

Assessing China's news coverage and soft power in Latin America in the wake of the Belt and Road Initiative (2013-2021)

Andrea Morante
Georgetown University

H. Denis Wu
Boston University
ORCID: 0000-0002-9657-1734

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Abstract

This study assesses the impact of China's mediated communication strategies implemented in Latin America from 2013 to 2021. We content-analyzed the press coverage about China in nine countries and unveiled tones, topics, and frames which were then examined further across different sources. Public sentiments toward China were gauged to infer a potential link to China's communication efforts. Overall, China's program to influence Latin American media outlets and public opinion has not resulted in substantial gains; the region's sentiment toward China actually deteriorated. There is a communication gap between Chinese and Latin American publics, which is vital to public diplomacy.

Introduction

China's rapid emergence as a world power in the 21st century has generated a vast impact across the world. The interconnected phenomena stemming from China's ascending dominance have been acutely noticed in many areas including military and economic power, international relations, and international communication (Ikenberry, 2008; Dreher et al., 2021; Okuda, 2016). China's interests in communicating its perspectives to the world are deeply rooted in its ruling party's long-time policy (He, 2018). With more resources at its disposal, China has expanded its media operations and public diplomacy programs significantly around the world (Cook, 2019), including Latin America. This is expected because communication can and should reflect shifting power as well as changing paradigms in the international community (Dicken-Garcia and Viswanath, 2002). As China aims to be a world leader, its global communication and impact merit prudent examination.

Like many parts of the world, Latin America is witnessing a vital shift of power away from the West and toward China (Ospina Estupinan, 2017). Keen on this momentum, China has spent heavily on communications to cultivate a positive image aimed at enhancing its soft power (Nye, 2004), which would facilitate its geopolitical and economic interests via persuasion rather than coercion. Latin America represents a pivotal region for advancing China's national and international interests (Harrison, 2021). China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) deserves special attention in this global context. BRI, of which several Latin American countries are part, has been deemed a potential paradigm shift of the world's existing power structure in which the U.S. leads (Silvius, 2021). It claims to deliver infrastructure and development and expand the region's access to a major export destination and external

financing (Zhang, 2019), thus elevating the economic and political connection between China and Latin America.

International relations scholars (e.g., Winter, 2022) argue that China's dominance in Latin America, due to its geopolitical importance, represents a tipping point of global power restructure. However, more solid empirical evidence is needed – especially from the communication perspective. It is unclear whether – and to what extent – Latin Americans have formed a more favorable view toward China since the launch of the BRI. Moreover, we have learned little about the media portrayal of China in Latin America since the BRI was launched. News coverage is a critical source people rely on to form their sentiments about foreign countries (Semetko et al., 1992). These are reasons why this study aims to investigate the media coverage of China and potential opinion shift after the BRI.

Despite increased economic cooperation and political engagement with China, Latin American publics appear to regard China with distrust. Polls conducted in 2018-2019 by the AmericasBarometer revealed that less than half of Latin Americans trusted the Chinese government (Asen, 2020). The percentage of Latin Americans who harbor positive sentiments toward China is still lower than that toward the U.S. by ten percentage points. Moreover, communication between Latin Americans and the Chinese appears limited beyond the Chinese government's public and digital diplomacy efforts; the exchange between the two publics is minuscule, partly, due to incompatible digital platforms (Micolta, 2020).

Given the significance of the topic and much needed empirical evidence, this article seeks to assess the effects of China's communication policies within Latin America during the BRI. This study systematically examines the press coverage about China in 22 Latin American newspapers to gauge the extent to which China's communication has contributed to its coverage in Latin America. It also charts the trend of public opinion in Latin American countries toward China, which sheds light on whether – and to what extent – China's decade-long communication endeavor has been followed by any change in its soft power.

