

**How the Uyghur Issue Has Been
Framed Across Global
Media - A Snapshot**
September 2021

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Overview

G5iO undertook a discourse-based analysis of popular international media outlets and their coverage of the Uyghur issue over the last two years. The study aims to analyse how the issue has been (a) reported in the international media, (b) key themes and narratives that were propagated and (c) any similarities/differences in the chosen media agencies' reporting of the Uyghur issue.

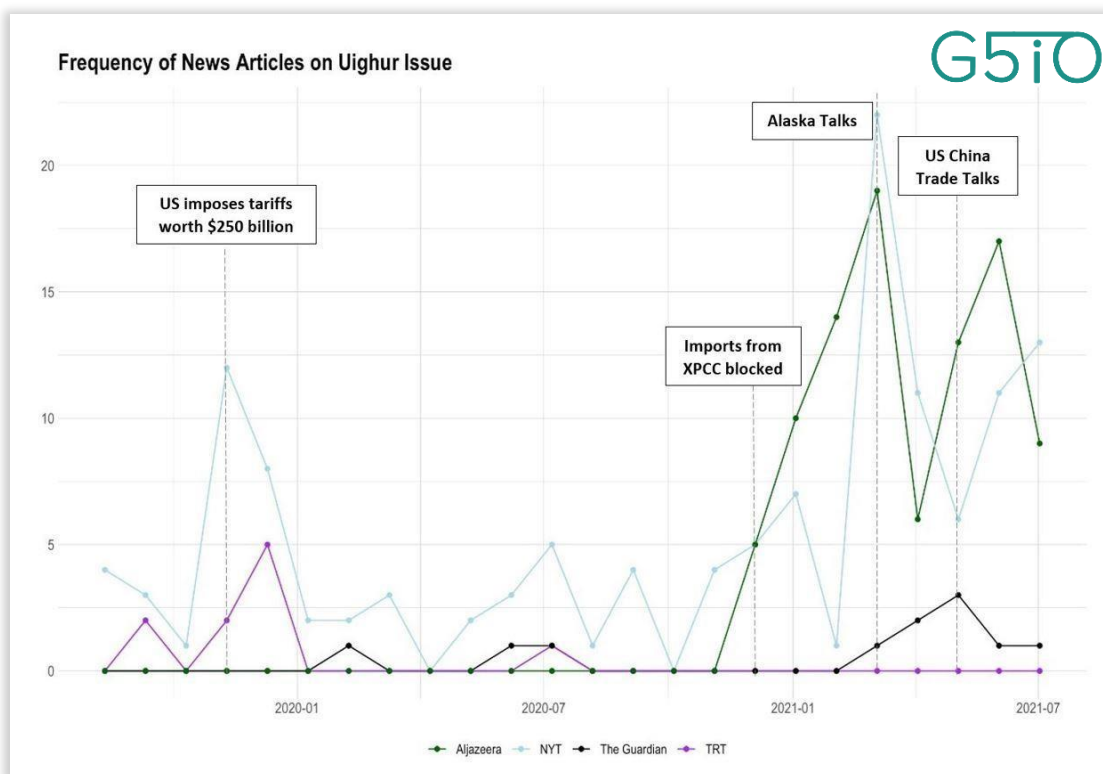
Methodology

Data Points:

- 320 news articles from the New York Times, The Guardian, TRT and Al Jazeera (1st December 2019 – 1st September 2021).
- Google Trends Data (1st December 2019 – 1st September 2021).
- Twitter Data (1st August 2019 – 1st September 2021).

