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Discrepancies in the newsworthiness of maritime security in Chinese and US media outlets: a corpus-based discursive news values analysis

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This article analyzes and compares the news values constructed in the English news reporting from Chinese and US mainstream media around events concerning maritime security, revealing how the related events have been packaged and sold differently in the two societies, uncovering the discrepancies in Chinese and US social visions on maritime security, and exploring the social attitudes underpinning the constant conflicts between the two countries in the marine sphere. Adopting corpus linguistic methods and the discursive news values analysis (DNVA) framework, this study examines news values through keywords, naming strategies, and images contained in Chinese and US mainstream English news outlets. The results show that Chinese media established the news values of Positivity and Proximity prominently through both textual and visual reporting, by emphasizing common international interests, advocating diplomatic joint cooperation and demonstrating optimistic attitudes towards the future of marine environment. By contrast, US media keenly construed Negativity and Eliteness, by highlighting the exclusive national interests/security of the US, dwelling on threats from other countries and distinctly demonstrating worries, fears, anger and violence. The differences in newsworthiness reflect that maritime security has been constructed in discrepant ways in Chinese and US society: as international joint security with optimistic perspective in China, and as exclusive national security with pessimistic perspective in US. This study has improved and supplemented the results of the previous China-US marine policy studies by the findings of the social emotions/cognition towards maritime policy revealed through newsworthiness analysis.

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Introduction

Maritime security is one of the latest buzzwords in international relations. It has been defined by scholars as national security in maritime territory, in shipping channels, marine environment, and utilization of ocean resources, etc., involving the economic, political, technological, legal and military measures of a country (Bueger, 2015). The previous studies summarized that China's maritime security policy is geared towards promoting good-neighborliness and seeking sustainable development of the nation, while the US' policy is implemented to advance maritime hegemony and ultimate national maritime security (Pedrozo, 2020; Claes, 2018; Yung and Wang, 2016). The discrepant concerns and practices in the maritime security policies of the two countries has lead to constant military conflicts and diplomatic tension between them; for example, Chinese government protesting against US vessel frequently navigating near China's Nansha Islands, the confrontation between China's ocean fishing fleet and US Coast Guard in Vietnamese waters, etc. Both countries vindicated the legitimacy of their maritime activities, which in turn posed as a threat or interference to the other party. Politics is socially structured and the political decisions/behaviors should be interpreted based on social structure analysis (Herbert, 2023). The examination of the discrepancies of the social attitudes/visions on maritime security in the two societies will provide us with a full view of the social structure that shapes the constant marine conflicts and disputes between these two countries, and help the Sino-US marine policy studies penetrate deeply into the sociological interpretation.

News values (newsworthiness) have been defined as a set of criteria for journalists to determine the selection of what is being reported as news and how (Caple et al., 2020); they are constructed socially and cognitively, "reflecting the values of the society about the role of a newsworthy entity" (Zhang and Caple, 2021: 71). Thus, examining news values helps to identify the ways through which the media packaged the social event and sold its intended values to the public (Bednarek et al., 2021). Moreover, as news values can be used to gain insights into the readers' cognition of the news events, news values analysis also reveals how the specific society perceives and understands the social event (Bednarek et al., 2021). Exposure of the hidden news values within news reports is the very concern of discursive news value analysis (DNVA) approach, which focuses on systematically identifying newsworthiness and its construction strategies through multimodal news resources. The present study adopts the DNVA method to disclose the news values constructed by Chinese and US news discourse around maritime security, which may inform us on their divergences in news value construction and social perceptions. Empirically, we will answer the following research questions:

1. In what ways has maritime security been defined and described in news reporting in China and US?
2. What news values were constructed by these definitions and descriptions of maritime security?
3. What social structures dominate the Chinese and US media in their news values construction?

Exploring these answers will reveal how maritime security has been portrayed and packaged differently by media in Chinese and US society. The results of the present study help uncover the social background of the Sino-US marine conflicts, thereby offering an sociological explanation to the scholars who focus on marine policies.

Visions of maritime security in China and US

China's and the US' visions of maritime security afford important perspectives for understanding the maritime strategic interaction between the two countries as well as overall Sino-US relations, which has been one of the hot research topics for Chinese and US scholars. Currently, their studies mainly focus on a comparison of Chinese and US foreign policies in the marine sphere. For example, He (2019) examined the difference between maritime security policies of US and China, and concluded that China's maritime security policy is made to seek sustainable development of the nation; while the US policy is implemented to promote maritime hegemony. Yee (2017) investigated the origins of the concepts of defense in the foreign policies of China, Japan and US, and their influence on the Diaoyu/Senkakus issues. Tang (2016) analyzed the idea of building the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, which makes Chinese maritime security strategy enter a new stage of development, and its influence on Western maritime security strategies including the US. Foreign policy analyses reveal effectively the visions and plans of the political institutions and authorities, but can hardly uncover the social attitudes and public cognition towards maritime security, which are the social grounds for construing political visions and diplomatic decisions of a country (Bueger, 2015; Smith, 2012).

Media coverage is seen as a socially determined construction of reality in which the "objectivity of news is based on a social consensus among journalists" (Bednarek and Caple, 2012). A group of scholars focused on examining marine policies through media reporting analysis. For example, Gao et al. (2023) investigated the governance model of the marine eco-economic system reported by Chinese media and found that differently biased objects within distorted media reports affect the trend of the governance effect of the marine ecoeconomic system. Olsen and Osmundsen (2017) examined how the industry's framework conditions and policy were influenced by public opinion through analysis of the Norwegian news reporting on aquaculture industry. Though these studies interpreted political visions from the perspective of news discourse, they have not penetrated into news values, which are the rules that are applied by news workers in order to select events as news or to choose the structure and order of reporting (van Dijk, 1990). Besides, these existing studies mainly explored the news reporting way through news contents analysis, and have not taken a systematic approach to examine various aspects of the news discourse. The present study adopts DNVA approach to discursively compare the newsworthiness of Chinese and US media in reporting maritime security. By this means, the newsworthiness that controls the news report construction and the social structure that dominates the newsworthiness formation will be fully investigated through systematic analysis of multimodal news resources. The DNVA approach we used in this study will provide a new and effective method for scholars to understand the Chinese and US marine policies from a sociological perspective.

Definitions of news values and a discursive approach to news values

"News values" is a concept that originates from journalism (Caple, 2018), and is largely accepted as values by which one fact is judged more newsworthy than another (Palmer, 2000). They function as the criteria that drive the journalists to select news content for the given target audiences (van Dijk, 1990; Conley and Lamble, 2006). For example, Lavie and Lehman-Wilzig (2003) held that news values have the power to "impact news selection" and "dominate the journalistic practice" (McQuail, 2005: 310). Allern (2002) described news values as a tacit journalistic culture for journalists to quickly master.

