

Original Article

Domestic Roots of Filipino Misperceptions of China

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Abstract: The various historical, cultural, socio-economic, and political factors that lead Filipinos to dislike China. The Philippines' colonization and dependency on foreign powers, particularly the US, has made it wary of outsider interference, including China's South China Sea claims. The media and elites including politicians, businesses, and academics also shape Filipino attitudes of China. Some media outlets portray China as an aggressive and expansionist danger, while government officials and elites advocate a nationalist agenda. This study explored the domestic roots of Filipino perceptions of China, and how these perceptions shape the Philippines' foreign policy towards China. The study employed a mixed-methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis, results suggest that knowledge of China is mainly propelled by political elites and media, while a positive attitude towards China is brought about by people-to-people exchange, trade, economics, and cultural visits. However, negative attitudes persist when it comes to the South China Sea issue. The study also highlighted the historical and cultural factors that shape Filipinos' perceptions of China and their influence on the Philippines' foreign policy towards China. Finally, the study emphasizes the importance of managing political and territorial tensions between the two countries and strengthening economic and social relationships for a peaceful and prosperous future.

Keywords: Filipino elites, Filipino perceptions, Philippine-China relations

1. INTRODUCTION

There are three main factors define Philippine public opinion toward China: trust or distrust, negative or positive perceptions, and favorable or unfavorable attitudes. First, elite constructs' popularity can boost public trust in China [1]. Elites are "those people or organizations that are considered the best or most powerful in comparison to others of a similar type a small portion of society composed of powerful people holding an unreasonable amount of wealth, privilege, political power, or skill in a society [2]. The second notion is media framing, where mass and social media shape popular opinions of China. Media framing influences Filipino perceptions of China since over 80% of Filipinos use the internet and social media and 70% use them for news and current events [3]. The third idea is Filipinos' cultural and historical preference for Western and American democracy and neocolonialism. Filipino cultural and historical influences, such as a fondness for Western and American democratic principles and neocolonialism, can influence China perspectives [4]. Recent surveys in Southeast Asia and the Philippines think China is more influential than the US. Increased trust suggests that "China will vie for regional leadership in response to the perceived growing indifference of the US towards Southeast Asia and ASEAN" [5]. Filipino faith in the US is high, while trust in President Xi Jin Ping's leadership is rising. Increasingly, people believe China will do the right thing but may "become a revisionist power with an intent to turn Southeast Asia into its sphere of influence" [6]. This suggests a growing anxiety about "China's military capacity" although Filipinos still trust the US military. Most of Filipinos perceive China as a strategic economic partner but unfriendly politically [7]. The two most recent China-Philippine disputes may explain these bad sentiments. South China Sea disputes and

COVID-19 [8]. Comprehending these impressions of China requires comprehending the cause-and-effect relationship of the three variables above. Thus, Filipinos' unipolar perspective of China in the South China Sea issue threatens domestic security. Filipino elites' unfavorable backing for China's South China Sea and COVID-19 foreign policy causes insecurity and negative impressions [9]. Political elites were the most important "elites of wealth" and "elites of power." Political elites are power elites who associate with rich elites. Philippine power elites are "top decision-makers in a polity, as well as those with significant indirect influence [10]." A prominent businessman or officeholder having legal authority over key decisions." In the political elite, "wealthy elites" include elected officials, economic and corporate elites, and oligarchs. Political elites shape public opinion on China, but the other two may contribute alternatively as primary and secondary variables [11]. Political elites moved from social influencers to political leaders as descendants of the Filipino *Ilustrados*, Spanish colonial elites, and American privileged class [12]. American democratic governments are creating political elites to win Filipino support for freedom and equality. Social classification persisted, and political elites—military and oligarchs—remained at the top. Upper and privileged classes persist. They maintained power, especially in decision-making and governance [13]. Recently, maritime and territorial disputes in the South China Sea, COVID-19, and China's militia may have influenced China's bad attitude. However, increasing trust in President Xi Jin Ping's leadership and global presence, China's economic rise, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), joint investment and development, and China's COVID-19 response and aid to the Philippines have led to positive trends [14]. In recent years, the Philippines has been a key player in the ongoing territorial disputes in the South China Sea, with China and the USA, the role of the Philippines in balancing the relationship for a more stable and peaceful regional setting will be very crucial [15]. As tensions rise between the two nations, understanding the domestic roots of Filipino perceptions of China is increasingly important. The purpose of study is to investigate the domestic roots of Filipino perceptions of China, specifically exploring the role of elite constructs, media framing, and cultural/historical factors. By examining the influence of these factors on Filipino perceptions of China, the research aims to provide insights into the underlying mechanisms and implications of these influences on public attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward China in the Filipino context. The findings can contribute to a better understanding of the domestic factors that shape Filipino perceptions of China and their implications for Philippines-China relations.

