

The Representation of Israel-Hamas Conflict in the American and Chinese News Coverage: A Corpus-assisted Comparative Critical Discourse Analysis

Jianbin Zhu^{1,2}, Yuqi Liu^{1,*}

¹ College of Foreign Studies, Guilin University of Technology, Guangxi, China

² School of Humanities and Education, Foshan University, Guangdong, China

*Corresponding author

ABSTRACT

This research scrutinizes the divergent portrayals of the Israel-Hamas conflict in The New York Times (NYT) and China Daily (CD), utilizing a corpus-based critical discourse analysis approach that blends topic modeling, keyword and collocation analysis, with discourse-historical analysis (DHA) strategies. The analysis reveals how NYT frames the conflict through the lens of democratic values, human rights, and portrays Israel as a defender in the conflict, emphasizing security and terrorism narratives. In contrast, CD offers a narrative that leans towards state sovereignty, national development, and provides a more neutral or sympathetic portrayal of Hamas, reflecting China's stance on non-interference and peace. This comprehensive analysis underscores the significant role media plays in shaping public perception and policy regarding international conflicts, highlighting the entanglement of media narratives with national geopolitical agendas. By offering insights into the ideological and geopolitical underpinnings of media representations, this study contributes to the broader discourse on media's influence in international relations, advocating for enhanced critical media literacy among readers. It opens avenues for future research on media narratives in other geopolitical contexts, emphasizing the importance of understanding media as a tool for both reflecting and constructing political realities.

KEYWORDS

News Media; Critical Discourse Analysis; Topic Modeling; Corpus Linguistics.

1. INTRODUCTION

In October 2023, Hamas, as an Islamist political party of Palestine, announced a military operation against Israel, codenamed "Al-Aqsa Flood." In response, Israel declared a state of war and initiated "Operation Iron Sword" targeting Hamas in the Gaza Strip. This was the first declaration of war by Israel against Hamas since the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and represented the fifth conflict between Israel and Hamas since 2021. The fifth conflict between Hamas and Israel has drawn international attention and condemnation. However, Views are split on the conflict between the United States and China with the former stands for western powerful countries and have been ally with Israel, and the later is considered as the confederation with Palestine and other third world countries. Apart from that, Hamas is an acronym for the Islamic Resistance Movement and has been designated a terror organization by the United States, EU, Japan and Singapore (Anton La Guardia, 2003), while identified as resistant organization by the China, Irian, turkey, Egypt, and most of Arab countries (Shankar, Abha, 2013).

In this study, we applied the discourse historical approach (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009), an influential theory of critical discourse study, to compare the images construction of Hamas and Israel in the fifth Israel-Hamas conflict between united states and China. The primary goal of the comparative analysis of two media discourses is twofold. First, the study aims to investigate how do the media representations of the Israel-Hamas conflict in New York Times and China Daily differ in their ideological framing and discursive strategies. Second, the study captures the dynamic and reflexive nature of the linguistic constructions adopted by the two media actors, thus facilitating further investigation into the diversity and opposition inherent in their framing strategies. The ways how linguistic means like rhetorical devices, and quotation are employed differently across the two corpora to construct divergent narratives are discussed.

The corpus approach and topic modeling technology are combined to achieve the research objectives and further uncover keywords hidden in the discourse as much of meaning carried in texts is not accessible to naked-eye and direct observation (Partington et al., 2013: 11). Additionally, the corpus approach can help render analysts' interpretations more trustworthiness (Subtirelu and Baker, 2018) and avoid the subjectivity and overgeneralization of the author's judgements (Hart and Cap, 2014). Finally, Hammer and Kellner's critical media theory(2009) and Van Leeuwen's legitimation strategies (2007; 2008) are also applied in the study for the deeper exploration of the complex discursive strategies and the unnoticeable topics.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The complex relationship between Israel and the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip has been characterized by consistent enmity and conflicts. It can be roughly divided into four major conflicts until the fifth war broken out. The first war between Israel and Hamas broke out on 27 December 2008 and ended on 18 January 2009, resulted in approximately 1,440 Palestinian deaths and 13 Israeli deaths (Creppell, 2007). The second war, from 14 November to 21 November 2012, led to 174 Palestinian deaths and 6 Israeli deaths. Two years later, the third war erupted from 8 July to 26 August 2014, seeing 2,251 Palestinian deaths and 73 Israeli deaths (Barak, 2014). On 10 May 2021, the fourth war took place and lasted 11 days, which is triggered by the Israeli government's eviction order for Palestinian residents in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood of East Jerusalem to make way for Jewish settlements. This led to Palestinian outrage, resulting in 237 deaths and 6,278 injuries. In this study, we investigate the fifth Israel-Hamas conflict erupted in October, 2023 covered by two different news media. As argued by Wright (2002) that media representations significantly influence societal perceptions of different groups and the role of news media is particularly significant in shaping public opinion, influencing policy-making, and resolving conflicts, a view also supported by Savrum and Miller (2015).

Mass media play a crucial role in not just relaying information but in actively constructing realities, validates and gives legitimacy to the media's interpretation. Erjavec (2001) points out that media narratives not only portray a specific view of events but also strategically employ evidence to reinforce and give a sense of naturalness to their perspectives. Such practices establish norms and shape public ideology, particularly regarding perceptions of people, communities, and institutions. An analysis of how media discourse frames conflicts can help interpreting, evaluating, and justifying the roles and actions of various actors involved. Such analysis is key to understanding the impact on national identity formation and ideological shifts. Previous studies on news media discourse have mainly focused on constructed images of a particular nation, organization, and enterprenure, as well as groups of people such as refugees and asylum seekers (Baker & McEnery, 2005). KhosraviNik (2010) employs a CDA investigation on discursive strategies employed by various British newspapers between 1996–2006 in the ways they represent refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants. Omidian and Sijani (2023) examines the representation of Syrian refugees in the Canadian press, from December 2015 to December 2017, highlighting the role of ideological and political stances in the

portrayals of refugees across news outlets. However, many existing media representation studies on conflicts are non-comparative analysis. For instance, Finlay(2018) uses discursive psychology to examine how Israeli spokespeople described the conflict, and Israel's actions, in ways that denied responsibility for civilian deaths. Pasitselska(2017) uses ideological discourse analytic tools to demonstrates how two prominent Russian TV channels shaped the persuasive message, creating strong unity and mobilizing a high level of support among the national audience.

