

May 2018 - July 2019

China in Canadian Newspapers, A Mass Data Analysis:

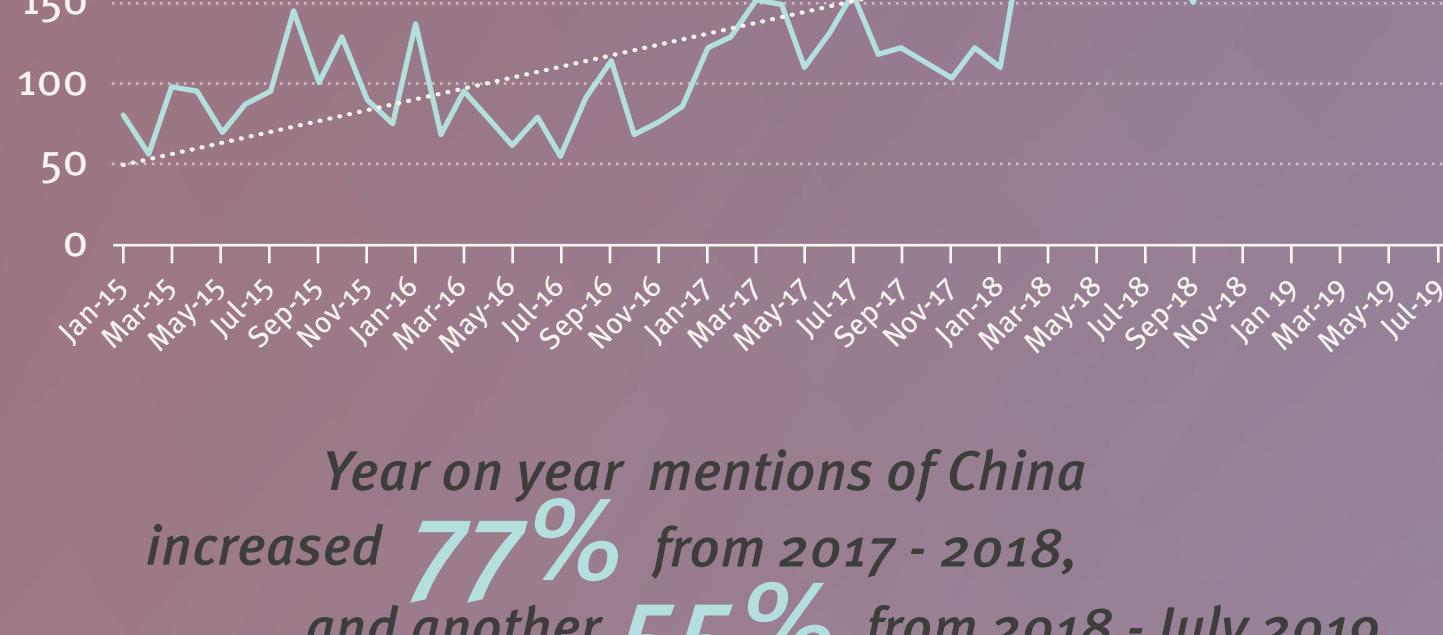
THE STORM

This content analysis examines China's appearances in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* from May of 2018 to July of 2019, highlighting the topics and tone of coverage with regard to China. This period was characterized by China-Canada and China-U.S. tension, and featured a number of newsworthy events worth reviewing.

In the forthcoming full report, which will be published in March 2020, The China Institute at the University of Alberta (CIUA) explores the ways in which Canadian newspapers frame China and subsequently influence public sentiment. This research builds upon a prior analysis of Canadian news media mentions of China from 2015 to mid-2018, helping to illustrate long-term trends as well as flashpoint topics and reactions. This infographic report provides a preliminary glimpse into the findings of our research.