2. MATERIALS & METHODS

This study employs a quantitative methodology to investigate the domestic roots of Filipino perceptions of China. A survey design was utilized to collect data from N=1,736 Filipinos residing in the Philippines as represented from the three major island groups as Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. The sample, although not representing the entire population, provides a diverse range of respondents. To analyze the data, the study utilized multiple regression analysis as a tool for predictive statistics. This statistical method investigates the connection between multiple dependent variables and independent variables to predict the value of the dependent variable using predetermined values of the independent variables. The statistical analysis of the data involved two main processes, namely data cleaning and coding, and data processing. Data cleaning and coding were carried out using the R programming language, while data processing was performed using Python. The quantitative methodology utilizes multiple regression analysis, mainly predictive statistics as employed in linear regression and logistic regression analysis. The study examined the domestic roots of Filipino perceptions of China by analyzing the influence of various independent variables on four dependent variables, namely Trust of China, Knowledge of China, Attitudes to China, and China as a threat. The independent variables are categorized into four broad categories, including Elite Constructs, Culture and History, Interactions and Experiences, and Demographic Factors. The study uses linear regression to analyze the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, while logistic regression was employed to examine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, China as a threat.

3. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

3.1 Demographics and Characteristics of the Respondents

The majority of respondents were male (65.21%) and from Metro Manila (41.05%). Regarding age, the sample was mostly young, with 50.63% between 29 and 40 years old, and 27.19% between 18 and 28 years old. In terms of educational attainment, the majority of respondents completed tertiary education or higher (55.47%). Concerning monthly income, many respondents stated that they were from the middle class (41.13%), followed by those from the upper middle class (29.67%).

Table 01: Demographics and Characteristics of the Respondents in the Philippines (N=1,736)

Gender	
Male	65.21%
Female	34.79%
Educational Attainment	
Tertiary/Univ or higher	55.47%
Secondary School	28.51%
Primary School	16.01%
Age Group	
18-28	27.19%
29-40	50.63%
41-50	17.51%
51-60	3.40%
Over 60	1.27%
Place of Residence	
Metro Manila	41.05%
Luzon	36.80%
Visayas	15.47%
Mindanao	6.68%
Monthly Income	
Poor (below 10k)	6.62%
Low-income (10k-20k)	13.65%
Middle (20k-72k)	41.13%
Upper-Income (73k-200k)	29.67%
Rich (200k and above)	8.93%
Employment	
Company Employee	32.37%
Business Employed	28.80%
Professional Staff	14.06%
Government Employee	13.13%
Unemployed/Retired	8.12%
NGO Staff	3.51%
Political Stance	
I support the current admin of the Philippine Government	7.43%
I am a little skeptical of the current Philippine Government	9.15%
I prefer not to mention my views of the current Philippine Government	3.42%

3.2 Linear Regression Analysis

The linear regression models were developed to predict the levels of "Knowledge of China", "Attitudes toward China", and "Trust in China" among individuals, using various independent variables that were grouped into four broad categories, including elite constructs, culture and history, interactions and experiences, and demographics. The findings from the quantitative models support the hypothesis that elite constructs, the media, and American influences significantly influence Filipino perceptions of China. However, the limitations of the data do not allow for the explicit identification of causation between the variables and Filipino views of China, but the results can be used to provide meaningful analysis. The results suggests that personal experiences and exposure to China, such as visiting the country or working for an NGO, were stronger predictors of knowledge of China than demographic factors or cultural and historical beliefs. The results also indicated that individuals who choose not to disclose their political stance or who believe that learning Chinese is not important tend to have lower knowledge of China. This indicates that knowledge of China maybe not directly influenced by elite constructs and those who have less interest of learning Chinese is consistent with having lesser interest of China. This also suggests that higher levels of trust in the United States of Aamerica may be associated with greater knowledge about China. Finally, in the Demographics category, the study found that people with lower monthly incomes tend to have lower knowledge of China, while people who work for an NGO tend to have higher knowledge of China. The data suggests that personal experiences and beliefs play a crucial role in shaping an individual's knowledge of China.