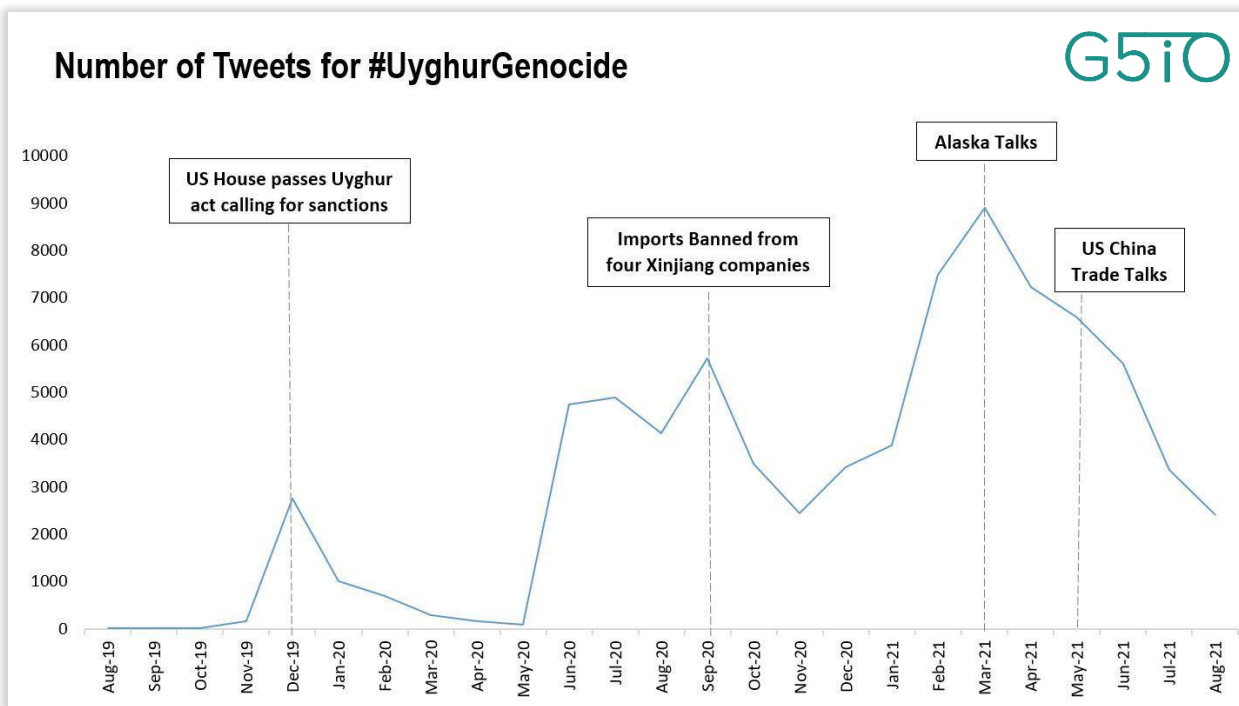
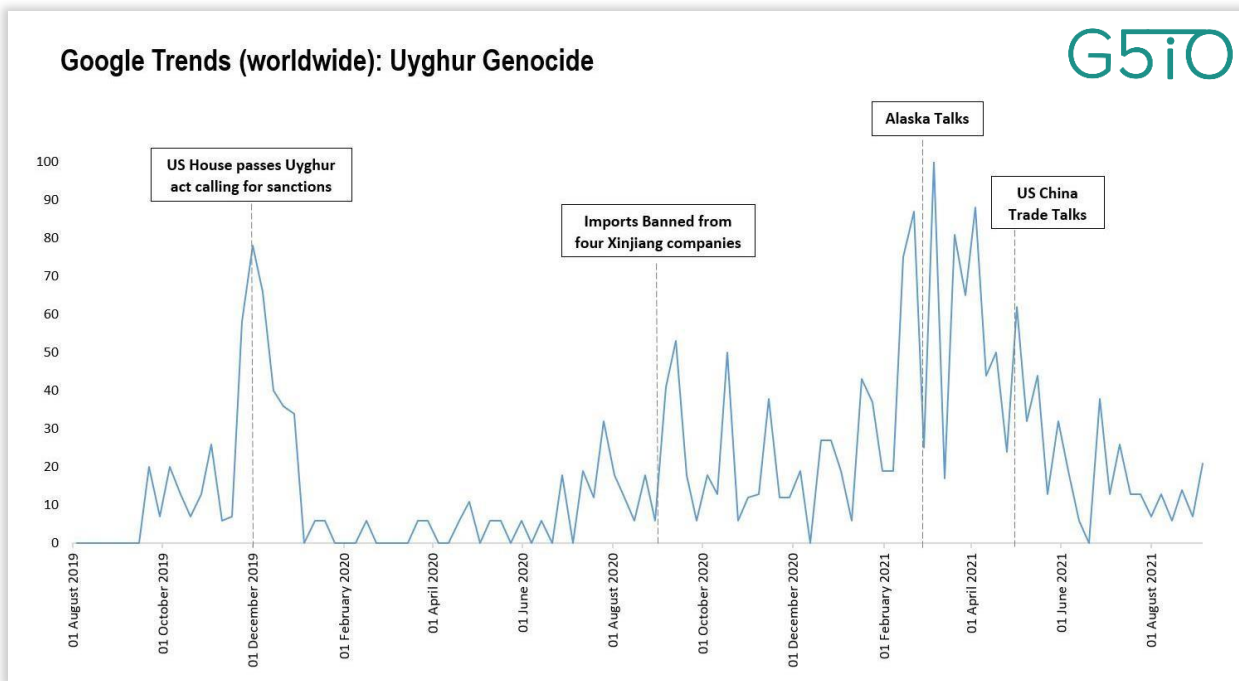
Insight 1:

An analysis of the frequency and timing of the news articles published shows that the coverage of Uyghur issue is more related to the US-China trade war.



NYT's coverage of the Uyghur issue closely coincided with the state of US China relations. For instance, coverage peaked around the times when the US imposed tariffs on Chinese imports, and the highly contentious Alaska Talks between both countries. This trend receded once US-China trade talks resumed in May 2021.

Data from Google Trends and Twitter for the keyword "Uyghur Genocide" and "#UyghurGenocide", follows a similar trajectory. It shows how greater US coverage of the issue (for e.g., in NYT) led to greater public interest across the world around the same periods.



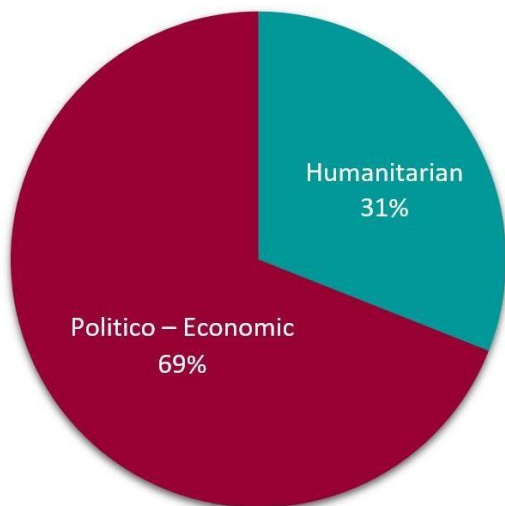
Insight 2:

There was a clear divergence between the NYT and other media outlets (non-US) in their reporting of the Uyghur issue. NYT's coverage of the issue was framed in a more politico-economic context urging for sanctions against Chinese companies and ban on imports.

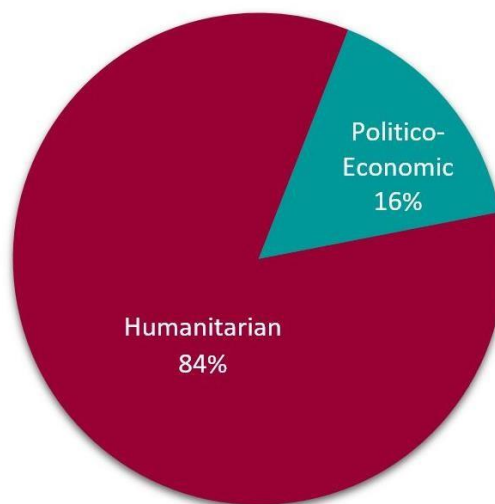
TRT, AL Jazeera and Guardian on the other hand focused more on the humanitarian side of the issue outlining daily struggles, and plight of Uyghur Muslims emphasizing the victims more than the alleged perpetrators.