Study Background

Starting in 2013, China began to strengthen its ties with the Latin American and Caribbean region (China, 2016) via campaigns driven by the Belt and Road Initiative (Heath et al., 2021; Smith, 2021). As of 2021, 19 governments of the region had joined the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which equates to \$1 trillion of transactions (Nugent and Campbell, 2021). China has also become a major financier for Latin American governments, having lent more than the financing provided by the Inter-American Development Bank, the Development Bank of South America, and the World Bank combined (CEPAL, 2018; Chin and Gallagher, 2019).

Political ties between China and Latin America have also grown closer (Myers, 2021; Roy, 2022). This increasing connection has resulted in Latin American policymakers holding friendlier attitudes towards promoting Chinese geopolitical and economic interests (Roy, 2022). The Covid-19 pandemic and self-imposed retreat of the U.S. (Dodson and Brooks, 2021) has only accelerated this trend, as China has established friendlier relationships via vaccine diplomacy (Harrison, 2021) and new and more affordable technologies such as smartphone and internet devices (De Aragão, 2021a). Moreover, local governments have sought direct investment from China (Trevisan, 2020). These examples illustrate how China's engagements with Latin America have produced warmer attitudes at the government level.

China's endeavor has resulted in strong reactions from Washington, which tends to regard the region as its backyard (De Aragão, 2021b; Zhang, 2020). Caught between the two, Latin American countries, as reported by *The Economist* (2022), tend to choose a non-aligned stance. Yet recent polls show seesawing of favorability between them (Bermúdez, 2018),

suggesting the jury is still out. Therefore, a systematic investigation of China's external Communication and favorability in the region is merited.

China's Communication in Latin America

China has embraced public diplomacy tools (Wang, 2006) to sway the region's elites as well as media and publics. For example, training programs and seminars on development, agriculture, and BRI are widely available for anyone interested (Jenkins, 2021). With the rebranding of CCTV's foreign-language news channels in 2016 as China Global Television Network (CGTN) and existing media such as Xinhua, *People's Daily*, and China Radio International, China implemented its "media going-out policy" to reshape its national image (Morales, 2018; Farah and Mosher, 2010; Madrid-Morales, 2015) and to gain soft power worldwide (Ye and Albornoz, 2018; Wang, 2011; Okuda, 2016). Most literature on the expansion of China's global media operation has focused on Africa (Madrid-Morales, 2021), however. For Latin America, CGTN-Español was intended to convey the Chinese perspective on international issues as well as to share Chinese culture (CGTN, 2020). Nevertheless, CGTN-Español's presence is limited in the region (Ye and Albornoz, 2019); CGTN has yet to broadcast in Portuguese – a language spoken by a third of the region's population.

Two additional approaches China has taken in the region are inserting pro-China narratives into local media and practicing digital diplomacy. For example, the "China Watch" supplement, produced by *China Daily*, has been placed in various Latin American newspapers (Lim and Bergin, 2018). *La Tercera*, a Chilean paper, published "Conexión China" to promote Chinese culture (Portales, 2022; Geal and Soutar, 2018). In addition, an increasing number of Chinese diplomatic and affiliated social media accounts have amplified content generated by Chinese government agencies or state-owned media. They also used hashtags such as "solidarity" and "country cooperation" to win the hearts of Latin Americans (Micolta, 2020). Bottom-up communication between publics is essential to public diplomacy (Cull, 2019), but this phenomenon has yet to surface. Yong (2014) pointed out that the barriers to interaction between Latin American and Chinese publics lie in their differing access to digital platforms. WhatsApp and Facebook are highly popular in Latin America, yet they are not accessible to the average Chinese, who use platforms such as Weibo and WeChat (Latin American Business Stories, 2021).

