DIGITAL DIPLOMACY 2022 – 2023-I:

THE STRENGTHENING OF CHINA'S DIGITAL DIPLOMACY IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

MARÍA CATALINA MICOLTA PORTOCARRERO
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ABOUT THE REPORT

This report examines the digital diplomacy of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and collects the main findings of previous similar studies published by the Andrés Bello Foundation, namely: 2020, a decisive year for China's digital diplomacy in Latin America and the Caribbean and 2021, Towards a balance in China's digital diplomacy in Latin America and the Caribbean, and continues the analysis for the years 2022 and the first semester of 2023. An extensive analysis was conducted of the activity and use of relevant X (formerly Twitter) accounts across the region to determine the use of social media as a diplomatic tool by the PRC state apparatus.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

María Catalina Micolta is the Director of Research Projects at the Andrés Bello Foundation. She is a foreign policy and public diplomacy analyst with experience in research on the regional integration process of the European Union and European Community Law with emphasis on migration and security. María Catalina has a degree in Political Science with a focus on International Relations and a Masters degree in International Relations from the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Colombia. As director of research projects, she manages, supervises and participates in the process of design, management, development and publication of the Foundation's academic research.

The views expressed in this report are those of the author alone. They do not necessarily reflect the views of the Andrés Bello Foundation – China Latin America Research Center. An online edition of this and related reports can be found on our website, together with additional information on the subject.

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PREFACE

The Andrés Bello Foundation – China-Latin America Research Center presents this new study that delves into the ongoing digitalization process of China's public diplomacy towards Latin America and the Caribbean. It zeroes in on the dynamics of the X (previously Twitter) accounts of China's representatives and diplomatic representations in the region for 2022 and the first semester of 2023. It also offers comparative insights based on the findings from studies conducted in 2020[1] and 2021[2].

As in previous studies, and to maintain methodological continuity for comparative analysis, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was employed in this study. For the quantitative aspect, tools such as "Twitter Advanced Search" and "Twitonomy"[3] were used to gather statistical data from each account. As for the qualitative component, content analysis of all the tweets published by the accounts in question was conducted to identify the most relevant themes and their discursive focus. Both methods have facilitated a comprehensive analysis of the data collected during 2022 and the first half of 2023, allowing for meaningful comparisons with the years 2020 and 2021.

As of June 2023, of the 26 diplomatic representations of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in Latin America and the Caribbean[4], 21 of them had X accounts[5]. For 2022, the total number of accounts, including both representations and diplomatic representatives, was 33, while for June 2023, it was 34. It is worth noting that in both periods, three accounts showed no activity: the account of the ambassador in the Bahamas, Dai Qingli (@DQingli); the account of the embassy in Suriname (CHNEmbSuriname); and the first account created in the name of the ambassador in Venezuela, Li Baorong (@Li_Baorong), which was suspended in 2021 and later reactivated. Similarly, for the first half of 2023, the account of the current ambassador to El Salvador, Zhang Yanhui (@ZhangYanh), showed no activity.

Also important to highlight is the fact that there

[1] Micolta, M. (2022, 3 de marzo). 2020: Un año decisivo para la diplomacia digital de la República Popular China en américa Latina y el Caribe. Centro de Investigación Chino latinoamericano Fundación Andrés Bello. **https://fundacionandresbello.org/investigacion/2020-un-ano-decisivo-para-la-diplomacia-digital-de-la-republica-popular-china-en-america-latina-y-el-caribe/**

[2] Micolta, M. (2022, 21 de junio). 2021: Hacia un equilibrio en la diplomacia digital de la República Popular China en América Latina y el Caribe. Centro de Investigación Chino latinoamericano Fundación Andrés Bello.

[3] Debido a los cambios en las políticas en la red social X (antes Twitter), aplicativos como Twitonomy ya no pueden ofrecer sus servicios de recolección de data. Al respecto ver Twitonomy. (2023). Twitter #analytics and much more… Twitonomy. **https://www.twitonomy.com/**

were significant changes in diplomatic personnel from the PRC in several countries across the region between January 2022 and June 2023, as illustrated in the table below:

COUNTRY		CHANGES AND APPOINTMENTS
Brazil		In **March 2022** the ambassador, **Wanming Yang** (**@WanmingYang**), left office. **Zhu Qingqiao**, former ambassador to Mexico (who has no X account), took over as the new ambassador.
El Salvador		In **December 2022** the ambassador, **Ou Jianhong** (**@oujianhong**), left office. In **January 2023**, **Zhang Yanhui** (**@ZhangYanh**) took over as the new ambassador - but his X account has no activity.
Mexico		In **May 2023**, **Zhang Run** (**@EmbZhangRun**), leftt his post as ambassador to the Dominican Republic and took over as the new ambassador to Mexico.
Nicaragua		In **June 2022**, **Chen Xi** took office as the new ambassador, (he does not have an X account).
Peru		In **September 2022**, **Song Yang** took office as the new ambassador (he does not have an X account).
Dominican Republic		Ambassador **Zhang Run** (**@EmbZhangRun**) left office in **March 2023**. **Chen Luning** (**@EmbChenLuning**) took over as new ambassador in **April 2023**.
Venezuela		In **March 2023**, Ambassador **Li Baorong** (**@Li_Baorong** and **@EmbChinaVen**) left office. **Lan Hu** (who does not have an X account) took over as new ambassador in **May 2023**.

Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center.

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[4] El 25 de marzo de 2023, la República de Honduras rompe relaciones diplomáticas con Taiwán y establece relaciones diplomáticas con la República Popular China. Fundación Andrés Bello. (2023). Honduras establece relaciones diplomáticas con China. Fundación Andrés Bello. **https://fundacionandresbello.org/noticias/honduras-%f0%9f%87%ad%f0%9f%87%b3/honduras-establece-relaciones-diplomaticas-con-china/**

[5] Para junio del año 2023 las representaciones diplomáticas en Costa Rica, Dominica, Guyana, Honduras y Nicaragua no poseen cuenta de X, al igual que sus representantes.

Finally, the creation of the categories used in the content analysis involved a combination of both methodologies. Based on the data collected for 2022 and the first semester of 2023, the list of categories was modified to better fit the evolving nature of the data collected. The new categories were also applied to the consolidated results for previous years, allowing for a comparative analysis.

To learn more about the methodology used to conduct this study, please **click on this link** ↗

For an explanation of digital diplomacy and how to understand it within the framework of public diplomacy, and to provide a contextualization of the development and characteristics of the public diplomacy of the PRC, please refer to the study relating to the first semester of 2020.

> **NOTES**
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> ** For the purposes of this report, any mention of 'China' should be understood as a reference to the 'People's Republic of China'. Likewise, any use of terms like 'Chinese' specifically refer to aspects, individuals, or elements associated with said country.*
>
> ** Throughout this report, any mention or reference to 'accounts' will be understood as referring to the X accounts (formerly Twitter) of diplomatic representatives (consuls and ambassadors) and diplomatic representations (consulates and embassies) of the People's Republic of China in Latin America and the Caribbean. This definition applies unless specified otherwise.*

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[4] El 25 de marzo de 2023, la República de Honduras rompe relaciones diplomáticas con Taiwán y establece relaciones diplomáticas con la República Popular China. Fundación Andrés Bello. (2023). Honduras establece relaciones diplomáticas con China. Fundación Andrés Bello. **https://fundacionandresbello.org/noticias/honduras-%f0%9f%87%ad%f0%9f%87%b3/honduras-establece-relaciones-diplomaticas-con-china/**
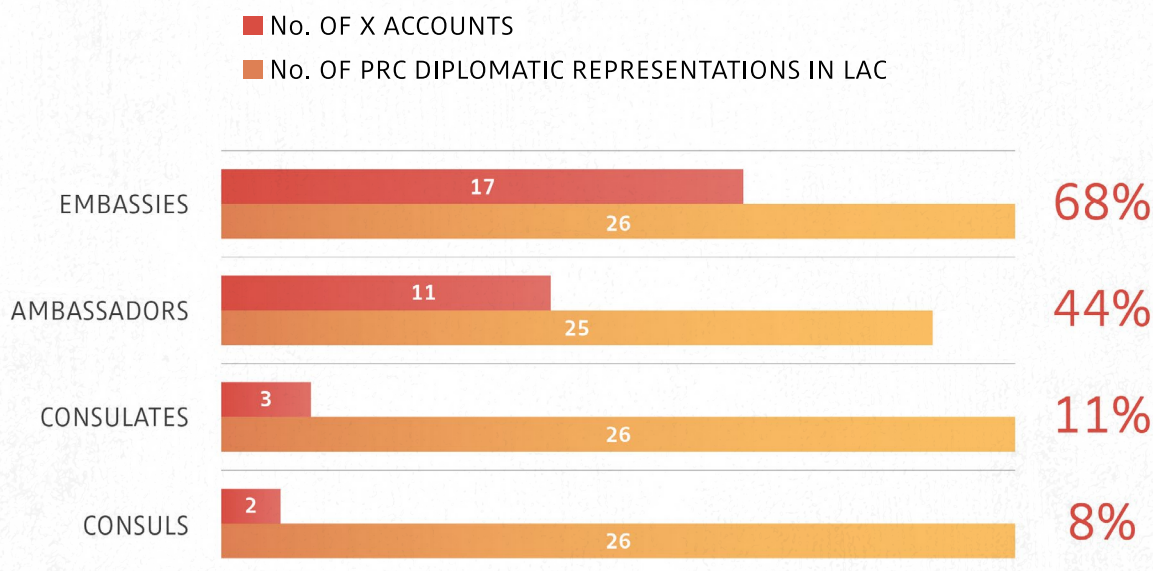
[5] Para junio del año 2023 las representaciones diplomáticas en Costa Rica, Dominica, Guyana, Honduras y Nicaragua no poseen cuenta de X, al igual que sus representantes.

I.

X ACCOUNTS OF DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES AND DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS OF THE PRC IN LAC 2022 AND 2023-I

In December 2022, the PRC had 25 embassies and 26 consulates distributed among the 33 countries that make up the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). During the first semester of 2023, the number of diplomatic representations changed due to the establishment of relations between the Republic of Honduras and China on March 25. As shown in the following table, between January 2022 and June 2023, considering diplomatic representations (i.e., embassies and consulates), 68% and 11% have X accounts, respectively. Among diplomatic representatives (i.e., ambassadors and consuls), 44% and 8% have X accounts, respectively.

NUMBER OF X ACCOUNTS OF PRC REPRESENTATIVES AND DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS IN LAC AS OF JUNE 2023.

■ No. OF X ACCOUNTS
■ No. OF PRC DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS IN LAC

	No. OF X ACCOUNTS	No. OF PRC DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS IN LAC	
EMBASSIES	17	26	68%
AMBASSADORS	11	25	44%
CONSULATES	3	26	11%
CONSULS	2	26	8%

Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center.

The only account created in 2022 was that of the Embassy of China in Jamaica (@ChinaEmbJA) in June, resulting in a total of 33 active accounts for that period. In the first semester of 2023, two new accounts were established: @ZhangYang, the account for the Ambassador in El Salvador, Zhang Yanhui, in January; and @EmbChenLuning, the account for the Ambassador in the Dominican Republic, Chen Luning, in March, bringing the total to 34 accounts for that period.

