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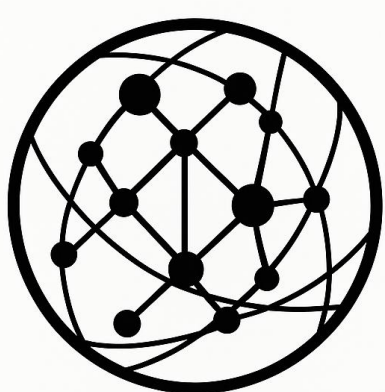
This policy brief is part of the EPINOVA Policy Brief Series on Strategic Competition, AI-Enabled Warfare, and Information Conflict.

Recommended Citation:

Wu, Shaoyuan (2026), *Control vs. Amplification: Information System Divergence in the U.S.–Israel–Iran Conflict Evidence from China’s Signaling System*, Policy Brief No. EPINOVA–2026–PB–18, Global AI Governance and Policy Research Center, EPINOVA LLC, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19238746>.

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Control vs. Amplification:

Information System Divergence in the U.S.–Israel–Iran Conflict Evidence from China’s Signaling System

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Date: March 26, 2026

Key Judgments

- China operates a baseline-controlled information signaling system characterized by stability, delayed responsiveness, and low amplification volatility.
- External information environments function as decentralized, event-driven amplification systems, producing rapid and high-intensity signaling spikes.
- Divergence between the two systems is structural rather than narrative, emerging from differences in information dynamics rather than content.
- Information instability is driven primarily by event amplification (EAR), rather than variations in baseline narrative intensity.
- The interaction between baseline control and event amplification produces a dual-layer signaling structure with inherently nonlinear escalation patterns.
- The central systemic risk lies not in narrative competition, but in the loss of amplification control during high-intensity events.

Executive Summary

The U.S.–Israel–Iran conflict has produced not only military escalation, but also a structural divergence in how information is generated, transmitted, and amplified across different systems.

This policy brief proposes an Amplification–Accumulation Divergence framework (AADF) to explain how information systems generate path-dependent divergence under asymmetric amplification dynamics.

The analysis examines China’s information signaling system through a computational framework based on a baseline–event dual-layer model, operationalized using the Signaling Pressure Index (SPI) and the Event Amplification Ratio (EAR).

The analysis shows that China maintains a stable baseline narrative with controlled release patterns, whereas external information systems are dominated by event-driven amplification spikes linked to battlefield developments, economic disruptions, and political signaling.

The core finding is that divergence does not arise at the level of narrative volume, but at the level of amplification dynamics. During high-intensity events, external systems rapidly exceed baseline control, generating temporary but significant surges in information pressure.

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This divergence reflects two fundamentally different system logics:

- A controlled signaling regime (China)
- A decentralized amplification market (external systems)

The outcome is not direct contradiction, but asymmetric information escalation, in which event-driven amplification temporarily overrides baseline narrative stability.

1. From Narrative Comparison to System Analysis

The current U.S.–Israel–Iran conflict has been widely analyzed in terms of military escalation and geopolitical risk. However, less attention has been given to the **information-layer dynamics** that accompany and shape these developments.

This study proposes an Amplification–Accumulation Divergence framework (AADF) to explain how information systems generate path-dependent divergence under asymmetric amplification dynamics. It focuses on how different systems structure and respond to information pressure during conflict. Rather than treating information output as a homogeneous flow, it distinguishes between two analytically separable components:

- **Baseline signaling** (structured, continuous narrative output);
- **Event-driven amplification** (discrete spikes triggered by specific developments).

This distinction enables a more precise understanding of how divergence emerges—not as a function of total output, but as a function of **how systems respond to shocks**.

2. China’s Information System: Baseline Control Under Stability

The analytical framework adopts a dual-layer structure consisting of a baseline layer and an event layer.

The baseline layer represents stable, continuous narrative production associated with official discourse, policy positioning, and long-cycle communication strategies. In contrast, the event layer captures short-term amplification spikes triggered by discrete developments, including military strikes, political statements, and economic disruptions.

To operationalize this structure, two key metrics are introduced: the Signaling Pressure Index (SPI) and the Event Amplification Ratio (EAR).

- a) **Signaling Pressure Index (SPI):** measures total information intensity.

$$SPI = \textit{Baseline} + \textit{Event}$$

where *Baseline* represents continuous narrative signaling and *Event* captures discrete amplification spikes. SPI therefore reflects the total information pressure exerted by the system at a given time.

