潮) and ‘riot’ (暴动) are semantically associated with actions, their discursive function remains retrospective rather than prospective.

3. Motivational frames

All four components of motivational frames are covered, though to different extents. Severity is substantiated in three dimensions: T0’s continuous updates on arrests and insults show the long-lasting feature of foreign oppression; the emotionally triggering language of T1 underscores the abject situation of Chinese people and amplifies the injustice frame, including ‘misfortune’ (不幸), ‘have no choice but to’ (只好), ‘bloodshed’ (流血), ‘coolie’ (苦力); T3 illustrates severity with lethal consequences in physical confrontations against armed foreign officers and troops. The urgency component is also conveyed through T3 as it points out immediate, life-endangering threats. The efficacy component is relatively thin, though some c-TF-IDF keywords in T0 suggest mobilisational efficacy: ‘various colleges’ (各校) and ‘various localities’ (各地) could suggest broad involvement and support for the strike; ‘establish’ (成立) implies organisations are formally created to lead and facilitate the strike, and ‘join’ (加入) implies the growth of such organisations. Lastly, the propriety frames are highlighted in T2 and T5. The sacrificial martyrs in T2, by dying for the Chinese people’s shared cause, pose a moral debt to be paid by the living. The narrative in T5 is highly aligned to justify the short-term sacrifices as a way to avoid long-term suffering, as well as its confidence in winning, which prompts readers to comply with the anti-imperialism cause as an imperative.

Representative Documents

Building on the word frequency baseline and the topic distribution dimension, I explore framing patterns by the CCP press further through examining the 18 most representative text units—three for each of the

top six topics—generated by the BERTopic pipeline. The three core framing tasks will be analysed in order, and the strength of each will be evaluated from several aspects.

1. Diagnostic Frames

The strengths of the diagnostic frame of *Hot Blood Daily* can be analyzed in four aspects. First, the scope of the identified antagonists is broad and extends beyond Imperialists alone. In the representative documents, blame is cast on the Beijing-dispatched envoy for treating terms of negotiation perfunctorily; the Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce for revising the ULCE (Union of Labour, Commerce, and Education)'s original seventeen negotiating conditions; the North China Daily news (the most prominent British-owned newspaper in Shanghai); the warlords for being tools of Imperialists; the Chinese religious adherents for colluding with Imperial powers; and journalists prioritising self-protection over speaking out truths. The listing of rivals thickens the diagnostic frame as it now consists of not just the Imperialists themselves, but also individuals and organisations hindering or even not participating in the cause of anti-imperialism.

The culpable agents are not only abundant in scope but also concretised with details: they no longer remain abstract personas. This concretisation reinforces the diagnostic frame in two ways: it features abominable traits of the antagonists with vivid details, which prompts readers to perceive and thus accept, and it increases the credibility of *Hot Blood Daily*'s diagnostic by citing actual actions and speeches by the antagonists, instead of beginning with slogans for mobilisation. For example, when repudiating the Beijing-dispatched envoy, an exact quote is used to demonstrate his irresponsibility: 'These conditions... cannot all be treated the same way — [it's rather like having] a whole table of dishes set before me at once. I cannot eat it all in one sitting; I still need time to sort through it properly' ¹⁸. This analogy comparing ULCE demands as food and the perfunctory attitude is expected to enrage the readers and thus followed by *Hot Blood Daily*'s remark: 'What kind of talk is this?!' ¹⁹. The conduct of the English soldiers is also documented in great detail: 'The female corpse was carried off and hidden by British soldiers... [the companies] therefore bribed the delinquents and coerced the entire workforce back to their posts yesterday. The workers are now effectively held hostage.' ²⁰.

