Paraguayan Perceptions of the Economic Influence of the United States and China in Paraguay

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1. Introduction

The United States and China represent approximately 45% of the global economy in 2021. Increasingly, China has become a global economic powerhouse that in many regards rivals the economic influence of the United States around the world. For now, the US economy is larger than that of the Chinese economy, but the relative positions of these two countries may change in the next 10 to 20 years. Both countries are active economically in Paraguay. Longstanding is the relationship with the US which intensified throughout the 20th century (Masi and Rojas, 2019). For China the economic connection is more recent, primarily a 21st century act. Because Paraguay recognizes Taiwan instead of mainland China diplomatically, Paraguayan exports, for the most part, are not directly allowed into China. This however does not preclude Chinese imports from arriving in Paraguay, nor Paraguayan exports to make their way to China via a third-party facilitator (Rojas, 2018). So, comparing Paraguayan exports to both the USA and China is problematic because of Taiwan.

Import data for 2021 indicates that China is the most important import market for Paraguay (30.0% of the total) and the USA is Paraguay's fourth most important import market (7.0% of the total).[1] Neither country is in the top five official export destinations for Paraguayan goods (Banco Central de Paraguay, 2022). Indeed, the US is Paraguay's 6th largest export market (2.1%); whereas China ranks in 34th place for Paraguayan exports (0.3% of the total).[2] Regardless, both countries play an important role not only in the global economy, but also within the Paraguayan economy. This essay highlights the perceptions of 3,004 Paraguayans of the involvement and influence of the United States and China within the Paraguayan economy. The profile of the nationally representative survey sample of respondents is reported, as expected, in Table 1.

The first stage of Chinese involvement in the Paraguayan economy was characterized by goods destined for the Brazilian marketplace and goods intended for the local economy. In the first place, China used the Paraguayan re-export market to pass luxury goods to Brazil. For the local more price-sensitive market, Chinese goods began to enter and compete in areas of more common household demand, such as clothing, footwear, electrical appliances, and hardware. Thus, in this first stage of presence of China in Paraguay, which lasted approximately until the global economic crisis of 2008-2009, import of finished goods, mostly for the Brazilian market was predominant. Since the global economic crisis of 2008-2009, the Chinese presence in Paraguay has entered a second stage. In this more recent era, many more technologically sophisticated Chinese products along with a wave of inputs and capital goods have definitively increased production and productivity of the country's agricultural and manufacturing sector[3]. In this second stage, the share of Chinese goods designed for and

[1] The authors thank Rubén Alderete of CADEP for his expert help in summarizing import and export data for Paraguay. The 10-year average (2012-2021) for imports from China is 28.4% of all Paraguayan imports and 8.3% for imports from the US.

[2] The 10-year average (2012-2021) for exports to China is 0.4% of all Paraguayan exports and 1.9% for exports to the US.

[3] Fertilizers, agro-chemicals, and other inputs for the agriculture sector; machinery, parts and intermediate goods for the manufacturing sector.

required by local Paraguayan production has grown disproportionately vis-à-vis Chinese finished goods.[4]

Historically the highest percentage of products imported from the United States have been durable and non-durable consumer goods, intermediate goods and, to a lesser extent, capital goods. However, by 2021, the largest share of imported products from the United States has been in capital goods, with a significant reduction in intermediate and final consumer goods[5]. In any case, with a significant difference in the imported value of both countries, China has contributed the most to expanding the supply of inputs for agricultural and industrial production in Paraguay

In terms of exports of goods, both China and United States appear as non-relevant destination markets. Currently, the United States represents 2.4% of Paraguayan total exports while China represents just 1% of the export total [6]. However, the difference is wide between both countries in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI). The United States occupies second position regarding FDI stock in Paraguay, comprising 13% of the total between the years 1995 and 2021. During the same time span, Chinese FDI ranks in 23rd place with just 0.2% of the FDI total[7].

No diplomatic relations exist between Paraguay and China. Instead, Paraguay has diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Thus, it is also important to measure the participation of Taiwan in Paraguay's foreign trade and as a player in foreign direct investment. After representing 20% of total Paraguayan imports in 2000, imports from Taiwan were only equivalent to 0.3% of total Paraguayan imports in 2021. Twenty years ago, Taiwan was the destination market for 0.7% of Paraguay's total exports. Currently 1.8% of Paraguayan exports go to Taiwan[8]. In terms of stock of FDI, there is no participation of Taiwan (0.0% of the total).

A low participation of Taiwan in Paraguayan foreign trade and its null participation in FDI show that the benefits received by Paraguay in its diplomatic relations with this country have been established through other channels: mainly through official Taiwanese donations of resources allocated to different projects, although in insignificant amounts [9].