Comparison of Media Coverage on Uyghur Issue G5TO

New York Times



TRT - Guardian - Al Jazeera



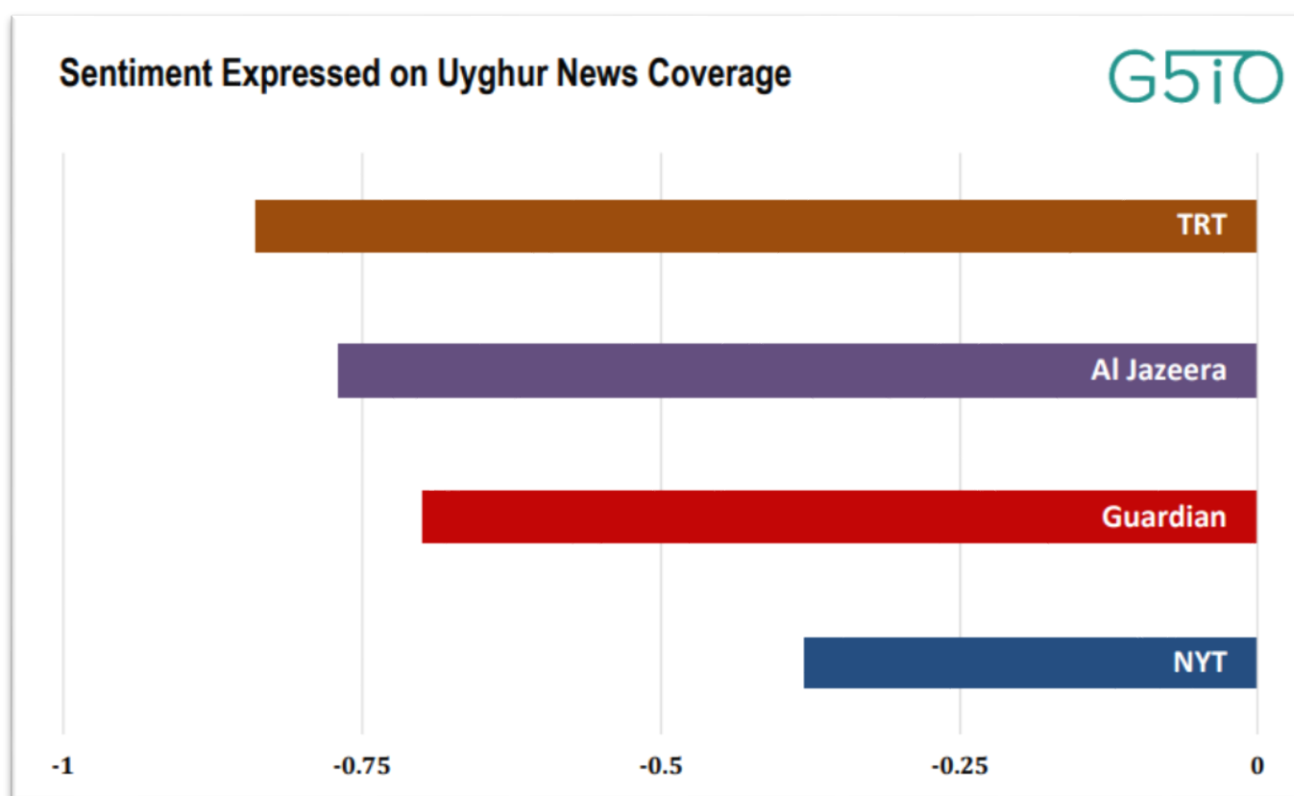
Insight 3:

Newspaper from different countries reported on the issue based on the strategic interest of their own country.

Whereas all four newspapers analysed have highlighted the generally 'negative' aspects of this issue, they have nevertheless differed in the extent to what was perceived by our algorithm as negative.