January 2015 - July 2019:

Total Number of Articles About or Mentioning China by Month



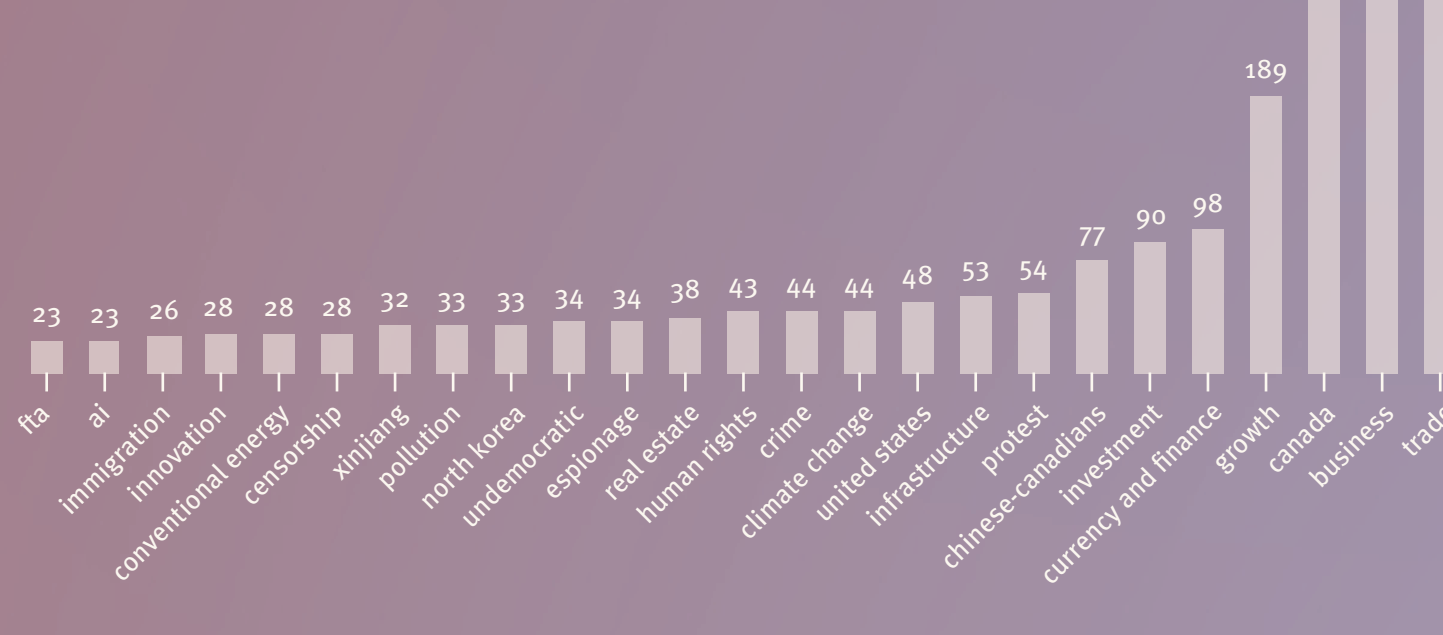
Year on year mentions of China increased **77%** from 2017 - 2018, and another **55%** from 2018 - July 2019

May 2018 - July 2019:

Most Frequently Mentioned Topics

Of nearly **4500** articles collected, **3333** mentioned China substantively.

China was a central focus in **1658** articles.



Over the three and a half years leading up to mid-2018, only **353** articles mentioning China in the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* primarily focused on trade, compared to **927** from May 2018 - July 2019.