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[4] By the year 2000, 55% of China's imported goods consisted of final consumer goods. By 2021, this share had dropped to 17%, leading to increased imports of capital goods (63%) and intermediate goods (20%). Data from BCP.

[5] According to BCP foreign trade data, the final consumer goods imported by Paraguay from the United States in 2000 represented 55% of the total imports from that country and 32% corresponded to intermediate goods. By 2021, 63% of items imported from the United States were capital goods, 10% intermediate goods, and 25% final consumer goods.

[6] Exports to the United States are concentrated in organic sugar, charcoal, leather goods and automotive wiring (parts), while exports to China are mainly tanned hides, sesame seeds and copper waste. Data from BCP.

[7] IED stock from the United States in Paraguay was US$ 796 million while IED stock from China reached only US$ 14 million by 2021. Data from BCP.

[8] Increase in the participation of Taiwan as a destination market for Paraguayan goods has been due to pressure from Paraguay, as of 2015, to grant tariff preferences to Paraguayan commodities in the Taiwanese market through a preferential trade agreement.

[9] Taiwanese donations for public works and multisectorial strengthening of the public sector in Paraguay were in the order of US$29 million between 2003 and 2008 and of US$71 million between 2008 and 2018, rising to US$140 million from 2018 onwards (Rojas, 2018).

2. Paraguayan Perceptions of the US and Chinese Governments

A recent nationally representative survey undertaken during the winter of 2021 in Paraguay asked 3,004 respondents their opinion of the reliability of the US and Chinese governments (see annex for an explanation of the survey). The LAPOP has explored this question over several years of the survey, from 2012 to 2021. The profile of the nationally representative survey sample of respondents is reported, as expected, in Table 1.

Table 1 Profile of Paraguayan Survey Respondents

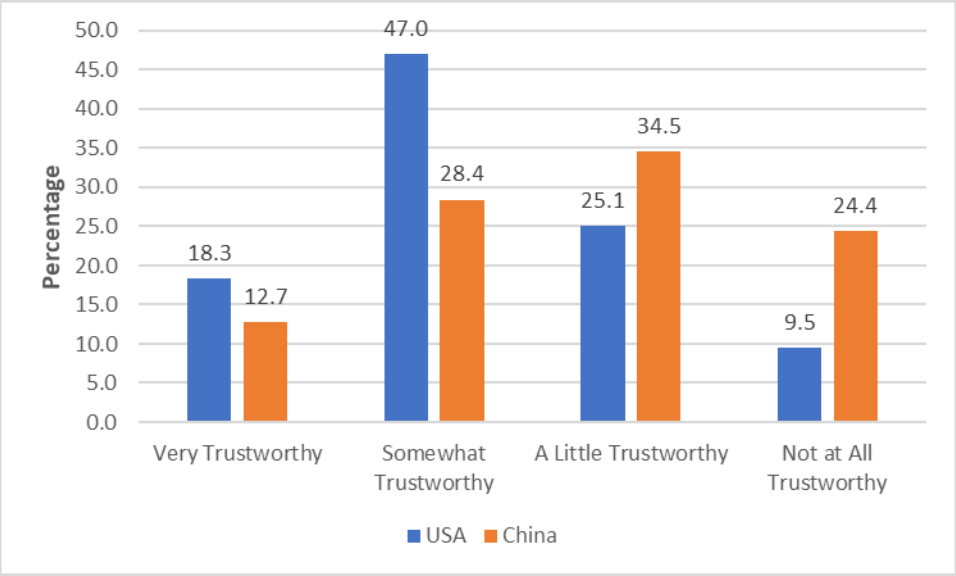
Variable	Result
Mean Age (std. dev.)	40.5 (15.4)
Gender (%)	
Male	51.3
Female	48.7
Residence (%)	
Urban	69.8
Rural	30.2
Region (%)	
Asuncion (Capital)	10.6
Central Department	34.9
North	12.5
Center	17.8
South	11.0
East	13.3

Source: AmericasBarometer Paraguay, 2021.

For the most part, Paraguayans view the US as significantly[10] more reliable than China. Some 65% of those surveyed have some or a lot of trust in the United States, while only 41% have the same kind of trust in China (see Graph 1).

[10] The difference is significant at the .001 level (Crosstabulation, Pearson Chi-Square = 93.662, df = 9, p= .001<).