Table 02: Model 1: Predicting "Knowledge of China"

term	estimate	std.error	statistic	p.value	signif
(Intercept)	3.145803	0.242235	12.98659	7.37E-37	***
Age29-40	0.038087	0.078226	0.486887	0.6264	
Age41-50	-0.00742	0.101051	-0.07346	0.94145	
Age51-60	0.018844	0.175785	0.107201	0.914642	
AgeOver 60	0.142306	0.296283	0.480303	0.631073	
SexMale	0.285817	0.064505	4.430923	9.97E-06	***
EmploymentCompany Employee	0.099298	0.080555	1.232668	0.217868	
EmploymentGovernment employee	-0.10265	0.104052	-0.98648	0.324038	
EmploymentNGO staff	0.385307	0.171543	2.246128	0.024822	*
EmploymentProfessional staff	0.051138	0.099174	0.515637	0.606174	
EmploymentUnemployed/Retired	-0.1243	0.15669	-0.79326	0.427734	
Monthly_IncomeMiddle (20K-72K)	-0.15552	0.09683	-1.60609	0.108438	
Monthly_IncomePoor (below 10K)	-0.4965	0.163957	-3.02822	0.002497	**
Monthly_IncomeRich (200K & above per month)	0.088106	0.186324	0.472863	0.636371	
Monthly_IncomeRich (200K & above per month)	0.416186	0.164251	2.533836	0.01137	*
Monthly_IncomeUpper-income (73K-200K)	0.035049	0.107384	0.326393	0.744167	
Educational_AttainmentSecondary School	-0.29216	0.097353	-3.00105	0.002729	**
Educational_AttainmentTertiary / University or higher	-0.0672	0.093406	-0.71945	0.471963	
I_have_visited_ChinaNo	-0.51768	0.109102	-4.74496	2.26E-06	***
I_have_visited_ChinaYes	0.661657	0.101999	6.486912	1.14E-10	***
Permanent_or_current_residenceMetro Manila	-0.09491	0.073225	-1.29615	0.195097	

Permanent_or_current_residenceMindanao	-0.20697	0.127704	-1.62072	0.10526	
Permanent_or_current_residenceNUL	-0.08148	0.316203	-0.25767	0.796689	
Permanent_or_current_residenceVisayas	-0.01642	0.096417	-0.17032	0.864775	
Source_of_informationInternet mass media (Inquirer.net, GMA online, ABS-CBN online, Rappler)	0.225693	0.107118	2.106962	0.035265	*
Source_of_informationOther	0.469098	0.227471	2.062234	0.039335	*
Source_of_informationSocial media (Facebook, Twitter, IG, Tiktok)	0.195472	0.106013	1.843841	0.065378	
Political_Stancel prefer not to mention my views	-0.22146	0.102378	-2.16312	0.030669	*
Political_Stancel support the current administration of the Philippine government	-0.04452	0.07161	-0.6217	0.53422	
Dutertes_Independent_Foreign_Policy	0.029431	0.034346	0.856918	0.391609	
Marcos_Independent_Foreign_Policy	0.016313	0.037326	0.437054	0.662127	
Chinas_Communist_Party	0.001969	0.033708	0.058411	0.953428	
Teaching_and_Learning_of_the_Chinese_language	-0.10922	0.039516	-2.76393	0.005772	**
PhilippineChina_Military_Cooperation	-0.10922	0.039516	-2.76393	0.005772	**
Chinas_economic_presence_in_the_Philippines	-0.09596	0.038983	-2.46152	0.013933	*
Portrayal_of_China_in_social_media	-0.01924	0.037138	-0.51799	0.60453	
ASEANChina_Cooperation_in_South_China_SeaWest_Philippine_Sea	-0.03494	0.038053	-0.91819	0.358646	
Chinas_investments__infrastructure_projects	-0.04241	0.034436	-1.23165	0.218249	
Philippine_Military_Capacity	0.015081	0.035996	0.418962	0.675296	
Martial_Law	0.028242	0.033127	0.852526	0.394041	
US	0.108996	0.026024	4.188268	2.95E-05	***

The data indicates that various factors play a significant role in shaping people's attitudes toward China. Among these factors, gender and income were identified as critical determinants. Specifically, males were more likely to hold a favorable view of China, and individuals with low or high monthly incomes were also more likely to have a positive attitude towards the country compared to those with moderate incomes. Conversely, education level had a negative impact on people's attitudes, with those who had attained a higher education level being less likely to view China positively. Additionally, individuals who had not visited China were found to have a less favorable attitude toward the country. The study also revealed that familiarity with China and its relationship with the Philippines was a positive influence on people's attitudes. Several factors, including Duterte's independent foreign policy, teaching and learning of the Chinese language, Philippine-China military cooperation, ASEAN-China cooperation in South China Sea, Philippine military capacity, martial law, and the US, were found to have a significant positive effect on predicting people's attitudes about China. These findings suggest that individuals who possess greater knowledge about China and its relationship with the Philippines are more likely to hold a positive view of the country.