It is also worth mentioning that there are X accounts that are no longer part of the study since the representative has left the position:

— **@WanmingYang:** Wanming Yang, Ambassador of PRC to Brazil until March 2022.
— **@oujianhong:** Ou Jianhong, PRC Ambassador to El Salvador until December 2022.
— **@Li_Baorong y @EmbChinaVen:** Li Baorong, PRC Ambassador to Venezuela until March 2023.

II.
ACCOUNT CREATION

As depicted in Figure 1, the creation of X accounts from PRC diplomatic representatives and representations shows a rising trend from 2019 to 2020, with a total of 23 accounts created. This trend, as highlighted in the study conducted for 2020, reflects China's keen interest in expanding and enhancing the digitization of its public diplomacy, along with extending its outreach.

FIGURE Nº 1. NUMBER OF ACCOUNTS CREATED 2020 - 2023-I
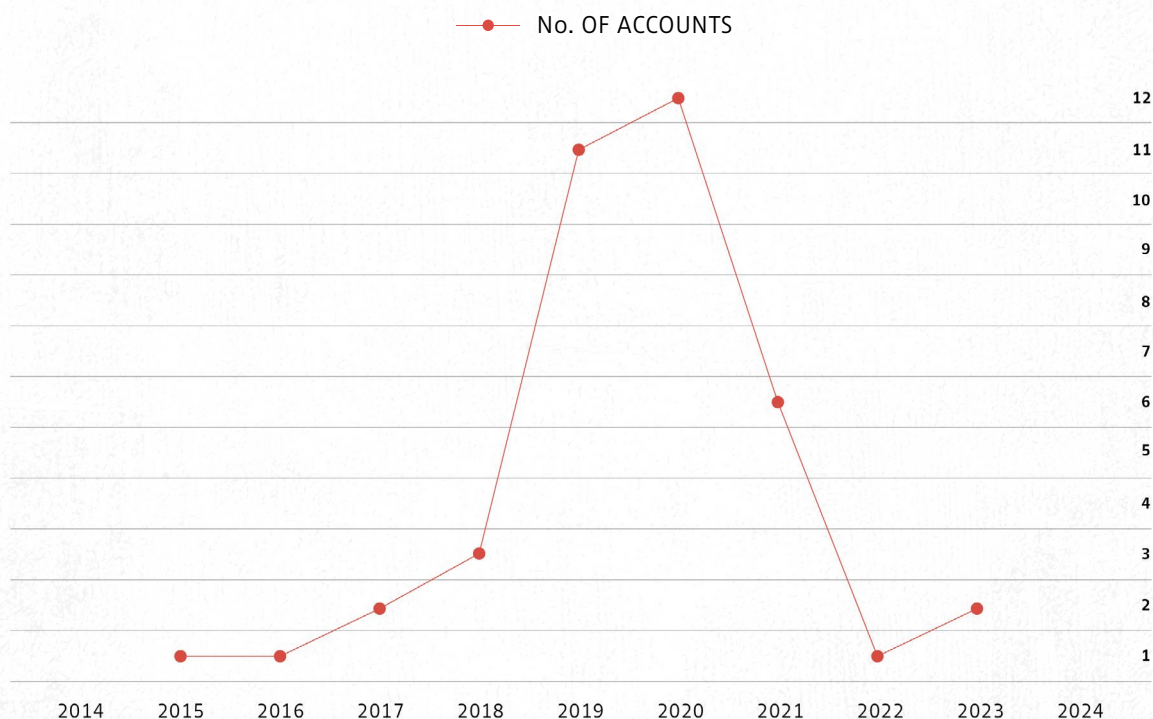
Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center.
With account creation data provided by Twitter Advanced Search.

Starting in 2021, the pace of account creation begins to decrease, with a total of six new accounts. For 2022 and 2023-I (first semester), the downward trend continues with a total of three new accounts for both periods. It should be noted that the urgency manifested in improving and protecting China's international image, which was negatively affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, ceased to be a priority. However, while there is a decrease in the number of accounts created, when put into context and compared to the total number of active accounts by the end of the study period, the trend towards strengthening its digital diplomacy remains solid.

CHANGES IN X VERIFICATION POLICIES - ACCOUNT IDENTIFICATION

Previously, the verification of an X account through the classic blue badge allowed confirmation of its authenticity and was subject only to those accounts of public interest, assigned only upon request of the account user. As of November 9, 2022, X stopped accepting verification requests under the previous criteria. However, accounts that already had the verification badge under the previous standards could keep it. According to the new verification criteria, accounts that want verification can do so by subscribing to the XBlue[6].

FIGURE Nº 2. VERIFIED ACCOUNTS
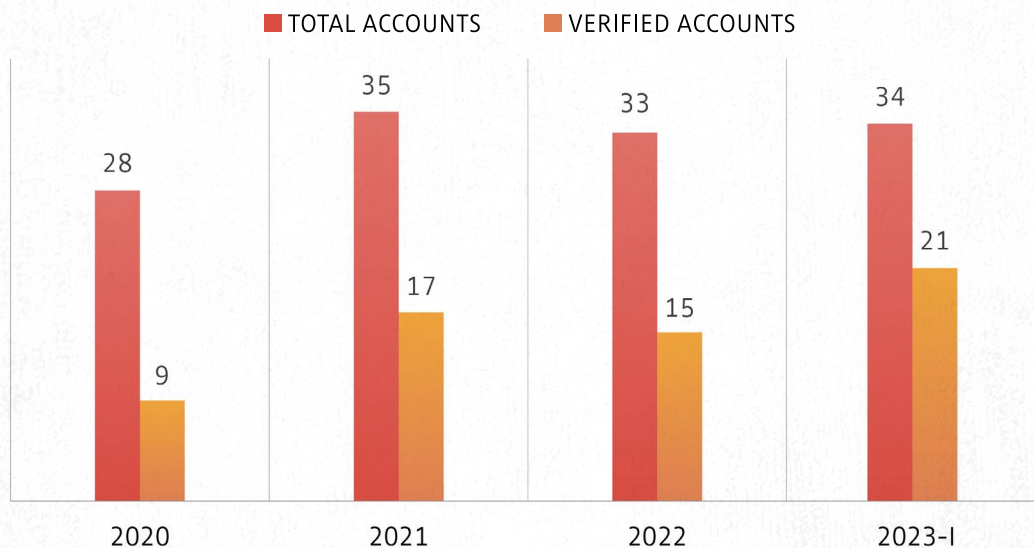
Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with verification data provided by X's new verification policies
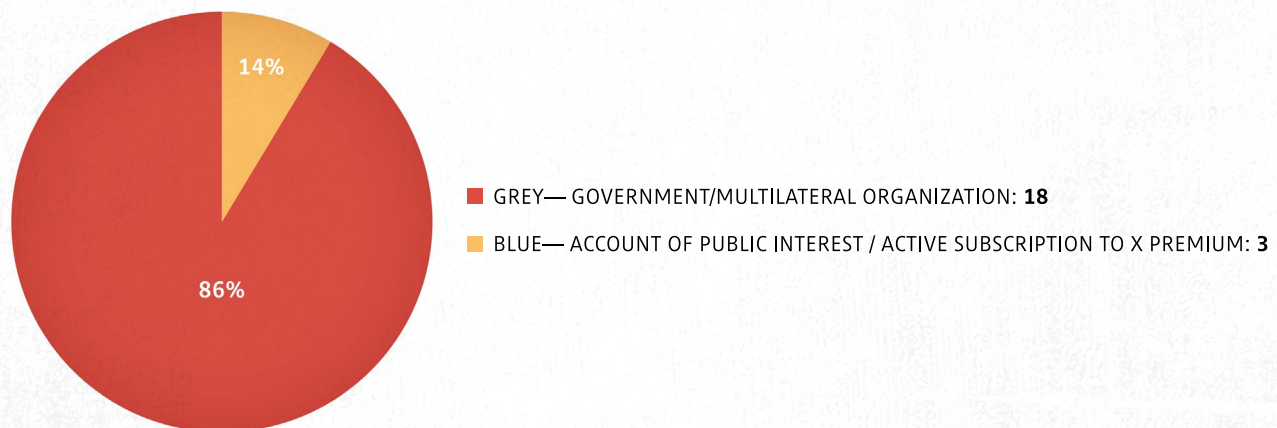
As shown in the figure above, there is a significant increase in the number of verified accounts from 2020 to the first semester of 2023. In 2020, out of a total of 28 accounts, only 9 were verified, representing 33%. For 2021, there is a notable increase as the number of created accounts rises from 28 to 35, with a total of 49% verified accounts. The trend continues in 2022, with 45% of verified accounts. Concluding the study period, the year 2023 stands out, with the most relevant data for its first semester, as out of the total 34 accounts, 21 of them, meaning 62%, have the blue verification badge.

Nonetheless, three accounts that had the verification badge under Twitter's old standards have lost it for the first semester of 2023. These accounts are: **@YXiucheng, belonging to the Ambassador of the PRC in Barbados, Yan Xiucheng; @WeiHongtian, belonging to the Ambassador of the PRC in Grenada, Wei Hongtian; and @ConsulChinaRJ, belonging to the Consulate General of the PRC in Rio de Janeiro.** In none of these three cases is it clear why the verification badge was removed.

TYPES OF VERIFICATION BADGES

X has developed a new model for classifying account verifications based on three colors. First, we have the blue badges that, as explained in the previous section, will continue to be displayed by accounts verified under the parameters prior to the November 2022 changes or through the purchase of this through the XBlue service subscription. Second, the golden badge which indicates that it is an official commercial account in organizations verified by X. Finally, the gray verification badge identifies accounts belonging to government entities or multilateral entities, as well as their affiliated officials[7]. Thus, the old government label[8] is removed and replaced in some way by the gray badge.

FIGURE N°3. TYPE OF BADGE FOR ACCOUNTS ACCORDING TO COLOR UP TO JUNE 2023-I

14%

86%

■ GREY— GOVERNMENT/MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATION: **18**

■ BLUE— ACCOUNT OF PUBLIC INTEREST / ACTIVE SUBSCRIPTION TO X PREMIUM: **3**

Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with verification data provided by
X's new verification policies

As shown in graph no. 3, of the 21 verified accounts, 18 of them – that is 86% – have the gray verification badge; and 3 of the 21 accounts, 14%, have a blue verification badge. Among the latter, we highlight that the accounts with a blue badge belong to diplomatic representatives (@MahuiChina, Ma Hui, ambassador of the PRC in Cuba and @ZhangRun, Zhang Run, former ambassador of the PRC in the Dominican Republic and current ambassador in Mexico) ; and one other account to the Consulate General of the PRC in São Paulo @CGChinaSP. Regarding the accounts with the gray verification badge, we found that, of the 18 in total, 16 of them belong to diplomatic representations of the PRC in LAC and only 2 to diplomatic representatives, such is the case of the account @embajadorcn_uy belonging to Wang Gang, ambassador of the PRC in Uruguay; and, the @EmbChinaVen account belonging to Li Baorong, former ambassador of the PRC to Venezuela[9].