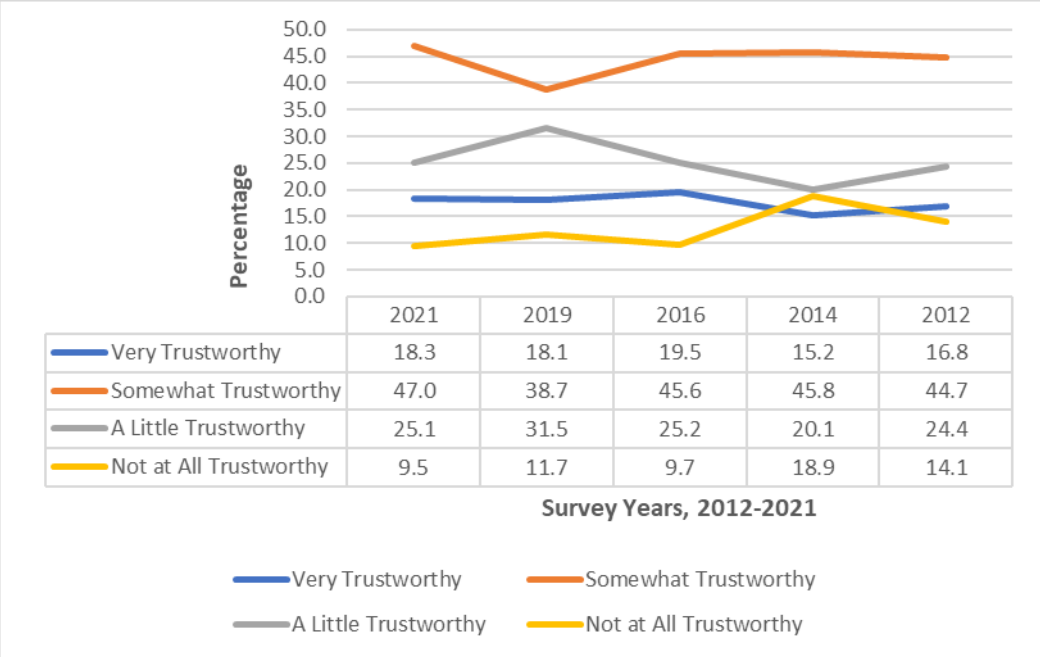
Graph 1 The US and Chinese governments are, in your opinion… (2021)



Source: AmericasBarometer Paraguay, 2021.

The question on Chinese and US governmental trustworthiness from the LAPOP survey was continuously asked over five surveys from 2012 to 2021. Over the years, the trustworthiness in the Chinese government has waned whereas the trustworthiness of the US has remained more or less steady with a dip connected to the Trump presidency (see Graphs 2 and 3). More specifically, the trend for China indicates a stable trustworthiness perception from Paraguayan respondents from 2012 to 2019 of around 59% for very and somewhat trustworthy. This trend dips considerably in 2021, perhaps due to the Covid-19 pandemic that began in China coupled with more overt Chinese power projection in international and commercial relations. The Paraguayan view of the trustworthiness of the US government is more or less constant—in the mid-60 percentile range—throughout the time period except for the survey undertaken during the presidency of Donald Trump. During 2019, the Paraguayan view of the US dropped under that of the Chinese.

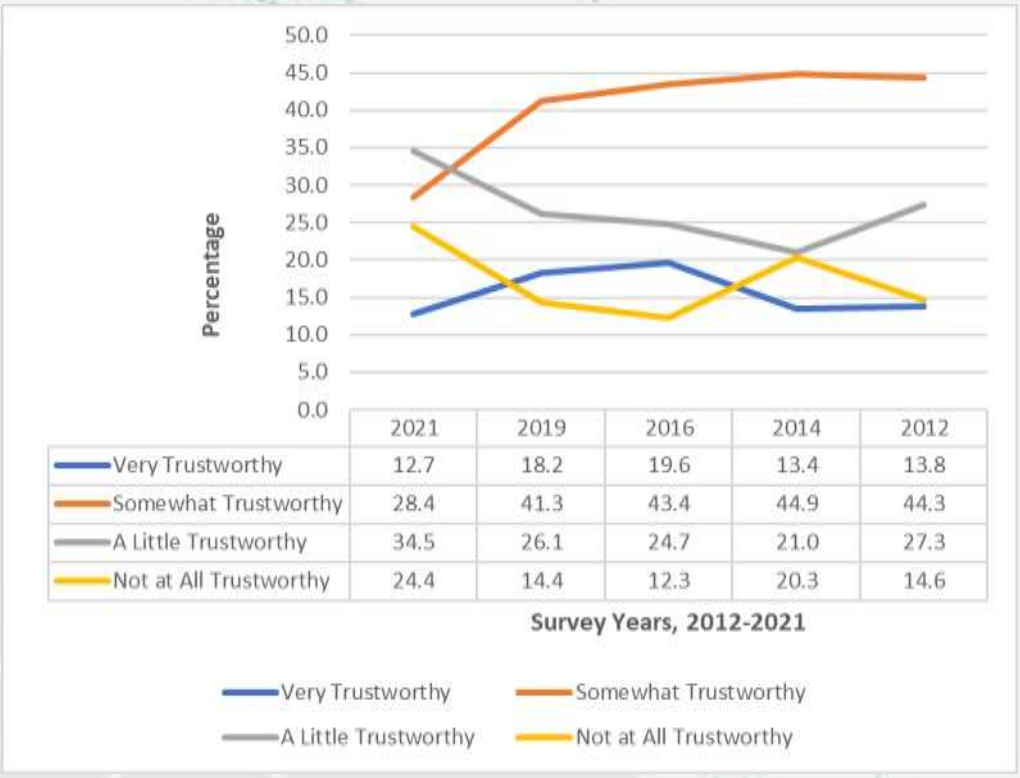
Graph 2 The Government of the US is, in your opinion