These studies have revealed how media representations construct different national or community's identities and shape public opinions but neglected to provide a comparative lense on how different news media from different countries discursively construct the same conflict. Sun (2023) presents a comparative discourse analysis of media representations of the Russia-Ukraine conflict in the New York Times and the Indian newspaper Business Today with an extended corpus-based discourse-historical approach, contributing a lot to the recent research gap. However, Sun's research is a corpus-based quantitative analysis combined with some qualitative analyses. Corpus linguistics methods have their limitations and one such limitation pertains to the fact that it is difficult to completely eliminate the subjective components from the analysis (Smirnova, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to employ more advanced and comprehensive quantitative analysis tools such as topic modeling and sentiment analysis in natural language processing to enhance the objectivity of such analyses. This study employs corpus-assisted CDA to investigate differences in media coverage of the same news event, compensating for the paucity of existing knowledge in this area to examine subjectivity in news framing and textual organization to unravel the newspapers' representational strategies and corresponding linguistic realization in relation to Hamas Israel-conflict. Furthermore, we combine advanced natural language processing tools like topic modeling to enhance the qualitative analysis, with the goal of offering more immediate and pertinent insights and interpretations of conflicts, which could substantially influence international peace and security.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts the corpus-based critical discourse analysis to explore how American and Chinese media construct the image of Hamas and Israel in the conflict. Corpus-based critical discourse analysis synthesizes Corpus Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), with each discipline having distinct characteristics (Flowerdew, 2023). An advantage of such an analysis approach lies in that the discourse is the most typical and representative linguistic pattern retrieved from a great number of discourses, rather than the individual discourse selected by the researcher under the analysis framework of a corpus linguistic approach(Liu & Guo, 2016). Baker and Levon argue (2015) that corpus-based critical discourse analysis research, when combining detailed qualitative interpretation with corpus methods, can demonstrate greater research validity. CL provides a comprehensive view of language use in particular contexts and a broader understanding of the textual environment of specific words(QMN-Nguyen, 2023). CL in this study aids in quantifying the language differences in representations between American and Chinese media to examine the deeper discursive strategies across different contexts.

As mentioned in the above section, news media, through the selection of perspectives and linguistic expression, either explicitly or implicitly manipulate the content and narrative style of reports, exerting influence on readers to realize the complete process of news dissemination. CDA is an analytical research approach that primarily investigates how social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are manifested, perpetuated, and countered through text and talk within social and political contexts(Schiffrin, 2008). Social sciences have yielded a significant understanding of the macro-level factors in news production and the impacts of mass media reporting (Van Dijk, 1988), and in turn the hidden inequality, injustice, and ideology in the society conveyed by the news discourse can be revealed explicitly based on CDA(Mu & Ma, 2022). CDA effectively analyzes power dynamics in societal and cultural contexts and exposes hidden inequalities and ideologies in media, linking broad

social settings with specific communication practices (Yan & Santos, 2009) and discursive features such as intertextuality, metaphors, genre hybridity, modality, subject positions or political contradictions remain its part of the study (Bruzos, 2023). DHA aims to analyze the positive self-representations and negative other-representations within discourse, revealing the intentions of constructing in-groups and out-groups and clarifying the attitude tendencies in political discourse (Wodak, 2001: 73) and has been proved to be highly suitable to studies concerned with the role of ideology in media representations (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001). DHA posits that the construction of in-groups and out-groups in discourse is achieved through five discourse strategies: naming strategy, predication strategy, argumentation strategy, perspective strategy, and intensification-weakening strategy (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009: 93-94).

In natural language processing, topic models are a suite of text-understanding algorithms that unearth the latent patterns from large bodies of unstructured text (Anoop & Sreelakshmi, 2023). Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) is an unsupervised clustering algorithm that can classify large databases of unstructured text and extract potential topic information (Jing et al, 2023). Additionally, it reduces the semantic dimensions of raw text and is particularly useful for summarizing topics from various datasets (Luo & He, 2021). Since its inception (Blei, 2003), LDA has become a commonly used topic model that can be used to interpret public sentiment variations and further explore the reasons (Tan et al., 2014). With an unsupervised machine learning algorithm to analyze the patterns from the unstructured comments, LDA is commonly used in scenarios dealing with limited observations. As the approach is unsupervised, the algorithm may automatically cluster similarities where qualitative analysis may fail when dealing with large unstructured text data.

In doing so, combining CL and DHA, this study strives to interpret and explain the discursive construction of Hamas and Israel in CD and NYT with not only an investigation of textual data but also a critical look at the underlying ideological configurations behind the use of narratives concerning hackers or hacking (Pei, 2022). Through the integration of corpus linguistics and the socio-historical context of the time, the analysis aims to demonstrate the analytical process of DHA and its value in the analysis of news discourse.

4. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. Data Collection

This article utilized the LexisNexis Academic news database with "Hamas" and "Israel" as the search terms respectively. It gathered all reports from major U.S. mainstream media, The New York Times (NYT), and China's official foreign media, China Daily, regarding the Hamas-Israel conflict from October 7, 2023, to December 31, 2023. The choice of October 7th as the starting point for data collection is because the fifth major Hamas-Israel conflict officially erupted on that date, and December 31st marks the end of the data collection period for this study. The selection of The New York Times and China Daily as media sources is because of their significant roles in shaping national identity, inevitably embedding national ideologies and values (Duan & Takahashi, 2017). The New York Times ranks prominently among English-language American media, boasting a large circulation and a broad readership (Samaie & Malmir, 2017), and is a widely-read American daily newspaper established in New York City in 1851. It ranks third in a 2009 list of the top 25 American newspapers, as published by the American Broadcasting Company (ABC), behind only The Wall Street Journal and USA Today (Kim, 2014). Founded in June 1981, China Daily is mainland China's first and most authoritative English-language national daily, with a daily circulation exceeding 200,000 copies and distribution in over 150 countries and regions outside China (Liu Jun, 2006, p. 74). China Daily positions itself as a representative media outlet for reporting on Chinese politics, economics, culture, and society to the outside world, serving as a crucial channel for China's global communication (Zhang & Wu, 2017). Additionally, the corpus analysis software used in this study is Lancsbox Version 3.0

(Brezina & Platt, W. 2023) and a reference corpus was established using the BNC (2014) corpus with a total of 200 million words, following the principle that the reference corpus should be at least five times larger than the target corpus to maximize the extraction of thematic terms.