In the existing small group of linguistic news studies, news values are more concerned with the elements of news

presentation rather than the examination of actual news stories (Caple and Bednarek, 2013; Bednarek, 2006; Bell, 1991). In other words, news values were defined as a discourse construction process, instead of a content framing process (Richardson, 2007; Baker et al, 2013). Bell (1991; 1995) more explicitly defined the dialectal interactive relation between news values and news language as the following terms: the controlling and driving roles of the news values in constructing and presenting news discourse; and the function of language to enhance and maximize news values. In the interpretations by these previous studies, the news presentations were presented as explicit linguistic material, including words, syntactic constructions, and linguistic signaling (Graesser et al., 1985).

Synthesizing these previous journalistic and linguistic perspectives, Bednarek and Caple (2013; 2014; 2015) put forward a discursive view on news values, which made a two-fold development: First, news values are defined as the newsworthiness discursively constructed through discourse, thus becoming a quality of texts (Bednarek and Caple, 2013). Second, a wide range of semiotic devices, both linguistic and non-linguistic, are focused on to analyze the newsworthiness of the news discourses (Caple and Bednarek, 2013). The analysis approach derived from such a discursive view is named as "discursive news values analysis (DNVA)" (Caple and Bednarek, 2013: 2), which reveals newsworthiness and its construction strategies through discourse analysis of multimodal news resources. This approach not only examines the explicit political viewpoints contained in public remarks that are dominated by the social powers, but also reveals the implicit values underpinning spontaneous wording that has been constrained by the social powers and cannot be expressed directly by the journalists in reporting. For helping researchers identify the news values through diversified news resources, Bednarek and Caple (2017) simultaneously updated the definitions of newsworthiness and their construction strategies from the original 7 categories focusing on written language, to the 11 categories concerning visual devices and cross-cultural news communication (Bednarek, 2016) (see Appendix 1). As the present study concerns cross-cultural comparison between China and US, we adopt the 11 news value categories and their definitions including Aesthetic Appeal, Consonance, Eliteness, Impact, Negativity, Positivity, Personalization, Proximity, Superlativeness, Timeliness, Unexpectedness (Bednarek and Caple, 2017) (see Appendix 1), which involve both linguistic and visual resources that construct the concept of maritime security.

With its powerful framework for systematically revealing deep ideological newsworthiness through multimodal resources, DNVA framework has been widely put into use in cross-cultural contexts, for comparing the differences and similarities of the reporting on social events in two selected countries, including reporting of national days, sports stars, climate, etc (Caple et al., 2020; Zhang and Caple, 2021). We also have found a meager amount of studies adapting DNVA approach to exploring the discrepancies in national interests as constructed in social event reporting from different countries. For example, applying the DNVA approach, Chen and Liu (2023) examined news values constructed by news reports of *China Daily* and *CNN* on COVID-19 vaccines and found that Chinese media packaged the COVID-19 vaccine as diplomatic aid to establish a positive national image and build stable diplomatic relations with the recipient countries; on the other hand, the US media portrayed the COVID-19 vaccine as a medical/commercial product to increase demand from other countries, hail the rapid development of bilateral relations and depict the US as a crucial partner. Caple et al. (2020) adopted the DNVA approach to investigate the newsworthiness of National Day Reporting of Chinese and Australian media, and discovered that the two media have been dominated by different

identities: multiculturalism and reconciliation in Australian media, and patriotism and the valorization of nationalism in Chinese media. These studies fully justified that news values are politically and socially shaped, and also demonstrated the strong capability of DNVA in revealing and comparing the national interests of different countries.

Compared with these social events focused on by the previous studies, diplomatic events involve the participation of two (or more) countries which are more deeply affected by discrepancies in political and social ideologies. The analysis of news values will definitely reveal marked discrepancies of the participant countries in packaging the same diplomatic event as news, and in presenting national interests and political strategies (Chen and Liu, 2022). Thus, in DNVA studies of diplomatic events, news values should be specially interpreted from political structure (Chen and Liu, 2023). However, so far diplomatic events have rarely been focused on and covered in news values analysis. This study makes a new attempt to adopt DNVA into China-US maritime security, with the aim of proving the application potentials of DNVA framework in diplomatic events studies. For examining the social power that dominates the news values, the political structure of China and US in the promotion of national security will be specifically analyzed (which will be specified in detail in the following section).

Data and methods

Data. News values are context-sensitive depending upon the publication's target audience (Bednarek et al., 2021). In this study, we do not focus on the newsworthiness constructed for solely domestic or international audiences, so the media that targets both the national and global markets has been selected. For Chinese media reporting, we chose the mainstream English international news websites in China, including *China Daily*, *People's Daily*, *Xinhua* and *Global Times*, which serve as the most influential news outlets for the Chinese domestic and international audiences. It is important to note that the selected English media outlets possess news contents and reporting ways that synchronize with the domestic Chinese versions (including 中国日报, 人民日报, 新华网and环球时报). Thus, the news corpus can reflect what the Chinese media has sold to both the domestic and international audiences. For US news reporting, we chose *Cable News Network (CNN)*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Fox News*, *Associate Press* and *ABC news*, which enjoy the widest domestic and international circulation with extensive readers.

We selected English news reports from both the Chinese and US news websites. In order to ensure that the chosen reports deal with maritime security to a significant extent, the corpus only includes those reports with the English keyword "maritime security" in the headline and that are "maritime security" -themed in the whole body of the reports (Chen and Liu, 2023). We retrieved online English news reports randomly from the database during the recent year, for the period between 1st January 2021 and 10th November 2022 (when the data collection of this study started).

We have found that there are only 102 news reports regarding maritime security in US media during the selected period, which has much less coverage than Chinese media which has 175 related news reports. For ensuring the comparability, we decided to collect the round number 100 news reports for each media. For US media, we collected the maximum 100 (round number) news reports; for Chinese media, based on quota sampling, we selected 100 news reports (about 57 percent of the total 175 quantities, containing a proportional number of the news reports in each month during the selected period), which can reflect the

Table 1 The two corpora of Chinese media and US media.		
Corpus	**Chinese media**	**US media**
The number of news reports	100	100
Total word count	64,932	123,636
The number of photographs	95	74

temporally complete features of the news reporting. Considering that the news reports are usually of different lengths, which renders the two corpora uneven in word counts (Table 1), the analysis of this study is based on percentages instead of the total numbers. As the present study is concerned with how news values are discursively constructed through both language and images, a total of 95 photographs associated with the verbal stories have been collected in the Chinese media corpus, while 74 were included in the US media corpus (Table 1). Moreover, since photographs of the two media are not equal in number, the analysis of the news values constructed by visual resources is also based on percentages, for ensuring the comparability.

Methods. Corpus linguistic studies are combined in this DNVA study to examine the news values construed in: (1) keywords and concordances, in order to identify the focus of the reporting (Baker, 2006); (2) labels identifying "maritime security", to highlight the aspects of the news entity that are considered newsworthy; (3) photographs accompanying the news reports, to explore how the concept of maritime security is visually presented to audiences (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). On these bases, we also analyzed the ways through which news values are constructed, which involves investigating "news actors", "happenings", and "issues" (Bednarek et al., 2021: 707). The analysis comprises the five steps listed below.