Furthermore, the first representative document in Topic 2 wrote a report which contains ten congratulations for the Chinese government's appointment of officials such as Cai Tinggan, listing and satirizing ten detailed concessions and negotiations failures against the six-nation commissioners. The General Chamber of Commerce is also not presented as an abstract concept. Its main composition is dissected: 'First, as the compradors of foreign trading houses, it's the second instrument of imperialism, relying on unequal treaties for their very survival. Second, bankers who repeatedly collude with the Englishman [Francis] Aglen, monopolizing domestic and foreign bank [lending], and extending large

¹⁸ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 10 June 1925, in 热血日报(合订本)[Hot Blood Daily, Compiled Edition] (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1980), 27.

¹⁹ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 10 June 1925, 27.

²⁰ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 10 June 1925, 27.

loans to the Peking government...Third, industrialists who run factories with docking workers' wages as their only know-how...'21. The newspaper also refuted what is argued by the North China Daily: 'One need only compare this with his earlier statements – 'the attitude of our workers is undoubtedly the attitude of all the striking Chinese' – and he made a fool of himself with his blatant self-contradiction'22. When criticizing the British Consul-General Sidney Barton, the newspaper used a quote for each of his reasonings for refusing ULCE demands and their respective rebuttals:

(1) ...To save face, [he] has gone so far as to act so perversely...23

(2) [He says] if the guilty are punished and compensation paid, [foreign authorities] will no longer kill indiscriminately as they please — 'it will make things difficult to manage hereafter,' he says!24

(3) We stand entirely on the side of right; they have been argued into having nothing left to say, and yet they still mouth empty phrases about 'maintaining their authority'.25

The prominent boundary framing also reinforced the diagnostic frame. Juxtaposing the pronouns 'us' and 'them' is used habitually. Moreover, there are multiple juxtapositions between the anti-imperialist Chinese and various antagonists. Shaping the merchants as adversaries of workers forms a contrast in identities: 'These three types of elements make up the great majority of the General Chamber of Commerce; the interests attached to their position stand directly opposed to those of us: small merchants, workers, and students'26. Their living situations are portrayed in contrasts: 'A merchant, even when his money is at stake and negotiations fail, does not thereby lose his life; it is not so for workers — a worker may lose his position in the morning and face starvation by evening'27. More explicitly, 'The General Chamber of Commerce does not represent the workers'28. Apart from the merchants, the living situations of the Chinese labourers and foreign employers are also put into comparison: 'Look at that old worker. He served the foreigners so obediently for so many years, and now, nearly eighty, when he is finally let go, he has nothing but a tattered bedroll to his name... yet however many cigars and foreign hams [they consumed], every bit of it was supplied out of his labour'29; 'The smallest gesture from a citizen deserves death — while they, fully armed, may kill as they please on the Chinese soil'30; and, an eulogy for martyrs is immediately followed by a portrayal of the Public Works Bureau's entertainment 'When the bright moon rises, all one hears is song and music drifting from the upper floors'31. Beyond the rhetorical device of juxtaposition, the boundary is constructed from the newspapers' framing of the conflict as between

21 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 21 June 1925, 74.

22 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 6 June 1925, 14.

23 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 21 June 1925, 74.

24 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 21 June 1925, 74.

25 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 21 June 1925, 74.

26 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 21 June 1925, 74.

27 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 14 June 1925, 44.

28 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 14 June 1925, 44.

29 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 11 June 1925, 33.

30 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 11 June 1925, 33.

31 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 6 June 1925, 14.

weak ethnicities and the Imperialists as certain, as evident in two quotes: ‘...more than two-thirds of the world’s peoples groan in agony under the chopping block of imperialism. This too is an utterly solid fact, and great resistance [to it] therefore follows naturally as inevitable’³²; ‘When the invaded weak and small peoples resist merely for the sake of their most minimal survival, this must be natural to the multitude’³³.

Lastly, *Hot Blood Daily*’s radical language bolsters the diagnostic frame through intensified adversarial framing. Apart from real names or positions of antagonists, they have been labeled as ‘running dogs’, ‘spies’, ‘conspiring traitors’, ‘wretches’, and ‘foreign lackeys’. Rhetorical devices, including sarcasm and rhetorical questions, are also used. For instance, ‘they dignify it with the lofty name of ‘peaceful revolution.’ Are we to wait until our countrymen are slaughtered and the nation destroyed before rising up to save it?’³⁴ reprimands hypocritical, irresponsible acts of domestic antagonists. Such inflammatory language is conducive to triggering emotional reactions such as rage and hatred.