4.2. Data Pre-processing

The data in both text corpora were first pre-processed by removing stopwords, punctuations, and special characters, converting words to lowercase with NLTK package SPACY in Python software. Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency (TF-IDF) was computed to recognize duplicates by manually excluding comments, obituaries, and reader letters, we finally obtained a specialized corpus of 2123 reports from NYT, amounting to 2,436,247 tokens, and 335 reports from China Daily, totaling 222,994 tokens. The distribution of news by sources and its amounts is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Information about the Corpus

Corpus	Texts	Tokens
CD	335	222,994
NYT	2123	2,436,247

4.3. Research Method

This research was conducted in several stages. Firstly, we conduct the topic modeling through the genism package in the software python (version 3.11.5) to get the 5 topics of both corpora (when the max coherence = 0.53 & 0.57) and then the keyword analysis is performed on both corpora, comparing the similarity and difference between two corpora as well as identifying the general themes of discourse through thematic terms and indexes. Keywords refer to the words with significant high frequency obtained by comparing with the reference corpus, and the concordance can provide the word frequency information of the search word in the target corpus and present the context of the word (Baker, 2006). Secondly, we examined the collocations of search terms Hamas and Israel with a size window of 5 through concordance in an effort to explore the discourse strategies (in this study three strategies: nomination strategy, predication strategy, and argumentation strategy are included) and other linguistic manifestations in the conflict reported by The New York Times and China Daily.

5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1. Keywords Comparison

Kilgarriff (Kilgarriff, 2009) critiqued the chi-squared and log-likelihood tests for comparing corpora, advocating for a simpler approach used in Sketch Engine. This method involves comparing corpora through a straightforward ratio of word frequencies. Therefore, this study employs a new method to compare two corpora, and the top 75 results from keyword identification based on this algorithm and WordCloud (figure1& figure2) are further provided to visualize their difference. In the CD corpora (Table 2) and NYT corpora (Table 3) show some common keywords such as "Israel", "Gaza", "Hamas", "Palestinian", "Israeli", "military", "civilians", and "attacks". All of the shared keywords indicate that both media outlets recognize Hamas and Israel as the primary participants in the conflict, with coverage focusing on the violence and military aspects of the conflict.

The conflict report in CD corpora mainly focuses on International Diplomacy and Relations: China, China's, Relations, United, President, Foreign, Summit, Xi, Netanyahu, Diplomatic, Bilateral, Regional, Promote; Conflict Dynamics and Security: Gaza, Israel, Palestinian, Israeli, Hamas, Conflict, Military, Cease-fire, Civilians, Security, Attacks, Airstrikes; Humanitarian Efforts and

Peace: Initiatives, Humanitarian, Peace, Cooperation, Solution, Crisis, Development, Global, Economic. While the report in NYT corpora pays closer attention to Military Actions and Political Stances: Israel, Gaza, Hamas, Israeli, Military, War, Biden, U.S, Trump, Republicans, Administration, Congress, Democrats, Attacks, Airstrikes; Ethnic, Religious, and Humanitarian Concerns: Palestinian, Palestinians, Civilians, Jewish, Jews, Antisemitism, Humanitarian, Civilian, Hospital; International Context and Security Issues: United, States, U.N, Security, International, Intelligence, Iran, Invasion, Violence.

On the one hand, the distinctive keywords of CD corpora including "China," "China's," "peace," "cooperation," "security," and "development," suggest that China Daily tends to approach the conflict from a Chinese perspective, possibly exploring the impact of the conflict on China or China's role in the Middle East. This also reflects China Daily's inclination to report on peace efforts and the potential for regional security cooperation in the context of the conflict. The unique keywords of The NYT corpora, on the other hand, involving "Biden," "Trump," "U.S.," "Jewish," "antisemitism," "terrorism," "violence," "airstrikes," "forces," reveal that The New York Times may focus more on the U.S. government's response, showing a greater emphasis on the military aspects and security issues of the conflict. This also demonstrates a greater attention to the Jewish community which forms a stark contrast in the portrayal of Hamas as a negative entity for the terms such as terrorist, antisemitism, and invasion.

Table 2. Top 75 Keyword Terms Based on Simple Maths in China Daily Corpus

Term	Simple maths	Term	Simple maths	Term	Simple maths
Gaza	49.78	israel's	9.57	Ministry	6.16
Israel	41.53	oct	9.35	solution	6.02
China	29.13	relations	9.12	killed	5.95
conflict	27.65	United	9.07	Israel-Palestine	5.88
Palestinian	26.98	President	9.06	situation	5.87
Israeli	25.81	east	8.95	conflicts	5.75
Hamas	22.99	middle	8.57	council	5.57
humanitarian	20.58	foreign	8	leaders	5.54
china's	16.38	hong	7.99	crisis	5.38
peace	14.83	Biden	7.97	war	5.38
cease-fire	14.57	aid	7.92	Saudi	5.35
countries	14.46	two-state	7.81	us	5.33
Palestinians	13.64	sides	7.41	Palestine-Israel	5.31
un	13.55	states	7.2	dialogue	5.26
cooperation	13.13	economic	7.09	Netanyahu	5.18
security	12.85	summit	7.04	immediate	5.15
palestine	12.17	xi	6.85	diplomatic	5.14
civilians	12.13	Ukraine	6.67	western	5.14
strip	10.91	region	6.64	development	5.04
Chinese	10.4	Beijing	6.59	bilateral	5.03
global	10.31	hostages	6.52	Israelis	5.01
military	10.28	resolution	6.45	Egypt	4.97
International	10.15	attacks	6.41	regional	4.81
Arab	9.75	Washington	6.34	promote	4.68
nations	9.67	efforts	6.29	civilian	4.66

fifth topic of the Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza focus on humanitarian in the Gaza conflict and revolves around critical dimensions such as the distribution of aid, the profound impact on civilians, and the ongoing negotiations aimed at securing a cease-fire. Figure 5 shows the distribution of the main topics in the CD corpus.