Mediated China in Latin America

News coverage of a country is vital for forming images held by media users. Given China's goal to enhance its soft power worldwide, its media portrayal should be examined first. Existing foreign news scholarship suggests the influence on the image of a country stems from its status in the world (Galtung and Ruge, 1965) and the magnitude of economic interaction between the covered and covering countries (Wu, 2019). Given these factors, China, as the most populous country and an economic powerhouse, should be considered highly newsworthy. However, studies show that news about China tends to focus on incidents or issues such as the SARS crisis and Sino-American rivalry (Luther and Zhou, 2005; Leung and Huang, 2007). Studies of news coverage of China suggest that the country tends to be portrayed through a narrow lens. Griffiths (2013) found that the topics of stories on China tend to cluster around the economy, foreign affairs, security, politics, and human rights. Several content-analytical studies (Liss, 2003; Tang, 2021; Willnat and Luo, 2011) show that news about China tends to be negative and have a limited scope. These empirical studies also underscore the frame of threat from China beneath storylines.

Media coverage of China by the Global South and in non-English languages has shown a similar pattern. Chinese media in Kenya and South Africa were found to generate little impact on audiences' perception of China – most still harbor negative attitudes

(Wasserman and Madrid-Morales, 2018). Likewise, Rodríguez Wangüemert et al. (2017) studied broadcast news in Spanish media and found that China has been treated as a peripheral country and often framed with a threat and confrontation undertone. Given the above evidence, we posit the following question:

RQ1: How has the Latin American press covered China in terms of topics, tones, and frames during the period of the Belt and Road Initiative?

Traditionally, Latin America's press has been dependent on Western news agencies or media outlets for foreign coverage (Schement and Rogers, 1984). News sources are critical in determining how frequently and how foreign countries are covered (Gabore, 2020; Madrid-Morales, 2021). With more content made conveniently and readily available by Chinese media and news agencies for journalists in this region, it is important to examine whether these Chinese sources such as CGTN and Xinhua have been used by Latin American media and generated any impact on the news coverage of China. It would be interesting to see how these sources compare with Western counterparts on frames and tones of stories that pertain to China (Ospina Estupinan, 2017).

The choice of information sources about a topic undoubtedly influences how it is covered. China's keen interests and active involvement in the region also have generated news framed as cooperation, mutual interest, and positive engagement (Ospina Estupinan, 2017). Cardenal (2017) showed that negative environmental aspects of China's economic projects have been suppressed when Peruvian news media relayed positive Sino-Africa relation in Ethiopian coverage (Skjerdal and Gusu, 2016). On the other hand, the frames of "conflict" and "economic consequences" were also found in stories about Chinese investments in Latin America (Zhu and Wang, 2018). Most news flow studies have focused on news agencies or media sources (at the macro-level). Given the influence from individuals, representatives, and officials that are strategically media-engaging and whose voices are indeed included in stories, it would make sense to also investigate sources at the micro-level within each story. By identifying each of the sources used by the Latin American press, we can then determine whether sources (Chinese vs. others) used in the stories are related to frames and tones of the stories about China. Based on the rationale and literature reviewed above, we formed the next two research questions:

RQ2a: To what extent have the stories about China included information from Chinese sources?

RQ2b: What are the differences between the stories that include and others that do not include Chinese sources?

Reacting to China's Message

There is a dearth of literature that directly addresses how Latin Americans perceive China after the BRI. Existing articles on the influence of China's campaign are limited to China's messaging on Twitter, especially after the Covid-19 period. Three major themes regarding China's messaging to Latin American publics stand out: 1) Commentary and announcements regarding COVID-19-related issues; 2) "Wolf Warrior"-type messaging; 3) Friendly messaging, including the adoption of rhetoric regarding historical and cultural ties between China and specific Latin American states (Cardenal, 2017; Myers, 2021). While Chinese embassies' tweets are primarily promotional, "spikes in negative and defensive messaging" have also been identified (Myers, 2021, p. 9). China's "Wolf-Warrior" image (Martin, 2021) is salient throughout the BRI, particularly amidst the Covid-19 period. Sometimes, Latin American countries interacted with China in a similar fashion. For example, Brazil and Ecuador experienced negative messaging on social media; Chinese diplomats used the hashtag #LaVerdad" (#TheTruth) daily to defend and address precarious situations (Myers,

2021). In Peru, the Chinese Embassy had a series of blistering exchanges on Covid-related issues with Mario Vargas Llosa, a Nobel Prize laureate (2020).

