

Comparative Study on the Reporting of the 2023 Israel–Palestine Conflict by Chinese and American Official Media: Narrative Frames, Stance, and International Public Opinion Division

Shuaijun Liu*

Communication University of China, Broadcasting and Hosting Arts Major, Beijing 100000, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

Copyright: © 2026 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: This paper studies narrative frameworks, ideological stances, and the fragmentation of public opinion in Chinese and American media of the 2023 Israel-Palestine conflict. The study finds that both official media in China and the US embrace different narrative structures and ideological positions on the Israel-Palestine issue. This reflects their contestations on public opinion internationally. Examining similarities and differences in the media coverage helps to reveal the causes and consequences of international public opinion fragmentation and gives a new way of looking at how international news is spread.

Keywords: Israel-Palestine conflict; Rewritten; Chinese and American official media narrative positioning in the face of global public opinion polarization

Online publication: March 18, 2026

1. Introduction

1.1. Research background and significance

In October 2023, a new Israeli-Palestinian conflict broke out and attracted the whole world's attention. After the conflict, China and US media coverage differ a lot in framework, logic, and ideology. The media coverage of China and the US is related to their national interests, foreign policies, and ideologies because the media coverage is important. It leads to differences, various interpretations around the globe, and modifications in the course of conflict communication.

1.2. Study questions and objectives

The Israel-Palestine fight flared up in 2023, which caught worldwide attention. As global information spreads, Chinese and US official media, as key parties in international public opinions, reflect their views towards international order, values, power structures, and diplomatic discourse. Communication studies have found that the different reports of the same event by them reflect different national political, ideological, and diplomatic positions^[1]. Using framing theory, political economy, and specific models to study the 2023 Israel-Palestine conflict media differences^[2-3]. Framework analysis posits that news chooses to emphasize information to create meaning, not just to reproduce facts^[3]. The news framework affects how the audience perceives the news and the media context, with researchers identifying key political news frameworks^[4]. Conflict, Human interest, morals, responsibility, and economic impact are typical frames. The model states that news frame selection is both a textual strategy and a practice of ideology^[2-3]. It is the reflection of the media's discourse logic and stance in political communication and global opinion competition.

This article studies the difference in the narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian disputes due to structural differences in politics, communication, and international roles between China and the US. Chinese media emphasize responsibility and human interests, whereas US media emphasize conflict and ethics^[4]. Framework use reveals values and guides opinion as media follow national and international discourse frameworks to inform narrative and stances. Analysis according to established framing typologies is performed to show media discourse competition^[4]. From a political economy perspective, this article states that the news framework chosen is both an editorial decision and a reflection of power struggles and ideas^[5]. This model describes how media position themselves and represent international conflict differently.

This paper takes the 2023 Palestine-Israel war as a starting point, employing a qualitative perspective along with a comparative content analysis. Re-sampling period: 27-12-2008 to 19-10-2025: Original news reports (headlines and leads on conflict, excluding videos/photos) from China/USA official media. Analysis and graphics according to the fact confirmed by the site screenshot.

2. Differences in conflict narrative frameworks and how the main conflicting parties and external characters are presented

2.1. Basic characterization of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

The Israeli-Palestinian issue begins from Israel's 1948 establishment and the UN partition; it has ethnic, religious, area, and safety aspects. The main problem of the Palestine-Israel conflict is the structural conflict between Palestinian self-determination and Israel's security.

Statista data shows 5600 Palestinian deaths recorded from 2008 to 2020. 115000 injury data recorded (**Figure 1**). The same period saw 250 deaths for Israelis and 5,600 injuries. In 2014, Israel executed "Operation Blade Protection" in Gaza following the kidnapping and murder of three teenagers. The 7-week campaign killed more than 2 thousand, mostly Gazans. In 2018 Demonstrations throughout the Gaza-Israel border resulted in over 28,000 Palestinian casualties^[6]. The figure shows that the fight is very intense, and when it occurs. The root cause lies in the basic differences between Israel's claim to sovereignty and security and Palestine's wish for self-determination and territory.



Figure 1. Israel-Palestine conflict deaths statistics

2.2. Chinese and American media keywords overview

Chinese and American media used different words and focused on different aspects in their 2023 Israeli-Palestinian conflict coverage (Table 1). Like Chinese media use “peace”, “dialogue”, “justice”, in the report, the Palestine-Israel conflict resolution is emphasized. Incomplete stats show China’s media mentioned “peace” around 1600 times and “justice” around 450 times. Chinese state media focus more on international peace deals in their news.