Primarily, keywords indicate the most salient word usage of a news corpus, that is different from another news corpus. For the purpose of identifying the differences between the Chinese and US media corpora, each corpus served as the reference corpus for the other. we used the corpus analysis tool (for concordancing and text analysis) AntConc 3.5.8w[1] (Anthony, 2022) in conducting the keywords analysis in order to ascertain which words demonstrate saliency in the two corpora. Indeed, keywords plays an important role as a "pointer" to the focus of the reporting and the discourse construction of news values; thus, our analysis has revealed discrepancies in the news values established by Chinese and US media. Furthermore, we examined concordance lines for a deeper investigation of the ways in which the news values are constructed. It is noteworthy that though the corpus-based keyword analysis focused more on revealing the differences of the two news corpora, the following two analysis methods (nomination analysis and news photograph analysis) will supplement the results of the keyword analysis by concentrating on both the differences and the similarities.

Secondly, all the selected texts in the corpora are concerned with the theme of maritime security, which is frequently referred to as "security" for short. We thus included the search term "security" in our examination of the concordance lines and collocations (with manual verification to ensure that all the nominations of "security" actually refer to maritime security). The way news writers define the news entity depends on how they refer to the newsworthy entity (van Leeuwen, 2008).

Thirdly, in order to analyze the visual construction of news values, we have labeled the content and camera techniques demonstrated in the photographs. Content, in the photographs, comprises visual participants, their activities, the circumstances in which these activities occur, etc (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006).

Camera technique, on the other hand, includes "shutter speed (how fast), aperture (how much light), focal length (how much in focus), lens (how distorted/natural/condensed the shot), and angle (how high or low the angle)" (Bednarek and Caple, 2012: 105).

Fourthly, we identified the news values constructed by the salient linguistic and visual usages revealed through the above three steps, by referring to the definitions of 11 news values and their construction strategies illustrated in Appendix 1 (Bednarek and Caple, 2017: 260–271; Bednarek et al., 2021: 707). We have further analyzed how these multimodal resources work together to systematically emphasize the newsworthiness of maritime security.

Lastly, we will discuss the social structures (social background and public cognition towards the event) that influence the newsworthiness constructed by Chinese and US media mainly in terms of political structure (see the "Discussion" section), for the media outlets of the two different societies are both powerfully dominated by politics. First, almost all newspapers in China remain under the guidance of the Chinese government (Shirk, 2011; Sun, 2012; Chan, 2019), and national, provincial and local newspapers are censored by the governmental Propaganda Department and State Council Information Offices (Caple et al., 2020). Therefore, the news reporting is greatly dominated by China's political structure and serves as the mouthpiece of the Chinese government (Shirk, 2011). Second, for the US media, as the political economy model embedded in US historical context and factors into the equation the nature of media as powerful, corporate institutions with ties to other centers of power in society, the supposedly "free" US media systems are actually coopted as political propagators and hegemonic tools (Boyd-Barrett, 2015, 2022; Mirrlees, 2018, 2021). Especially in reporting political topics (including maritime security), the Chinese and US media more tend to submit themself to the will of the political authorities for demonstrating correct political positions or obtaining financial support (Chan, 2019; Mirrlees, 2018). Based on this, the analysis framework with political structure interpretation of the news values and their discourse construction ways is logical and reasonable.

In addition, though this study focuses on revealing the construction of news values in Chinese and US news reporting, it can offer further insights into the readers' cognition of the news events considering how news institutions work with the concept of target audiences (Bednarek and Caple, 2012). It also can reflect how maritime security has been perceived differently by the readers through the two media.

Findings and analysis
Key themes in reporting and the construction of news values.
The Chinese and US news corpora were analyzed and compared reciprocally by AntConc 3.8.4 w and two keywords lists were produced based on the keyness values (which indicates the extent to which a word in an observed corpus is more or less frequent than that in a reference corpus). Based on the previous corpus-based studies (Anthony, 2022), 50 has been frequently taken as the critical value of defining the high keyness of a word. Thus, we selected all the keywords with keyness value above 50 and presented them in Table 2.

Table 2 shows the keywords with their frequencies and keyness values in the brackets (e.g., for the keyword "gas (241/145)" where "241" indicates the frequency and "145" refers to the keyness value). These keywords were classified into different groups based on their parts of speech, and the differences can be easily found in the two lists.

The keywords for Chinese media dominantly focus attention on international joint interests and global cooperation, in their

Table 2 The keywords (frequency/keyness value) in Chinese and US media.

Parts of speech	Chinese media	US media
common nouns	cooperation (353/561)	gas (241/145)
	community (77/101)	oil (202/93)
	order (95/97)	energy (128/49)
	stability (109/95)	(price) cap (88/65)
	security (367/143)	prices (60/51)
	peace (137/158)	sanction (113/60)
	interests (117/159)	company (87/59)
	development (138/170)	ship (279/98)
	future (75/69)	missile (131/88)
	law (284/306)	crew (75/55)
	issue (93/115)	boat (107/64)
	disputes (68/91)	invasion (76/64)
	convention (66/90)	war (196/77)
	mechanism (50/86)	island (181/76)
	enforcement (79/67)	
	governance (80/154)	
	navigation (91/78)	
	escort (37/70)	
	sovereignty (65/57)	
	protection (50/51)	
proper nouns	Philippines (82/107)	Israel (170/143)
	ASEAN (174/351)	Russia (291/130)
	UNCLOS (82/175)	Taiwan (316/127)
	DOC (46/98)	Lebanon (121/102)
	COC (41/87)	Ukraine (207/100)
		Mr. (139/117)
		officials (198/84)
adjectives & adverbs	global (178/68)	
	international (199/170)	
	shared (54/65)	
	joint (117/56)	
	bilateral (60/89)	
	jointly (44/79)	
	regional (171/212)	
	South (590/482)	
	countries (438/348)	
verbs	promote (48/94)	said (1342/186)
	safeguard (43/57)	say (84/56)
	safeguarding (30/64)	

use of common nouns, proper nouns, adjectives/adverbs and verbs. The concordance lines (index sentences produced by AntConc 3.8.4w) show that the twenty common nouns as keywords and the seven adjectives/adverbs as keywords highlight the joint interests of the international community and international cooperation in realizing maritime security advocated by China (see Example 1 to Example 7), including "the naval cooperation to pursue a mutually beneficial and win-win approach to maritime security advocated by Chinese president Xi Jinping (in Example 2)", "the maritime community to safeguard the common maritime interests of mankind advocated by Chinese government (in Example 3) ", "the common interests of China and ASEAN countries in protecting marine biological resources (in Example 4)", "China's escort missions in carrying out of its international duties (in Example 5)", "the global ocean governance called by Chinese ambassador to the United Nations (in Example 6)", etc. In describing these initiatives, the responsible attitudes and the positive expectations of China towards the international marine issues have been highlighted, with an abundance of positive portrayal of global maritime security governance, such as "jointly maintaining regional peace and stability (in Example 1)", "pursue a mutually beneficial and win-win approach to maritime security (in Example 2)", "realize

the beautiful vision of lasting peace and universal security (in Example 3)", etc. In this way, the news value of Positivity has been established. A case in point is the description in Example 1, where the expressions including "military cooperation", "jointly maintaining", highlight the long-term marine cooperation between China and Russia; the wording including "regional peace", "stability", depicts the grand vision of the two countries for a stable marine environment. In this way, the news value of Positivity has been constructed.