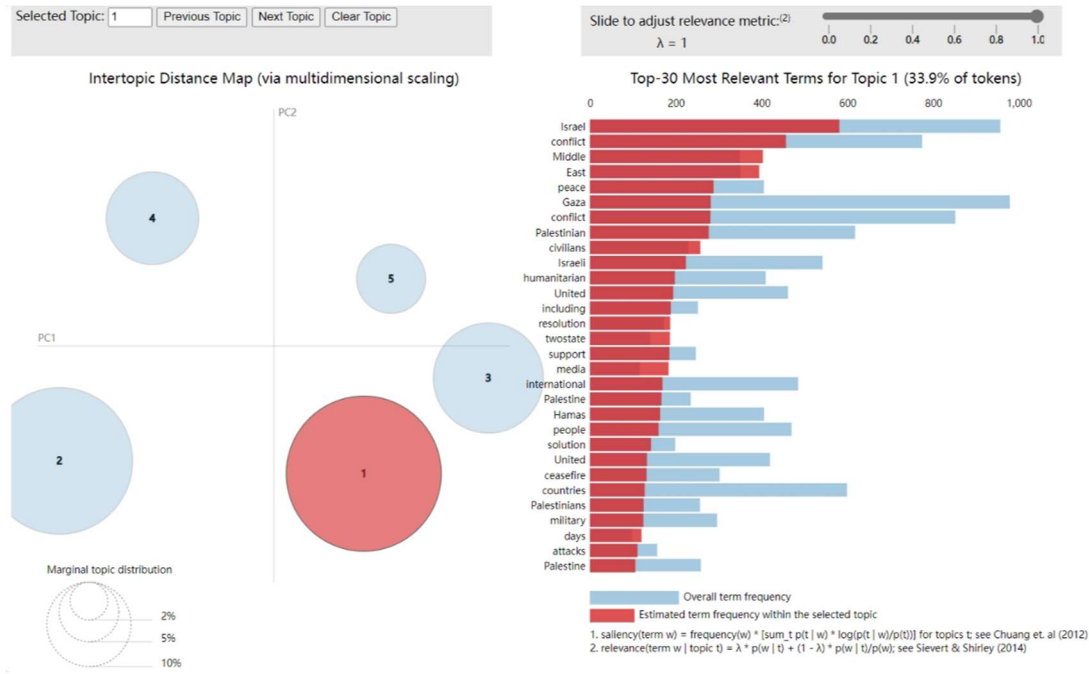


Figure 3. Topic Distribution in China Daily's Coverage

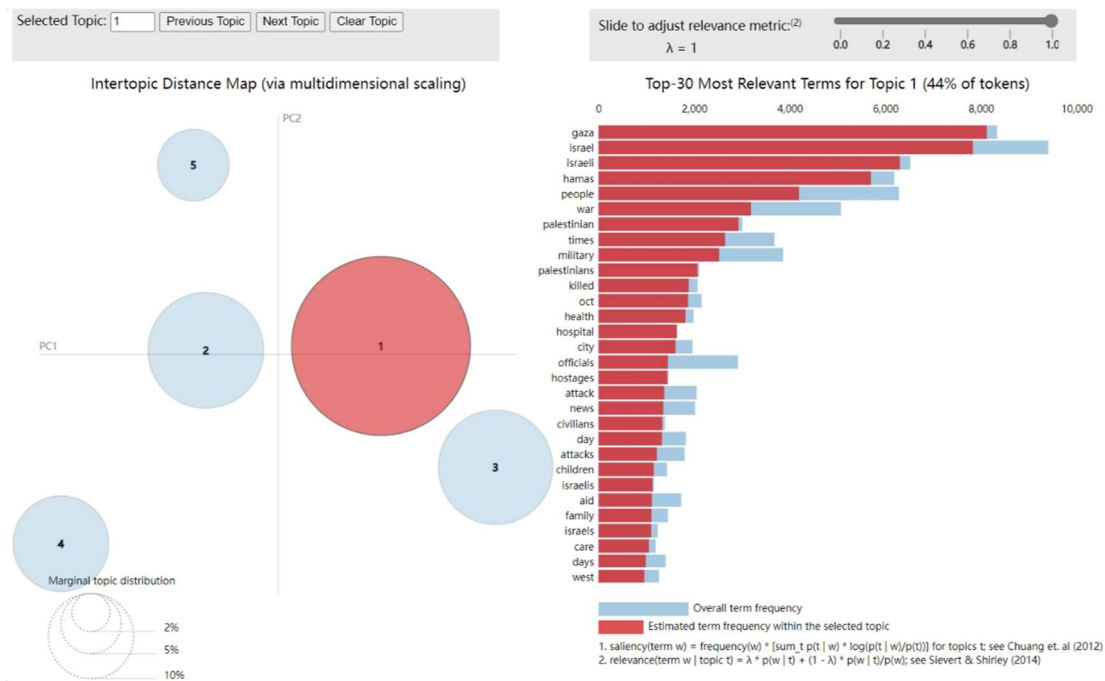


Figure 4. Topic Distribution in The New York Times' Coverage

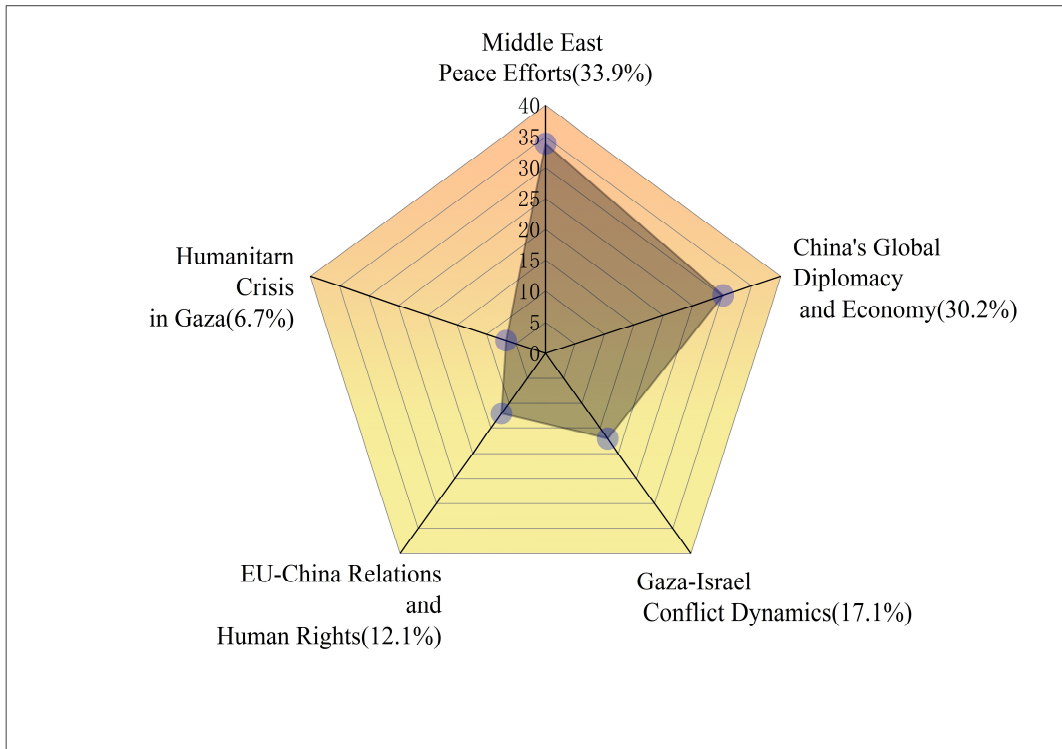


Figure 5. Detailed Analysis of Five Topics in China Daily's Coverage

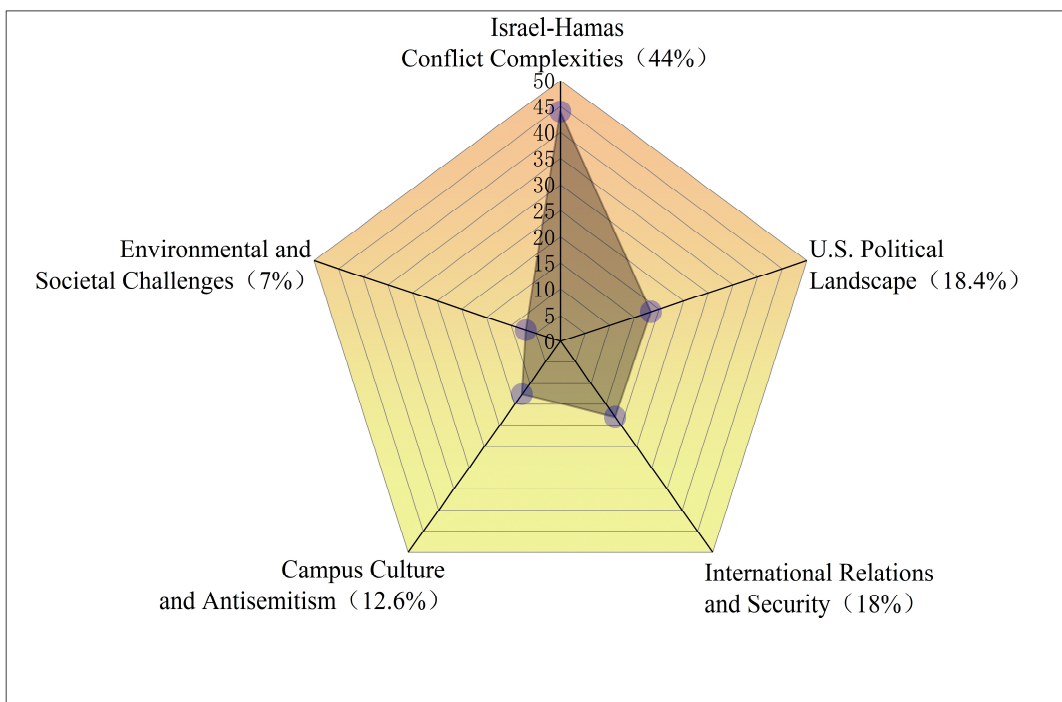


Figure 6. Detailed Analysis of Five Topics in The New York Times' Coverage

For the NYT corpora, the first topic explores the conflict's geopolitical and military dimensions, encompassing terms related to Gaza, Israeli-Palestinian interactions, military actions, and civilian impacts. The second topic shifts towards the U.S. political landscape, featuring discussions on major political parties, prominent figures like Trump and Biden, and key political issues. In the third topic,

the focus broadens to international relations and security, which include terms related to global affairs, such as Ukraine, Russia, China, and various aspects of international security and diplomacy. The fourth topic delves into campus activism and social issues within educational settings, addressing issues such as freedom of speech, antisemitism, diversity, and social movements. Lastly, the fifth topic addresses environmental and societal challenges, incorporating discussions on climate change, public safety, cultural phenomena, and broader societal issues like inflation and environmental concerns. Figure 6 shows distribution of the main topics in the NYT corpus.

In the coverage of the Israel-Hamas conflict, the NYT and CD exhibit divergent approaches that highlight the ideological and geopolitical discrepancies between the United States and China. These differences are not merely rooted in national interests but are strategically employed to further their respective agendas on the international stage. The New York Times' choice of themes reflects the American ideological commitment to democratic values, human rights, and individual freedoms. This reporting strategy is designed to underscore issues of liberty, governance, and societal concerns, embodying Western democratic ideals and serving as a means for the United States to project its values and achieve its foreign policy objectives internationally. Such coverage portrays the