On the contrary, the US media focused on “security” (2700), “defense” (1500), and “conflict escalation”, focusing more on security and military aspects.

Table 1. 2008–2023 China-US official media Palestine-Israel conflict keyword frequency and narrative logic comparison.

Comparison dimensions	Chinese State Media (2008–2023)	US Official Media (2008–2023)
Keyword inclinations	“Peace” “Justice” “cooperation”	“Security” “Defense” “Escalation of conflict”
Reporting framework	Structural Peace narrative	Security Defense narrative
Narrative logic	Multilateralism, political settlement	Self-defense legitimacy, counter-terrorism logic
Peak years	2014, 2021, 2023	2014, 2021, 2023
Total keyword frequency (estimated)	2,000 times	5,000 times

Chinese media puts more emphasis on Palestinian and Israeli rights than the US media, which focuses more on national interests. Contrary to the assumption, the national media report an event based on their own interests and values [1,5].

2.3. Chinese narrative logic vs. American official media

Chinese and American media have different narratives on Israel-Palestine. Chinese state media mentions that the conflict has a certain historical background and asks people to learn the cause of the problem in terms of origin. Like when Chinese media mentioned “Palestinian issue” and “Israeli settlement issue” to show this issue’s complexity over time ^[7].

And after much searching, there were different thoughts about the big conflicts that happened from the Chinese and US official news sites. Chinese media reported the Palestinian death, and US media reported the Israeli soldier’s safe and military operation justification.

Chinese and US state media have different narrative logics; info select standards, and interpretations about the Israeli-Palestine problem. Similarities and differences represent the stances and differing interests/values of the two countries in the international public sphere ^[1]. The reason is that both countries’ reports of foreign wars are usually influenced by their own political, historical, and cultural backgrounds and thus have developed distinctive narrative structures ^[7-8].

2.4. Shaping Israel’s image

Chinese and US state media display a difference in how they represent Israel in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The media reported that due to no burial grounds, over 40,000 Palestinian grave diggers died in Gaza ^[6].

It shows that Chinese media mainly focus on conflicts that are negative to Israel’s image, whereas American media focus on Israel’s defense. After more searching, it became clear that the Chinese media were quoting data from international organizations and Palestinian authorities US media favored Israeli official and military expert views Chinese media mainly talked about the influence on civilians from a humanitarian aspect, but the American media focused on Israeli defense efforts on national security and countering terrorism.

But contrary to expectations, Chinese and US official media showed some deviations from country stances on the Palestine-Israel issue due to conflict portrayal being based on global perceptions, audience expectations, and professional judgment ^[8]. From the “Fourth Estate or Mouthpiece” debate, conventional scholar conclusion suggests that media freedom and regime type influence content ^[8]. The study claims that different reasons and factors combined result in a positive image of the country in the media and its perspectives.

2.5. Hamas labels and descriptions

Chinese and US media have differences in naming and description of Hamas during the Palestine-Israel war. Chinese media frequently employ “Hamas” as the official name and describe it in an objective manner as a Palestinian resistance organization. Xinhua named Hamas as the “Palestinian Resistance Movement”, expanding upon the idea of being oriented toward violent products.

US media call Hamas a “terrorist organization” but keep its official name. This refers to the military clash regarding legitimacy between Hamas ^[7].

Further research shows that it was the US media focusing on Hamas being violent and anti-Israel, while the Chinese media focused on Hamas being more social and community-oriented in Palestine. Both of these media have a difference in defining terrorism and adopting a stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict involving Hamas. The reason for this may be that the two countries have different interests and value differences in terms of international politics ^[5, 8].

2.6. America’s role positioning

China’s and the US’s official media reporting of the Palestine-Israel conflict are compared. The US media presented special views on its part. US state media played up its “mediator” role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for reasons of national interest ^[1]. US state media have referred to the keyword “American mediation” more than 210 times in their reports, while Chinese state media have used this term less frequently, with only about 48 mentions (Table 2).

Table 2. Keyword distribution and frequency in Chinese and American official media reports on Palestine-Israel mediation (2008–2025)

Media Sources	Keywords	Estimate Mentions (2008–2025)	Data basis explanation
US official media (VOA, RFA)	“US mediation”/” US Mediation	210 times	About 210 reports on Middle East peace mediation were retrieved based on the keyword search for English reports on VOA and RFA websites (“US mediation in Middle East conflict”), with about 80 percent related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
Chinese state media (Xinhua News Agency, People’s Daily, CCTV)	“China Mediation”	48 times	Searching for the keywords “China Mediation” and “Chinese mediation in the Middle East” through Xinhua News Agency and People’s Daily Online databases, reports mainly focused on the two conflict periods of 2014 and 2021.
Time range	2008–2025.	Data are estimated after standardized deduplication	Based on LexisNexis Academic and open media full-text retrieval platforms (Factiva, Wise News).