Table 03: Model 2: Predicting "Attitude towards China"

term	estimate	std.error	statistic	p.value	signif
(Intercept)	1.444785	0.086308	16.73986	2.11E-58	***
Age29-40	-0.00441	0.027791	-0.15862	0.873989	
Age41-50	0.008986	0.0359	0.25031	0.802377	
Age51-60	-0.01398	0.062708	-0.2229	0.823636	
AgeOver 60	0.019391	0.105556	0.183705	0.854266	
SexMale	0.087064	0.022997	3.785784	0.000158	***
EmploymentCompany Employee	-0.03261	0.028742	-1.13443	0.256772	
EmploymentGovernment employee	0.009832	0.037126	0.264821	0.791179	
EmploymentNGO staff	0.098243	0.06122	1.604769	0.108728	
EmploymentProfessional staff	0.006587	0.035317	0.186513	0.852065	
EmploymentUnemployed/Retired	-0.07595	0.055844	-1.36009	0.173979	
Monthly_IncomeMiddle (20K-72K)	0.059378	0.03455	1.7186	0.085867	
Monthly_IncomePoor (below 10K)	0.158937	0.058391	2.721949	0.006555	**
Monthly_IncomeRich (200K & above per month)	0.28036	0.06637	4.224227	2.52E-05	***
Monthly_IncomeRich (200K & above per month)	0.071589	0.058571	1.222264	0.221775	
Monthly_IncomeUpper-income (73K-200K)	0.104909	0.038338	2.736431	0.006275	**
Educational_AttainmentSecondary School	-0.12709	0.034708	-3.66178	0.000258	***
Educational_AttainmentTertiary / University or higher	-0.2409	0.033085	-7.28116	5.01E-13	***
I_have_visited_ChinaNo	-0.11692	0.038923	-3.00392	0.002704	**
I_have_visited_ChinaYes	0.077387	0.036406	2.125661	0.033673	*
Permanent_or_current_residenceMetro Manila	-0.03382	0.026084	-1.29673	0.194896	
Permanent_or_current_residenceMindanao	0.043211	0.045549	0.948686	0.342913	
Permanent_or_current_residenceNULL	-0.06578	0.112883	-0.58277	0.560127	
Permanent_or_current_residenceVisayas	-0.07227	0.034258	-2.10964	0.035033	*
Source_of_informationInternet mass media (Inquirer.net, GMA online, ABS-CBN online, Rappler)	-0.03631	0.038242	-0.94953	0.342484	
Source_of_informationOther	-0.02408	0.081124	-0.29683	0.766629	
Source_of_informationSocial media (Facebook, Twitter, IG, Tiktok)	-0.05031	0.037818	-1.33024	0.183616	
Political_Stancel prefer not to mention my views	0.102915	0.036547	2.815952	0.004919	**
Political_Stancel support the current administration of the Philippine government	0.059447	0.025554	2.326297	0.020118	*
Dutertes_Independent_Foreign_Policy	0.085098	0.012123	7.019746	3.18E-12	***
Marcos_Independent_Foreign_Policy	0.050941	0.013322	3.823926	0.000136	***
Teaching_and_Learning_of_the_Chinese	0.118264	0.012081	9.789307	4.64E-22	***

_language					
PhilippineChina_Military_Cooperation	0.042811	0.013979	3.06251	0.002229	**
Chinas_economic_presence_in_the_Philippines	0.034783	0.01387	2.507696	0.012243	*
Portrayal_of_China_in_social_media	0.037255	0.013133	2.836689	0.004612	**
ASEANChina_Cooperation_in_South_China_SeaWest_Philippine_Sea	0.032611	0.01346	2.422751	0.015506	*
Philippine_Military_Capacity	0.044285	0.012757	3.471336	0.000531	***
Martial_Law	0.039357	0.011813	3.331671	0.000881	***
US	0.060298	0.009281	6.49716	1.07E-10	***

The analysis finds that respondents who are over 60 years old, female, company or government employees, or have tertiary/university education are less likely to trust China. On the other hand, respondents who have visited China or have a negative attitude towards Duterte's Independent Foreign Policy, Martial Law, or the US are more likely to trust China. Although, negative attitudes towards Duterte's Independent Foreign Policy are not as significant, which could be due to some respondents perceiving the policy as only being independent from the USA and not from other powers. As the perceived level of China's economic presence rises, people's trust in China declines, potentially due to concerns over Chinese economic influence in domestic affairs that does not necessarily representative of China. The negative coefficient for "ASEANChina_Cooperation_in_South_China_SeaWest_Philippine_Sea" indicates that a perceived decrease in cooperation between China and the ASEAN countries in the South China Sea correlates with a decline in trust in China. This underscores the importance of maintaining positive relationships between China and the ASEAN countries in the South China Sea. However, other factors could also influence trust in China and cooperation in the South China Sea, so additional research is needed to fully comprehend the situation. The other variables, such as monthly income and residence, do not have a significant relationship with trust in China based on the data with a significance level of 0.05. Therefore, these variables may not be strong predictors of trust in China, at least not at the given level of significance. Overall, the analysis suggests that demographic factors, educational attainment, and attitudes towards China are the main drivers of trust in China among the respondents.