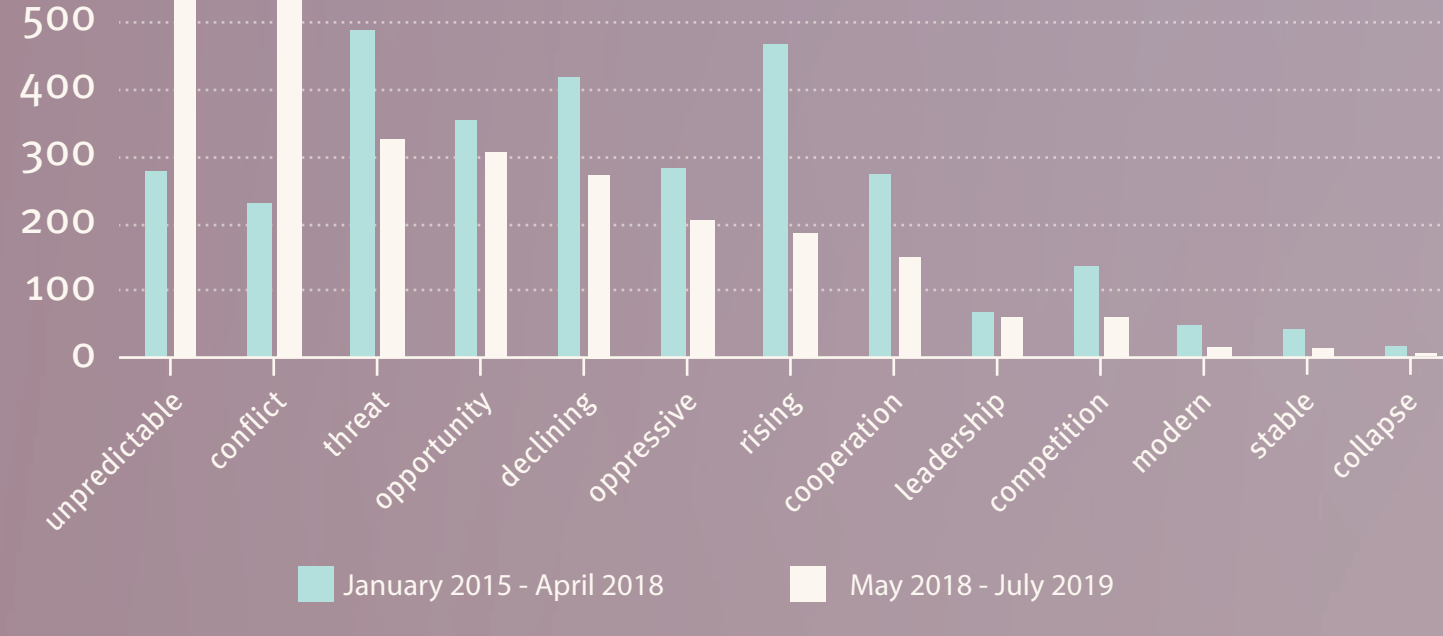
January 2015 - April 2018 | May 2018 - July 2019:

Comparing Media Framings of China Between Research Periods

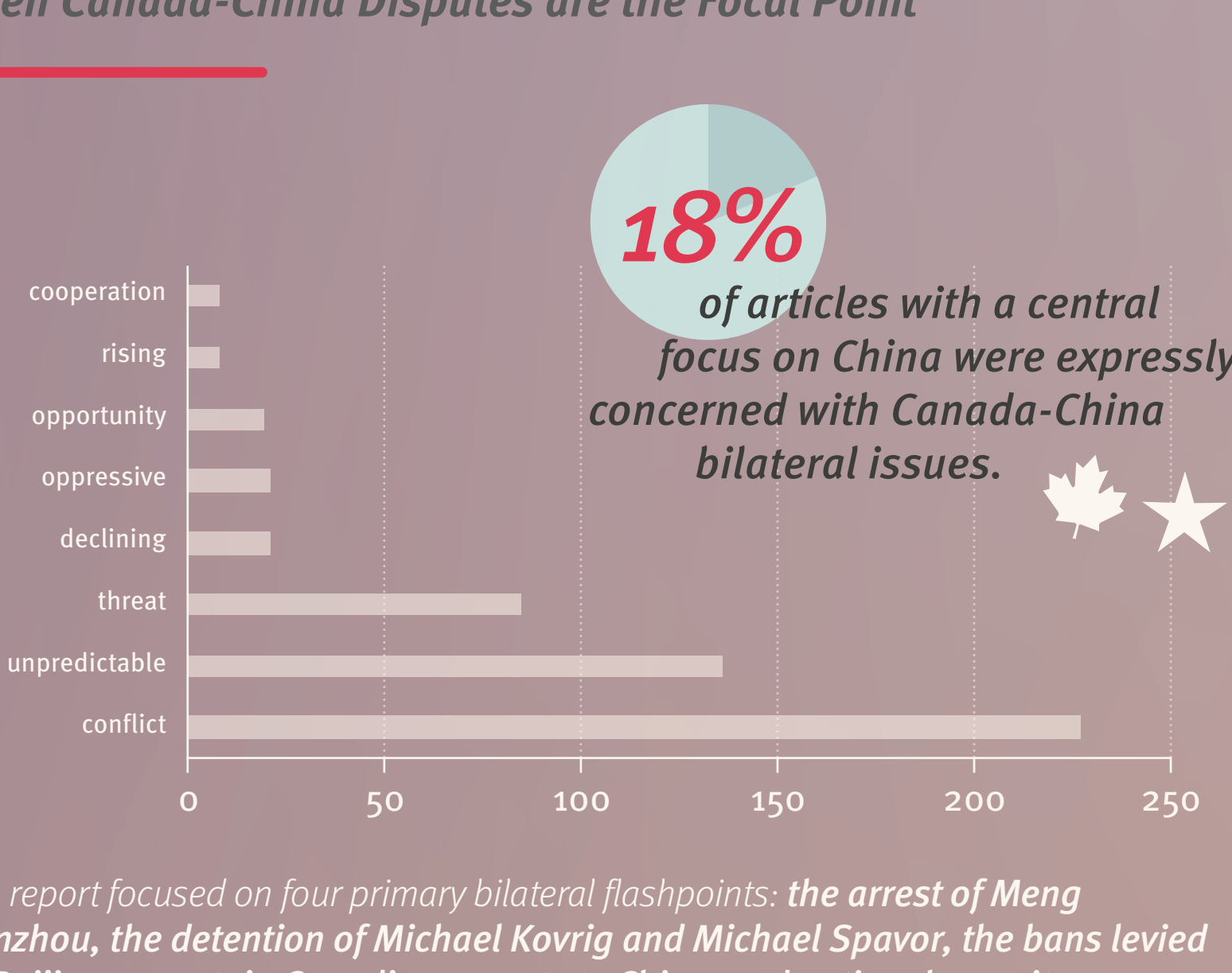


The graph below displays a marked shift in media framings of China from January 2015 – April 2018 to May 2018 – July 2019. Excluding neutral tone, the number of articles about or mentioning China published by the *Globe and Mail* and the *National Post* in the fifteen months from May 2018 to July 2019 (3052 articles) was nearly equal to the number of articles published in the three and a half year period from January 2015 to April 2018 (3085 articles).

In this graph, we see a shift towards “unpredictable” and “conflict”, and a steep decline in “rising” and “cooperation” framings of China over the 2019. Overall, pessimistic framings of China were more prominent in the latter research period than in the former.



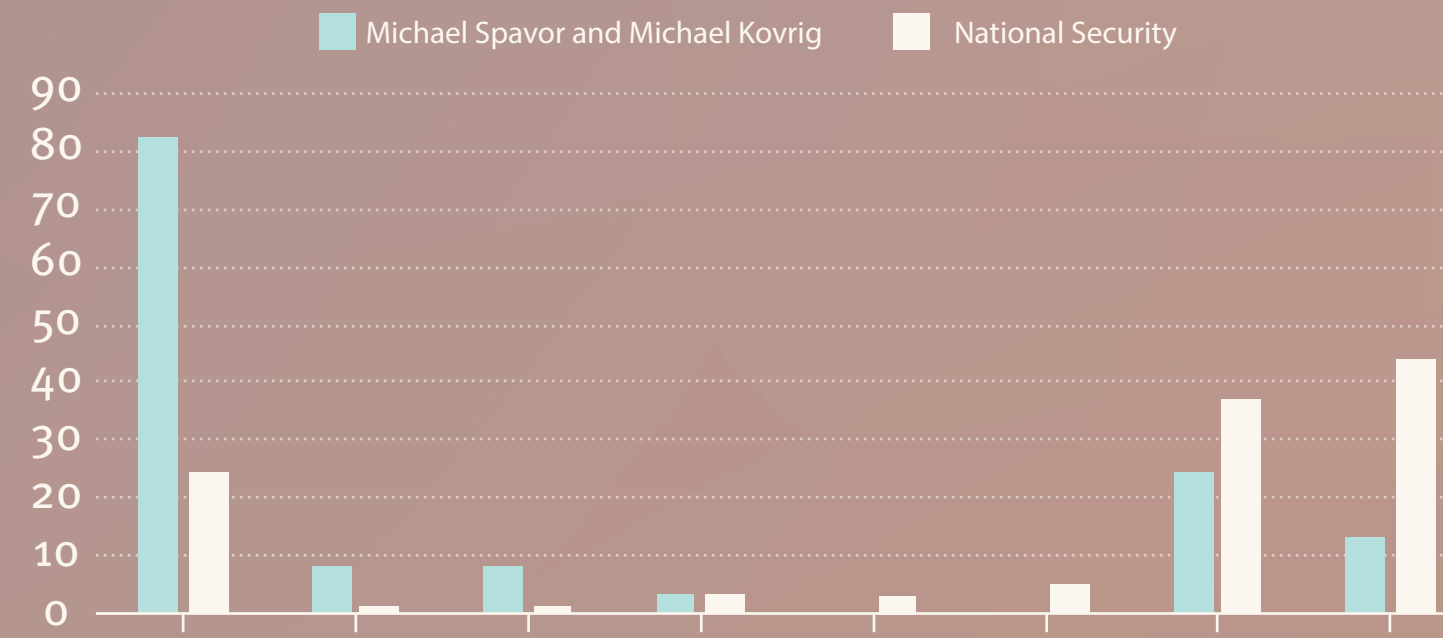
Media Framings of China when Canada-China Disputes are the Focal Point