2. Prognostic Frames

Hot Blood Daily contains a weak prognostic frame when calling for action and a more thorough and detailed narration of performative action or analysis of the prognostic. This tension, stressing weak public engagement in the actual resolution process, embodies the CCP’s encouragement of public delegation of leadership to its supporting and dominating organisations. Therefore, its prognostic frame is considered weak.

This dichotomy is especially clear in the third representative document of Topic 0. A large proportion of the text is devoted to analyzing why boycotting trams would not be an effective means of resistance, expanding on reasons such as its lack of a strong impact on imperialists and the unreliability of conscience in the long term. However, despite this elaborated analysis of a disapproved strategy, the proposal for the actual alternative is especially brief and vague: ‘I’m speaking from conscience. Yet once organised, is that conscience going to endure’³⁵, without going further into what organisational actions should be executed. This illustrates the CCP’s willingness to showcase its maturity and sophistication in political analysis, and yet its reservation to explain its plan to the readers, which weakens the readers’ agency to interact with the resolution process and instead encourages obedience to the CCP.

There is more evidence of this prognostic pattern scattered across the corpus. On one hand, action proposals that engage the readers are often too vague to be executed. For example, ‘we should hold firm on severing economic ties with the imperialists’³⁶ never specified the procedures and methods to sever the ties. ‘Armed force has truly become indispensable’ did not elaborate on how and when the military would be deployed. Even less practical are the following claims that even appear to have an emphasis on

³² 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 11 June 1925, 33.

³³ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 11 June 1925, 33.

³⁴ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 21 June 1925, 74.

³⁵ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 23 June 1925, 80.

³⁶ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 16 June 1925, 52.

motivational effects: ‘Rise in anger and resist! Quickly raise our slogan — unite with the oppressed peoples of the world!’³⁷; ‘Rise up, friends! Rise up and resist! Rise up and overthrow the warlords’ backers — imperialism! Rise up and overthrow imperialism’s tool — the warlords! Rise up!’³⁸.

On the other hand, specifications and elaborations of actions are only present in the analysis and CCP-backed organisations’ documentations of their finished work. For example, specific tactics, such as granting Chinese representative seats in proportion to their tax payments and reform of voting rights in the Shanghai Municipal Council’s ratepayers’ meeting and Board of Directors, are reported. However, they are presented only as parts of the demands ULCE submitted to the Commissioners of Foreign Affairs. Likewise, while ‘Resolved: this union shall issue a public notice, in its own name, calling on our countrymen to promptly withdraw from British insurance companies’³⁹ covers another tactic, it is a performative enactment in organisational meeting minutes. ‘It is guaranteed that a large welcome reception will be convened for the leaders of India’s revolution’⁴⁰ is a concrete action to foster shared resistance against Imperialism, but the report leaves out details of how the reception would be implemented or any calling for public engagement. In addition, a layered strategy in carrying out the solution is also discussed: ‘[We] should achieve the complete resolution of the massacre. Even if we cannot force the foreign [powers] to submit and cannot secure the full rights of Chinese people for our nation, at the very least we should obtain a guarantee that preserves our capacity to rely on our own strength against the aggressors, and to continue the struggle’⁴¹. Nonetheless, this is only a prognostic analysis manifesting CCP’s agenda and political sophistication, as it does not further explain the actionable strategies to guarantee preserving capacity for continuation of resistance.

Therefore, the specificity and concreteness of performative prognostic proposal and analysis, along with impracticable solutions that encourage public participation, together indicate the emphasis of the prognostic frame is demonstration of the CCP’s own leading capacity and efficiency. Since the main purpose has shifted away from providing actionable guidance for collective action, the prognostic frame is overall weak.