	2021	2019	2016	2014	2012
Very Trustworthy	18.3	18.1	19.5	15.2	16.8
Somewhat Trustworthy	47.0	38.7	45.6	45.8	44.7
A Little Trustworthy	25.1	31.5	25.2	20.1	24.4
Not at All Trustworthy	9.5	11.7	9.7	18.9	14.1

Source: AmericasBarometer Paraguay, 2012 - 2021.

Graph 3 The Chinese Government is, in your opinion



	2021	2019	2016	2014	2012
Very Trustworthy	12.7	18.2	19.6	13.4	13.8
Somewhat Trustworthy	28.4	41.3	43.4	44.9	44.3
A Little Trustworthy	34.5	26.1	24.7	21.0	27.3
Not at All Trustworthy	24.4	14.4	12.3	20.3	14.6

Fuente: AmericasBarometer Paraguay, 2012 - 2021.

Despite a significant presence of Chinese products in Paraguay, it is possible that the perception of the majority of Paraguayan citizens about the Chinese government basically follows the trajectory of the Cold War. In other words, the anticommunist tradition inaugurated by the authoritarian Stroessner regime (1954-1989) may still influence a large part of the Paraguayan population. On the other hand, the United States has traditionally been considered as a power with great influence over the political and economic decisions of Paraguay; in many ways this influence being perceived as convenient for the country.
The previous survey (2019) indicated a greater trust of Paraguayans in the Chinese government than in that of the United States, which would indicate a break in that static perception of the Cold War. This 2019 result is likely to have reflected growing international activism of China and an image projection of the Chinese government as a leader in economic globalization, contrasting with the introspective (anti-globalization) and isolationist character of the Trump administration.

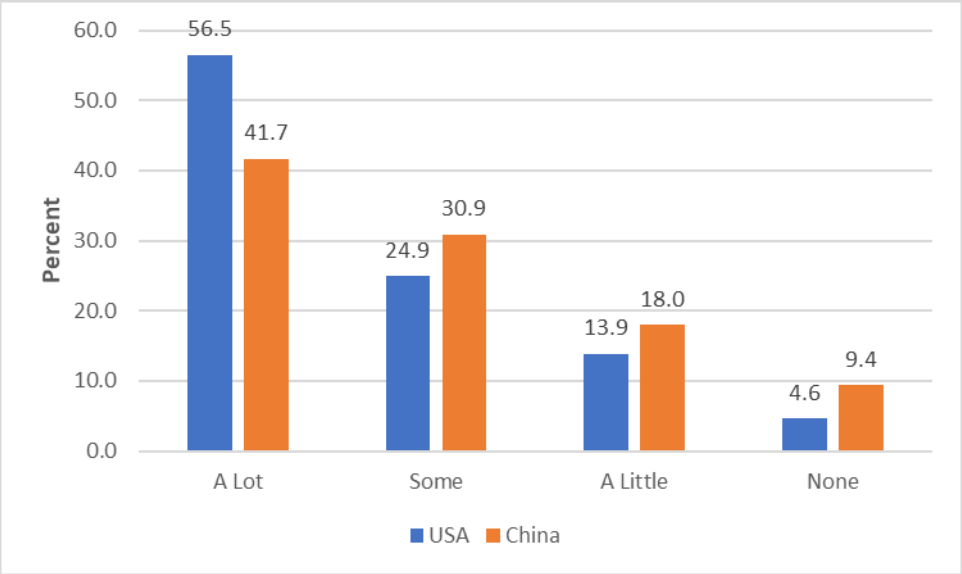
It is likely that the change in perception of Paraguayan citizens in 2021 is a consequence of the change of government in the United States, which is immediately very active in returning to the international agenda. It may also be due to the fact that the United States has donated an important batch of anti-Covid vaccines to Paraguay. Part of the loss of confidence in China, in 2021, by the respondents may be in part explained by several causes: increase in strategic and economic conflict between the United States and China, the deterioration of China's image after the emergence of the pandemic in its territory, and Paraguay's limited access to Chinese vaccines through indirect channels.