This report focused on four primary bilateral flashpoints: the arrest of Meng Wanzhou, the detention of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor, the bans levied by Beijing on certain Canadian exports to China, and national security concerns regarding Huawei and Canadian network infrastructure.

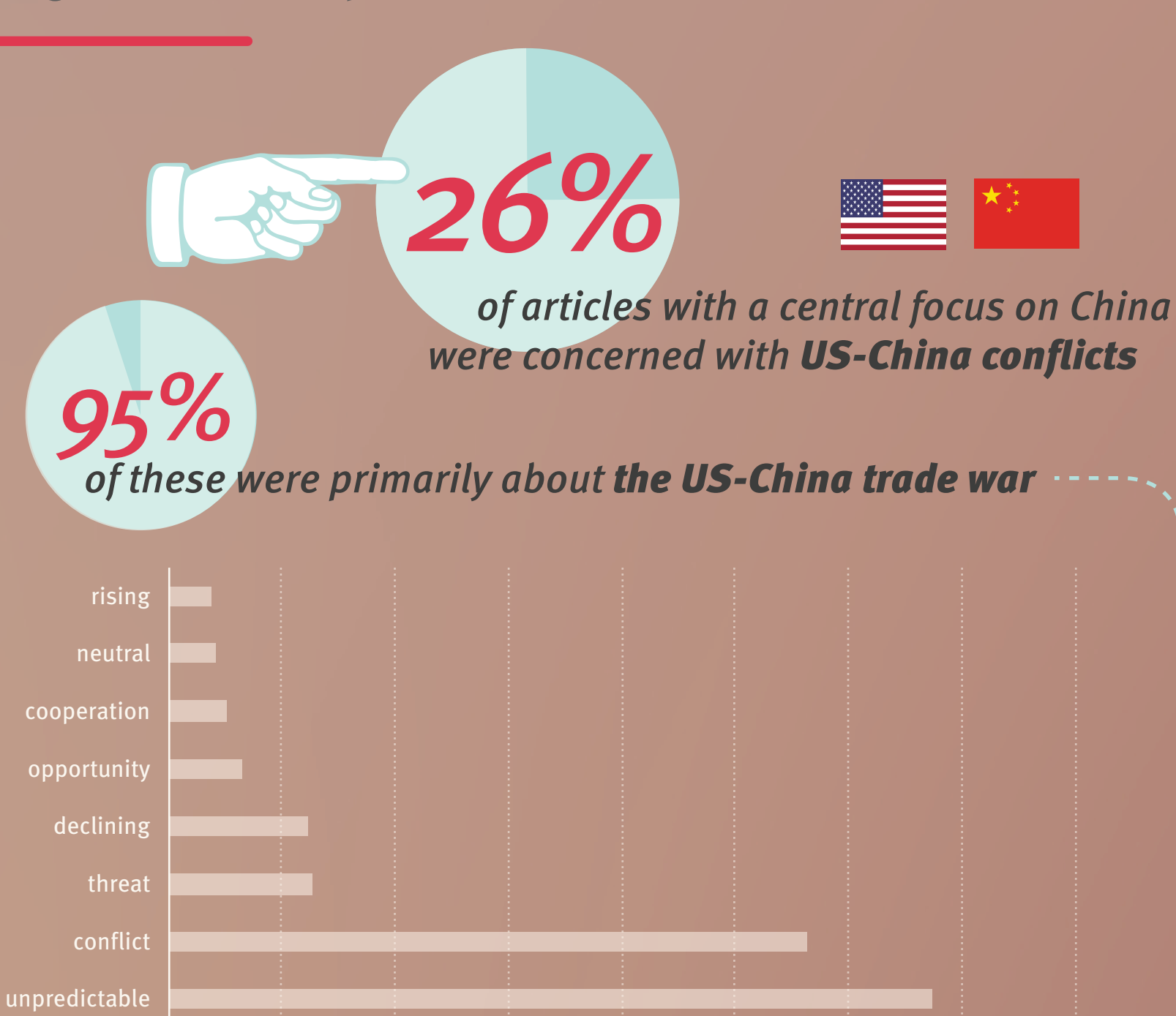
543 of the articles collected in this study directly addressed these issues, while another 61 were concerned with China-Canada diplomacy more broadly. The first notable difference between these articles and the whole article population was the relative absence of more optimistic terms such as “opportunity” and “cooperation”. “Threat” framing was also relatively more prevalent amongst this article group as shown above.