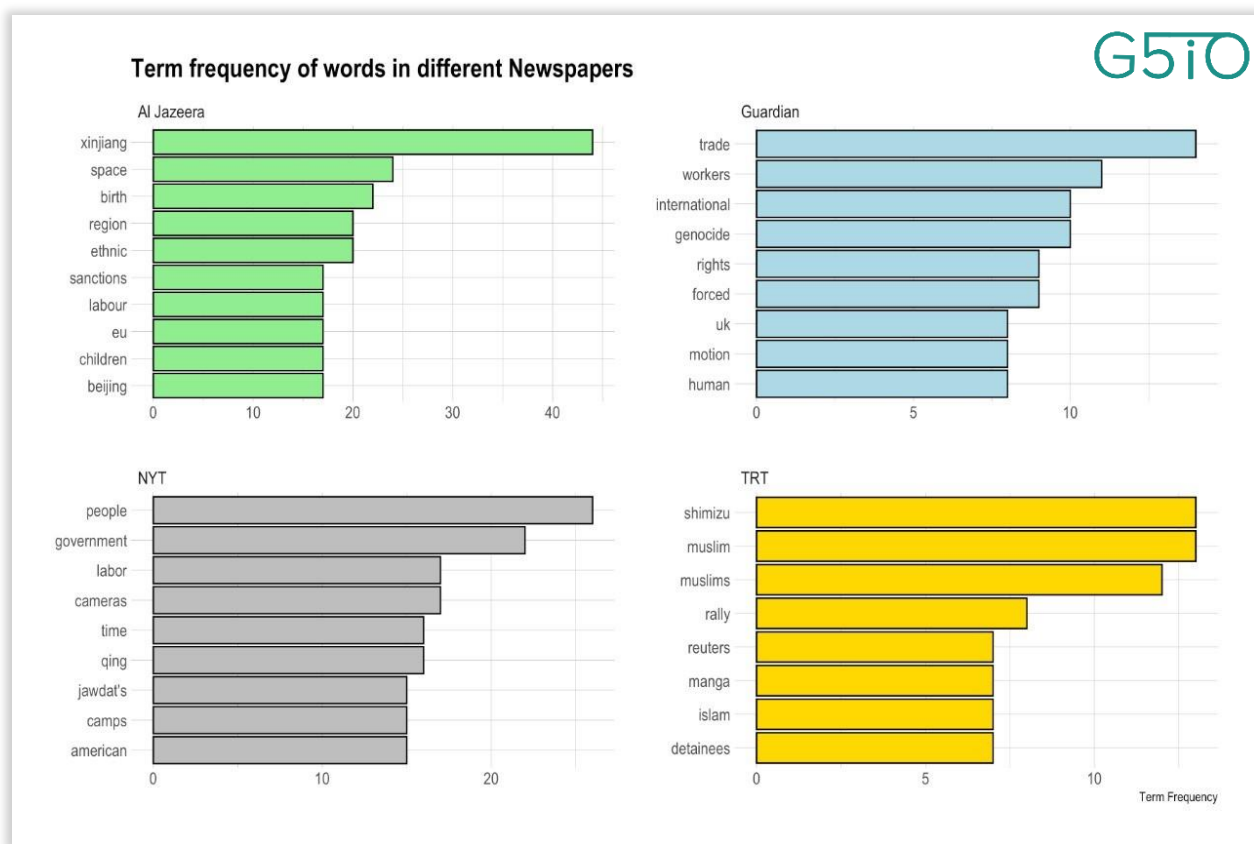
This could be explained by the fact that TRT and Al Jazeera showed negative sentiments based on the ethnic and religious persecution of the Uyghur Muslims while the Guardian took a more rights-based approach to criticize the incarceration of Uyghur Muslims.

NYT reported mostly on US-China trade war in the context of Uyghur issue and argued for increased sanctions, hence the decreasing classification of negativity.



Insight 4:

Similarly, an analysis of the most frequent used words shows that TRT and Al Jazeera mostly talked about “religion”, “Islam”, “Muslims” while talking about the Uyghur Issue. The Guardian focused on “international laws”, “human rights” and the UK’s role in addressing the issue. The NYT focused on forced labor, concentration camps, surveillance through cameras and response of American government.



Conclusion:

- Uyghur issue is been discussed on the global media based on the national interest of the respective countries.
- US’s NYT coincided its coverage based on the US trade war with China on the Uyghur issue.
- On the Uyghur issue, the international media is essentially taking a state narrative.