3. Motivational Frames

Hot Blood Daily addresses each component of motivational framing and strengthens each one with differing means. I will interpret CCP press’s framing characteristics of each component sequentially.

3.1 Severity component

³⁷ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 21 June 1925, 74.

³⁸ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 6 June 1925, 14.

³⁹ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 14 June 1925, 44.

⁴⁰ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 23 June 1925, 80.

⁴¹ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 8 June 1925, 19.

The severity component of the motivational frame is strengthened by both the depth of illustrations of single incidents and the breadth of oppression's geographical locations and means.

In-depth depictions of vivid, particularised scenes serve the severity component by making diagnostic claims more direct and self-evident than constructing refutable abstract arguments. For instance, the cruelty of foreign troops are visceral when their conducts are described in detail: 'They plundered house after house; within just a few hours, all the young women in the village had been raped, and all the able-bodied young men had been beaten until their skin was torn and blood flowed'⁴². A similar triggering piece of evidence is foreign troops' treatment of a shop owner: 'The night before last, at midnight, two Western constables sat inside [the shop]. They forced the shopkeeper to open up, went outside and tore down the shop's signboard, then beat the shop assistant until his head bled'⁴³. Another supporting argument for cruelty is the continuous arrest of the Chinese people for simple actions, vividly portrayed by: 'People distributing pamphlets were the first to be arrested; another worker was arrested as foreigners patrolled the border between the Chinese district and the foreign concession for several days. Yesterday at one o'clock in the afternoon, on Nanjing Road, another [pamphleteer] was also arrested'⁴⁴. Lack of respect for any privacy, another aspect of severity, is illustrated as: 'The school in question was forcibly entered by the British, who crossed into Chinese territory; nine citizens had their residences searched'⁴⁵.

In addition to depth, breadth, which refers to the accumulation of instances across geography and tactics, is also used to emphasise threat as systemic and omnipresent. Geographically, the newspaper reports repression across the nation, such as Qingdao in the faraway Shandong province: '[I] met a friend who had just returned from Qingdao, and [we] spoke of the situation in Qingdao'. Repression in Hankou, a city in Hubei province, is also mentioned multiple times. The tactics of oppression are characterised as diverse and exceed readers' usual expectations of stereotyped foreign repressions, such as arms conflict or arrests. Journalism and information is being controlled as 'the entire press circle in Qingdao has been bought off', thugs are turned into traitors as imperialists are 'buying off not only Chinese warlords and officials but also a group of hired thugs', rumours are fabricated as 'they use rumours of 'Bolshevisation' to deceive us, so that our unity dissolves on its own'⁴⁶, and military force is a practical threat through 'ten American [warships], one Italian, three French, four Japanese... twenty-four in total'⁴⁷. This variety of strategies creates an atmosphere where no domain, and no aspect of public life, is left untouched by Imperialist oppression.

3.2 Urgency component

⁴² 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 6 June 1925, 14.

⁴³ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 8 June 1925, 19.

⁴⁴ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 7 June 1925, 15.

⁴⁵ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 7 June 1925, 15.

⁴⁶ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 11 June 1925, 33.

⁴⁷ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 8 June 1925, 19.

The urgency component is bolstered by a semantic field of killing and bloodshed, which, apart from severity, makes the situation seem immediately life-threatening and perpetually damaging if there's no instant resistance. Phrases like 'blades and chopping blocks lie thick everywhere', 'hot blood is pouring out once again', 'slaughtered happily', 'martyrs', and 'grief for our compatriots who have already died'⁴⁸ are scattered across the representative documents. Reports like 'The Europeans and Americans have brutally killed unarmed Chinese students, workers, and merchants right in the middle of the street'⁴⁹ indicate that ordinary citizens with no desire for armed conflict could be killed, making the lethal risk applicable to almost all. 'On the twelfth of June, the British again massacred over a dozen of our labouring compatriots in Hankou'⁵⁰ raise the readers' awareness of the frequency and continuity of the killings, which underscores urgency: each day of inaction results in dozens of more deaths.