Comparing Media Framing of China Across Multiple Canada-China Dispute Focuses

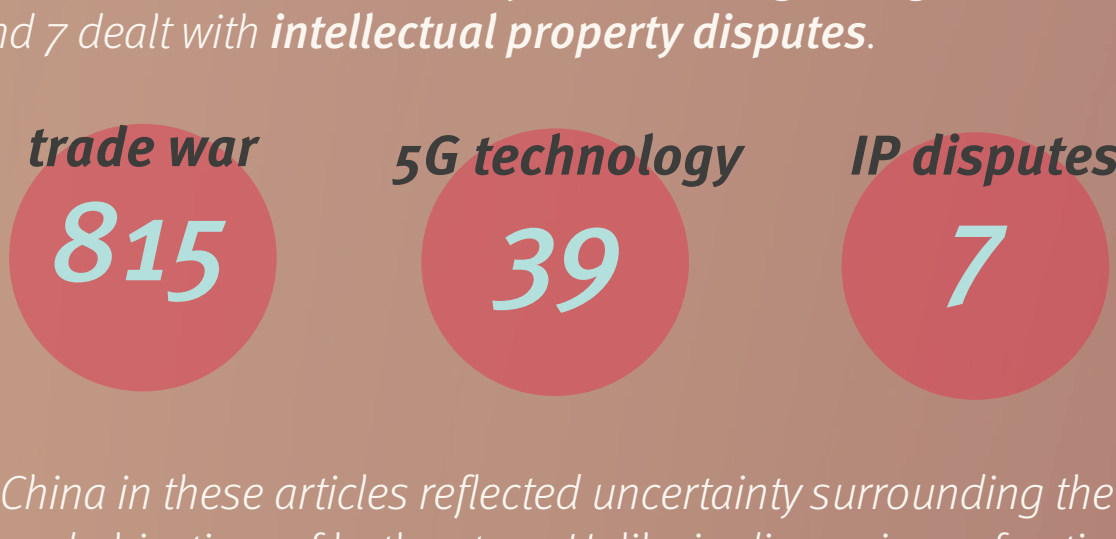


Media framings of China also varied from issue to issue even with the topic of Canada-China bilateral relations. As shown above, the predominant framing of China in the context of national security was “threat,” whereas “conflict” was more frequently associated with articles concerning Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig.