The two verbs "promote" and "safeguard/safeguarding" as keywords portray the actions that China has taken to improve international maritime security (See Examples 9 & 10), simultaneously presenting the active role of China in promoting the international order and establishing the news value of Positivity. For example, the escorts of Chinese navy for Chinese and foreign ships has been described (Example 10), praising China's effort to promote maritime security of the world and establishing news value of Positivity.

Besides, the group of proper nouns as keywords describe the countries and international institutions that China will cooperate with in protecting maritime security, such as Philippines, ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), UNCLOS (United Nations Convention On The Law Of The Sea), etc. (see Examples 11 & 12). The dominant news value of Positivity constructed in Chinese news reporting garners a favorable attitude from international audiences and closes the distance geographically and culturally, thus establishing the news values of Proximity. For example, as the statement in Example 12 emphasizes that marine border stability has been maintained by efforts of China and ASEAN, the audiences from the south east countries (including Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, etc.), which are described as the beneficiaries and appraised as the contributors, tend to be positively disposed towards the Chinese media. By this means, the Proximity has been construed in Chinese news reporting.

In contrast, the US reports have been found with dominant focus on energy transactions and military actions, which are fully demonstrated by common nouns as keywords including "gas", "oil", "prices", "sanction", "company", "ship", "war", etc (see Table 2). The concordance lines further show that these common nouns usually co-occurred with diversified names of countries, a portion of which appear as proper nouns in the keyword list (see Table 2). These countries not only include the opponents of the US (e.g., Russia, North Korea), but also contain long-term allies which lately have posed threats to US (e.g., Lebanon, Ukraine, Israel), delivering a variety of different threats against the maritime interest/security of US. These threats contain "the diplomatic tensions between US and its Middle East allies (in Example 13)", "a disputed area in the Mediterranean Sea between Lebanon and Israel which will impact the traffic of US ships (see Example 22)", "European nations that are still funding Russia through buying its oil and gas (in Examples 14 & 16)", "the deterioration of the bilateral ties between the U.S. and other countries in the immediate region" (in Example 15), "the nuclear test of North Korea (in Example 18)", "Chinese warships steaming in the Taiwan Strait (in Example 19)", etc. Simultaneously, a variety of negative emotions of the US have been frequently accompanied and prominently portrayed, including worry, fear, violence and anger, with instances such as "historic enemies" (in Example 13), "war machine" (in Example 14), "deteriorated sharply" (in Example 15), "fear of violating sanctions" (in Example 17), "invasion rehearsals" (in Example 20), "unsafe for commercial shipping" (in Example 23) etc. In this way, the news value of Negativity has been markedly established. For corroboration, Example 20 makes its point with North Korea's missile launches that targeted US military facilities in Japan, which highlights the threat from North Korea by wording

of "nuclear attack on", "missile drills", etc., consequently establishing the news value of Negativity; the statement in Example 23 focuses on portraying Russia's navy now effectively controlling all traffic in the northern third of the Black Sea, in which the wording "control all traffic", "unsafe for commercial shipping" explicitly indicate the threat from Russia's navy against the US in marine traffic and the worry of the US government over US commercial shipping, naturally construing Negativity.

On the other hand, another group of keywords demonstrates the political elites of the US and their quotes appealing for sanctions against the opponent countries of US (see Examples 25–27). In these instances, the indication of authoritativeness construes Eliteness (such as "John E. Smith, former director of the foreign", "Mr. Smith, co-head of Morrison & Foerster's national security practice", etc.), and the appeals for sanctions undermine the interests of the opponent countries of US, and constructs the news value of Negativity. For instance, the US Treasury officials in Example 27 put forward policies to allow for Russian oil to be sold if it is purchased at a price that is well below market rates; the expressions including "below market rate" and "diminish" indicate the repression conducted by US, construing Negativity.

The keywords analysis show that the Chinese news reporting has been dominated by news values of Positivity and Proximity, with focus on describing China's responsible attitudes, active role and positive expectations in promoting international cooperation and improving global maritime security. It is inescapably clear that the Chinese media constructs the concept of maritime security through the lens of international joint interests. In contrast, it is apparent that the US media portrays the concept of maritime security absolutely from the stand of its self-interest, by concentrating on reporting its gains and losses in marine interests (e.g., oil/gas exploitation), and its perceived threats emanating from other countries. The US news reporting has been strikingly driven by news values of Negativity and Eliteness, highlighting the worries, fear, violence and anger of the US.

It is noteworthy that as the corpus-based keyword analysis approach focuses on revealing the difference of the two corpora, those commonly used words by the two media have not been listed by the AntConc, including those concepts which are publicly taken as the reporting focus of the Chinese media and the US media (e.g., "Vietnam" by Chinese media).

Examples from Chinese media's reporting

Example 1. The normal military *cooperation* between China and Russia is aimed at *jointly* maintaining *regional peace* and *stability*.
(*Global Times*, 2022-09-28)

Example 2. Nations should enhance mutual respect, equal treatment, and mutual trust, strengthen maritime dialog and exchanges, deepen practical naval *cooperation*, and pursue a mutually beneficial and win-win approach to maritime security, Xi said.
(*Xinhua*, 2022-06-09)

Example 3. Only by resolving maritime disputes a peacefully, promoting maritime cooperation under the concept of a maritime *community* with a shared future, as well as proactively strengthening the international order and rules of maritime security governance, can we truly safeguard the common maritime interests of mankind and realize the beautiful vision of lasting peace and universal security.
(*Global Times*, 2022-06-01)

Example 4. In non-traditional fields such as the protection of marine biological resources, the prevention and control of marine environmental pollution, and the prevention and rescue of marine disasters, China and ASEAN countries have urgent practical needs and strong political will to deepen *cooperation*, and their common *interests* far outweigh their differences.
(*People's Daily*, 2022-04-21)

Example 5. Based on the arrangements of the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and at the request of the Somali transitional government, China dispatched the first escort task force to the Gulf of Aden and the waters off Somalia on December 26 of that year to carry out *escort* missions, which opened a new journey for the PLA Navy in regular deployment in the far seas and the carrying out of its duties.
(*Global Times*, 2022-08-01)

Example 6. The Chinese ambassador to the United Nations called on the international community to tackle global ocean *governance* challenges as a whole.
(*China Daily*, 2022-07-16)

Example 7. At this moment, improving *global* maritime security governance has become increasingly urgent.
(*Global Times*, 2022-07-01)

Example 8. Zhao added that Japan should heed the appeals of neighboring countries and the *international* community and rescind its decision to dump the water into the sea.
(*Xinhua*, 2022-04-14)