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[6] Al respecto ver Twitter. (2023). Cómo obtener la marca de verificación azul en X. Twitter. **https://help.twitter.com/es/managing-your-account/about-x-verified-accounts**

[7] Al respecto ver Twitter. (2023). Acerca de las etiquetas del perfil y las marcas de verificación en X. Twitter. **https://help.twitter.com/es/rules-and-policies/profile-labels**

[8] Anteriormente, de acuerdo con las políticas de transparencia de la red social Twitter, el uso de la etiqueta gubernamental permitía brindar contexto sobre aquellas cuentas controladas por los gobiernos, medios con afiliación estatal y las personas vinculadas con estas entidades. Fuente: **https://help.twitter.com/es/rules-and-policies/state-affiliated-china**

[9] El exembajador Li Baorong deja el cargo en Venezuela en marzo de 2023.

III.
ACCOUNT ACTIVITY

During the first months of 2022, account activity followed a stable trend compared to the previous year. Between February and March, there was an increase in activity, sustained between both months, corresponding to the inauguration of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. During this time, the content of the accounts focused on promoting China's development, strengthening international multilateralism, and sporting activities and events. Additionally, starting in February 2022, Russia's invasion of Ukraine became a prominent theme in the accounts[10]. From June onwards, there was a significant increase in account activity focused on the preliminary activities leading up to the G20 summit in mid-November in Bali, Indonesia[11].

FIGURE Nº 4. **ACCOUNT ACTIVITY BETWEEN 2022 AND 2023-I**
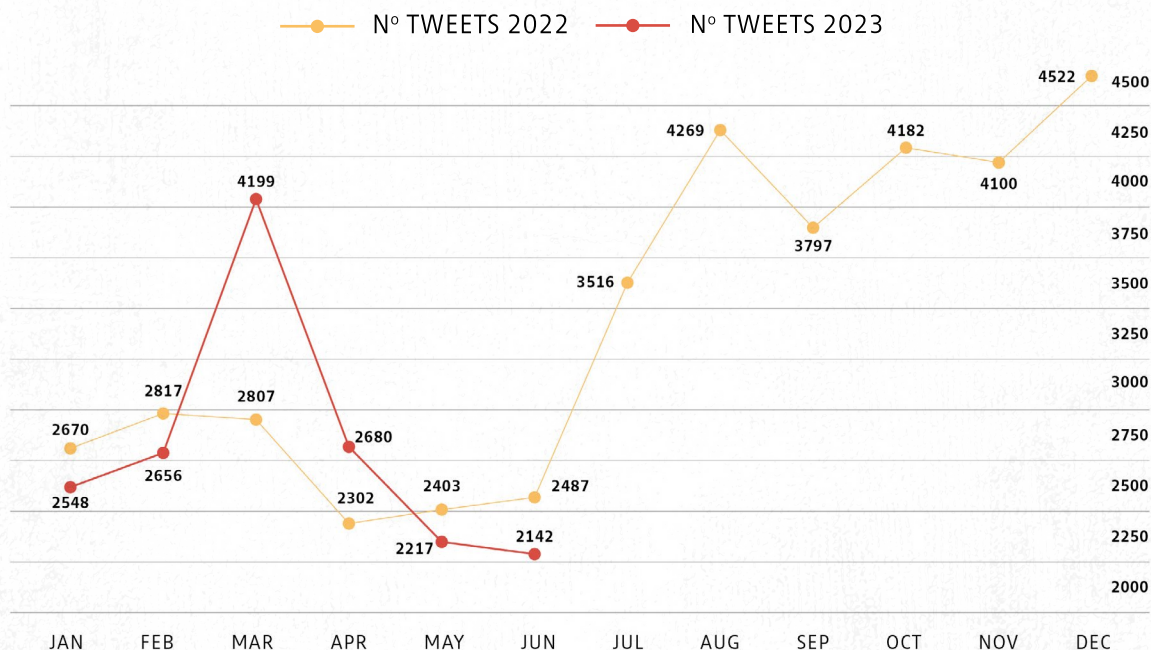
Source: Fundación Andrés Bello - Centro de Investigación Chino Latinoamericano with account activity data provided by Twitonomy and manual collection.

August saw a peak in account activity. As the figure indicates, there were a total of 4,269 tweets, which largely focused on the Chinese government's rejection of the visit by the then Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi[12], to Taiwan on August 2. The PRC government declared it a provocative act violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country[13]. In the days leading up to the announcement of Pelosi's intention to visit, as well as the moment she arrived in Taiwanese territory, all accounts, in unison and reactively, focused all their interactions on condemning this act. As we outline later in the description of the different interactions of the accounts, this issue highlights all the features of Chinese public diplomacy.

During the months of September, October, and November 2022, there was a slight decrease in account activity, although it remained high overall. September began with activity related to the Chinese government's reactions to the report presented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights expressing concern about the results of the assessment of human rights situations in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region[14]. As we will see later, the accounts' dynamics will remain reactive due to the nature of this topic. During this month, albeit to a lesser extent and now more proactively, a notable topic revolves around the condolences sent by the Chinese government to the family of the monarch and the people of the United Kingdom for the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. For October, the central theme will be the celebration of the 20th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) from

the 16th to the 22nd[15]. The trend in account activity was quite proactive, highlighting the achievements of the CCP, amendments to the party's statutes, and the confirmation of a third term for President Xi Jinping. Finally, for the month of November, the accounts' activity was related to the promotion of the fifth edition of the China International Import Expo – CIIE[16] in Shanghai between the 5th and 10th of that month.

In December, account activity saw a renewed increase. Several topics influenced the activity during this period, including the 15th China-LAC Business Summit held in Ecuador[17]; the FIFA World Cup in Qatar, where, despite China not qualifying, various diplomatic representations made references to this sporting event as another multilateral space fostering solidarity among countries; the adoption of the Global Biodiversity Framework[18] at the 15th United Nations Conference on Biological Diversity; and the announcement of the relaxation of China's "Zero-Covid" policy[19].

For 2023, account activity remained stable compared to the same months of the previous year. Notably, in January and February, there were highlights related to the progress in reopening borders in China, the resumption of international flights, and the easing of health policies regarding Covid-19 infections. However, as shown in Figure 4, March witnessed a peak in activity across all accounts, totaling 4,199 tweets. The reason behind this surge was the severance of diplomatic relations with Taiwan by the Republic of Honduras in favor of establishing official

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[10] Hankin, L. y Chacón, R. (2023, 24 de febrero). Guerra en Ucrania en gráficos: cómo ha cambiado el conflicto desde el inicio de la invasión rusa hace un año. BBC News Mundo. **https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-internacional-64681811**

[11] Group of 20 [G20]. (2022). G20 BALI LEADERS DECLARATION Bali, Indonesia, 15-16 November 2022. Group of 20 [G20]. **https://www.g20.org/content/dam/gtwenty/gtwenty_new/about_g20/previous-summit-documents/2022-bali/G20%20Bali%20Leaders%27%20Declaration,%2015-16%20November%202022.pdf**

[12] Nancy Pelosi deja el cargo como presidenta de la Cámara de representantes de los Estados Unidos en octubre de 2023.

[13] Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de la República Popular China. (2022). Declaración del Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de la República Popular China. Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores de la República Popular China. **https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/esp/wjdt/gongbao/202208/t20220802_10732323.html**

relations with the PRC. Following the announcement made on March 25 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Honduras[20], under the instructions of President Xiomara Castro, all Chinese diplomatic representations and diplomats in the region expressed their views, celebrating the decision of the Central American country.

FIGURE NO. 5. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: ACCOUNT ACTIVITY BETWEEN 2020 AND 2023-I
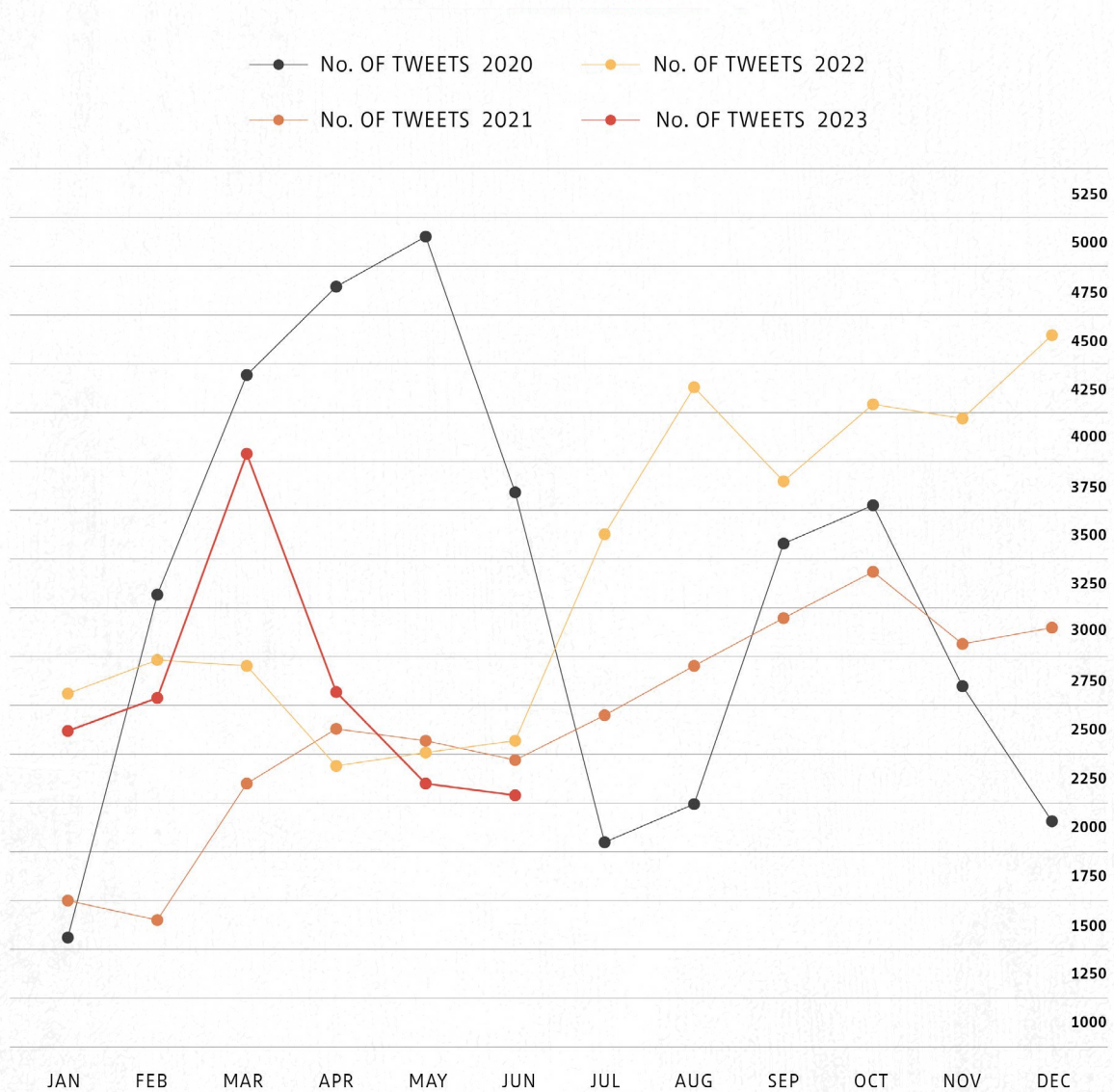
Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with account activity data provided by Twitonomy and manual collection.