3. Paraguayan Perceptions of the Influence the US and China have on the Paraguayan Economy

Further, the survey, apportioned in half, asked the Paraguayan respondents their opinion concerning the economic influence of the two global economic powers. One half considered the economic influence in Paraguay of the US, and the other half considered the economic influence of China. The results indicate that both countries are perceived to exert a lot or some economic influence upon Paraguay (see Graph 4) with the US considered somewhat more influential.

The term “influence” in this question could be understood in two ways. On the one hand, respondents can interpret it as economic “presence”. In this sense, the flow of Chinese products in the Paraguayan market is very significant, only matched by the value of the stock of US investment in the country. On the other hand, it can be interpreted as the pressure exerted by the demand of a large market like China for commodities produced in Paraguay. Representatives of the Paraguayan agribusiness sector have insistently requested the opening of diplomatic relations with China, in recent years. Thus, when the United States is perceived by respondents as having greater influence over the Paraguayan economy, the level at which this influence is attributed to China is high and may grow over the years.

Graph 4 How much influence would you say the US and China have in Paraguay's economy?



Source: AmericasBarometer Paraguay, 2021.

In turn, beyond the significant presence of FDI from the United States, the perception of greater US influence over the Paraguayan economy may be reflecting a higher diversity of transmission channels of this influence: a growing dependence on the Paraguayan treasury for the issuance of sovereign bonds in New York; the influence of the US Treasury in defining the global floor for bond interest rates and in granting loans through multilateral institutions (World Bank and others); and the incidence of reference prices established in the Chicago Stock Exchange for the global market of commodities exported by Paraguay.

3.1 A Closer Look at the Perceived Influence of the US and by Selective Respondents Characteristics

The survey allows for a closer look at a few select demographic and household characteristics that may provide a fuller perspective of respondent perceptions. Respondent age, education, gender, and household media access, either through the Internet or cable/satellite television are available to contrast with respondent answers as to the US economic influence (a lot, some, a little, none) in Paraguay (see Table 2). Media consumption has been connected with opinion formation (Han, 2022); we operationalize media consumption through the proxy of household media availability.

Three variables—respondent age, gender, and media access through cable or satellite television at home—are not significantly connected to respondent response. Education, residence, and possessing Internet at home significantly differentiate response categories. Higher levels of education attainment are more closely connected to the higher opinion of the influence the US exerts on the Paraguayan economy. Urban respondents were much more likely to indicate a high level of economic influence from the United States compared to rural respondents. Access to the Internet and cable/ satellite television at home is significantly

related to the respondents' opinion of the higher-level economic influence of the US in Paraguay.

Table 2 How much influence would you say the US have in Paraguay´s economy?