Table 04: Model 3: Predicting "Trust in China"

term	estimate	std.error	statistic	p.value	signif
(Intercept)	8.697529	0.409803	21.22371	5.38E-89	***
Age29-40	-0.26305	0.132339	-1.9877	0.047003	*
Age41-50	-0.45773	0.170954	-2.67752	0.007487	**
Age51-60	-0.25327	0.297386	-0.85165	0.394525	
AgeOver 60	-1.51831	0.501239	-3.02911	0.002489	**
SexMale	0.288026	0.109127	2.639371	0.008381	**
EmploymentCompany Employee	-0.53333	0.13628	-3.91348	9.45E-05	***
EmploymentGovernment employee	-0.3017	0.176031	-1.71392	0.086723	
EmploymentNGO staff	0.020412	0.290209	0.070335	0.943935	
EmploymentProfessional staff	-0.20489	0.167779	-1.22119	0.222182	
EmploymentUnemployed/Retired	-0.5185	0.265081	-1.95599	0.050627	
Monthly_IncomeMiddle (20K-72K)	0.235971	0.163813	1.440494	0.149909	
Monthly_IncomePoor (below 10K)	0.417765	0.277376	1.506133	0.132216	
Monthly_IncomeRich (200K & above per month)	0.474665	0.315215	1.505845	0.13229	

Monthly_IncomeRich (200K & above per month)	0.38937	0.277874	1.401248	0.16132	
Monthly_IncomeUpper-income (73K-200K)	0.130287	0.181667	0.717174	0.473364	
Educational_AttainmentSecondary School	-0.17087	0.164697	-1.03749	0.299652	
Educational_AttainmentTertiary / University or higher	-0.37117	0.15802	-2.34886	0.018943	*
I_have_visited_ChinaNo	-0.90365	0.184574	-4.89585	1.07E-06	***
I_have_visited_ChinaYes	0.688216	0.172557	3.988338	6.93E-05	***
Permanent_or_current_residenceMetro Manila	-0.31712	0.123879	-2.55989	0.010555	*
Permanent_or_current_residenceMindanao	-0.01501	0.216044	-0.06947	0.944621	
Permanent_or_current_residenceNULL	0.067844	0.534939	0.126826	0.899093	
Permanent_or_current_residenceVisayas	-0.12877	0.163114	-0.78945	0.429957	
Source_of_informationInternet mass media (Inquirer.net, GMA online, ABS-CBN online, Rappler)	-0.43796	0.181217	-2.41674	0.015763	*
Source_of_informationOther	-0.56415	0.384825	-1.466	0.142831	
Source_of_informationSocial media (Facebook, Twitter, IG, Tiktok)	-0.41133	0.179349	-2.29345	0.021942	*
Political_Stancel prefer not to mention my views	0.162279	0.173199	0.93695	0.348916	
Political_Stancel support the current administration of the Philippine government	0.029217	0.121147	0.241168	0.809453	
Dutertes_Independent_Foreign_Policy	-0.04882	0.058105	-0.84026	0.400878	
Marcos_Independent_Foreign_Policy	0.148222	0.063146	2.347302	0.019023	*
Chinas_Communist_Party	-0.17532	0.057027	-3.0744	0.002142	**
Teaching_and_Learning_of_the_Chinese_language	-0.03809	0.058684	-0.649	0.516426	
PhilippineChina_Military_Cooperation	-0.14779	0.066852	-2.21077	0.027183	*
Chinas_economic_presence_in_the_Philippines	-0.23984	0.065949	-3.63673	0.000284	***
Portrayal_of_China_in_social_media	-0.30816	0.062828	-4.90475	1.02E-06	***
ASEANChina_Cooperation_in_South_China_SeaWest_Philippine_Sea	-0.23491	0.064376	-3.64904	0.000271	***
Chinas_investments__infrastructure_projects	0.06162	0.058257	1.057739	0.290323	
Philippine_Military_Capacity	0.036023	0.060897	0.591531	0.554242	
Martial_Law	0.219729	0.056043	3.920753	9.17E-05	***
US	0.372645	0.044027	8.464095	5.44E-17	***

Results revealed that respondents who are government employees, unemployed/retired, or have tertiary/university or higher education are more likely to perceive China as a threat, while those who have visited China are less likely to do so. Additionally, respondents who support the current administration of the Philippine government are less likely to perceive China as a threat, while those

who prefer not to mention their views or oppose the current administration are more likely to do so. The findings of this study are consistent with prior research that suggests that political attitudes and education level are associated with perceptions of threat from other countries. Similarly, the finding that visiting China is associated with lower perceptions of threat is consistent with research on intergroup contact and prejudice reduction. The study also found that several variables, such as age, sex, monthly income, and residence, are not significant predictors of the perception of China as a threat. The finding is consistent with prior research that has shown mixed results regarding the relationship between these variables and perceptions of threat. According to the table below, respondents have generally positive feelings toward China, particularly in terms of Chinese food and China's achievements in science and technology, as evidenced by weighted means of 2.41 (SD=1.18) and 2.44 (SD=1.18), respectively. While the concept of China's communist party received the lowest weighted mean, with a weighted mean of 2.71 (SD=1.27). The elements of the PH-China relationship received an overall satisfaction rating from the study's respondents.