Example 9. He pointed out that last September, President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Development Initiative at the UN General Assembly, "offering China's wisdom and solutions to *promote* the international community's focus on development, create synergies, and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda".
(*China Daily*, 2022-07-16)

Example 10. China firmly *safeguards* world peace and stability, with "a total of 41 task forces of more than 120 vessels having escorted more than 7000 Chinese and foreign ships."
(*Xinhua*, 2022-08-28)

Example 11. Under the guidance of the DOC, China has established bilateral mechanisms with *Vietnam* and the *Philippines* over the South China Sea issues and has been keeping close communication with *Malaysia* and *Brunei* over their maritime issues.
(*China Daily*, 2022-07-26)

Example 12. Through consultations around the *Code of Conduct (COC)* in the South China Sea and by implementing the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, China and *ASEAN* have actively maintained stability there and improved security cooperation in the region.
(*Global Times*, 2021-09-14)

Examples from US media's reporting

Example 13. It is also a regional victory for the Biden administration, which lately has seen diplomatic tensions rise with some of its Middle East allies, especially those in the Gulf. With the possibility of much needed *gas* from the Mediterranean and averting a potential security crisis between historic enemies, the United States notched an important win in a region where its influence has seemingly diminished.
(*CNN*, 2022-10-12)

Example 14. As long as European nations are still buying *oil* and *gas* from Russia, they are "funding the war machine.
(*CNN*, 2022-03-07)

Table 3 Nominations of "security" in Chinese and US media.

Nomination strategies	Expressions	
	Chinese media	US media
Socialized nominations (35, 100%/9, 21%)	**joint** maritime security (5)	**potential** security (5)
	global security (8)	**future** security (4)
	people's security (5)	
	public security (6)	
	national maritime security (11)	
Medical nominations (0, 0%/33, 79%)		**Taiwan'** security (7)
		Kuwait's security (12)
		Israel's security (6)
		Japan's security (8)

Example 15. Greece and Turkey have been locked in a maritime and territorial dispute for decades, but with shifting geopolitical alliances and the discoveries of natural *gas* and *oil* in regional waters, relations have deteriorated sharply not only impacting NATO, but also bilateral ties to the U.S. and other countries in the immediate region.
(*CNN*, 2022-09-03)

Example 16. The Biden administration fears that the combination of a European Union embargo on Russian oil imports and a ban on the insurance and financing of Russian oil shipments will send *prices* soaring by taking millions of barrels of that oil off the market.
(*CNN*, 2022-08-03)

Example 17. Lars Lange, secretary general of the International Union of Marine Insurance, a consortium based in Germany, said he believed that even with a price cap, insurers would still be reluctant to cover Russian oil exports for fear of violating *sanctions*.
(*The New York Times*, 2022-08-03)

Example 18. North Korea fired two short-range ballistic *missiles* toward the East Sea on Wednesday, just one day before U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris arrives in South Korea and amid speculation that North Korea is preparing to conduct its seventh nuclear test as early as October.
(*ABC news*, 2022-09-28)

Example 19. The maneuvers included launching ballistic *missiles* into waters around Taiwan, numerous Chinese warships steaming in the Taiwan Strait and dozens of PLA warplanes breaching the median line.
(*CNN*, 2022-08-28)

Example 20. North Korea has long condemned the allies' combined military exercises as *invasion* rehearsals and often countered with its own *missile* drills, including short-range launches in 2016 and 2017 that simulated nuclear attacks on South Korean ports and U.S. military facilities in Japan.
(*Associated Pres*s, 2022-06-06)

Example 21. "The Coast Guard is both a federal law enforcement agency and a military force, and therefore is a faithful protector of the United States in peacetime and *war*," states GoCoastGuard.com, the service's recruiting arm.
(*Fox News*, 2022-08-04)

Example 22. Amid decades of hostility, *Lebanon* and *Israel* on Tuesday reached a historic maritime border deal, finally demarcating a disputed area in the Mediterranean Sea that is believed to be rich in oil and gas.
(*CNN*, 2022-10-12)

Example 23. *Russia*'s navy now effectively controls all traffic in the northern third of the Black Sea, making it unsafe for commercial shipping, according to a U.S. government document obtained by The Washington Post.
(*The Washington Post*, 2022-05-24)

Example 24. Two United States Navy warships have entered the *Taiwan* Strait in what is the first US naval transit in the waterway since US-China tensions spiked this month over a visit to the island by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.
(*CNN*, 2022-08-28)

Example 25. John E. Smith, former director of the foreign assets control unit, *said* the key was ensuring that financial services firms and maritime insurers were not responsible for vetting every oil transaction, as well as providing guidance on complying with the sanctions.
(*The New York Times*, 2022-08-03)

Example 26. "The question is will enough jurisdictions agree on the details to move this forward," *said Mr. Smith*, who is now co-head of Morrison & Foerster's national security practice. "If they do, it could be a win for everyone but Russia."
(*The New York Times*, 2022-08-03)

Example 27. Ms. Yellen (a top priority of Treasury Secretary Janet L. Yellen) and other Treasury *officials* want those sanctions to include a carve-out that allows for Russian oil to be sold, insured and shipped if it is purchased at a price that is well below market rates. They argue that this would diminish the revenue that Russia took in while keeping oil flowing.
(*The New York Times*, 2022-08-03)

News values constructed by nominations of security. As mentioned in the "Data and methods" section, the instances of "security" we have analyzed all refer to maritime security. Table 3 demonstrates the specific categories of nomination strategies and the occurrences/proportions of the nominations for maritime security in English news reporting from both Chinese and US media. For example, the nomination strategy "Socialized nominations (35, 100% / 9, 21%)" indicates that the nominations for maritime security as socialized references occur 35 times in Chinese media and represent 100% of all the nominations. Meanwhile, the nominations for maritime security as socialized nominations occur 9 times in US media representing 21% of all the nominations; the expression "joint maritime security (5)" indicates that the nomination "COVID-19 vaccine" occurs 5 times in Chinese media.

In terms of naming strategies of "security", there are wide variations in Chinese and US media. The Chinese media strongly highlight the international aspects of the concept of "security", with frequent references of "joint maritime security" and "global

security"; and also the civilians' stand and national stand in relation to "maritime security", with nominations of "people's security", "public security" and "national maritime security". The concordance lines show that these nominations illustrated by Chinese media demonstrate China's active efforts in propelling international cooperation on maritime security, accompanied by expressions of positive expectations for security, such as "global peace and development" (see Example 29). Even the contexts with domestic-centered nominations of "people's security", "public security" and "national maritime security" advocate and expect international cooperation to create a prosperous future, which also construes the news value of Positivity. For illustration, the statement in Example 29 equates the vision of China's national security with the expectation of global peace and development, which permeates aspiration for promoting the global marine environment as a shared community. Meanwhile, as this series of nominations take the Chinese citizens as a foothold point and highlight their safety and interest, the reporting is very close to the Chinese domestic audiences geographically and culturally, thereby establishing the news value of Proximity.