Como se observa en la gráfica Nº 5, al examinar de manera comparada la actividad de las cuentas, se puede identificar el año 2020 como el año con el mayor y más extenso pico de actividad, sostenido entre los meses de enero y junio, debido al impacto generado por la emergencia sanitaria mundial por el virus Covid - 19 y la posterior declaratoria de pandemia por parte de la Organización Mundial de la Salud. Para este año el enfoque discursivo de las cuentas fue en su mayoría de carácter reactivo en virtud de la defensa frente a las diversas acusaciones en contra del gobierno chino por el origen y manejo del virus. En el año 2021, la actividad de las cuentas muestra un comportamiento más estable y equilibrado gracias a los avances en la contención de la pandemia, siendo el enfoque proactivo el predominante en el contenido de las cuentas, propiciando un mayor fortalecimiento de su diplomacia pública a través de la promoción del país a nivel internacional como un socio fuerte, cooperativo y solidario. Para el año 2022 y el primer semestre del 2023, la actividad de las cuentas sigue manteniendo esta tendencia en fortalecer su diplomacia pública de manera equilibrada, en la que se evidencia una mayor presencia del enfoque proactivo a lo largo del tiempo y la aparición del enfoque reactivo cuando las circunstancias así lo ameriten.

[14] United Nations. (2022). OHCHR Assessment of human rights concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People 's Republic of China. United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. **https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/ohchr-assessment-human-rights-concerns-xinjiang-uyghur-autonomous-region**

[15] Xinhua. (2022, 25 de octubre). Texto íntegro de informe al XX Congreso Nacional del Partido Comunista de China. Spanish.news.cn. **https://spanish.news.cn/20221025/7d0809b9796646939ad783414a4cee25/c.html**

[16] China.org.cn. (2022). 5th China International Import Expo (CIIE). **china.org.cn. http://www.china.org.cn/business/node_8033011.html**

[17] XV Cumbre Empresarial China-LAC. Xinhua. (2022, 15 de diciembre). Inauguran en Ecuador XV Cumbre Empresarial China-LAC 2022. Foro China-CELAC. **http://www.chinacelacforum.org/esp/ltdt_2/202212/t20221215_10990795.html**

[18] Marco Global Biodiversidad Biológica Kunming – Montreal. United Nations Environment Programme. (2022, december 18). Convention on Biological Diversity [Conference]. Conference of the parties to the convention on biological diversity, Montreal, Canada. **https://www.cbd.int/doc/c/e6d3/cd1d/daf663719a03902a9b116c34/cop-15-l-25-en.pdf**

[19] State Council of the People's Republic of China. (2022). China optimizes COVID-19 policies. English.gov.cn. **https://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/ministries/202212/07/content_WS63909eb2c6d0a757729e4112.html**

[20] Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores y Cooperación Internacional – Gobierno de la República de Honduras. (23 de marzo, 2023). Comunicado: Honduras anuncia ruptura de relaciones diplomáticas con Taiwán. **https://docs.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=https://sreci.gob.hn/sites/default/files/COMUNICADO%252025%2520de%2520marzo%2520de%25202023.pdf**

IV.
MOST ACTIVE ACCOUNTS: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS 2020 – 2023-I

The most active accounts during the study period belong to diplomatic representatives. However, as explained in the 2021 report, there is a notable exception with the embassy in Brazil, @EmbaixadaChina, which had 3,702 tweets in 2020, earning it the third spot for that year. Similarly, for 2022 and the first semester of 2023, the accounts of diplomatic representations in Grenada (@ChinaEmbGrenada) and Jamaica (@ChinaEmbJA) rank fifth. Both cases show a growing trend in embassy account activity rather than being tied to specific topics, as seen with the embassy in Brazil in 2020.

FIGURE NO. 6. TOP 5 MOST ACTIVE ACCOUNTS 2020 – 2023-I

2020		No. OF TWEETS	2021		No. OF TWEETS
1	**Li Baorong** Ambassador of the PRC in Venezuela @Li_Baorong	9383	1	**Wei Qiang** Ambassador of the PRC in Panama @weiasecas	3769
2	**Wei Qiang** Ambassador of the PRC in Panama @weiasecas	7301	2	**Yan Xiusheng** Ambassador of the PRC in Barbados @Yxiusheng	3302
3	**Embassy of the PRC in Brazil** @EmbaixadaChina	3702	3	**Ma Hui** Ambassador of the PRC in Cuba @MahuiChina	2429
4	**Liu Quan** Ambassador of the PRC in Surinam @AmbLiuQuan	3655	4	**Zhang Run** Ambassador of the PRC in Dominican Republic @EmbZhangRun	1790
5	**Zhang Run** Ambassador of the PRC in Dominican Republic @EmbZhangRun	2873	5	**Wang Gang** Ambassador of the PRC in Uruguay @embajadorcn_uy	1536

2022		No. OF TWEETS	2023 – I		No. OF TWEETS
1	**Ma Hui** Ambassador of the PRC in Cuba @MahuiChina	15598	1	**Yan Xiusheng** Ambassador of the PRC in Barbados @Yxiusheng	2020
2	**Yan Xiusheng** Ambassador of the PRC in Barbados @Yxiusheng	2325	2	**Ma Hui** Ambassador of the PRC in Cuba @MahuiChina	1781
3	**Wei Qiang** Ambassador of the PRC in Panamá @weiasecas	2216	3	**Wang Jialei** Ambassador of the PRC in Bolivia @WangJialei4	1552
4	**Wang Jialei** Consul of the PRC in Bolivia @WangJialei4	2059	4	**Wei Qiang** Ambassador of the PRC in Panama @weiasecas	1044
5	**Embassy of the PRC in Grenada** @ChinaEmbGrenada	1482	5	**Embassy of the PRC in Jamaica** @ChinaEmbJA	966

Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center.

In terms of the extensive activity of the accounts of diplomatic representatives, it is important to note that the personal style of diplomatic personnel significantly influences how their accounts are managed. It appears that in the content of tweets from ambassadorial accounts, both proactive and reactive trends can be explicitly identified based on the addressed topics - a feature that might be a bit more implicit in the case of diplomatic representations. However, the intensity and the somewhat combative or provocative tone in their expressions greatly depends on the individual disposition and personal style of the diplomat in question.
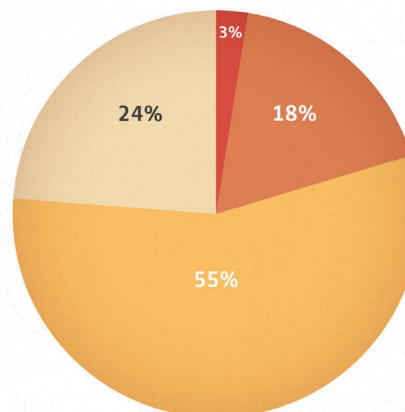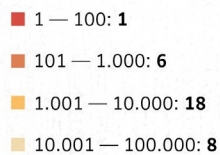
V.

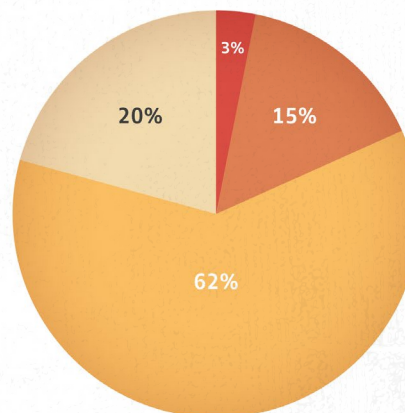# DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE FOLLOWERS AND FOLLOWED ACCOUNTS [21]

The following figures show that for 2022, 18 out of 33 accounts (55%) had a range of 1,001 to 10,000 followers. This figure increases for the first semester of 2023, with a total of 21 out of 34 accounts (62%). The same trend occurs with the number of accounts that have a range of over 10,000 followers; in 2022, we have a total of 8 accounts (24%), and in 2023-I, a total of 7 accounts (20%).

FIGURES NO. 7 AND 8. **RANGE IN THE NUMBER OF FOLLOWERS 2022 - 2023-I**

FOLLOWER RANGE 2022
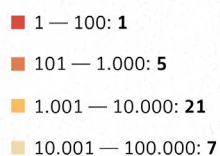
- 1 — 100: **1**
- 101 — 1.000: **6**
- 1.001 — 10.000: **18**
- 10.001 — 100.000: **8**

3%
18%
24%
55%

FOLLOWER RANGE 2023-I

- 1 — 100: **1**
- 101 — 1.000: **5**
- 1.001 — 10.000: **21**
- 10.001 — 100.000: **7**

3%
15%
20%
62%

Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with account activity data provided by Twitonomy and manual collection.

Putting these figures in context and comparing them to previous periods, there is a substantial increase in the number of followers of the accounts. As shown in the following figure, the growth in the number of followers accelerates over time, a consequence of the creation of accounts and their increased activity. Similarly, it reflects the growth in the bidirectional nature of communication between many accounts and the foreign audience, particularly through interactions via replies or mentions from other users. All of this is an indicator of the gradual strengthening of China's digital diplomacy in the region. The trend is observed in both the accounts of diplomatic representations and representatives.

FIGURE NO. 9. RANGE IN THE NUMBER OF ACCOUNT FOLLOWERS 2020 - 2023-I

Legend: ■ 1 — 100　■ 101 — 1.000　■ 1.001 — 10.000　■ 10.001 — 100.000

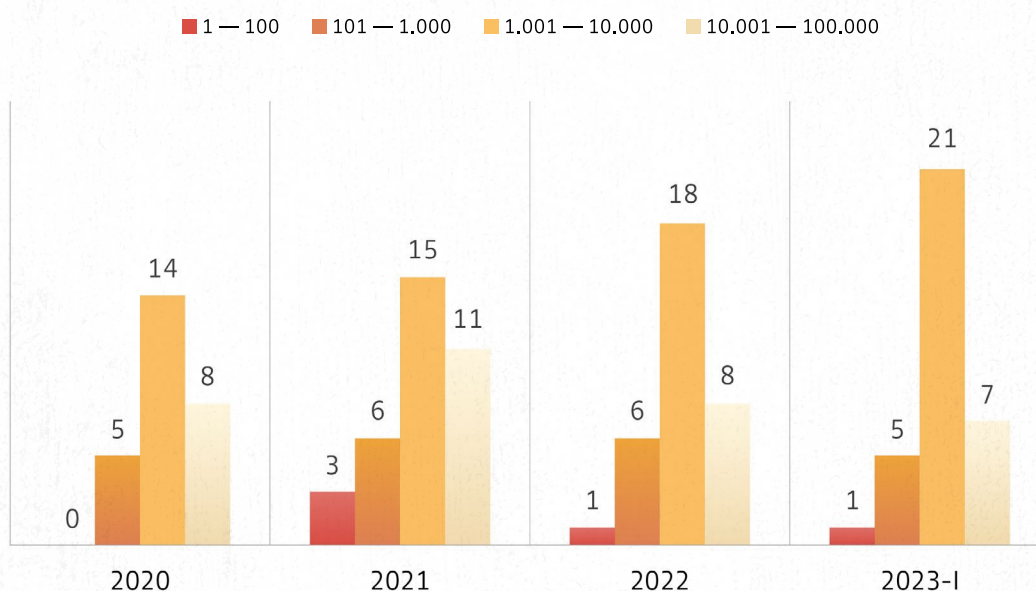|	2020	2021	2022	2023-I
1 — 100	0	3	1	1
101 — 1.000	5	6	6	5
1.001 — 10.000	14	15	18	21
10.001 — 100.000	8	11	8	7

Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with account activity data provided by Twitonomy and manual collection.