United States in its role as a global leader, intertwining its domestic policies and values with its international actions. Conversely, the reporting by China Daily is imbued with the ideological stance of the Chinese Communist Party, emphasizing state sovereignty, national development, and stability. By highlighting China's role in global diplomacy and economic growth, this reporting strategy aims to craft an image of China as an emerging global power, prioritizing national interests and strategic partnerships in its approach to international relations. The purpose of China Daily's coverage is to support China's geopolitical strategy, emphasizing economic partnerships and regional stability to expand China's international influence and assert its dominance in global affairs.

The distinct themes and narrative frameworks adopted by The New York Times and China Daily in their coverage of the Israel-Hamas conflict serve the strategic objectives and international image-building of their respective countries. The former employs a critical analysis and emphasizes liberal democratic values to maintain America's global leadership position, while the latter aligns with the official stance of the Chinese government, emphasizing China's role as a responsible global actor, aimed at promoting global development and cooperation. This contrast in reporting not only reveals the fundamental ideological and geopolitical differences between the two nations but also reflects the complex motivations behind their use of media reporting to achieve national strategic objectives.

5.3. Discursive Strategies and Linguistic Devices Used to Represent Hamas-Israel Conflict

5.3.1. Comparison of Nomination Strategies

Nomination strategies are intentional plans that aim at discursive construction of in-groups and out-groups entailing social actors, objects, events, processes, and actions. These strategies are mainly realized through nouns and pronouns, linguistic categorization devices, metaphors, metonymies, and synecdoche are used to indicate processes and actions (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009). We employ the graphcoll tool in Lancsbox to investigate the collocates of Hamas and Israel in both corpora and Table 4 shows the major noun collocates in two corpora.