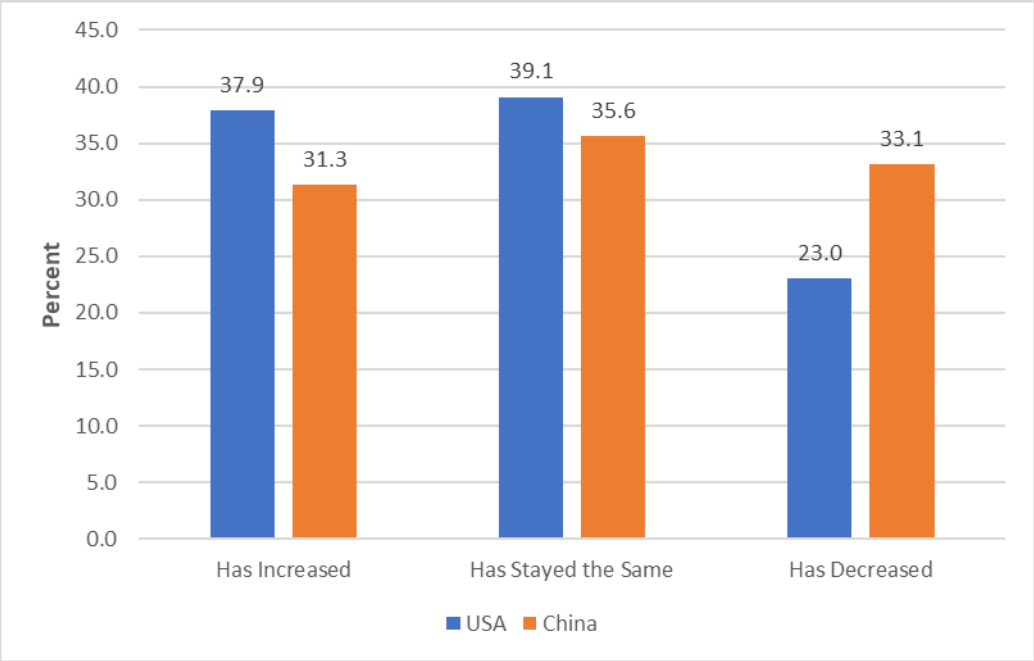
Variable	A lot	Some	A little	None
Age (std. dev.)	40,8 (14,8)	40,0 (15,7)	39,9 (14,1)	37,4 (14,8)
Education (%)				
Primary	*50.4*	*21.7*	*20.9*	*7*
Secondary	*57.7*	*22.1*	*15.3*	*5*
Tertiary	*58.7*	*29*	*10*	*2.3*
Gender (%)				
Male	59.9	24.7	11.1	4.3
Female	52.8	25	17.2	5
Residence (%)				
Urbana	*60.7*	*22.1*	*13.6*	*3.5*
Rural	*45.2*	*32.8*	*14.1*	*7.9*
Media Access				
Have Internet at Home				
Yes	*58.3*	*26.2*	*11.6*	*3.9*
No	*50.4*	*18.7*	*22.8*	*8.1*
Have Cable / Satelite Television at Home (%)				
Yes	*58*	*25.6*	*12.2*	*4.3*
No	*54.4*	*24.3*	*16.2*	*5.1*
Total	56.50%	24.90%	13.90%	4.60%

Significant variables ($p < .05$) appear in italics.
Source: AmericasBarometer Paraguay, 2021.

It has been previously shown that the United States exerts a decisive political and economic influence on Paraguay, in the opinion of respondents. The variables studied here confirm this trend, emphasizing those who have access to cable television and Internet at home, as well as those who have higher levels of education. Although this segment of the population does not represent the majority, the percentages show that this view of the United States as the most influential is also shared by those who only have primary or secondary education and those who do not have access to Internet or cable TV.

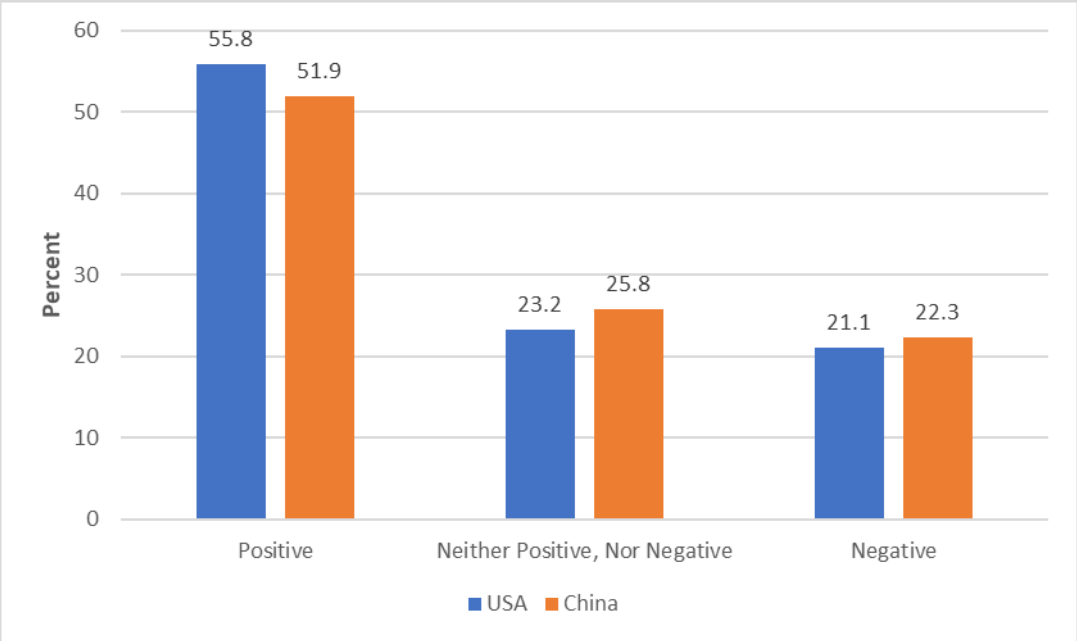
Two follow-up questions provide additional insight. The first considered whether US economic influence has changed over the preceding 12 months (from 2019-2020). A clear majority of respondents indicated that US influence has either increased or stayed constant over the preceding year (see Graph 5). The second considered more consequentially the character of the US economic influence: whether the economic influence was positive, negative, or neither positive nor negative (i.e., benign, neutral). In essence, a response continuum of economic influence from positive to negative. A majority indicated that US economic influence in Paraguay was positive, though distinct minorities considered US influence as neutral or negative (see Graph 6).