3.3 Efficacy component

Efficacy is shaped to the extent that it could encourage actions: short-term effects of the strike are articulated, while long-term concessions from Imperialists are not achieved. This partial efficacy is optimal because it fulfills two purposes simultaneously: it compensates for the powerful severity and urgency components that could be demoralizing, convincing the readers that even though the situation remains grave and proposed demands are not accepted, the movement itself has been making rapid progress; and it leaves room for unaccomplished goals that require continued efforts, so that readers are not yet satisfied with existing progress. Some examples of movement-wise efficacy: The statistics comparing tram companies' revenues before and after the boycott, based on 'At its peak, daily income used to average seven to eight thousand [dollars]... now daily income is only just over six hundred'⁵¹, shows boycotting trams are effective at temporarily inflicting financial pains on foreign companies; the emergence of an old man's courage to defy his imperialist employers—'From having nothing to now speaking such firm words to the foreign masters is something rare and precious in any movement. That it could move even an old worker like this to act in unison is something China has truly gained from this [struggle]'⁵²—proves the mobilisation effective due to awakening impacts; even emotional intensity and unity amongst leaders—'As each representative spoke, they were impassioned and unrestrained, moved to tears even as their voices rose'⁵³—demonstrates mobilisation efficacy that plants hope in readers as such resolute and unified are prepared for struggles and successes.

3.4 Propriety component

⁴⁸ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 6 June 1925, 14.

⁴⁹ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 6 June 1925, 14.

⁵⁰ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 16 June 1925, 52.

⁵¹ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 23 June 1925, 80.

⁵² 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 11 June 1925, 33.

⁵³ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 14 June 1925, 44.

The propriety of supporting the anti-Imperialist movement is most starkly represented by one document: ‘Overthrowing Imperialism is our responsibility’⁵⁴. Apart from this, the propriety frame is also reinforced by equating political stance as moral obligation and characterizing the strike as a historical trend.

The representative documents of *Hot Blood Daily* recast political positions as tests of virtues. Aligning with the newspaper’s firm anti-imperialism stance is judged as morally superior, which incentivises compliance because while people may not desire the same political standing or easily accept a radical claim, they often favor superior moral traits. For example, ‘Any sage understands the necessity for the oppressed to unite with one another’⁵⁵ translates the acknowledgement of collective resistance into a criterion for wisdom and moral clarity (sage in Chinese usually refers not to saints but wise people), which motivates readers to endorse this acknowledgement because the opposite of wisdom and moral clarity is almost universally undesirable. The same mechanism applies to ‘our awakened consciousness is that the unequal treaties must be abolished in their entirety’⁵⁶, where only people who believe in complete revocations of unequal treaties are ‘awakened’. The same notion recurs: ‘The Chinese people have already awakened’⁵⁷.

On the other hand, any adversarial political conduct or beliefs are converted into moral inferiority and are used to repel readers from following them. For instance, ‘the person in charge, beyond already offering a 20% discount to promote domestic goods, gave an additional 20% discount to help their [foreign] master — this is nothing less than acting as accomplice to a tiger [in devouring its prey]’⁵⁸. This humiliating remark degrades the morality of people who offer price benefits to foreigners.

DISCUSSION

In this section, I first integrate analysis of each corpus from the word frequencies, topic distribution, and representative documents dimensions to summarise the framing patterns of *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) and *Hot Blood Daily*, respectively.

For *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) corpus, the diagnostic frame is applied by naming Imperialism as the root cause, exaggerating its harms with both geographical and ideological escalation, and aggressive language that creates powerful emotional resonance. The motivational frames emphasise all four components: severity and urgency through repeated, tinted description of status quo and characterisation of the scope of Imperialism; efficacy through constant illustrations of devastation of the colony; and propriety through prompting the Chinese identity and membership to a global oppressed community, as well as through inflammatory language, revolutionary phrasing, and prevalent and deep

⁵⁴ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 24 June 1925, 84.

⁵⁵ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 25 June 1925, 88.

⁵⁶ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 8 June 1925, 19.

⁵⁷ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 8 June 1925, 19.