The NYT and CD shared some noun collocations in their representation of Hamas such as assault, attacks, civilian, forces, Gaza, Hamas, hostages, Israel, Israeli, militants, Netanyahu, oct, Palestinian, truce, war, and representation of Israel including aid, airstrikes, Arab, assault, conflict, defense, forces, Gaza, ground, Hamas, Palestinian, Ukraine, war. Terms like 'hostilities,' 'territory,' and 'children' for Hamas in CD, and 'security,' 'solidarity,' and 'citizens' for Israel in NYT suggest a focus on the humanitarian and societal impact of the conflict from each source's perspective. However, unique terms like 'resistance' in CD for Hamas and 'airstrikes,' 'defense,' and 'Hezbollah' in NYT for Israel point to distinct narrative angles.

The CD corpus nominates Hamas with terms like 'resistance,' 'retaliation,' and 'victory' suggesting a strategy that frames them as actors in a struggle or conflict. The use of 'resistance' could nominate Hamas as a group that is defending against aggression. In the case of Israel, the CD corpus's use of 'operation,' 'wing,' and 'territory' suggests a focus on the state's military aspects, which nominate Israel as an actor with agency and control, implying a portrayal of dominance or as a military and political entity exerting control, potentially over Palestinian territories and people. In contrast, the collocations of NYT corpus for Hamas include 'terrorist,' 'incursion,' 'gunmen,' and 'massacre.' These terms carry negative connotations and construct Hamas as an aggressor, involved in violent and illicit activities, potentially framing them as the instigator rather than the defender. On the one hand, terms associated with Israel in the NYT corpus include 'defense,' 'airstrikes,' 'security,' and 'diplomatic.' These suggest a portrayal of Israel as a nation defending itself and engaged in security actions, aligning with a narrative that positions Israel as a legitimate state actor responding to aggression. NYT leans towards an ideological position that is more sympathetic to Israel, framing it as a defender, while casting Hamas in a negative light as aggressors and terrorists. In addition, the NYT leaned towards condemning Hamas and portraying Israel as the defensive party. The CD corpus, with its use of terms like 'resistance' and 'retaliation' for Hamas, may offer a more neutral or even sympathetic portrayal of Hamas, at least in the context of resistance.

Table 4. Major Noun Collocates for 'Hamas' and 'Israel' in Both Corpora

Corpus	Hamas	Israel
CD&NYT	assault, attacks, civilian, civilians, conflict, days, fighters, fighting, forces, Gaza, Hamas, hostage, hostages, including, Israel, Israeli, Israelis, militant, militants, Netanyahu, oct, Palestinian, people, release, response, Saturday, strip, support, surprise, truce, war	aid, airstrikes, Arab, assault, attack, attacks, Biden, civilians, conflict, defense, forces, Gaza, ground, Hamas, Hezbollah, hostages, Israel, Israeli, Netanyahu, oct, Palestine, Palestinian, Palestinians, people, pressure, relations, rockets, southern, support, surprise, time, Ukraine, war.
CD	resistance, statement, targets, retaliation, day, Wednesday, operation, Sunday, wing, united, Benjamin, movement, Monday, minister, pressure, territory, wipe, agreement, victory, children, hostilities, southern	Abraham, influence, western, outbreak, urge, Wednesday, negotiations, operation, Xinhua, strip, billion, countries, unity, media, Zhang, blind, accords, news, situation, campaign, release, militant, Monday, bank, militants, operations, west, Tel, agency, humanitarian, air, coexistence, aircraft
NYT	video, Palestinians, leader, women, defeat, organization, incursion, terrorist, deal, senior, jihad, officials, gunmen, month, rockets, tunnels, invasion, controls, Iran, condemn, command, campaign, leadership, underground, threat, ground, terrorists, Qatar, massacre, leaders, hospital, assailants, atrocities, terror, weeks, Hezbollah, power, goal	administration, Blinken, Friday, trip, citizens, president, prisoners, terrorist, security, solidarity, visit, criticism, deal, response, prime, Sunday, officials, ties, normalization, month, border, Saudi, invasion, Lebanon, Jewish, Iran, American, days, blockade, strikes, Benjamin, Jews, Saturday, week, minister, civilian, assistance, northern, Arabia, Egypt

One device through which this strategy is realized is the use of metaphors, which is defined as a figure of speech in which a word or a phrase is applied to an object or an action to which it is not literally applicable.

5.3.2. Comparison of Predication Strategies

The NYT and the CD corpora employ sophisticated predication strategies in their discourse, effectively assigning attributes or qualities to entities such as Hamas, Israel, and various other actors. This linguistic mechanism is manifested through either positive or negative evaluative language, and the use of explicit predicates, predicate-like nouns, adjectives, and adverbs. Such strategies significantly contribute to positioning these actors along a spectrum that ranges from condemnation to a stance of neutrality, as evidenced in Table 5.

The CD corpus predicates Hamas with terms such as 'massive,' 'continued,' and 'vowed,' which signify significant and sustained agency without imparting explicit moral judgment. Likewise, Israel is depicted through terms like 'arrived,' 'influence,' and 'unwavering,' suggesting a strong and active geopolitical role. These lexical choices present both entities as assertive within a complex conflict narrative, favoring neutral or descriptive terms over pejorative or laudatory descriptors. The initial designation of Hamas as a resistance organization, rather than a terrorist entity, contributes to a discourse that refrains from ascribing blame or victimhood within the conflict narrative, thus maintaining a neutral perspective. This abstention from a dichotomous portrayal might be seen as stemming from a strategic choice to align reportage with China's broader diplomatic postures in the region.

Conversely, the NYT corpus predicates Hamas with an overwhelmingly negative lexicon, including 'condemned,' 'massacre,' and 'kidnapped,' constructing a narrative of illegitimacy and violence. The predication of Israel with terms such as 'defend,' 'diplomatic,' and 'humanitarian' aligns with an ideological bias that frames Israel as a legitimate state actor engaged in self-preservation and international diplomacy. It may be explicable, to some extent, by the alliance between the United States and Israel, as well as the United States' influence in the Middle East that Hamas is presented in a manner consistent with criminalization and delegitimization, while Israel is characterized in a reactive role, often justified by the predicates used. The divergent lexical choices in both corpora underscore the influence of language in shaping the discourse on the Israel-Hamas conflict, reflecting and potentially reinforcing the respective media outlets' positions and the geopolitical ideologies they represent.