Searching “China Mediation” and “Chinese mediation in the Middle East” on Xinhua and People’s database results showed mainly reports about conflict from 2014 and 2021.

The US media focuses on the leadership of the world in this issue ^[3]. It is found that the US media stressed the mediating role as well as military-financial aid for Israel, which improved America’s worldwide position.

US media broke the patterns when it came to their Middle East news coverage; they put more stress on world justice instead of political interest ^[8]. The basic mechanism is that the US media can make the US look better to the rest of the world by mediating and advocating for its Middle East policy ^[1, 3].

3. National positions, information source structures, and reporting perspectives reflected in media coverage

3.1. The policy logic behind the Chinese media stance

The coverage regarding the Palestine-Israel conflict is related to policy in Chinese media ^[1-2]. Chinese state media emphasize peaceful conflict resolution, consistent with its foreign policy. China stresses solving the Israeli-Palestinian problem through diplomatic talks, according to People’s Daily. In the face of Israel and Palestine matters, it is a reflection of the countries’ foreign policy will and adherence to international law.

Chinese media were equally divided in terms of conflict history, territorial dispute, and security ^[7]. The media in China discuss Israel escalated with Palestine. This writing is quite different from just focusing on Palestinian rights.

Chinese media focuses on Chinese peaceful suggestion and creation role in Israeli-Palestinian conversation: China stated it was for a “two-state” solution and global collaboration for peace. Reports say that China has been

actively involved in global issues and that it is seen as a responsible big country, as shown by UN resolutions and foreign community condemnation ^[6]. The public can understand global opinion hotspots. It also reflects China on the world stage.

3.2. U.S. media policy background

U.S. media's view of the 2023 Israel-Palestine conflict is like US foreign policy goals ^[1]. The US is backing Israel, according to the media report. Incomplete stats show 80% of the US media's Israel coverage is positive, more than negative. So, the US media tend to be on the side of Israel, which is related to US security in Israeli-Palestinian conflict reports ^[3]. Further research shows that the US media quoted most of the time Israelis officials instead of Palestinians ^[7]. The US-Israel relationship is strong, so the US media cannot be neutral on the Israeli-Palestinian issue ^[5, 8]. The US media's soft talk about Palestinian pain secretly shows what they think about the Israeli-Palestinian problem.

3.3. Different versions of media roles in national exchange strategies

Chinese and US media had different descriptions of the Palestine-Israel war. Take the US, for example. The media mentions as proof for the US statements in the Middle East, showing that the US media supports national interests throughout the whole world ^[1, 3].

Research shows that the US media calls it Israel's self-defense, China's media calls it the Palestinians' right ^[7]. The reason is that America's media creates a dominant global leader image ^[3], but China's media expresses peace and coexistence.

Chinese media, contrary to what's normal, brought up all kinds of international conflict parts ^[8]. Chinese media provide a wider range of information and different viewpoints compared to the US media's singular conflict perspective and different international strategies ^[7].

3.4. Info citations, positions, and building

Analysis of China-US official media citations on Palestine-Israel is different: Chinese media mostly favor UN/Palestinian quotes (55%), American media heavily favor Israeli government/military quotes (80%) ^[6-7]. China's focus on balance of stress, fairness, law, and humanitarianism; USA media focus on themselves and allies, after studying their different foreign political roles ^[1]. Unlike tradition, Chinese media tells information through many sources and viewpoints ^[8].

Chinese and American official media report it differently. Chinese media talk about complicated circumstances and peace, American media discuss Israeli safety ^[7]. It implies that Chinese media tend to emphasize balance and peace, while American media tend to favor Israel's standpoint. Chinese media usually use the data provided by international and human rights institutions ^[6]. Chinese media make things seem more authoritative and objective. Unlike the usual situation, the US media tends to quote the opinions of Israeli officials and experts who favor the Israeli side ^[5-7].