In contrast, the US media references to security are not hinged on real current circumstances, as depicted by nominations including "potential security" and "future security". Moreover, the concordance lines show that these nominations always indicate the worries of the US about its security intentions, which can be seen from the instances such as "a potential security crisis between historic enemies" (in Example 32), "future security threats"(in Example 33). This is highlighted in Example 32 which defines the opponent countries of the US in the Mediterranean region as potential security threats against the gas transaction, demonstrating the extreme anxiety of US. Besides, US media frequently highlights the security of other countries in the reporting to debase its rival states, for example, emphasizing Taiwan's security and Japan's security to highlight the threats from China (see Examples 34 & 35). Furthermore, Example 34 criticizes Chinese missiles flying over Taiwan Island and demonstrates the concerns of US for Taiwan's security and the worries of US about China's military strength. With such a deep anxiety delivered by the US reporting on "security", the news value of Negativity has been eminently constructed.

To sum up, in naming "security", Chinese news reporting is dominated by Positivity and Proximity, with references to international cooperation and prospect of maritime security, while US news reporting is dominated by Negativity, with indications to worries and anxieties stemming from threats from far off countries.

Examples from Chinese media's reporting

Example 28. China needs a stronger navy to cope with the volatile regional and *global security*.
(*China Daily*, 2022-08-01)

Example 29. It (The PLA Navy) can also better safeguard *national security* with an expanded fleet and large warships, including the three aircraft carriers, at its command, and contribute more to *global* peace and development.
(*People's Daily*, 2022-08-01)

Example 30. Zhang Shengjie, captain of the Changsha, a Type 052D destroyer said, "I really feel the profound meaning of effectively defending the motherland and its *people's security*."… "The PLA Navy escort task forces respond to all the escort needs of Chinese and foreign ships, as they do their best to ensure the safety of the escorted ships and provide medical aid and the repair of equipment as much as possible, effectively safeguarding the safety of passage in international waterways.

(*Global Times*, 2022-08-01)

Example 31. The law (China's Coast Guard Law) clarifies the scope of international cooperation in law enforcement, advocates the establishment of an institutional law enforcement cooperation mode, emphasizes the joint maintenance of maritime *public security* with other countries
(*Global Times*, 2021-04-15)

Examples from US media's reporting

Example 32. With the possibility of much needed gas from the Mediterranean and averting a *potential security* crisis between historic enemies, the United States notched an important win in a region where its influence has seemingly diminished.
(*CNN*, 2022-10-12)

Example 33. While the deal is a win for both sides, *future security* threats are not likely to be eliminated by the maritime agreement.
(*Washington Post*, 2022-10-12)

Example 34. The Chinese missiles flew over Taiwan Island for the first time… "(Nancy Pelosi, the speaker of US Congress) leads the democratically elected branch that originates America's government funding and economic policies. Her position and role makes her commitment to *Taiwan's security* particularly significant," Schuster said.
(*CNN*, 2022-08-08)

Example 35. "This is a serious problem that concerns *Japan's security* and the safety of its citizens. We strongly condemn it," Kishi told reporters during a press conference. Kishi said this was the first time that Chinese ballistic missiles had landed within Japan's EEZ and that a protest had been lodged with Beijing.
(*CNN*, 2022-08-04)

News values constructed by photographs. We analyzed the newsworthiness construction of all the photographs illustrated in the Chinese news reporting and the US news reporting, from two perspectives: content and camera technique (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006; van Leeuwen, 2008). To note the number of news values constructed in each paragraph, the analysis results have been collated in an MS Excel spreadsheet. Figure 1 indicates the collated results in percentages, which highlights completely different news values in the photographs from the two media corpora.

In terms of contents, the portraits of ships dominate both the Chinese and US news photographs, but they are pictured in totally different scenes. Chinese media focuses on Chinese ships undertaking tasks and mostly appearing with a sunny and bright background, with extremely blue sky, white clouds, glistening sea water and golden sun rise, etc. For example, a group of Chinese naval fleet sailors headed for escort missions are pictured waving farewell on the deck at a port in Zhoushan (east China's Zhejiang Province), with their smiling gleamed gleaming in the yellow sun light (*Global Times*, 2022-09-05), demonstrating a festive and triumphant atmosphere. In another example, a maritime rescue vessel is captured while departing from Sanya port for the Nansha Islands in the South China Sea, with white clouds and hovering seagulls set against the blue sky, depicting a serene and beautiful harbor (*Global Times*, 2022-07-17). Even in the reporting on "US 'escalates provocation' in South China Sea", the Chinese media portrayed the guided-missile destroyer-Hohhot (Hull 161) from the perspective of the ship's bow at the front against the background of a rosy dawn and bluish sky, metaphorizing the forging forward towards a prosperous future (*Global Times*, 2022-07-14). All of these visual contents demonstrate brightness and glory, and depict scenes with a high intensity of positivity before
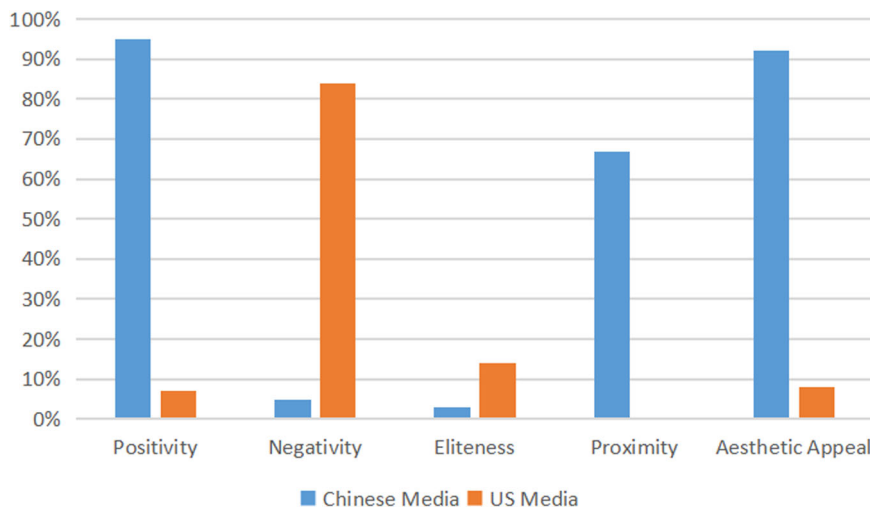
Fig. 1 News values contructed by news photographs. The construal of news values in the photographs in the Chinese and US news corpora (as percentages).

the audiences' eyes, constructing the dominant news value of Positivity in the Chinese news photographs (Positivity occurred in 95% of all the Chinese news photographs). As Chinese media works as the mouthpiece of the Chinese government (Chan, 2019), Chinese news reporting is greatly dominated by the official tones of the Chinese government. This newsworthiness of Positivity in portraying China's maritime activities conforms to the positive diplomatic vision advocated by the Chinese government encouraging the other countries to mutually cooperate and jointly build a community with a shared future in marine space.