- b) **Event Amplification Ratio (EAR):** captures the relative weight of event-driven spikes.

$$EAR = \frac{\textit{Event}}{\textit{Baseline}}$$

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An $EAR > 1$ indicates that event-driven amplification exceeds baseline signaling capacity, representing a potential threshold condition for divergence.

This framework allows us to distinguish between **structural stability (baseline)** and **system responsiveness (amplification)**.

3. Empirical Observation: Stability vs. Volatility

Empirical observations reveal a clear structural contrast:

- China's system exhibits **high baseline stability and low volatility**;
- External systems exhibit **low baseline cohesion but high event responsiveness**.

As shown in **Figure 1**, baseline narrative intensity remains relatively stable over time, while event-driven signals appear as sharp, irregular spikes.

These spikes are not evenly distributed but cluster around high-intensity developments, indicating that external systems are **reactive rather than structurally controlled**.

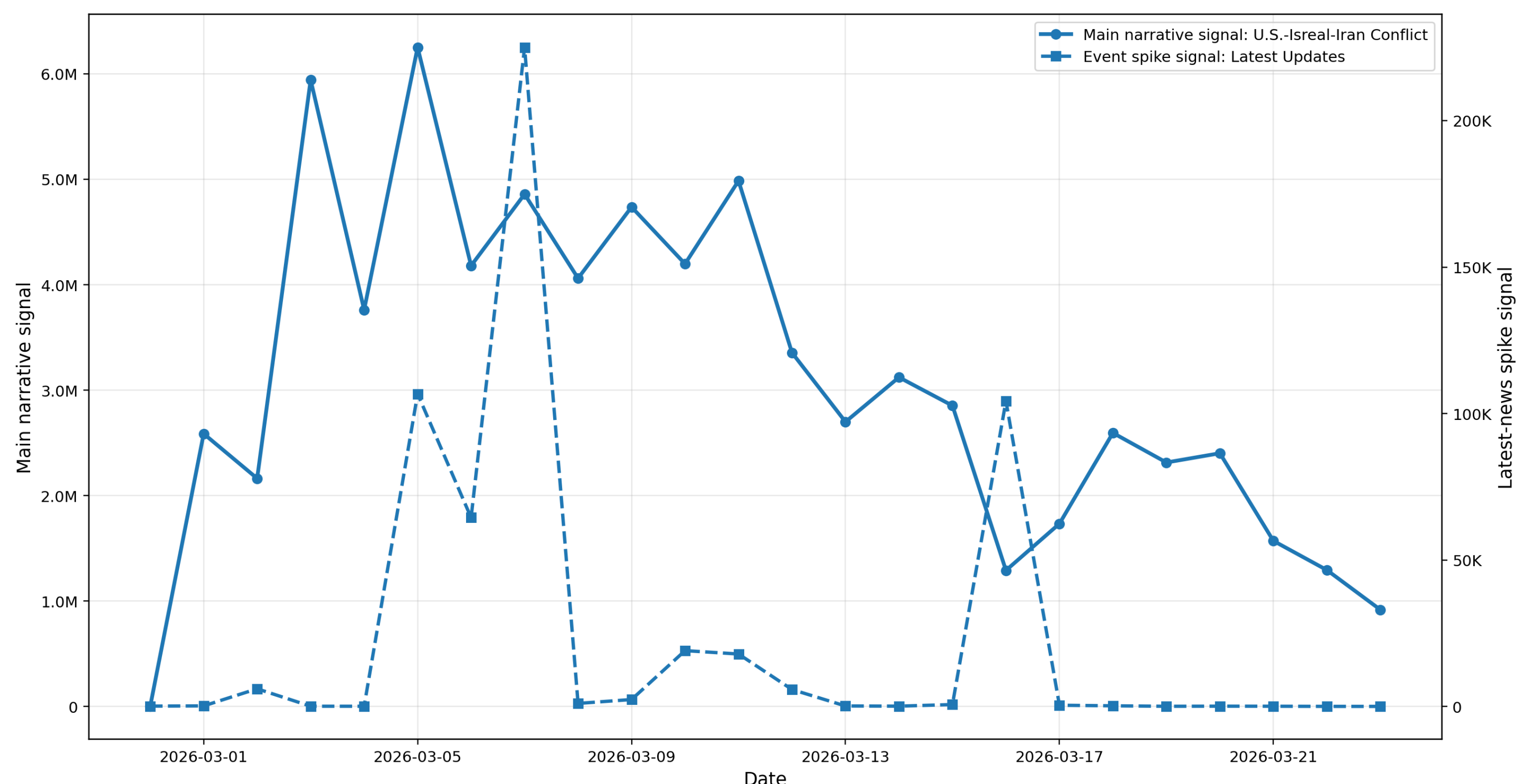


Figure 1. Two-Layer Information Structure: Main Narrative vs. Event Spikes

(Feb 28–Mar 23, 2026, China)

Note: The solid line represents baseline narrative intensity (SPI baseline component), while the dashed line represents event-driven amplification signals. Divergence emerges when event spikes exceed baseline absorption capacity. Data are derived from aggregated media and information signal counts across major international and Chinese platforms.