Table 5. Comparison of Adjective and Verb Collocates for Hamas and Israel

Corpus	Hamas	Israel
CD&NYT	attack, attacked, captured, deadly, fight, held, Islamic, killed, launched, official, released, release, response, military,	attacked, called, continued, defend, diplomatic, international, killed, launched, military, siege, support, surprise, united,
CD	massive, continued, reported, left, prime, wing, united, supporting, declared, vowed, told, pressure, territory, wipe, offensive, hostilities, southern	massive, arrived, influence, western, reached, condemned, outbreak, urge, negotiations, bombing, reported, intensified, blind, supporting, rose, announced, blindly, campaign, declared, unwavering, signed, unconditional, formed, release, vowed, militant, west, Islamic, avoid, denied, humanitarian
NYT	control, condemned, regroup, defeat, controlled, kidnapped, accused, deal, senior, jihad, targeting, destroying, eliminate, condemning, kill, invasion, controls, condemn, command, campaign, armed, underground, threat, ground, abducted, holding, massacre, destroy, seized, committed, assailants, denied, eradicate, power	agreed, responded, invaded, accused, prisoners, responsible, including, visit, criticism, deal, response, imposed, prime, ties, urged, month, border, Jewish, Iran, American, blockade, blamed, stand, strikes, Jews, killing, released, destroy, assistance, northern,

5.3.3. Comparison of Argumentation Strategies

Selective reporting of speeches by news media serves to steer and convince readers to adopt the perspectives presented in news narratives. Analyzing the argumentation strategies in such reported speech uncovers the persuasive aims and underlying attitudes of the media (Yang & Wang, 2023). The strategy of argumentation that seeks to justify attributions, whether positive or negative, is accomplished by employing *topoi*. These are used specifically to justify the inclusion or exclusion within a political context and serve as the content-based warrants or rules for conclusion' that forge links between arguments and their ultimate claims or conclusions (Wodak, 2011). It facilitates the derivation of conclusions through a framework of argumentative warrants without delving into the exhaustive explanation of these warrants themselves. Through the analysis of emergent *topoi* within political discourse, as suggested by Sierra (2021), we not only unveil the rationalizations behind binary oppositions but also gain insight into the ideologies shaped by political entities.

The *topos* of danger or threat involves the argument that specific dangers and threats should be countered or avoided due to their potentially harmful consequences (Wodak, 2001). The NYT employs the *topoi* of threat to construct Hamas as a significant security threat, thereby legitimizing Israel's military responses. For example, it clearly articulates the perceived immediate and dangerous threat posed by Hamas, justifying Israel's aggressive military response and the bipartisan support for emergency aid. Coupled with Van Leeuwen's legitimation strategies, he delineates four principal strategies for legitimizing actions or decisions, each comprising distinct elements. Authorization leverages established traditions or authorities for justification; moral legitimation aligns actions with prevailing value systems; rationalization grounds actions in their utility, making a case for their benefits; and mythopoesis employs narratives that morally sanction or condemn actions, effectively using stories to reward or penalize based on ethical.

The NYT's narrative leverages the strategy of authorization by referencing the authority of bipartisan support and international backing for Israel's military actions. This strategy is employed to legitimize Israel's aggressive responses to Hamas by situating them within the framework of a broader, authoritative consensus. By articulating the perceived immediate and dangerous threat posed by Hamas, the narrative invokes the authority of political and legal structures that endorse Israel's right to defend itself. This approach aligns with Van Leeuwen's description of authorization, where legitimation is anchored in the endorsement by entities vested with authority, including governments and international institutions that recognize the legitimacy of self-defense in the face of threats.

Moral legitimation is employed by framing Israel's military actions as fundamentally defensive measures aimed at protecting its citizenry from a pronounced threat. This strategy is evident in the portrayal of Israel's efforts to "effectively degrade and defeat the threat from Hamas" not only as a matter of security but as a moral obligation to ensure civilian safety. The moral argument is further reinforced by the critique of underestimating the threat level posed by Hamas, suggesting a moral imperative to respond decisively to avoid potentially harmful consequences. This aligns with Van Leeuwen's notion of moral legitimation, where actions are justified by aligning them with broader value systems that prioritize safety, security, and the protection of innocent lives. For example:

(1): "Arrives in Israel as the Gaza Strip is reeling from thousands of airstrikes and bracing for a potential ground invasion from Israeli forces after more than a million residents were told to evacuate the northern part of the enclave. The rapid escalation of hostilities has prompted a bipartisan outcry for emergency military aid for Israel, as it attempts to eliminate the threat posed by Hamas." (Source: New York Times).

(2): " The prime minister continued to push those policies. On one day in July, he even refused to meet a senior general who came to deliver a threat warning based on classified intelligence, according to Israeli officials. Israeli officials misjudged the threat posed by Hamas for years, and more critically in the run-up to the attack." (Source: New York Times).

(3): "It needs to replenish its defensive systems, including Iron Dome and other air defense capabilities," the group wrote. "But to better understand the efficacy of U.S. funding that supports Israel's operations inside Gaza, we respectfully ask your team to provide us with information relative to these two clear U.S. priorities: supporting an Israeli strategy that will effectively degrade and defeat the threat from Hamas and taking all possible measures to protect civilians in Gaza." (Source: New York Times).

Compared with NYT, the CD illustrates how humanitarianism is used as a *topoi* in arguing for or against specific political actions in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. CD's representation reflects the broader debate on the responsibility of states and international bodies to uphold humanitarian values, even when faced with complex geopolitical realities. The *topos* of humanitarianism can be paraphrased by the following conditional: if a political action or decision does or does not conform with human rights or humanitarian convictions and values, one should or should not perform or take it.

In the narrative constructed by CD, a clear dichotomy is presented between the United States' neglect of humanitarian concerns and China's advocacy for a neutral, humanitarian-focused approach. The United States' repeated exercise of its veto power in the Security Council, aimed at blocking resolutions for a humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza, strikes a contrast with the international plea for humanitarian assistance and the cessation of hostilities, highlighting a departure from global humanitarian values in favor of geopolitical alliances. This stance not only exacerbates the humanitarian crisis but puts the U.S. in opposition to the broader international consensus on the urgent need for peace and humanitarian aid. Conversely, China's call for a ceasefire and humanitarian assistance, articulated during the dialogue mechanism aimed at supporting the normalization of relations in the Middle East, underscores a commitment to a balanced and principled stance that prioritizes humanitarian considerations over geopolitical competition. This contrast not only illuminates the divergent approaches of global powers towards the conflict but also underscores the critical role of humanitarianism in shaping international responses to crises, suggesting a moral imperative for the global community to prioritize humanitarian values in the face of geopolitical complexities. For example:

"With 153 votes in favor, 10 against, and 23 abstentions, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in Gaza. Despite a General Assembly vote only carrying moral weight, as UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said, the messages they send are 'very important' since they reflect world opinion. And as CNN said, it is a rebuke to the United States which was the only..." (Source: China Daily).