Graph 5 Would you say that in the last twelve months that influence has increased, has remained the same, or has decreased?



Source: AmericasBarometer Paraguay, 2021.

Graph 6 Thinking about the US and China and the influence they have on the economy of Paraguay. Do you think those influencers are…



Source: AmericasBarometer Paraguay, 2021.

The second follow-up question deserves a closer look. Here we consider again respondent age, education, gender, residence, and household media access with respect to the character (positive, negative, or benign) of US economic influence. All but two of the demographic and household characteristics significantly contrast the answer subgroups—gender and residence did not differ significantly in respondent answers (see Table 3). Younger Paraguayans were more likely to perceive US economic influence as benign (i.e., neither positive nor negative) more so than older Paraguayans who saw great disparity, either positive or negative economic influence. A majority of all education groups saw US economic influence in a positive light. Nevertheless, substantial subgroups of primary and secondary school educated Paraguayans (about 25%) saw US economic influence in a negative light compared to a much small subset (13%) of the highest educated Paraguayans. Lastly, household media access, whether by internet or cable/satellite television ameliorated the negative perceptions of US economic influence in Paraguay.

Table 3 Thinking about the United States and the influence it has on the economy of Paraguay Do you think this influence is…

Variable	Positive	Neither positive Nor negative	Negative
Age	*41.3*	*35.4*	*41.6*
(std. dev.)	*-15*	*-13.1*	*-14.6*
Education (%)			
Primary	*55.7*	*12.4*	*25.8*
Secondary	*59.1*	*15.7*	*25.3*
Tertiary	*53.2*	*33.4*	*13.3*
Gender (%)			
Male	56.6	20.6	22.8
Female	54.8	26	19.2
Residence			
Urban	54.7	25.3	20
Rural	58.7	18.7	22.7
Media Access			
Have Internet at Home			
Yes	*58.2*	*25.7*	*19.1*
No	*56.9*	*12.3*	*30.4*
Have Cable/Satellite Television at Home (%)			
Yes	*58*	*25.5*	*16.5*
No	*52.5*	*20.2*	*27.3*
Total	55.80%	23.20%	21.10%

Significant variables ($p < .05$) appear in *italics*.
Source: AmericasBarometer Paraguay, 2021.

It is important to point out that even when the influence of the United States has increased or has remained the same for survey respondents, the weight that China has as a positive influence on the Paraguayan economy is similar to that of the United States. In any case, the fact that the segment of young and more educated people has clearly a more positive view of the influence of the United States may be responding to two factors. First, because products of globalization, both tangible and intangible, are mostly consumed and shared by younger

segments of the population. Second, because young and well-educated people receive more benefits from the relationship with the United States than those with lower educational levels.

3.2 A Closer Look at the Perceived Influence of China and by Selective Respondents Characteristics

As with the United States above, this section takes a closer look at China through a few select demographic and household characteristics that may provide a fuller perspective of respondent perceptions. These responses are derived from the half of the overall survey directed to questions concerning China. Respondent age, education, gender, residence, and household media access, either through the internet or cable/satellite television are available to contrast with respondent answers as to Chinese economic influence (a lot, some, a little, none) in Paraguay (see Table 4). Age, gender, residence, and cable/satellite television at home do not significantly differentiate response subgroups. Education and the availability of the internet at home do significantly contrast response choices. In general, higher levels of educational attainment are associated with a higher-level perception.

Table 4 How much influence would you say China have in Paraguay´s economy?

Variable	A lot	Some	A little	None
Age (std. dev.)	39.7 -14.5	38.0 (15.2)	41.0 (15.8)	38.9 (16.5)
Education (%)				
Primary *Secondary* *Tertiary*	*37.5* *40.9* *44.2*	*20.6* *34.6* *34*	*28.7* *16.8* *13.2*	*13.2* *7.7* *8.6*
Gender (%)				
Male Female	43.6 39.4	38.1 34	17.8 18.3	10.5 8.3
Residence				
Urban Rural	41.4 43.7	32.8 27.3	16.3 20.2	9.5 8.7
Media Access				
Have Internet at Home				
Yes *No*	*41.5* *42.9*	*33.1* *20.5*	*16.7* *23.2*	*8.7* *13.5*
Have Cable/Satellite Television at Home (%)				
Yes No	40.1 44.3	33.1 26.8	18.6 17	8.2 11.5
Total	41.70%	30.90%	18.00%	9.40%

Significant variables ($p < .05$) appear in *italics*.
Source: AmericasBarometer Paraguay, 2021.