The number of accounts followed is not significant. As shown in the following figures, for 2022, 31 out of 33 accounts (94%) in the study followed less than 1,000 accounts. The same happens during the first semester of 2023, with 32 out of 34 accounts (94%) following less than 1,000 accounts. Only 2 accounts in both periods have more than 1,000 accounts followed, representing 6% of the total in both cases.

FIGURES NO. 10 AND 11. RANGO EN EL NÚMERO DE CUENTAS SEGUIDAS 2022 Y 2023 - I

FOLLOWING RANGE 2022

- 1 — 100: **12 ACCOUNTS**
- 101 — 1.000: **19 ACCOUNTS**
- 1.001 — 10.000: **2 ACCOUNTS**
- 10.001 — 100.000: **0 ACCOUNTS**

6%
36%
58%
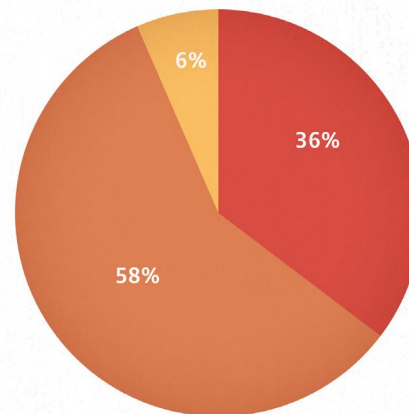
FOLLOWING RANGE 2023-I

- 1 — 100: **11 ACCOUNTS**
- 101 — 1.000: **21 ACCOUNTS**
- 1.001 — 10.000: **2 ACCOUNTS**
- 10.001 — 100.000: **0 ACCOUNTS**
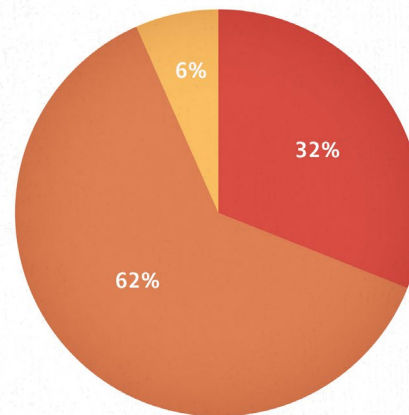
6%
32%
62%

Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with account activity data provided by Twitonomy and manual collection.

As shown in the following figure, the dynamics have remained stable across the four study periods, keeping the number of accounts followed within the previously described ranges.

FIGURE NO. 12. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: RANGE IN THE NUMBER OF ACCOUNTS FOLLOWED 2020 – 2023-I

Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with account activity data provided by Twitonomy and manual collection.

VI.
FEATURES OF FOLLOWERS AND ACCOUNTS FOLLOWED 2020 - 2023-I

The main characteristics of the accounts followed by the Chinese representatives and diplomatic representations align with those observed in the comparative study conducted for 2020 and 2021. Firstly, most of the accounts followed belong to the "PRC Government" and "Media and PRC Promotion Sites" user categories[22]. This underscores a key element of their foreign policy: the strict and precise guidance from the Chinese government regarding the management and safeguarding of its international image. Secondly, the "LAC Governments and Territorial Entities" category indicates a prioritization of communication with the governments and officials of the region. The "Organizations, Forums, and Multilateral Spaces" category falls in third position, demonstrating a commitment to strengthening and defending multilateralism. Last but not least, we have the "Foreign Media" category, emphasizing the importance of understanding the various narratives about China at international level.

In the case of follower accounts, these display the same features as those observed in the comparative study for 2020-2021. The majority of followers belong to the "Citizens" category, which refers to the foreign public, the main target of public diplomacy. This not only indicates the interest in China from the local audience but also strengthens the conditions for smooth and reinforced communication. Secondly, three types of user categories that are quite particular are still present: "PRC or Tawain Citizen," "Content Amplifier," and "Bot". Further investigation is needed to determine whether these accounts are part of *astroturfing* dynamics[23] —a public relations technique based on projecting a false image of naturalness and spontaneity to gain support and increase dissemination— as documented within China[24]. We also need to explore whether these are related to a new trend called *Spamouflage*[25], referring to the identification of a pro-China propaganda network operating on different social media platforms, including X[26].

The figure below reveals that there is a correlation between the features of follower accounts and the accounts followed by Chinese representatives and diplomatic representations. It also highlights

[22] Recordemos que los medios de comunicación de la RPCh más importantes a nivel nacional e internacional son de propiedad estatal. China Global Televisión Network (CGTN) es propiedad de China Central Televisión (CCTV) empresa que depende directamente del Consejo de Estado de la República Popular de China. Xinhua es la agencia oficial de noticias del gobierno chino y depende directamente del Consejo de Estado de la República Popular de China. China Daily es el principal periódico de habla inglesa, es propiedad del Partido Comunista de China. China News Service es la segunda agencia de noticias más importante de China y propiedad del Partido Comunista Chino. Global Times News, es un periódico con una línea editorial un poco más laxa en relación con los lineamientos del gobierno de China y es propiedad del China Daily. (Micolta, 2022a)

[23] Ver: Jerry Zhang, Darrell Carpenter and Myung Ko. (2013). Online Astroturfing: A Theoretical Perspective. Proceedings of the Nineteenth Americas Conference of Information Systems. Chicago, Illinois. **https://www.researchgate.net/profile/DarrellCarpenter/publication/286729041_Online_astroturfing_A_theoretical_perspective/links/56df195908ae979addef5103/Online-astroturfing-A-theoretical-perspective.pdf**

relationship dynamics between them, either through retweets, responses, and/or mentions. This is further explored in the following sections.

FIGURE NO. 13. ACCOUNT INTERACTIONS BY USER TYPE 2020 - 2023-I
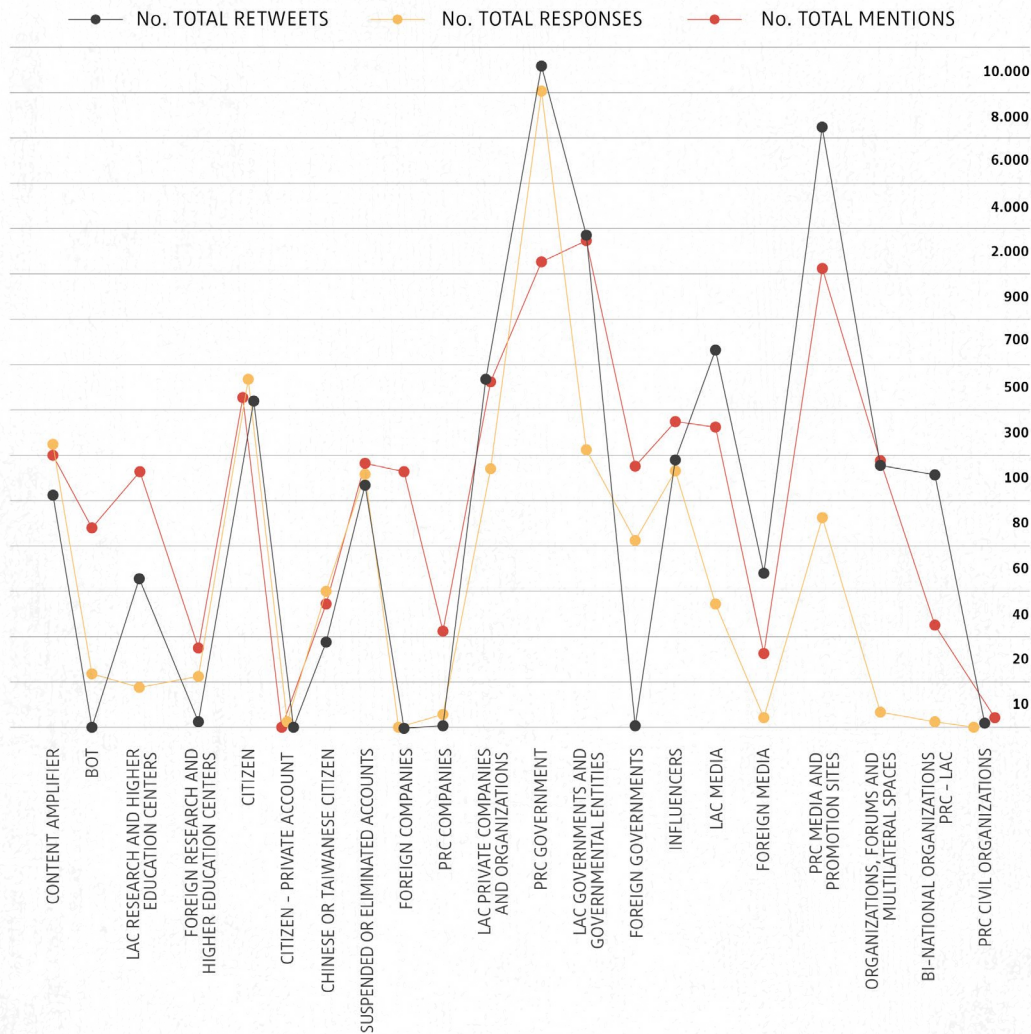
Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with account activity data provided by Twitonomy until March 2023 and manual collection until June 2023.

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[24] Ver: Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. (2017). How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts for Strategic Distraction, not Engaged Argument. American Political Science Review, 111(3), 484-501 y Han, Rongbin. (2015). Manufacturing Consent in Cyberspace: China's 'Fifty-Cent Army. Journal of Current Chinese Affairs, 44(2), 105–34, entre otros.