Media Framings of China through US-China disputes

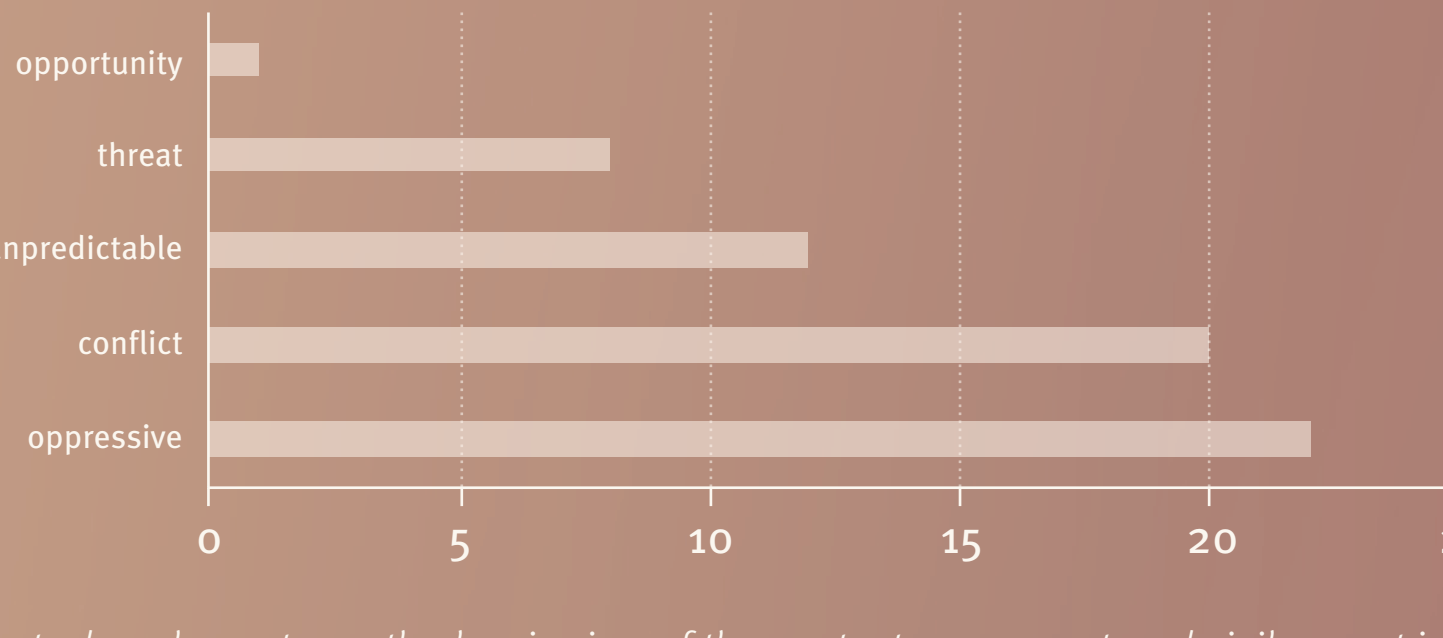


861 articles concerned U.S.-China conflicts, with 815 primarily mentioning the trade war. 39 articles discussed US national security concerns regarding Chinese 5G technology, and 7 dealt with intellectual property disputes.



The framing of China in these articles reflected uncertainty surrounding the trade war and the tactics and objectives of both actors. Unlike in discussions of national security, trade war related mentions of China tended to either paint both China and the U.S. as belligerent or neutral. This is why both “conflict” and “unpredictable” were dominant frames for China in this article group.

Media Framings of China in the Context of Hong Kong Social Upheaval



This study only captures the beginning of the protest movement and civil unrest in Hong Kong. Even so, we see notable framing differences between its coverage and aggregate coverage on China. In the 63 articles in our dataset that addressed the extradition treaty and subsequent protests in Hong Kong, “oppressive” was the most common frame used to describe China. Other topics such as Uighur religious freedoms in China, as well as human rights discourses garnered a similar tone of coverage.

Further discussion of these and other observations as well as a detailed methodology will be presented in the final report at china.ualberta.ca