Beyond social media, China's messages during the period have focused on promoting historical and cultural links (Cardenal, 2017). In Venezuela, for example, the promotion of China's culture was aired by Telesur in collaboration with CGTN (Cardenal, 2017); also, through the program "Prisma Cultural," China has sought to promote Chinese culture among Spanish-speaking countries (Cardenal, 2017). However, such programs have low audience ratings in Latin America (Ye and Albornoz, 2019) and it is unclear whether those who watch them view China differently. Given the lack of systematic investigation on the sentiments toward China in Latin America in academic literature, the following question is posed:

RQ3: Have Latin Americans viewed China differently after the Belt and Road Initiative?

Methods

This study employed two methods to gather evidence to address the research questions. First, we content-analyzed the news coverage of China in the press of nine Latin American countries. Second, we examined shifts of public opinion in 18 Latin American countries with existing polling data. Nexis was used to retrieve and collect news stories about China from 22 newspapers available through the database from Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Venezuela.¹ The sample of news stories was selected based on two composite weeks randomly drawn from each of the nine years (2013-2021). Fourteen weeks of each year were randomly decided, followed by randomly selected day of each week, rendering a total of 126 sampled days of news coverage. Whenever "China" appears in the headline or lead paragraph in the news published on the selected days, that news story was included in the sample. We also retrieved all news stories (content universe) from Nexis to detect the trend of the news volumes on China across the years and the Latin American countries. We found that the numbers of news stories in the universe retrieved from Nexis and in our study have similar proportions over the years (see Appendix A).

The coding sheet included primary and secondary news topics; news frame; tone toward China; three main sources from each story that are specifically identified by the reporter(s) in the text; and sources' respective country of origin. The list for news topics included 30 options, such as international politics, military and defense, business, agriculture, fashion, and entertainment. The primary method to build the list was to make the list of topics as exhaustive and mutually exclusive as possible – thus as coding proceeded the list was revised. When coding main sources, we only considered those directly quoted or specifically cited by reporters in the text and only the three top sources were recorded.

News frame in this study was defined as the generic, underlying structure that anchors the overall meaning of a news story, which differs from the frame that highlights specific events and situations (Ooi and D'Arcangelis, 2017) but resembles others that identify generic orientations (de Vreese et al., 2001). The frames identified in this study focus exclusively on the macrolevel impact of China on Latin America and the interaction between China and Latin American countries. As with the list of topics, the list of frames evolved from the phases of a pilot study and coding training and were finalized after the coding phase. For news focusing on a Latin American country, three frames were coded: 1) democratization or political freedom; 2) economic growth or development; and 3) authoritarian, dictatorship, or political control. For news focusing on the interaction between China and one or more Latin American nations, the following six frames were used: 1) conflict; 2) cooperation; 3) peace; 4) China as a threat or hegemon; 5) Latin America (or a Latin American nation) engages with China; and 6) China engages with Latin America (or a Latin American nation). Lastly, for

stories that discuss exclusively on China's internal development, another distinct frame was added. Of the 9 frames, 3 frames (conflict, threat, and authoritarianism) are treated as negative frames while 6 frames (cooperation, peace, engagements in either direction, democracy, economy) as positive frames. In the following analysis, positive and negative frames were dummy-coded.

Coders of this content analysis project were graduate students in a large U.S. university who are native Spanish speakers and can read Portuguese. They went through extensive training sessions and only after their intercoder reliability tests for each of the coding items resulted in a satisfactory score (i.e., $\alpha > .80$ with Krippendorff's formula) did they start coding news stories independently.

The re-coding of the news sources used in the story into "whether Chinese sources are used" followed the following rationale: If a story includes between one and three sources from China (three is the maximum number of sources coded), then this variable was dummy-coded 1. Therefore, there are two categories: stories with at least one Chinese source (1) versus those stories without any Chinese sources (0).