[25] El término "Spamouflage" ha sido acuñado en los estudios realizados por la empresa Graphika, la cual mediante el empleo de IA realiza estudios sobre márketing digital y desinformación. Para mayor información visitar **www.graphika.com**

[26] Nimmo, B. et al. (2020). Return of the (Spamouflage) Dragon. Pro-Chinese Spam Network Tries Again. Graphika Information Operations. https://public-assets.graphika.com/reports/Graphika_Report_Spamouflage_Returns.pdf y - Nimmo, B. et al. (2021). Chinese Spam Network Finally Starts to Gain Some Traction. Graphika Spamouflage Breakout. **https://public-assets.graphika.com/reports/graphika_report_spamouflage_breakout.pdf**

VII.
INTERACTIONS AND DYNAMICS OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN ACCOUNTS [27]

MOST RETWEETED USERS 2022 - 2023-I

The main category of users with the highest number of retweets for 2022 is "LAC Government and Government Entities," emphasizing the celebration of the establishment of diplomatic relations with Honduras and Nicaragua. Following this category in terms of the highest number of retweets are "PRC Government" and "PRC Media and Promotion Sites" – these categories continue to be the main ones in the first semester of 2023, maintaining the trend from previous years.

FIGURE NO. 14. NUMBER OF MOST RETWEETED ACCOUNTS BY CATEGORY 2022 - 2023-I

CATEGORIES	No. ACCOUNTS 2022	No. ACCOUNTS 2023-I
CONTENT AMPLIFIER	4	2
BOT	0	0
LAC RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION CENTERS	3	7
FOREIGN RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION CENTERS	0	2
CITIZEN	4	6
CITIZEN – PRIVATE ACCOUNT	0	0
CHINESE OR TAIWANESE CITIZEN	0	0
SUSPENDED OR ELIMINATED ACCOUNTS	0	0
FOREIGN COMPANIES	0	0
PRC COMPANIES	1	0
LAC PRIVATE COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS	4	2
PRC GOVERNMENT	45	37
LAC GOVERNMENTS AND GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES	61	29
FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS	1	0
INFLUENCERS	3	7
LAC MEDIA	15	8
FOREIGN MEDIA	1	0
PRC MEDIA AND PROMOTION SITES	20	22
ORGANIZATIONS, FORUMS AND MULTILATERAL SPACES	4	2
BI-NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS PRC – LAC	2	3
PRC CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS	2	0

Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with account activity data provided by Twitonomy until March 2023 and manual collection until June 2023.

FIGURE NO. 15. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: NUMBER OF MOST RETWEETED ACCOUNTS BY CATEGORY 2020 – 2023-I
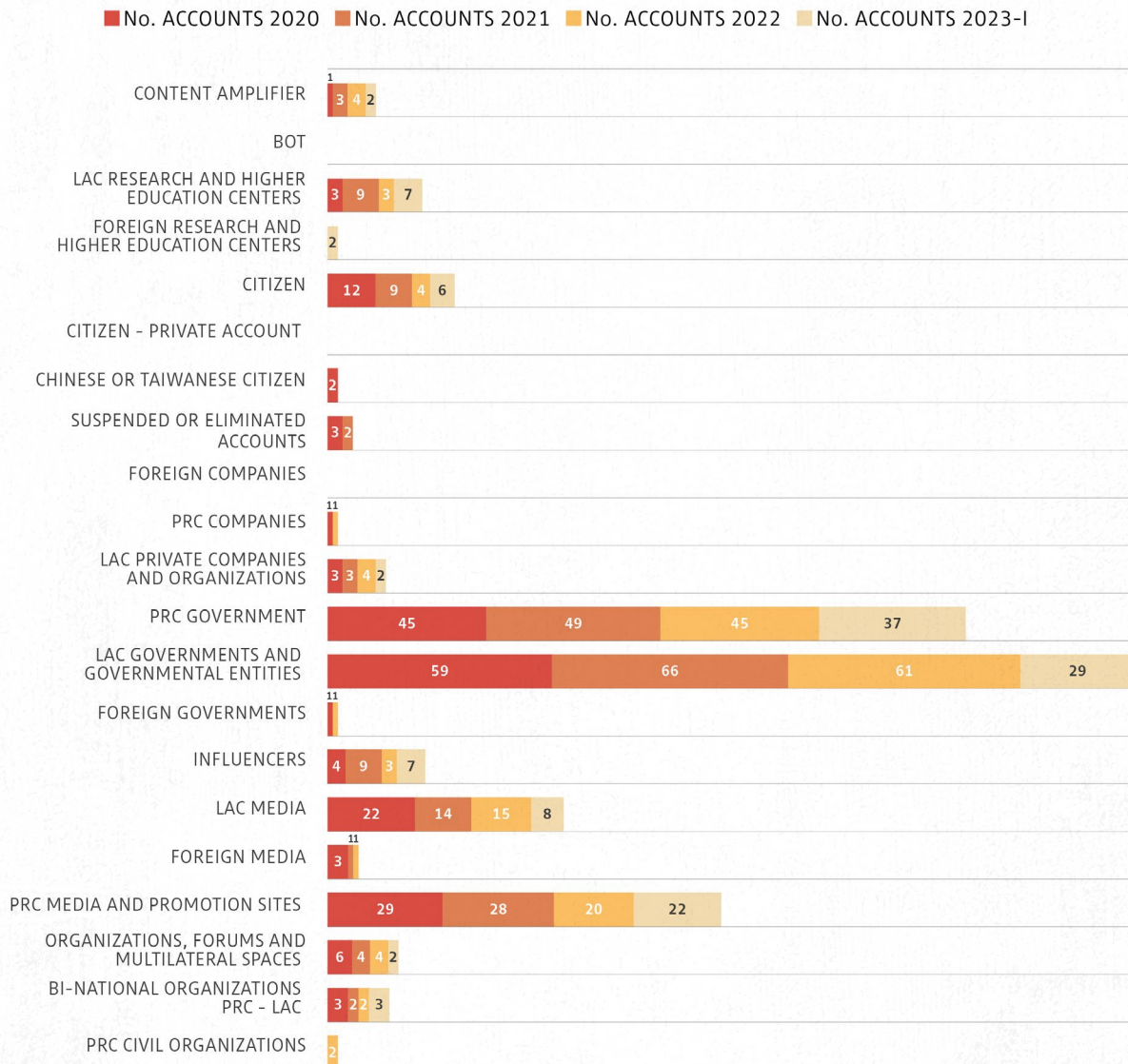
■ No. ACCOUNTS 2020   ■ No. ACCOUNTS 2021   ■ No. ACCOUNTS 2022   ■ No. ACCOUNTS 2023-I

Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with account activity data provided by Twitonomy until March 2023 and manual collection until June 2023.

[27] La creación de cuentas en redes sociales, las publicaciones y un número significativo de seguidores, no son elementos suficientes para una efectiva construcción de comunicación en red, y X no es la excepción. Es indispensable el uso de las diferentes opciones de interacción comunicativa con otras cuentas de usuarios. Actualmente, X conserva las interacciones que se manejaban en Twitter. Estas interacciones son: los retuits (RT), a través de los cuales se comparte una publicación original o tuit, y se usan para ampliar la difusión del mensaje original y en la mayoría de los casos mostrar respaldo. Las menciones (@nombredeusuario), las cuales permiten un "contacto directo" con otro usuario; y las etiquetas o hashtags (#palabras o frases), mediante los cuales se crea una red de comunicación sobre un tema determinado (Micolta, 2022a).

In comparison with previous years, it is clear that the highest number of interactions for the accounts is through retweets, far exceeding the use of other types of interactions such as replies and mentions. It is also noteworthy that the main categories of users interacted with are: "PRC Government," "LAC Governments and Government Entities," "PRC Media and Promotion Sites," and "LAC Media." This highlights, as mentioned earlier, a consistent amplification of content.

It is noteworthy that for 2022 and the first semester of 2023, new categories of users have been added, namely "Foreign Research Centers and Higher Education" and "PRC Civil Organizations." As we illustrate, these categories tend to be more relevant in cases of mentions and replies.

TYPE OF USERS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF RESPONSES 2022 - 2023-I

For 2022, the user category that takes the first place is "Citizen." As shown in the following figure, this marks a turning point compared to previous years, as the activity begins to occur in a bidirectional manner rather than being dominated by unidirectional discourses among the same official sources. However, discursive concentration remains evident, as the user category "PRC Government" occupies the second place in terms of the number of responses.

FIGURE NO. 16. NO. OF ACCOUNTS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF RESPONSES BY CATEGORY 2022 - 2023-I

CATEGORIES	No. ACCOUNTS 2022	No. ACCOUNTS 2023-I
CONTENT AMPLIFIER	16	3
BOT	0	0
LAC RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION CENTERS	2	2
FOREIGN RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION CENTERS	2	0
CITIZEN	59	22
CITIZEN - PRIVATE ACCOUNT	0	1
CHINESE OR TAIWANESE CITIZEN	2	10
SUSPENDED OR ELIMINATED ACCOUNTS	0	0
FOREIGN COMPANIES	0	0
PRC COMPANIES	1	0
LAC PRIVATE COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS	4	2

PRC GOVERNMENT	35	32
LAC GOVERNMENTS AND GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES	35	16
FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS	2	1
INFLUENCERS	5	4
LAC MEDIA	3	2
FOREIGN MEDIA	0	0
PRC MEDIA AND PROMOTION SITES	7	4
ORGANIZATIONS, FORUMS AND MULTILATERAL SPACES	3	0
BI-NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS PRC - LAC	0	1
PRC CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS	0	0

Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with account activity data provided by Twitonomy until March 2023 and manual collection until June 2023.

FIGURE NO. 17. NO. OF ACCOUNTS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF RESPONSES BY CATEGORY 2020 – 2023-I

No. ACCOUNTS 2020 ■ No. ACCOUNTS 2021 ■ No. ACCOUNTS 2022 ■ No. ACCOUNTS 2023-I
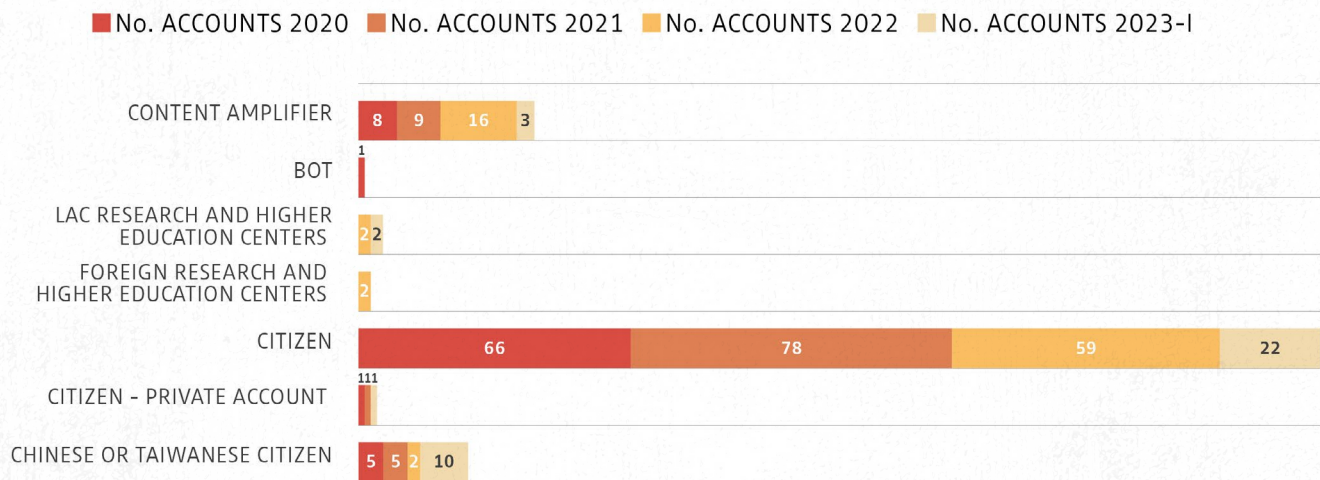
[28] Corresponden a las cuentas de la aplicación X (antes Twitter) de los centros de investigación de carácter multidisciplinar y sin ánimo de lucro que promueven la investigación y el debate académico sobre diferentes temáticas, creados en diferentes países a los de América Latina y el Caribe, así como las de sus miembros y representantes. De igual manera se incorporan las cuentas de la aplicación X (antes Twitter) de los centros de educación superior, públicos y privados, de países diferentes a los de América Latina y el Caribe, así como las cuentas de sus miembros y representantes.