4. Where Divergence Emerges: Amplification, Not Baseline

Divergence between information systems is not continuous, but emerges under specific conditions defined by amplification dynamics.

Empirical evidence shows that under normal conditions, event-driven signals remain marginal relative to baseline narratives, indicating that structural signaling dominates system behavior. However, during high-intensity events, amplification increases sharply, temporarily exceeding the system's capacity to absorb and regulate it.

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As illustrated in **Figure 1**, divergence is most pronounced during these amplification peaks rather than during periods of baseline fluctuation. This indicates that divergence is driven not by baseline variation, but by disproportionate amplification relative to that baseline.

This pattern reflects a transition from baseline-dominated signaling to amplification-dominated dynamics.

The implication is structural:

- Maximum divergence occurs not when narratives are strongest, but when amplification becomes most disproportionate.
- Baseline narratives remain comparatively stable across systems. Instability emerges only when event-driven amplification exceeds the system’s absorption capacity.

Figure 2 illustrates the amplification–accumulation mechanism through which repeated engagement cycles under conditions of structural cost asymmetry generate path-dependent divergence. Divergence does not result from single shocks, but from cumulative amplification processes that exceed system absorption capacity thresholds, producing persistent residual shifts across cycles.

This suggests that divergence is fundamentally a function of amplification asymmetry rather than baseline narrative competition, redefining the locus of information competition from narrative production to amplification control.