Table 05: Model 4: Predicting "China as Threat"

term	estimate	std.error	statistic	p.value	signif
(Intercept)	-3.1731	0.542313	-5.85105	4.88E-09	***
Age29-40	-0.02952	0.166152	-0.17766	0.85899	
Age41-50	0.416036	0.214439	1.940117	0.052365	
Age51-60	-0.32033	0.379919	-0.84314	0.399149	
AgeOver 60	0.309008	0.550968	0.560846	0.574903	
SexMale	-0.05756	0.136616	-0.42131	0.673531	
EmploymentCompany Employee	0.362569	0.186552	1.943522	0.051953	
EmploymentGovernment employee	1.182931	0.213246	5.547255	2.90E-08	***
EmploymentNGO staff	0.101826	0.399953	0.254594	0.799037	
EmploymentProfessional staff	0.378505	0.222633	1.700126	0.089107	
EmploymentUnemployed/Retired	1.293969	0.303156	4.268328	1.97E-05	***
Monthly_IncomeMiddle (20K-72K)	0.402976	0.204689	1.968723	0.048985	*
Monthly_IncomePoor (below 10K)	0.34315	0.310912	1.103688	0.269729	
Monthly_IncomeRich (200K & above per month)	0.25552	0.456847	0.559312	0.575949	
Monthly_IncomeRich (200K & above per month)	0.016511	0.377236	0.043767	0.96509	
Monthly_IncomeUpper-income (73K-200K)	0.025136	0.236838	0.106132	0.915478	
Educational_AttainmentSecondary School	0.572108	0.237403	2.409856	0.015959	*
Educational_AttainmentTertiary / University or higher	0.950175	0.22756	4.175491	2.97E-05	***
I_have_visited_ChinaNo	-0.0181	0.21168	-0.08549	0.931873	
I_have_visited_ChinaYes	-0.82024	0.209662	-3.9122	9.15E-05	***
Permanent_or_current_residenceMetro Manila	-0.0801	0.156683	-0.51119	0.609217	
Permanent_or_current_residenceMindanao	-0.55154	0.275048	-2.00525	0.044937	*
Permanent_or_current_residenceNUL L	-0.37441	0.632709	-0.59175	0.554018	
Permanent_or_current_residenceVisayas	-0.39965	0.213566	-1.8713	0.061303	

Source_of_informationInternet mass media (Inquirer.net, GMA online, ABS-CBN online, Rappler)	0.338469	0.226233	1.49611	0.134625	
Source_of_informationOther	0.453118	0.423281	1.070491	0.284398	
Source_of_informationSocial media (Facebook, Twitter, IG, Tiktok)	0.100158	0.226141	0.442901	0.657838	
Political_Stancel prefer not to mention my views	-0.30772	0.202554	-1.51922	0.128708	
Political_Stancel support the current administration of the Philippine government	-0.48186	0.153543	-3.1383	0.001699	**
Dutertes_Independent_Foreign_Policy	-0.16522	0.07356	-2.24602	0.024703	*
Marcos_Independent_Foreign_Policy	-0.00842	0.080384	-0.10477	0.91656	
Chinas_Communist_Party	0.166906	0.068799	2.425991	0.015267	*
Teaching_and_Learning_of_the_Chinese_language	-0.10451	0.073164	-1.42839	0.153179	
PhilippineChina_Military_Cooperation	0.095383	0.082458	1.156739	0.247379	
Chinas_economic_presence_in_the_Philippines	0.237857	0.082208	2.893373	0.003811	**
Portrayal_of_China_in_social_media	0.082439	0.077558	1.062936	0.287811	
ASEANChina_Cooperation_in_South_China_SeaWest_Philippine_Sea	0.167145	0.079639	2.098768	0.035837	*
Chinas_investments__infrastructure_projects	-0.07004	0.070835	-0.98875	0.322787	
Philippine_Military_Capacity	-0.01603	0.074255	-0.21587	0.829088	
Martial_Law	0.003268	0.069417	0.047085	0.962446	
US	0.028139	0.057347	0.490669	0.623661	

It has been argued that opinions about China have remained mainly positive in spite of these historical and contemporary obstacles precisely because of how the government of Rodrigo Duterte portrays China. The administration of Rodrigo Duterte has brought about a significant shift in relations with China. It is a pivot to maximize economic prospects while simultaneously reducing territorial tensions. In light of this, the Philippines continues to emphasize the positive aspects of its relationship with China, despite the fact that there have been disagreements on island claims and broken pledges made by China. This emphasis, in turn, preserves buried anti-Chinese sentiments, whether they are directed toward the country of China itself or, more crucially, whether they are directed toward the Chinese diaspora living in the Philippines.