⁵⁸ 热血日报 [Hot Blood Daily], 16 June 1925, 52.

harms inflicted by Imperialism. By contrast, prognostic frames are weak as they detach from the diagnostic, mostly focusing on naming the authorities and institutional processes and lacking specific charges against the imperialists or ways to activate public agency. When it addresses the audience, prognostic frames are vague and instead contribute to motivational frames without a call for practicable public action.

For the *Hot Blood Daily* corpus, the saliency of the diagnostic frame is constructed content wise, from the breadth of antagonists and their crimes, and language-wise, through deliberate juxtaposition for adversarial frames that creates a clear us/them boundary and radical language that amplifies the immorality and maliciousness of the antagonists. Motivational frames are also especially salient: the severity frame not only presents the long-lasting, endangering, and omnipresent nature of foreign oppression, but also concretises these aspects with details; the urgency component is highlighted by the triggering semantic field of killing and bloodshed; the efficacy component presenting success in boycotts and progress in mobilisation simultaneously served to diminish demoralisation from salient severity and urgency components and preemptively prevent complacency if ultimate legal and economic goal of the strikes are achieved; the propriety component is strengthened through collective pronouns and references in word frequencies, devotion of a relatively large size topic to the long-term cost-benefit analysis narrative in topic distribution, and recasting political position as moral standing in representative documents. The prognostic frame, by contrast, is not salient. The contrast between vague calls for action and detailed accounts and analyses of the antagonists' actions shows that the prognostic's primary goal is not developing ongoing solutions, but demonstrating the initiative, efficiency, and maturity of the aligned party. This makes the prognostic frame weakly salient.

From such framing analysis, I derived two main similarities and three main differences between *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) and *Hot Blood Daily*, which enables inference of the KMT and the CCP's agenda and motives at the time.

The largest similarity is the imbalance between the three core framing tasks. In both newspapers, the diagnostic and motivational frames are consistently more salient than the prognostic frame, with a shared emphasis on the identification and amplification of the cause of oppression, the legitimacy of the strike-boycotts, and an obligation to participate. However, the characteristics of the prognostic frames, including a disproportionate focus on partisan-backed organisations, an impracticable call for public engagement, an emphasis on motivational rather than prognostic, and elaboration on leading organs' actions and analysis, all suggest that the prognostic frame's primary task is legitimising leadership and rallying people around the parties. The emphasis on consensus framing (diagnostic and motivational frames) over action framing (prognostic frames) indicates that the primary goal of partisan political communication during the strikes is to garner support for partisan leadership and foster anti-imperialistic ideological consensus, rather than designing and advocating for concrete solutions. The ideology-focused nature of these strikes could partially answer doubts about their puzzling outcomes compared to previous strikes in the early twentieth century: the partisan leadership has transformed the latter strikes from concrete, solution-oriented economic struggles into ideological conflicts oriented toward national identity.

Another similarity between the two newspapers reinforces this argument. By illustrating mobilisation progress and outcomes of boycotts, the efficacy is conveyed through giving credit to the efforts of the protagonists rather than concessions made by the antagonists and characterising the progress as continuous rather than decisive gains. This presentation of the efficacy component in the motivational frames suggests that KMT and CCP both communicate that, in effect, the notion of the Chinese people rising up against the imperialists is more significant than immediate concrete economic or legal gains. This underscores the KMT and CCP's defining focus of the strikes is to garner support for the anti-imperialism cause in preparation for state-building.

The first difference between the two newspapers lies in the construction of diagnostic frames. First, the diagnostic frame is constructed differently. While *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) regards imperialism as the totalising culprit, *Hot Blood Daily* names multiple antagonists. Identifying a single, external cause could reflect KMT's agenda to become a multi-class coalition comprising merchants, military, students, and labor, and none of them was accused of complicity with foreign imperialists. However, the CCP was still a newborn party, established in 1921, and a Communist party, which means it had to differentiate itself from KMT propaganda and appeal to workers to establish a firm, loyal support base.