By contrast, the US media focuses on both the vessels of the US and those from other countries, and dominantly presented these ships against a background of grayness, cloudiness and gloom. The sea waters and the sky are mostly portrayed as dark, or even black. For example, a Chinese ship is captured sailing in black water (in Taiwan strait) which melts into the gray sky; the vast gloomy background contrasts with the tininess and loneliness of the ship (*CNN*, 2022-08-08). The main gun of the US Navy destroyer was shot in close-up with black search radar stuck with long and spiculated receivers, against the background of a gloomy twilight and gray ocean (*CNN*, 2022-07-20), which presents a violent and oppressive view. Besides, five of the photographs depict shipwrecks. For example, from the lens of US media, a smuggling boat full of Haitians sailing down to Florida is tilted, with several drowning passengers struggling in pale water (*Washington Post*, 2022-03-07), which entirely frames a miserable and thrilling picture. These numerous visual contents comprehensively demonstrate Negativity, which is the prominent news value construed by US news photographs (Negativity occurred as 84% in all the US news photographs).

Aesthetic Appeal (occurring in 92% in Chinese news photographs) has been established prominently in Chinese news images with a series of camera techniques, but much less frequently in US news photographs. In Chinese news photographs, high color sharpness, brightness, contrast and saturation have been regularly adopted. Most photographs contain the keen contrast of warm colors (yellow, rosy, pink, golden colors of sun, sunshine, dawn, etc) and cold colors (blue and white colors of ocean, sky, ship and cloud). The blending of multiple bright colors intensifies the layering senses and highlights the splendor of the contexts, consequently recognizing the depiction of ships, people, places and landscape for their beauty Captures, and thus establishing Aesthetic Appeal. For example, the photograph depicting a group

of Chinese naval fleet sailors on escort missions waving farewell on the deck at a port (*Global Times*, 2022-09-05) presents more than ten colors, combining the blue sky, white clouds, silver deck stuck with a red Chinese national flag, soldiers suited in black uniforms with their beaming faces, etc. Another instance is the photograph portraying the guided-missile destroyer- Hohhot (Hull 161), which demonstrates a composition of eight colors, including rosy and pink clouds in the dawn, deep blue sky, silver ship's bow, small black ships in the distant horizon, etc (*Global Times*, 2022-07-14). In addition, the positive atmosphere spontaneously demonstrated by beauty Captures, such as golden faces with smiles, brilliant sunshine, blue sky, etc., also notably construe Positivity.

In contrast, the photographs in US news reporting mostly deliver a less aesthetic sense (Aesthetic Appeal only occurred in 8% of US news photographs), due to low color sharpness, brightness, contrast and saturation and a monotonous blending of dark and cold colors. It can be inferred that the neutral density filter has been constantly used by photographers in US media. With the obscured Captures and poor quality images frequently involving negative content, the construal of Negativity can be discerned in these US visual resources. For example, the whole photograph which depicts the Chinese ship sailing in the Taiwan Strait (*CNN*, 2022-08-08) contains color gradients ranging from black to gray, including the light gray sky, the dark sea, and the black Chinese ship, which engenders a foggy, empty and vague context. For another example, the photograph portraying a tilted smuggling boat full of Haitians (*Washington Post*, 2022-03-07) is predominantly white and bluish white, with white sky and bluish pale sea water, which intensifies the chilly and pathetic sense delivered by the drowning Haitian passengers.

Besides, most of the Chinese photographs are presented from a horizontal angle and medium shot. Horizontal lens presents an equal relation between the image participant and the viewer of the image, and increases the audiences' feeling of personally being on the scene (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). The approachability delivered by this camera technique increases Aesthetic Appeal and also reinforces Proximity. For example, the picture displaying a maritime rescue vessel departing from Sanya port (*Global Times*, 2022-07-17) has been shot from a horizontal angle, in which the camera lens is adopted from the audiences' perspective who are seeing off the vessel from the dock. Medium shot favors wholly demonstrating the actors and background and displaying a more objective image of the news events. This camera lens helps shun subjectivity and unilateralism in Chinese news photographs.

By comparison, the statistics show that US media adopted abundant long (telephoto) lens with a high camera angle to portray the ships of other countries, while frequently uses using close-up shot with a low camera angle to depict the US vessels. "The use of a long (telephoto) lens to capture this image compresses the information in the image frame, making the elements look closer together than they are" (Bednarek and Caple, 2015: 30). With a long lens, the ocean and sky are compacted into what appears to be a smaller space, which further set off the tininess of the ship. Besides, a high camera angle (looking down on the image participant) has been frequently used in presenting images of ships, where the viewer is in the more powerful position. Thus, in US news photographs, the high camera angle enhanced the position of the US media and weakens the power of the vessels of other countries in the image capture. The combination of long lens and high camera angle were used by the US media to belittle the power of the vessel of other countries, thereby assisting in constructing Negativity. For example, the photograph which depicts the Chinese ship sailing in the Taiwan strait (CNN, 2022-08-08) integrates long lens with a high camera angle to keenly contract the figure of the Chinese vessel. Moreover, these blurred and freezing pictures also reduce Aesthetic Appeal in evidence. On the other hand, a close-up shot is used to underline and describe the principal entity in the image, and a low camera angle (looking up on the image participant), puts the image participant in the more dominant position. These two camera aspects have been combined in US visual reporting to highlight the power of the US vessels, contributing to the construction of Eliteness. For example, in the photograph that portrays a US Navy destroyer (CNN, 2022-07-20), the main gun was captured by a close-up shot and from a low camera angle, which features the firepower of the US vessel.

From the above analysis, we can see that media constructed or weakened Aesthetic Appeal in news photographs to assist in reinforcing the news values constructed by visual contents. For example, the beauty Captures (the high color sharpness, brightness, contrast and saturation) have been used by Chinese media to reinforce Positivity, which is the dominant news value constructed in the visual contents in Chinese news images. In US news photographs, heavy dark/cold colors and long/close-up lens with high/low camera angle are used to intensify the Negativity of the ships of other countries and construct the Eliteness of the US naval military power, which are the focus of the visual contents in US reporting.

Discussion

The present discursive news values analysis shows how a variety of words and images work together to highlight the specific newsworthiness, packaging and selling of the events concerning maritime security to the public. Overall, Chinese media dominantly highlights international common interests, diplomatic joint cooperation, and optimistic expectations towards future marine environment. This can be seen in keywords and nominations of "security", and the display of beauty Captures in news photographs, constructing prominent Positivity and Proximity through news reporting. On the contrary, US media highlights national interests/security of the US, dwells on threats from other countries, and demonstrates worries, fears, anger, and violence. All of these are indicated in keywords and nominations of "security", and illustrations of the gloomy, dark, pathetic and violent scenes in images, thus establishing distinct Negativity and Eliteness. Generally speaking, "maritime security", dominated by different news values, has been packaged in discrepant ways: as an international security concern which needs global cooperation and promises a bright future by Chinese media; and as an

exclusive national security issue which is haunted by worries, fears and anger against other countries by US media.