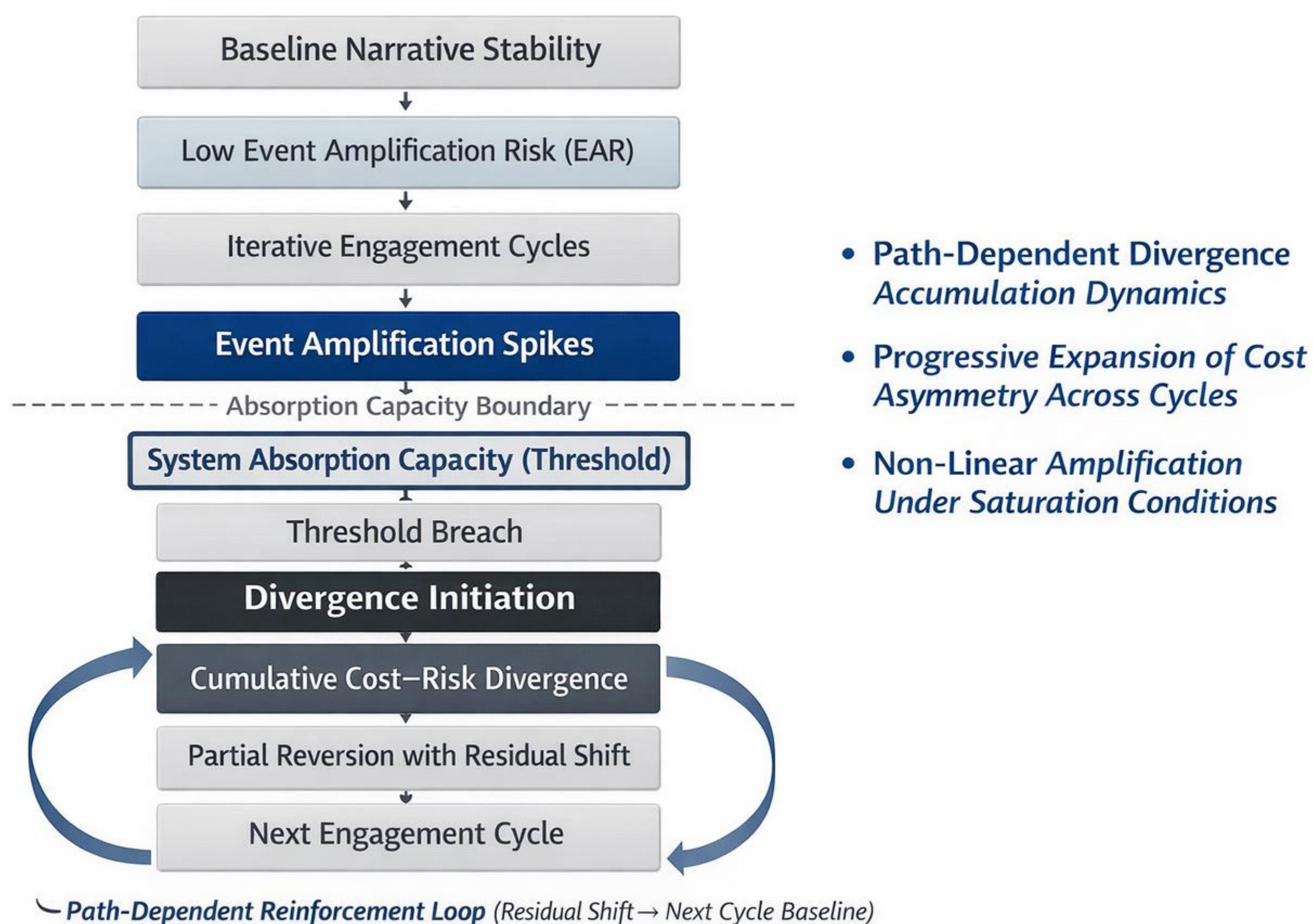


Figure 2. Amplification–Accumulation Divergence Mechanism

Note: Regime shift occurs when amplification exceeds system absorption capacity under asymmetric cost structures.

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5. System Logic: Control vs. Amplification

The observed divergence reflects two fundamentally different information system architectures, defined by how signals are generated, processed, and amplified under conditions of external shock.

a) China: Controlled Signaling Regime

- Stable baseline output
- Managed release timing
- Limited amplification volatility
- High narrative coherence

b) External Systems: Decentralized Amplification Market

- Fragmented baseline
- High responsiveness to events
- Amplification driven by media competition and network effects
- Low central coordination

These differences are not merely stylistic. They represent structural distinctions in how information systems process shocks and manage amplification.

In controlled signaling systems, shocks are absorbed and redistributed through baseline stabilization mechanisms. In decentralized systems, shocks are amplified through competitive and network-driven feedback loops.

As summarized in Table 1, the divergence between systems is therefore structural rather than stylistic, rooted in contrasting logics of control versus amplification.

Table 1. Structural Comparison of Information Signaling Systems

Dimension	China (Controlled Signaling Regime)	External Systems (Decentralized Amplification Market)
Core Structure	Centralized	Decentralized
Baseline Stability	High	Moderate / Fragmented
Amplification Volatility	Low	High
Event Responsiveness	Selective / Filtered	Immediate / Reactive
Signal Release Pattern	Controlled, periodic	Continuous, event-driven
Narrative Coherence	High	Variable
Amplification Driver	Institutional coordination	Media competition + network effects
System Objective	Stability and control	Speed and visibility
Divergence Trigger	External amplification spikes	Endogenous amplification escalation
Risk Profile	Under-reaction risk	Over-amplification risk

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6. Strategic Implications

The interaction between these two systems produces a structurally asymmetric pattern of information escalation.

China maintains baseline stability through controlled signaling, while external systems generate rapid amplification surges in response to discrete events. This asymmetry produces a temporal divergence pattern characterized by:

- **Low divergence under normal conditions, when baseline signaling dominates;**
- **Sharp divergence spikes during high-intensity events, when amplification temporarily exceeds system absorption capacity.**

This pattern suggests that information competition is not continuous, but event-triggered and nonlinear.

Strategically, this implies that the critical vulnerability of decentralized information systems lies not in their baseline coherence, but in their susceptibility to amplification shocks. Conversely, the strength of controlled signaling systems lies in their ability to maintain baseline stability, but at the cost of reduced responsiveness.

As a result, the locus of competition shifts from narrative production to the management of amplification dynamics. The key strategic variable is not how much information is produced, but how amplification is triggered, absorbed, and contained.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that divergence in information systems during conflict is not driven by differences in narrative volume, but by differences in amplification dynamics.

Within the Amplification–Accumulation Divergence framework (AADF), divergence emerges when event-driven amplification exceeds baseline signaling capacity and accumulates across repeated engagement cycles.

China’s system emphasizes stability and control, while external systems prioritize responsiveness and amplification. These structural differences generate episodic divergence, concentrated around high-intensity events.

Understanding this mechanism is essential for analyzing modern information competition, where control is not lost gradually, but temporarily overridden during amplification peaks.

In this sense, contemporary information competition is less a contest of narratives than a contest of amplification control.