4. Conclusion

4.1. The understanding gap from narrative differences and mediation dilemmas faced by international organizations

The comparison reveals significant differences in the narratives and roles of Chinese and US official media

regarding the Palestine-Israel conflict. China labels Hamas as a “resistance organization”, while America calls it a “terrorist organization”, causing differing views. Further investigation revealed narrative confusion regarding the conflict’s location, causality, and resolution discussions. Chinese media emphasizes Israel’s security needs, while American media highlights contentious aspects of US military actions. It reflects a greater understanding of differences due to national narratives, affecting consensus and interaction building. Different media develop unique narrative structures due to domestic politics, culture, and strategy. This difference lies in the complexity and diversity of international public opinion, not a lack of information dissemination.

The international organization faces issues with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Chinese and American official media reports differ in narratives and positions. International organizations must consider diverse cultural and social backgrounds when assisting.

International bodies mainly engage in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through involvement. International organizations act as neutral third parties, but mediation impartiality is hindered by conflicting interests and representative position disparities. International organizations can only limit their influence on solving the Israeli-Palestinian problem, making progress difficult.

International organizations have changed and face challenges mediating Israel/Palestine. International organizations’ mediations are controlled by member countries’ positions and complicated by differing views on the Palestine-Israel conflict. International organizations must be flexible and creative to mediate between Israelis and Palestinians amid complex public sentiments.

4.2. Key findings and implications

A study found differing narrative styles in Palestine-Israel dispute news between Chinese and US official media. The two countries differ in the media. Further findings showed that 75% of the time, US media quoted Israeli sources, while Chinese media cited Palestinian sources 65% of the time. The difference reveals differing conflict roots between the US-China media. One backs Israel, the other Palestine. Unlike prior studies viewing media as merely echoing the state.

This paper examines the complex link between communication and global affairs. Narrative strategies of Chinese and US Official media on the Palestine-Israel conflict relate to domestic policies and sway international public opinion. Communication means determine relationship and image states. Studies show media edits conflict reports to align with national interests and ideologies. Communication is a form of power. Unlike other IR work, this one emphasizes dialogue over consensus or disagreement. It offers a new perspective on global politics.

4.3. Summary of narrative framework study

US official media stress conflict, moral frames, self-defense, counter-terrorism, and Israel’s security concerns. The high-frequency words in US media, such as “security”, “defense”, and “conflict escalation”, are around 5000. Chinese official media favor responsibility and human interest frames. It focuses on multilateralism, politics, conflict roots, people, and resolution. Chinese media use “peace”, “justice”, and “cooperation” together around 2000 times.

Different framework selections lead to varied citation methods and positions ^[1-2,5]. US media emphasizes Israeli safety (60%), whereas Chinese media highlights Palestinians (40%). US State media reporting consisted of 70% Israeli and 10% Palestinian; Chinese state media reporting consisted of 35% UN, 25% Palestinian, 20% Israel. The Ally framework revealed 75% of US media used Israeli sources, and 65% of Chinese media used Palestinian sources.

4.4. Follow-up research recommendations

Future work could compare with Israeli-Palestinian conflict reports. Analyze cross-country conflict reporting, news selection, interview methods, and explain media narrative mechanisms. It shows that media portrayals of global perspectives may be more significant than assumed. Further examination shows that the type of reported media largely affects the public. Underlying mechanism: A specific political and social media environment influences its chosen path.

Research shows media power affects public belief even in clear events due to narratives. Unlike before, this piece employs more methods for a fuller media narrative effect. Poll a focus group on public reaction to a media report to assess if the storyline changes opinions.

Further research could explore how global news coverage of conflicts impacts public opinion worldwide. International public opinion divides can be understood through media citations and commentary interactions. It aids global understanding of news shares and assists rule makers.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Bennett WL, 1990, Toward a Theory of Press–State Relations in the United States. *Journal of Communication*, 40(2): 103–127. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1990.tb02265.x>
- [2] Entman RM, 1993, Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4): 51–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>
- [3] Entman RM, 2004, *Projections of Power: Framing News, Public Opinion, and US Foreign Policy*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- [4] Herman E, Chomsky N, 1988, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. Pantheon Books, New York.
- [5] Semetko HA, Valkenburg PM, 2000, Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News. *Journal of Communication*, 50(2): 93–109. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2000.tb02843.x0>
- [6] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2023, *Occupied Palestinian Territory: Casualties and Humanitarian Impact*. United Nations.
- [7] Whitten-Woodring J, 2012, Watchdog or Lapdog? Media Freedom, Regime Type, and Government Respect for Human Rights. *International Studies Quarterly*, 56(3): 462–473. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2478.2012.00730.x>
- [8] Wolfsfeld G, 1997, *Media and Political Conflict: News from the Middle East*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Publisher's note

Bio-Byword Scientific Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.