The public opinion datasets (2007-2020) for individual Latin American countries upon which we based the analysis of possible opinion shifts came from Latinobarómetro, a non-governmental organization that carries out opinion surveys of more than 600 million people in Latin America (Latinobarómetro 2022). Latinobarómetro collaborates with national and international public opinion research entities, including IPSOS, CID Gallup, and CEOP. The sample sizes range between 500 and 1,900 individuals for each country. Respondents of the region were asked if they "had a very good (1), good (2), bad (3), or really bad (4) opinion" about China. The first two categories were combined to represent a favorable view toward China, while the latter two were combined to represent an unfavorable view for the statistical analysis.

Findings

Results from content analysis

The most frequently occurring topics in the stories randomly selected from the Latin American press are international politics (14.8%), business and commerce (13.5%), disaster and pandemic (13.4%), the economy (12.4%), internal politics (8.5%), science and technology (6.1%), and health care and service (5.6%). While the foci of business and politics are apparent, the Covid-19 pandemic in the last two years took considerable space in the news coverage related to China – resulting in more stories about public health, precaution, and science.

Another critical component of China-related stories is their frames. We find that one frame stands out: 36.5% of news stories use the frame of China's internal development. In other words, more than one-third of the coverage during the BRI period described various aspects of advancement and development within China. We also found that a positive relation between the use of Chinese sources and the presence of this frame (see Table 1). In terms of frames related to international relations, both directions of engagement are prominent: China engaging Latin America (10.6%) and vice versa (9.3%) were invoked in coverage. Likewise, the cooperation frame (7.2%) between China and Latin American countries appears often in the stories.

[INSERT TABLE 1 AROUND HERE]

Regarding the tone in depictions of China, 35.7% of stories are positive toward China, 37% negative, and 27.3% neutral or mixed. Therefore, overall, China-related coverage in the Latin American press is balanced in terms of valence distribution. The report of the findings so far has addressed RQ1.

To address RQ2, which explores the influence of sources on news attributes (tone and frame), we tallied and classified all the sources. Of the 540 news stories coded, 282 used at least one source from China while 253 did not use any sources from China. A total of 408 China-affiliated sources such as official representatives from China and state-run news media were identified, comprising 31% of all identified sources in the news (RQ2a). It appears that Chinese sources are more likely to generate negative tones toward China than the stories that did not use Chinese sources ($\chi^2 = 18.96, p < .001$). Of the stories that used at least one Chinese source, 45% of them are negative in tone, 33.7% are positive, and 21.3% are neutral or mixed (see Table 2). On the other hand, of the stories that did not use any Chinese sources, 28.1% are negative, nearly 38% are positive, and 34% are neutral or mixed.

[INSERT TABLE 2 AROUND HERE]

RQ2b also led us to examine news frames in stories about China by the type of sources used. To streamline analysis, we assigned each of the nine frames that refer to both China and the region into either positive or negative categories. The use of Chinese sources is not related to the presence of negative frames ($\chi^2 = 1.51, p = .219$). However, the use of Chinese sources in news stories appears to be negatively related to the chance of invoking positive frames ($\chi^2 = 20.39, p < .001$). Thus, the use of Chinese sources has not reduced the appearance of negative frames; neither has it helped the stories framed positively (see Table 4).

[INSERT TABLES 3 & 4 AROUND HERE]

Table 5 shows the correlation between all variables examined above. The number of China-affiliated sources, number of negative frames, and number of positive frames in any given story are used (rather than dummy coded) while the story tone toward China is dummy coded. The results indicate that the use of China-affiliated sources is negatively related to the presence of positive frames ($r = -.176, p < .01$) and positively related to negative tone ($r = .168, p < .01$). Despite the lack of statistically significant findings from the sources' correlation with negative frames ($r = .058$) and positive tone ($r = -.027$), the use of China-affiliated sources in promoting a positive image in Latin American newspapers seems underwhelming or even counterproductive.