[29] Corresponden a las cuentas de la aplicación X (antes Twitter) de organizaciones creadas por miembros de la comunidad china de ultramar, conocida también como diáspora china, en los países de América Latina y el Caribe; así como las cuentas de sus representantes.
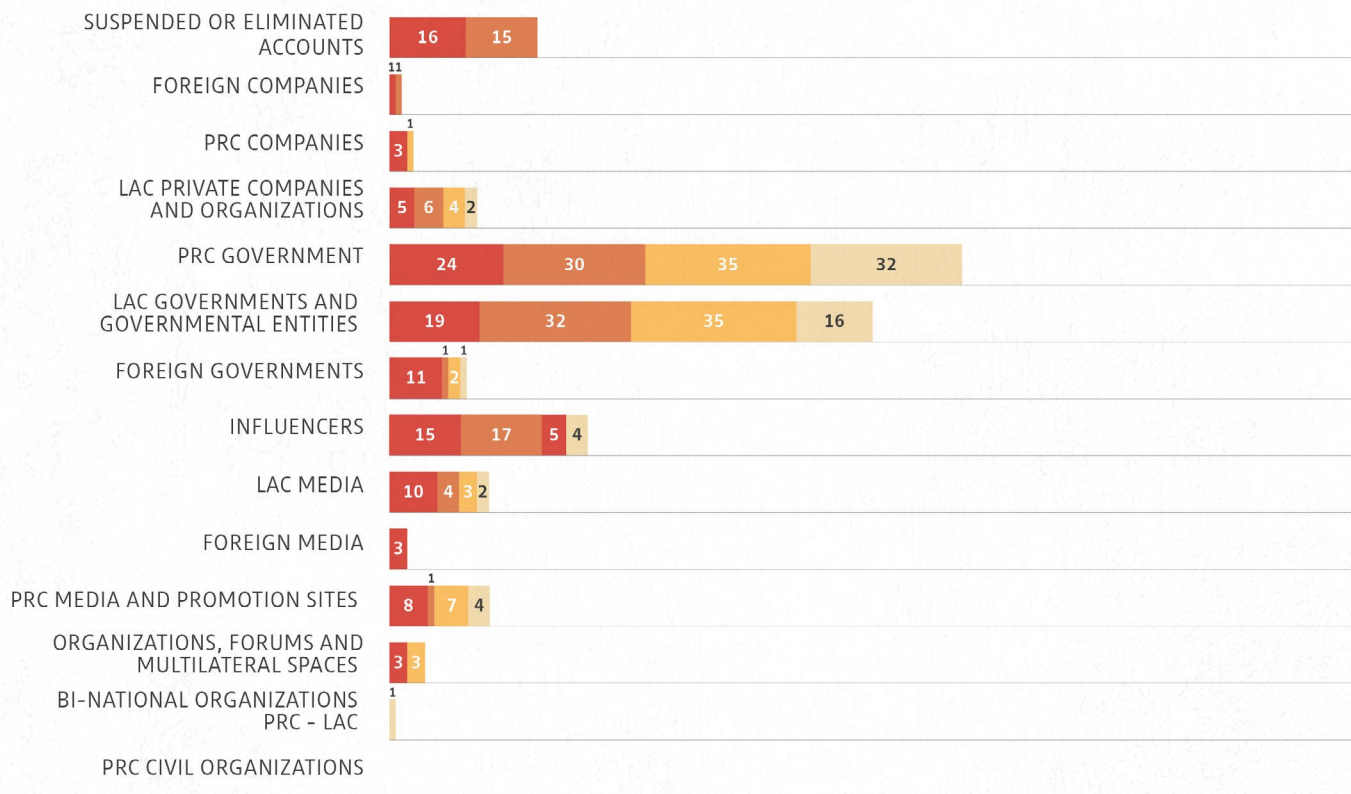
Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with account activity data provided by Twitonomy until March 2023 and manual collection until June 2023.

When examining the four study periods together, as illustrated in the previous figure, a significant change in communication dynamics is observed. While in the years 2020 and 2021, unidirectional communication predominated, starting from 2022, the "Citizen" category gained greater relevance. This indicates an increase in the level of interaction with the foreign audience.

TYPE OF USERS MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED 2022 - 20233-I

Highlighting that the purpose of mentions is to involve one or several users in the same conversation on a specific topic and thus amplify their reach, it is not coincidental that the "LAC Governments and Government Entities" user category leads in first place, followed by "PRC Media and Promotion Sites" "PRC Government." This demonstrates the ongoing emphasis on promoting China's image as a peaceful and reliable partner to official entities in the region.
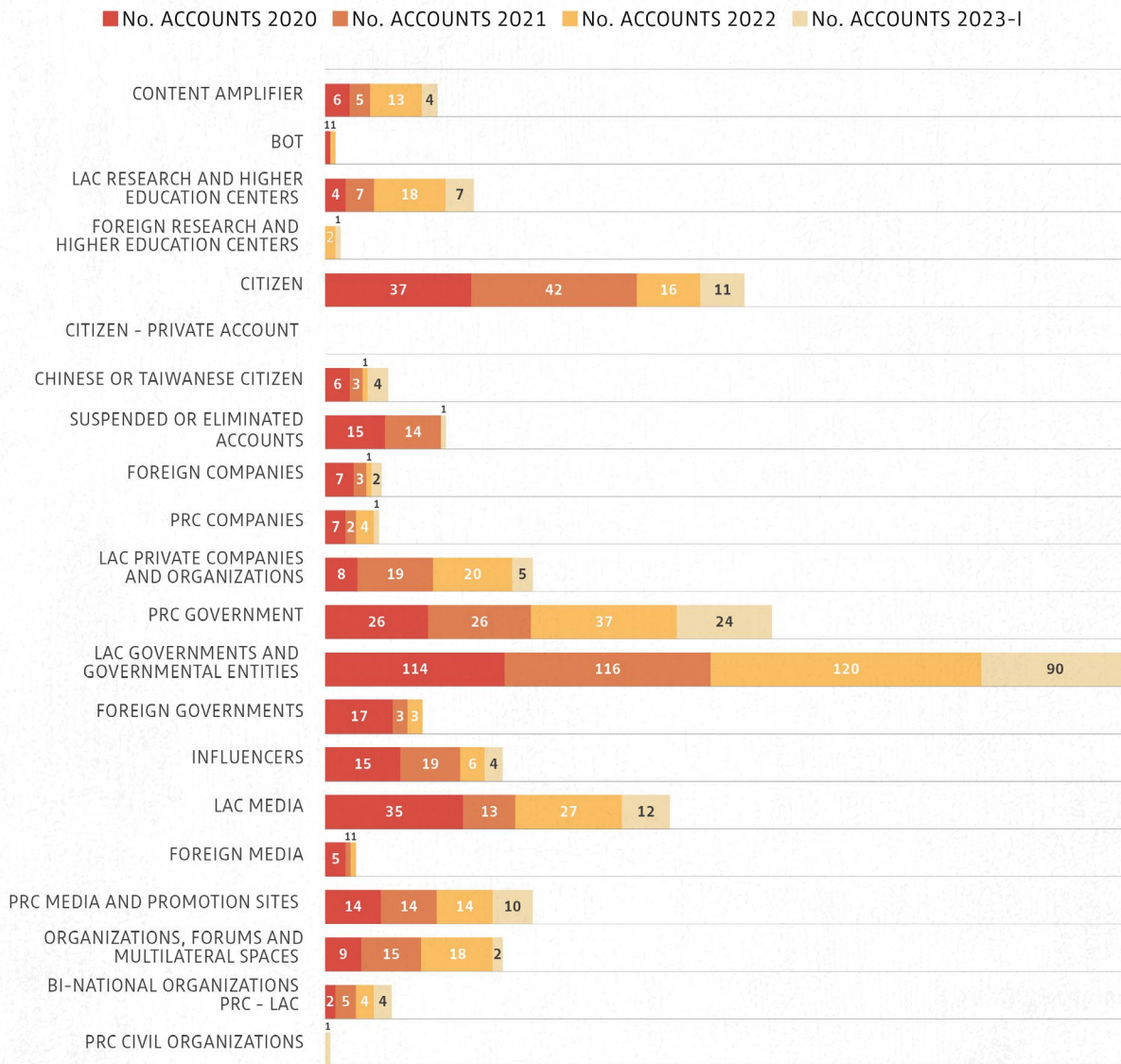
FIGURE NO. 18. NO. OF ACCOUNTS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF MENTIONS BY CATEGORY 2022 - 2023-I

CATEGORIES	No. ACCOUNTS 2022	No. ACCOUNTS 2023-I
CONTENT AMPLIFIER	13	4
BOT	1	0
LAC RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION CENTERS	18	7
FOREIGN RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION CENTERS	2	1
CITIZEN	16	11
CITIZEN - PRIVATE ACCOUNT	0	0
CHINESE OR TAIWANESE CITIZEN	1	4
SUSPENDED OR ELIMINATED ACCOUNTS	0	1
FOREIGN COMPANIES	1	2
PRC COMPANIES	4	1
LAC PRIVATE COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS	20	5
PRC GOVERNMENT	37	24
LAC GOVERNMENTS AND GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES	120	90
FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS	3	0
INFLUENCERS	6	4
LAC MEDIA	27	12
FOREIGN MEDIA	1	0
PRC MEDIA AND PROMOTION SITES	14	10
ORGANIZATIONS, FORUMS AND MULTILATERAL SPACES	18	2
BI-NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS PRC - LAC	4	4
PRC CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS	0	1

Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with account activity data provided by Twitonomy until March 2023 and manual collection until June 2023.