Scholars have defined news values as intermediary links enabling social powers to realize their influence on news discourse (van Dijk, 1990). As such, social structure dominates the journalistically assigned values presented in the news (Bednarek and Caple, 2012). As we have pointed out in the "Methods" section, both the Chinese and US media are influenced and censored by the political powers, so the social structure that dominates the Chinese and US news reports should be more of political structure. In this context, we interpret the social powers that influenced the Chinese and US media's news values mainly in terms of marine politics towards maritime security in the two societies.

Traditionally, China pursues national security mainly within land territory, and China's maritime security policy has been an imperative in facing the maritime security dilemma (e.g., the sovereignty dispute over the Diaoyu Islands with Japan, the sovereignty dispute over the Nansha Islands with the Philippines in the South China Sea) (He, 2019). Thus, China seeks maritime security for ensuring long-term national security and creating a peaceful and stable developing environment (Chen and Liu, 2022). For realizing this goal, China as a newcomer in the pursuit of marine development actively seeks international cooperation to elevate China's international influence and expand space for marine economic development (Pedrozo, 2020; Stokstad, 2009). Oriented by such a political context, the central themes in the reporting of Chinese media have been international common interests, diplomatic joint cooperation, and optimistic expectations towards future marine environment.

As the government-guided media outlets are the dominant channel for Chinese audiences to acquire news information, the public attitudes are usually consistent with the viewpoints sold by the media and lead by the government (Sun, 2012; Chan, 2019). We can infer from the dominant news values of Positivity and Proximity and their construction ways that maritime security has been construed in Chinese society as an international common security concern which needs to be realized through diplomatic joint cooperation, and the concept has been viewed in an optimistic mood.

In contrast, for over two hundred years, in line with Pax Americana, US has constantly regarded preserving sea hegemony as an important cornerstone to guarantee national security (Stokstad, 2009). With the peaking of its naval power, the top priority of the US is not expanding sea power, but to preserve its hegemony by depriving the opponents of their ability to navigate at sea, and eliminating the threats from other marine powers (Merrick, 2019). This marine political strategy has been fully demonstrated in A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower which highlights the US Navy plans, including traveling smoothly around the world (including ocean, land, sky, space, cyberspace and electromagnetic spectrum), strengthening maritime control and making opponents understand that the US cannot be defeated.

Social attitudes shape in conjunction with individual-level political attitudes (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996). A group of previous studies confirm that American public attitudes toward national security are characterized by partisan and ideological polarization (Bueger, 2015; He, 2019; Yee, 2017). However, Republicans/self-identified conservatives and Democrats/self-identified liberals, though divided about specific policies, have been unanimously stable over the past decade in their levels of support for promoting hegemony and seeking ultimate national security (He, 2019). Consequently, the highly commercialized US media, which focuses more on catering to public attitudes, still largely coheres with the nationwide political ideology that

highlights ultimate national interests/security, displays anxieties for potential threats from other countries, and demonstrates worries, fears, anger, and violence. It can be argued that these discrepancies in political structure of Chinese and US societies lead to the differences of Chinese and US media in constructing maritime security.

The significance of the results of this study lies in three aspects. First, this study has revealed the discrepancies in the newsworthiness constructed by Chinese and US media, a part of which was firstly found and has not been mentioned by the previous marine policy studies. The statement that Chinese media dominantly highlights international common interests, diplomatic joint cooperation, while US media highlights national interests/security of the US, has been put forward by a series of previous policy-centered research (Lee, 2021; Jamali and Liu, 2021). However, it is the first time by this study to reveal the social attitudes perceived and represented by news media of the two societies towards the maritime security, including the optimistic attitudes of China towards the international marine environment and the pessimistic attitudes of the US media by dwelling on threats from other countries, and demonstrating worries, fears, anger, and violence.

Second, through a multimodal corpus-based analysis approach, this study helps offer a fuller view of the news reporting ways of the Chinese and the US media in terms of maritime security than all the previous related studies with a news content analysis approach (as discussed in the section of "Visions of maritime security in China and US").

Third, this study systematically revealed the Discourse-Cognitive-Society system adopted by Chinese and US media in news production process. For China, the globally joint strategy for pursuing maritime security dominated the Chinese media to establish the maritime security as an international concern, and further to construct the news discourse with frequently used keywords and nominations related with international common interests and diplomatic joint cooperation, and with beautiful visual captures of marine scenery. For US, the deep-rooted aspiration for preserving sea hegemony drove the US media to highlight national interests/security of the US, dwell on threats from other countries, and demonstrate worries, fears, anger, and violence, which were demonstrated by keywords and nominations of "security", and illustrations of the gloomy, dark, pathetic and violent scenes in images. This results provide a much deeper and fuller interpretation of the two societies in terms of maritime security than most of the previous policy-centered Sino-US maritime security research. Correspondingly, the results obtained by this study improved the existing studies on maritime security visions of China and the US with social background analysis. For example, by examining the differences between the maritime security policies of the US and China, He (2019) concluded that the US policy is implemented to promote maritime hegemony. In contrast, the results of this study delve deep into social cognition to explain the US promoting maritime hegemony, which is based on its pursuit of exclusive national security and interests in the marine sphere and its fears and worries about the threats from other countries.

Conclusion

This study reveals the discrepancies of Chinese and US media in constructing newsworthiness in their reporting on maritime security: as international joint security with positive perspective in Chinese media, and as an exclusive national security with negative perspective in US media. This study provides a effective DNVA framework, a multimodal corpus-based analysis method and a media coverage perspective to explore the social attitudes

that the newsworthiness reflects, supplementing and deepening the results of the policy-focused maritime security studies.

The contributions of this study lie in four folds. First, this study has improved and supplemented the results of the previous Sino-US marine policy studies with the findings of the social emotions/cognition towards maritime policy in China and US reflected by newsworthiness analysis. Second, this study has demonstrated the possible application of discursive news values analysis approach in marine disputes studies, which helps researchers to deeply explore the social cognition of a specific country in marine disputes. Third, this study offers a corpus-based multimodal news reporting analysis framework (including both the texts and images) in terms of marine security, which offers a fuller view of the discourse construction ways than all the previous news content focused research. Last but not least, this study helps improve the readers' understanding of the marine conflicts between China and US by revealing the social attitudes and positions in these two countries (which are reflected by media reporting).

As Discursive news values analysis (DNVA) has so far been mainly applied to social event contexts, such as national days (Caple et al., 2020), sports stars (Zhang and Caple, 2021), and climate (Moernaut et al., 2019), this study offers a new DNVA investigation of marine dispute events, and especially provides momentum to scholars worldwide who are interested in adopting DNVA to their national maritime security contexts.

Data availability

The datasets analyzed during the current study are available in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3. Appendix 2 demonstrates the Chinese media's news reporting data, and Appendix 3 shows the US media's news reporting data.

Note

1 The website of AntConc 3.5.8w: https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software.html.

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Author contributions

Both authors contributed to the study conception and design. Data analysis, the first draft writing, and manuscript revision were conducted by CC. Material preparation and data collection were performed by RL. Both authors agreed and consented to the publication.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Ethical approval

Ethical approval was not required as the study did not involve human participants.

Informed consent

This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors.

Additional information

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