Second, most political commentaries in the representative documents of *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) assert the culpability of its antagonists by directly weaving them into the Imperialism-centred narrative, while commentaries in *Hot Blood Daily* corpus reproduce exact details, arguments, and quotes from adversaries before refuting them. This implies a differing need for propaganda by the KMT and the CCP. The already established governance of KMT through its institutional legitimacy leaves the newspaper's job at activating rather than constructing authority. This allows the party to absorb more events into its narratives and chain of evidence. By contrast, the CCP, which is still a "bloc within" the KMT under the United Front, needs evidentiary specificity to gain analytical authority to help promote its institutional authority.

A third difference is that, while *Hot Blood Daily* presents a separate urgency component of killing and bloodshed in its motivational frames, *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) never isolates urgency from severity. This could imply the CCP's urgency to expand its influence in Shanghai while the KMT was still in a relative power vacuum after its leader, Sun Yat-sen, passed away in March and while it was still under official alliance with the more powerful KMT before the latter turned against it. The KMT in Canton, on the other hand, may be more devoted to its long-term progression towards the Northern Expedition, the main stage it expected to extend its influence and legitimacy.

CONCLUSION

This study analyses Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party's coverage of the 1925-26 Canton-Hong Kong strike and strikes in Shanghai, respectively, through primary historical sources of *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) and *Hot Blood Daily*. The study is conducted under the Collective Action Frames theory proposed by Benford and Snow. To obtain analysable text data, I web-crawled text files of *The Republican Daily News* (Canton edition) and downloaded the PDF document of *Hot Blood Daily* followed by its OCR conversion into text files that can be read in the correct order. After running separate word frequency counts for each corpus as a baseline, I fed their text data into the BERTopic model to be classified into topic clusters with c-TF-IDF keywords and phrases extracted for each topic. The data analysis dissected aspects of word frequencies, topic distribution, and representative documents for each corpus, each through a lens of diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational frames under Benford and Snow's theory. Comparing the two newspapers' framing, I concluded that the KMT and the CCP shared an anti-imperialist ideology consensus as the underpinnings for state-building in their communication, while their main differences reflect distinct strategies for state-building under the United Front and their distinct position in China at the time.

The strengths of this research first lie in the use of primary sources, which offer comprehensiveness and authenticity for data analysis. Web crawling and advanced OCR technologies have been employed to extract raw texts from historical newspapers. Moreover, this study chooses the suitable methodology, primarily BERTopic modelling, and combines it with cutting-edge machine learning and quantitative research techniques to study historical texts. It serves well to explore and compare framing patterns, since topic modelling results reveal the distinct emphasis of different corpora. The combination of the frequency-word-cloud method and BERTopic modelling is another strength of this study; it confirms the results while showing nuances: one focuses more on phrasing and the other on content.

The main limitation of this study is the modest size of the *Hot Blood Daily* corpus, which has only 24 editions (271,219 tokens) available due to early suppression by the Shanghai Municipal Council's police of the International Settlement. For this reason, BERTopic clusters and c-TF-IDF keyword profiles should be read as only indicative of dominant discursive tendencies within a short window rather than as statistically robust patterns generalisable across the CCP press. Another limitation is the sub-optimal OCR accuracy of the *Hot Blood Daily* corpus, even though the study has incorporated polygon division, OCR model applicable to the traditional Chinese text, and mistakes correction by LLM into the data collection pipeline. The difficulty can be attributed to factors including the reverse reading order of traditional Chinese newspapers, the untidy section division, and the unclear display of some parts of the original PDF document.

Future research can be conducted by identifying and examining CCP newspapers with longer publication periods that can successfully go through web-crawling and OCR. Scholars could also investigate and compare a wider range of historical texts across different ends of the political spectrum, such as factions within the CCP and KMT, and commercial newspapers. Another direction for future research will be to

develop a more effective OCR pipeline that could convert images and PDFs of primary Chinese historical sources into text with higher accuracy, so that they would not remain buried under official modern partisan narratives.

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