FIGURE NO. 19. NO. OF ACCOUNTS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF MENTIONS BY CATEGORY 2020 – 2023-I

■ No. ACCOUNTS 2020 ■ No. ACCOUNTS 2021 ■ No. ACCOUNTS 2022 ■ No. ACCOUNTS 2023-I

Category	2020	2021	2022	2023-I
CONTENT AMPLIFIER	6	5	13	4
BOT	11			
LAC RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION CENTERS	4	7	18	7
FOREIGN RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION CENTERS	1 2			
CITIZEN	37	42	16	11
CITIZEN - PRIVATE ACCOUNT				
CHINESE OR TAIWANESE CITIZEN	6	3	1 4	
SUSPENDED OR ELIMINATED ACCOUNTS	15	14	1	
FOREIGN COMPANIES	7	3	1 2	
PRC COMPANIES	7	2	1 4	
LAC PRIVATE COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS	8	19	20	5
PRC GOVERNMENT	26	26	37	24
LAC GOVERNMENTS AND GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES	114	116	120	90
FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS	17	3	3	
INFLUENCERS	15	19	6	4
LAC MEDIA	35	13	27	12
FOREIGN MEDIA	5	1 1		
PRC MEDIA AND PROMOTION SITES	14	14	14	10
ORGANIZATIONS, FORUMS AND MULTILATERAL SPACES	9	15	18	2
BI-NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS PRC - LAC	2	5	4	4
PRC CIVIL ORGANIZATIONS	1			

Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with account activity data provided by Twitonomy until March 2023 and manual collection until June 2023.

For a description of each of the account categories analyzed, **click here.**

MOST FREQUENTLY USED HASHTAGS 2022 - 2023-I

Considering that the purpose of tags or hashtags is to highlight and amplify the reach of a specific topic within interactions on the platform, they will closely relate to the trends observed in the accounts' activity section. As seen in the figure below, the two main categories in hashtag usage are "PRC Government" and "PRC Promotion." The first addresses topics such as the defense of the "one China principle" after the visit of the President of the United States House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, in August 2022; the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative in 2023; the celebrations in both years of the Chinese government's annual plenary sessions of the National People's Congress (NPC) and of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), both known as the "Two Sessions"; the launch of the Global Security Initiative[30] in February 2023, which strives for security governance supported by the United Nations and with the purpose of preventing war, among other topics such as the respective celebrations of the anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party. As for the second category, "PRC Promotion", it mostly concentrated on the celebration of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Along similar lines, the "PRC - LAC Bilateral Relations" category follows, primarily mentioning the celebrations of the anniversary of China's diplomatic relations with various countries in the region. Likewise, the "Organizations, Forums, and Multilateral Spaces" category refers to the strengthening and promotion of BRICS and the development of sporting events such as the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup held in Qatar as renewed spaces for strengthening multilateralism. Following these are the categories "Technological Advances in the PRC," with the promotion of Shenzhou space missions and the promotion of 5G technology; and "International Solidarity and South-South Cooperation," in which the war in Ukraine has played a prominent role. Highlighted in this last category is the agreement between the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) and the People's Republic of China[31] or academic cooperation and knowledge diplomacy, as well as the admission of the Asian country as an Observer State.

Finally, we have the "U.S." category, in which the topic of Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan is addressed again, and the theme of Fentanyl is added due to U.S.' accusations against China regarding its responsibility for its production. The "Environment and Biodiversity" category follows, covering the UN Biodiversity Conference and the adoption of the Global Framework for Biological Diversity. The "Covid-19" category moves to the last place, although it continues to address topics related to recent research on the virus, as well as positive experiences following the overcoming of the pandemic.

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[30] MFA News. (2023, february 21). The Global Security Initiative Concept Paper. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China. **https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/202302/t20230221_11028348.html#:~:text=Chinese%20President%20Xi%20Jinping%20has,with%20a%20win%2Dwin%20mindset**

[31] China-FLACSO. (2023). People's Republic of China as FLACSO's Observer State. FLACSO General Secretariat. **http://cu.china-embassy.gov.cn/yw/zgyw/202302/P020230227818912557957.pdf**

FIGURE NO. 20. MOST FREQUENTLY USED HASHTAG CATEGORIES 2022 - 2023-I

HASHTAGS BY CATEGORY	MOST USE 2022	MOST USE 2023-I
N/A	1	1
ACCURACY OF INFORMATION	3	3
INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY AND SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION	13	8
BI-NATIONAL RELATIONS PRC - LAC	34	22
PRC PROMOTION	53	42
ORGANIZATIONS, FORUMS AND MULTILATERAL SPACES	19	10
ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY	13	3
PRC GOVERNMENT	59	27
LAC COMPANIES	0	0
PRC COMPANIES	4	1
U.S.A	9	9
COVID - 19	4	4
PRC TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES	14	5

Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with account activity data provided by Twitonomy until March 2023 and manual collection until June 2023.

When examining context and comparing across different study periods, among the categories of used hashtags (Figure 20), the "Covid – 19" category underwent the most significant change during the four periods, moving from the first place in 2020 to the last place in the first semester of 2023. Like the "Government RPC" and "U.S." categories, the Covid topic equally showed a greater tendency towards reactive discourse by the accounts, aimed at protecting and defending China's image both domestically and internationally. On the other hand, the categories "PRC Promotion," "Organisms Forums and Multilateral Spaces," "International Solidarity and South-South Cooperation," "Environment and Biodiversity," and "PRC – LAC Bilateral Relations" were marked by a proactive trend, aimed at reinforcing China's role as a cooperative, peaceful, and reliable partner.

FIGURE NO. 21. MOST FREQUENTLY USED HASHTAG CATEGORIES 2020 - 2023-I
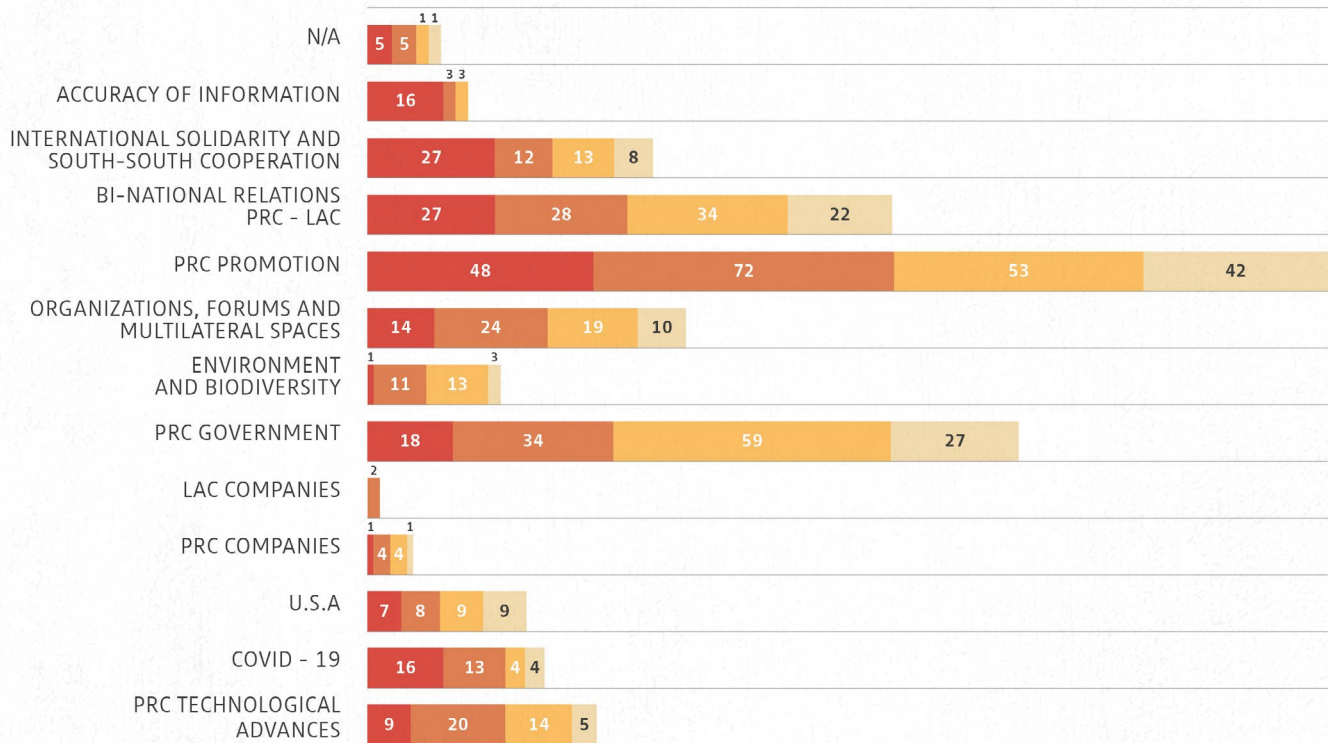
Source: Andrés Bello Foundation - China Latin America Research Center with account activity data provided by Twitonomy until March 2023 and manual collection until June 2023.

For a list and description of each of the hashtag categories analyzed, **click here.**

VIII.
CONCLUSIONS

The comparative analysis of account content between 2020 and the first semester of 2023 points to a strengthening of China's public diplomacy in the digital realm towards LAC. Additionally, the initial hypothesis of the study regarding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on this strengthening is confirmed.

In examining account activity and discourse content, two characteristic elements of China's public diplomacy emerge, outlining the main guidelines of its foreign policy: (1) a reactive tendency closely correlated with peaks in activity, aimed at protecting and defending China's image both domestically and internationally, and (2) a sustained proactive trend over time, aimed at reinforcing China's role as a reliable, cooperative, peaceful, and supportive global partner.

Regarding the above, it is worth emphasizing that, both in this study and in previous ones, it emerges that the primary guideline of China's public diplomacy is the protection, defense, and promotion of its image on the international stage. Similarly, the content analysis of each account and the dynamics found in the types of interactions such as retweets, replies, and mentions demonstrate the strict adherence to the guidance of the Chinese government regarding the projection of its image, or what President Xi Jinping has described as "telling China's story well".

Concerning communication with the foreign public, the main objective of public diplomacy, changes in the dynamics of the accounts of representatives and diplomatic representations are observed over time. Initially, in 2020 and 2021, there was a focus on maintaining control over the discourse regarding China's international image, emphasizing a unidirectional communication style. However, in the years 2022 and the first half of 2023, there is a noticeable shift toward increased communication through dialogue with the foreign public. Additionally, there is evidence of the strengthening of digital diplomacy through a more extensive and effective use of digital technologies supporting their public diplomacy efforts.

Finally, it's important to highlight that the level of engagement by PRC X accounts in LAC is still miniscule when compared to those of other extra-regional countries, especially the United States. For comparison, as of January 2024, the US Embassy's X account in Colombia and in Brazil have 285.4K and 111.9K followers, respectively. This report should be read as a guide to the PRC's official narratives and interests across Latin America and the Caribbean, not as a measure of influence.

Overall, the analysis of China's digital diplomacy in Latin America and the Caribbean through the development of empirical studies should be encouraged. This will allow for a better understanding of China's foreign policy interests and characteristics expressed through its public diplomacy. Moreover, it will enable the observation and comprehension of the relational dynamics that characterize China's relationships with each country in the region.
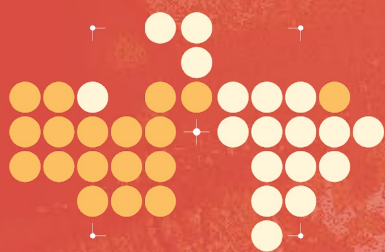
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