Table 06: General Feeling about China

	N	Mean	SD
Chinese food	1736	2.41	1.18
Chinese phone applications	1736	2.58	1.19
Chinese movies or dramas	1736	2.56	1.20
Chinese language	1736	2.65	1.22
China's economic rise	1736	2.53	1.23
China's science & technology achievement	1736	2.44	1.20
China's investments and infrastructure projects	1736	2.45	1.18
China's Belt & Road Initiative	1736	2.53	1.19
China's (zero) 0 poverty achievement	1736	2.69	1.20
China's anti-corruption initiative	1736	2.68	1.19
China's COVID-19 vaccines	1736	2.53	1.25
China's Communist Party	1736	2.71	1.27
China's form of government	1736	2.65	1.25
China's military power	1736	2.55	1.30

According to the table above, respondents favor the following descriptions of Philippine-China relations: (a) developing strong economic relations with China, with a weighted mean of 2.57 (SD=1.25); (b) Chinese investment in the Philippines, with a weighted mean of 2.60 (SD=1.21); (c) increased Chinese loans to develop the Philippines' infrastructure, with a weighted mean of 2.77 (SD=2.49); and (d) promote people to people relations. Despite Duterte's efforts to improve relations with China and strengthen ties between the two countries, Filipinos' views on China and its leader have not changed significantly. However, while opinions of the United States and its president remain positive, they have fallen from highs reached during the Obama administration. As of this spring, 78% of Filipinos have a favorable opinion of the United States, a decrease from the 92%. In terms of the global economy, nearly half of Filipinos (49%) believe that the United States remains the world's leading economic power, but this figure is significantly lower than the 66% who believed.

Table 07: Elements of PH-China Relationship

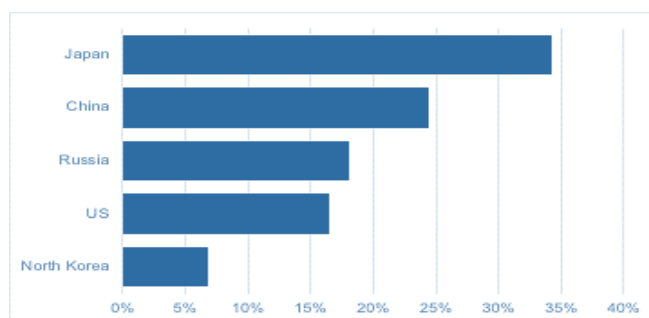
	N	Mean	SD
To develop strong economic relations with China	1736	2.57	1.25
More Chinese investment in the Philippines	1736	2.60	1.21
Increase loan from China to develop the Philippines' infrastruc	1736	2.77	1.31
To promote closer people-to-people exchange between the Philipp	1736	2.52	1.24

According to the results, the respondents of this study have the highest trust rating in China, with a weighted mean of 3.60. The respondents, on the other hand, have the lowest trust rating for Japan, with a weighted mean of only 3.11. It is also worth noting that the United States, one of the Philippines' oldest allies, came in second place with a weighted mean of 3.50, tied with Singapore. This result contradicts the findings of the July 2022 Pulse Asia survey, which found that the majority of Filipinos believe the United States, Australia, and Japan should be trusted the most, while China and Russia should be trusted the least. Pulse Asia polled 1,200 people in June 2022 about the level of trust that the Philippines should have in a group of ten countries. A total of approximately 31% of respondents believed that the Philippines should offer the US a "great deal of trust," while 58% believed that the Philippines should offer its longest military and economic partner a "fair amount of trust." According to the study's findings, approximately 36% of respondents believe that the Philippines should "not put too much trust" in China, while another 31% believe that there should be "no trust at all."

Table 08: Filipino Trust Rate on World Powers

	N	Mean	SD
Australia	1736	3.48	1.04
US	1736	3.50	1.17
Japan	1736	3.11	1.26
China	1736	3.60	1.16
Britain	1736	3.37	1.05
Singapore	1736	3.50	1.02
Russia	1736	3.31	1.17

According to the findings, respondents believe Japan is the greatest threat to the Philippines. Surprisingly, countries such as China and the United States, which would have a greater interest in the Philippines, were only ranked second and fourth, respectively. However, if current studies and trends are considered, this should come as no surprise. Japan is capable of becoming a more reliable alliance partner, of working more effectively with new partners, and of deploying force outside of its own territory, possibly outside of the traditional defensive "shield" role, in order to apply its own element of counter-strike power. Because of the ongoing threats posed not only by China, but also by Russia and North Korea, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and the ruling LDP have been advocating for the supplement. This information has not surprised the Americans. During a high-level conference in Washington in April 2022, both Suga and US President Biden declared their determination to improve Japan's national defense capabilities.