"The US has long deemed Israel to be its most important ally in the Middle East and it has unswervingly thrown its weight behind the country. Not least by repeatedly using its veto power in the United Nations Security Council to block resolutions calling for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza and humanitarian assistance for Palestinian civilians, despite the humanitarian crisis in the Palestinian enclave continuing to worsen..." (Source: China Daily).

"Human Rights Watch last week accused the Israeli government of committing a war crime. The United Nations is warning that the quantity of food reaching Palestinians in Gaza is just 10 percent of what is needed to feed the territory's inhabitants amid the Israeli military's near nonstop bombardment of the Palestinian enclave and its ground operations, which are worsening the humanitarian situation there with each passing day..." (Source: China Daily).

5.4. Linguistic Means

Both corpora use a myriad of linguistic devices as a way to heighten their construction of Hamas and Israel. The CD employs rhetorical devices including Metaphor and Personification to elaborate on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, attributing the prolongation of suffering to Israel's actions, and criticizes the United States for its intransigence and failure to persuade Israel to agree to a cease-fire.

The metaphor of "standing on both the wrong side of world opinion and history" is used to condemn the US (and implicitly Israel) for their stance and actions. In addition, Exaggeration is also used to criticize the current Israeli government's approach towards Gaza, depicting it as not only politically extreme but as lacking in humanity. The description of Gazans being trapped and the leader's actions as exacerbating their suffering constructs an image of Israel's policy as not just aggressive as well as trapping civilians in an untenable situation. For example:

It's time that the US acknowledged what is happening in Gaza and played a more constructive role by persuading Israel to agree to a cease-fire. The US should recognize that it is standing on both the wrong side of world opinion and history with its intransigence. (Source: China Daily).

This is absurd and ludicrous, and entirely misleading. In the meantime, we have the leader of the most extreme right-wing government in Israel's history banging his fists together on TV urging extreme violence upon the people of Gaza. (Source: China Daily).

NYT strategically employs an abundance of direct quotations from civilians and officials to construct a unilateral condemnation of Hamas. This journalistic approach enhances the authenticity and immediacy of the narratives, presenting the conflict not merely as abstract news but as a collection of personal stories imbued with emotions and individual experiences. By selectively amplifying voices that singularly criticize Hamas, the NYT shapes a narrative perspective that elicits reader empathy towards the victims of the conflict, predominantly casting Hamas in a negative light. While adding depth and authenticity to the reporting, the method may inadvertently limit the exploration of the conflict's complexity. This focus on direct quotes effectively mobilizes reader sentiment and aligns it with the grievances against Hamas, yet it also raises objectivity of the coverage and the dependence on official sources perpetuates narratives aligned with corporate and state interests, sidelining alternative viewpoints. For example:

The military would "do everything to ensure that this never happens again," he added. iris Haim, the mother of yotam, released a recorded message on Wednesday in which she told the soldiers involved in her son's death that she blamed no one except for Hamas. "We want to see you with our own eyes and embrace you," said Ms. Haim, in an English translation put out by Israel's government press office. "None of us are judging you or angry with you," she added. (Source: New York Times).

"I'm closing my eyes to these questions for now," said Ayelet Samerano, whose son, Yonatan, was shot by Palestinian gunmen and taken to Gaza on Oct. 7. Israel is engaged in an "existential war," she said in a phone interview. "I believe we'll learn all the answers - after the war." (Source: New York Times).

Earlier in the news conference, Mr. Miller addressed a different reporter's question on why he had not condemned rape by Hamas. "We haven't made an independent assessment," he said. "we've obviously seen the reports that Hamas has committed sexual violence, they've committed rape. We have no reason at all to doubt those reports." (Source: New York Times).

6. CONCLUSION

Topic modeling and keyword analysis revealed distinct thematic clusters in NYT and CD coverage which highlight differences in areas such as security, humanitarian issues, political responses, and international reactions. This quantitative analysis complements the DHA process by showing how each media outlet prioritizes certain aspects of the conflict, further illustrating the ideological underpinnings of their narratives. The convergence and divergence of topic modeling with discourse analysis demonstrates the multifaceted ways in which media shapes the portrayal of international conflicts. From the result of five topics of each outlet, The New York Times focuses on democratic values, human rights, and individual freedoms, aligning with American ideological commitments to project its values and achieve foreign policy objectives. Conversely, China Daily emphasizes state

sovereignty, national development, and stability, reflecting the Chinese Communist Party's stance and aiming to position China as a responsible global actor in international relations.

Furthermore, NYT constructs Israel as a defender against terrorism, emphasizing its right to security and self-defense, utilizing strong verbs and positive adjectives to describe its actions. This portrayal aligns with U.S. geopolitical interests, framing the conflict through a lens of national security and the global fight against terrorism. Conversely, the CD presents Hamas in a more neutral or even sympathetic light, focusing on the humanitarian impact of the conflict and the legitimacy of Palestinian resistance. CD's narrative reflects China's stance on non-interference and its diplomatic efforts towards peace and stability in the region. Both media outlets' strategies not only demonstrate their respective ideological biases but also the intertwining of media discourse with national geopolitical agendas. NYT and CD deploy contrasting rhetorical strategies to construct their narratives around the Israel-Hamas conflict, each mirroring their nation's ideological and geopolitical biases. NYT's language imbues Israel with legitimacy and moral high ground, often highlighting the existential threats it faces and emphasizing the need for security measures and legitimizing military actions. In contrast, CD adopts a more critical stance towards the use of force, bolstering the humanitarian crisis and the plight of the Palestinian people in a way to questions the morality of Israel's military responses.

In conclusion, this study utilizes a corpus-based Critical Discourse Analysis approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative analyses through topic modeling, keyword and collocation analysis, and the DHA framework of nomination, predication, and argumentation strategies. This methodology offers a nuanced understanding of how China Daily and The New York Times frame and position the Israel-Hamas conflict differently. The application of this approach seeks to elucidate the distinct presentations of the same conflict by these media entities, enhancing our comprehension of their reportage behaviors. Our analysis highlights the role of media in shaping public discourse and the importance of critical media literacy to navigate the biases inherent in media representations. The research, on the one hand, underscores how geopolitical interests, economic partnerships, and ideological identities are intertwined to shape countries' stances in international conflicts. On the other hand, it contributes valuable insights into the role of two divergent media in international conflicts, highlighting the influence of geopolitical interests on media framing and the importance of critically assessing media narratives in understanding complex international issues.

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