[INSERT TABLE 5 HERE]

Public Opinion toward China

It is important to examine the potential impact of mediated China by inspecting public opinion in the region (RQ3). According to a poll conducted by the LAPOP Americas Barometer in 2020, less than half of Latin Americans trust the Chinese government (Asen, 2020). Across the region, the Dominican Republic (71.6%) and Argentina (59.9%) are most trusting, while Panama (31.6%) and Bolivia (35.9%) are least. Pew's polls (2007-2019) show that the attitudes towards China in Brazil, Mexico, and Argentina are predominantly more positive than negative.

Additionally, we used Latinobarómetro data (2007 - 2020) to inspect the sentiment toward China in 18 Latin American countries before and after the BRI period. Overall, the view of the region toward China has worsened. Specifically, the average favorable view of the region has dropped from 77.82% to 70.88% ($t = 7.03, df = 17, p < .001$) between the two periods (2007-2012 vs. 2013-2020). Similarly, the average unfavorable view toward China has increased from 22.33% to 28.95% ($t = -8.142, df = 17, p < .001$). The overall trend of public opinion across the region appears to have gone downward recently. However, individual nations vary greatly: Brazil, Colombia, and Uruguay stand out as they have the lowest favorable views and the highest unfavorable views toward China.

Discussion & Conclusion

China's rise has brought significant changes to Latin America through economic development, inter-governmental connections, and communication programs. The analyses in this paper suggest that current efforts that China has been making at the communication level have not met their set goal. One of China's soft-power approaches has been exercised by the spread of its technological innovations (De Aragão, 2021a). Public opinion polls from the Pew Research Center suggest that Latin Americans perceive China's role in Latin America as highly influential, yet not systematically positive (Silver, Devlin & Huang, 2019). Likewise, based on the content analysis of Latin American press, China has gained a larger amount of coverage. Yet it was not necessarily yielded via the sources and frames that China has aimed for the region's media to use.

Furthermore, content analysis of the Latin American press suggests that China appears less ideal for an aspiring superpower during this examined period. For one thing, news topics about China are still quite narrow in scope. This study found that a substantial portion of stories about China clusters on aspects of progress and development within China, indicating that China's promotional messages have effectively penetrated the press of Latin America even though non-Chinese sources may have a larger influence on how China is framed. On the other hand, the use of Chinese sources is positively related to negative tones in news stories. Potential explanations for this phenomenon may be concerns regarding the transparency and bias of Chinese sources (Lim et al., 2021) as well as the region's traditional reliance on Western media as reported in the literature.

Existing scholarship and the results of our content analysis suggest a dearth of bottom-up or general publics' communication between China and Latin America. This gap of public diplomacy activities needs to be addressed in order to better understand China's communication strategies in Latin America. Likewise, there is a need to further examine the diverse factors that influence varied news frames and perceptions towards China in Latin America. Relatedly, the study did not include all media from the region, which could be improved in the future. Lastly, as Covid-19 might have triggered the coverage of themes such as science, technology, and pandemic-related issues, future research on China coverage should examine not only the long-term impact of Covid-19 but also other China-involved conspicuous issues such as Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Taiwan.

The findings derived from the news coverage and public opinion trends suggest that China's increasing involvement and communication programs in Latin America have not led to an increase in soft power. Even though news coverage and other messaging practices from the Chinese government have increased significantly, the publics' perception of China in the region has not improved accordingly. As Fallon and Smith (2022) pointed out, China's overseas soft-power campaign, including in Latin America, has not gone in the anticipated direction.

A potential factor that might have prevented China's media outlets from being accepted in Latin America is their low credibility. The promotive attributes of their content might have abated their credibility. Even though Latin America news media do not have the resources to access China directly, they might not want to use content from Xinhua or other state agencies because of concerns about potentially compromised material. The credibility issue of China's global media has been hinted as a major barrier for its outreach and intended consequence (Kim, 2020) because its press system is under the Chinese government's control. Anything else would be untenable under the authoritarian system.