**Figure 01:** Filipino views of Countries that are significant threat to the Philippines

3.3 Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis reveals that the perception of the Philippines towards China is complex, with some Filipinos viewing China favorably due to their shared culture and economic cooperation, while others are concerned about China's assertiveness in the South China Sea. The study also highlights that political elites in the Philippines can influence public opinion of China, with some citizens aligning their views with those of their chosen political leaders. The media's framing of China-related information also plays a significant role in shaping citizens' understanding of the country, with some narratives portraying China as a benefactor and economic partner, while others depict it as an aggressor in the South China Sea. Overall, the analysis suggests that there is no single, homogenous perception of China among Filipinos, and that factors such as cultural ties, economic cooperation, political influence, and media framing all contribute to shaping citizens' attitudes towards China.

3.4 Content Analysis

The study carefully underwent the selection process of the one hundred (100) posts about China that are available online. In making it, posts from different social media platforms were selected to undergo content analysis. The posts were categorized into eight emerging groups, namely: the US, media, Spratlys, maritime dispute, EEZ, navigation, Taiwan, and arbitral award. Said online posts were subjected to content analysis through MAXQDA 2022 software, and the results are presented below.

Table 09: Facebook terminology frequencies

Posts (N=76)	Frequency	Percentage
Exclusive Economic Zone	15	19.74%
Arbitral Award	11	14.47%
Media	9	11.84%
Spratly	8	10.52%
Taiwan	6	7.89%
Maritime Dispute	5	6.58%
Navigation	5	6.58%
US	7	9.21%

The analysis of social media posts related to China on Facebook revealed that the discussion of the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines was the most prevalent topic (19.74%). This suggests that the South China Sea disputes and territorial claims continue to be a significant concern for Filipinos. The prominence of posts about the arbitral award (14.47%), which was won by the Philippines in 2016, indicates that Filipinos value the country's sovereignty and legal victory in the dispute. The role of media (11.84%) was also a notable topic, suggesting that the public is interested in the media's role in shaping the Philippines-China relationship. Additionally, the Spratlys (10.52%) received significant attention, indicating that the issue of territorial disputes is not limited to the exclusive economic zone but extends to other contested areas. Furthermore, the US (9.21%) and Taiwan (7.89%) were also among the topics being discussed comprehensively when it comes to posts regarding China on Facebook. This suggests that the Philippine public's perceptions of China may also be influenced by its relations with other countries, particularly those perceived as allies or rivals of China. The analysis of social media posts suggests that the platform may contribute to the negative perceptions of China as a threat to the Philippines. The prevalence of posts related to the South China Sea disputes and territorial claims suggests that Filipinos are concerned about the country's sovereignty and security in the face of China's aggressive actions.

4. CONCLUSION

The study examined the various historical, cultural, socio-economic, and political factors that lead Filipinos to dislike China. The Philippines' colonization and dependency on foreign powers, particularly the US, has made it wary of outsider interference, including China's South China Sea claims. Poverty, corruption, and China's apparent disrespect for human rights and the environment also tarnish China's image. Past conflicts like the Chinese conquest of the Philippines and the 2010 Manila hostage crisis have tarnished China's image in the Philippines. External influences including the Philippines' connection with the US and communist ideology during martial law have also shaped Filipino views of China. The media and elites including politicians, businesses, and academics also shape Filipino attitudes of China. Some media outlets portray China as an aggressive and expansionist danger, while government officials and elites advocate a nationalist agenda. Chinese investments in the Philippines are also considered economic colonization by elites. To improve relations between the two countries, Filipinos must grasp the many elements that make them dislike China. In conclusion, this study illuminated the rich and multifaceted home foundations of Filipino perceptions of China and the forces that determine them. The findings reveal how political elites, media, cultural and historical elements, personal experiences, and geopolitical events shape Philippine attitudes of China. The study may enrich future research and conversations on this important topic and help us understand Philippine perspectives of China better.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Political elites should be mindful of their rhetoric and actions regarding China, as they have a significant influence on public opinion. Media outlets should strive for balanced and accurate reporting on China-related news and events to avoid framing biases. Education and cultural exchange

programs should be encouraged to promote a better understanding of China and its culture among Filipinos. Increased people-to-people interactions, such as tourism and business partnerships, can foster positive relations between the two countries. Regular and constructive dialogues between the Philippines and China can help address issues and concerns in the bilateral relationship.

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