Future studies should expand the time span of analyzed content that pertains to China. In particular, the news coverage about China before the launch of the BRI could be compared to news coverage after the launch. Additionally, it could be worth investigating how China uses other media and platforms, exercises tactics to promote its image, obstructs its competitors in foreign countries, and advances its viewpoints on international affairs.

Numerous reports show that China has been cultivating social media celebrities worldwide to produce and amplify favorable views (Mozur et al., 2021) and using the internet to disseminate disinformation (Chung-shan et al., 2019). This study only included print media to examine the influence of an existing Chinese initiative, but more media, particularly social media – which could be more technologically advanced and impactful – should be incorporated into future studies.

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Tables

Table 1. China's "internal development" frame by type of source used

Internal development frame	Chinese source used		No Chinese source used	
	n	%	n	%
Present	148	52.3	49	19.1
Absent	135	47.7	207	89.9

$$\chi^2 = 63.71 \text{ df} = 1 \text{ } p < .001$$

Table 2. Story tone toward China by source

Tone	Chinese source used		No Chinese source used	
	n	%	n	%
Positive	95	33.7	92	37.9
Negative	127	45.0	71	28.1
Neutral/mixed	60	21.3	86	34

$$\chi^2 = 18.96 \text{ df} = 2 \text{ } p < .001$$

Table 3. Negative frame toward China by source

Negative Frame	China source used		No China source used	
	n	%	n	%
Existence	27	9.5	17	6.6
No Existence	256	90.5	239	93.4

$$\chi^2 = 1.51 \quad df = 1 \quad p = .219$$

Table 4. Positive frame toward China by source

Positive Frame	China source used		No China source used	
	n	%	n	%
Existence	44	15.5	82	32
No Existence	239	84.5	174	68

$\chi^2 = 20.39$ $df = 1$ $p < .001$

Table 5. Correlation matrix

	Number of China sources	Number of negative frames	Number of positive frames	Positive tone toward China	Negative tone toward China
Number of China sources	1	.058	-.176**	-.027	.168**
Number of negative frames		1	-.054	-.198**	.210**
Number of positive frames			1	.347**	-.223**
Positive tone toward China				1	-.565**
Negative tone toward China					1

** $p < .01$ $n = 539$

Appendix A**Table A1. Values of news stories on China in the Latin American press**

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Argentina	24	19	25	80	88	101	30	26	34	756	1287
Bolivia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	106	61
Brazil	544	533	452	461	224	247	166	148	196	799	1225
Chile	129	296	600	837	886	752	371	244	254	390	1961
Colombia	0	0	0	0	113	179	54	128	116	164	90
Ecuador	7	10	8	4	7	14	19	10	2	16	52
Mexico	206	191	180	150	145	120	126	113	121	1044	450
Peru	68	60	57	46	56	52	19	0	11	866	438
Venezuela	60	102	129	47	52	31	5	5	14	211	47
Total	1038	1211	1451	1625	1571	1496	790	674	748	4352	5611
Study sample	N.A.	N.A.	56	58	39	59	29	21	18	210	142

Source: Nexis

¹ *El Comercio* (Peru), *La República* (Peru), *Diario Correo* (Peru), *Mercurio* (Chile), *La Tercera* (Chile), *Folha de São Paulo* (Brazil), *Estado de Sao Paulo* (Brazil), *Globo* (*Globo* and *Globo Online*) (Brazil), *Clarín* (Argentina), *La Nación* (Argentina), *El Tiempo* (Colombia), *El Espectador* (Colombia), *Excelsior* (Mexico), *El Debate* (Mexico), *Reforma* (Mexico), *Vanguardia* (Mexico), *La Razón* (Bolivia), *El Comercio* (Ecuador), *El Diario* (Ecuador), *El Nacional* (Venezuela), *El Universal* (Venezuela), *Diario Panorama* (Venezuela).