As in the case of the United States, variables such as high level of education and access to Internet are favorable to an opinion of China's decisive economic influence over Paraguay. However, the (urban) residence variable, which in the case of the United States is important in terms of an opinion of high economic influence of that country, is not so in the case of China. In any case, there is a common characteristic that is observed in terms the influence of both countries in the Paraguayan economy: people with higher incomes are those who think, in a clearer way, that both the United States and China have a decisive influence on the Paraguayan economy.

As in the previous section, two follow-up questions provide additional insight. The first considered whether Chinese economic influenced has changed over the preceding 12 months (from 2019-2020). For this question, Paraguayans are nearly evenly split among the three response choices. This split reveals a gap with the perception of the US vis-à-vis China, most notably in diminishing Chinese influence (see Graph 5). The second question reveals a perceived view of China that is somewhat similar but a bit less positive to that of the US regarding Chinese economic influence as positive, negative, or neither positive nor negative for Paraguay (see Graph 6).

As in the section above, we look further into the character of the perceived Chinese influence through the lens of five demographic and household variables (respondent age, education, gender, and household media access). Gender and access to cable/satellite television did not significantly differ among the response selections. Age, education, area of residence and access to the internet at home did differ significantly (see Table 5). Younger Paraguayans were more likely to perceive Chinese economic influence as benign more so than older Paraguayans who are more likely to answer at the polar ends of the character continuum. Respondents with a primary education had a relatively higher negative view of Chinese economic influence relative to those respondents with higher levels of education. Tertiary level educated respondents were much more ambivalent toward China, less than half perceived Chinese influence as positive with the remainder ambivalent or negative. A majority of Paraguayans residing in urban areas are more likely to see China’s economic influence as positive. On the other hand, rural Paraguayans are more critical of the economic influence of China. Respondents of households without access to the internet fell into a bimodal distributional pattern, for the most part either viewing Chinese economic influence as positive or negative and not in the middle. Half of respondents in households with internet access perceived Chinese economic influence as positive with a smaller proportion of negative responses comparatively to households without internet access.

Table 5 Thinking about China and the influence it has on the economy of Paraguay Do you think this influence is…

Variable	Positive	Neither positive Nor negative	Negative
Age	*40*	*34.5*	*41.4*
(std. dev.)	*-15.7*	*-12.6*	*-13.8*
Education (%)			
Primary	*60*	*8*	*32*
Secondary	*56.2*	*24.2*	*19.7*
Tertiary	*46.2*	*34.2*	*22.3*
Gender (%)			
Male	55	23.9	21.1
Female	48.5	27.9	23.7
Residence			
Urban	*54.7*	*28.5*	*16.5*
Rural	*44.6*	*18.2*	*37.2*
Media Access			
Have Internet at Home			
Yes	*50.9*	*28.2*	*20.9*
No	*58.8*	*10.6*	*30.6*
Have Cable/Satellite Television at Home (%)			
Yes	52.9	25.1	22
No	51.3	25.9	22.8
Total	51.90%	25.80%	22.30%

Significant variables (p < .01) appear in *italics*.
Source: AmericasBarometer Paraguay, 2021.

Respondents with only a primary education have the highest rate of viewing China's influence as negative, among the three education categories. However, these respondents also consider the Chinese influence as the most favorable, especially compared to those who hold a university degree. It is also important to observe that the population with primary education (low income) is probably the one that benefits from basic products imported from China at affordable prices, allowing the expansion of consumption in this segment of the population.

In addition, more sophisticated products such as shoes and sportswear or from the digital line are those the young population consumes the most, most of them being of Chinese origin, also with affordable prices. The latter is perhaps one of the indicators by which young people have a more benign view of Chinese economic influence. Finally, the globalizing effect of Chinese economic presence particularly influences the urban population and those who have Internet access at home, as observed. This segment of the population is precisely the one who is prone to have a more positive than negative view of Chinese economic influence in Paraguay.

4. Conclusion

China and the US are not only global economic powers, but also influential within the Paraguayan economy. For China, this influence is derived mostly from the import appetite of Paraguayan consumers and producers. Large-scale Paraguayan agricultural and industrial producers rely on Chinese inputs (e.g., supplies, capital goods) as do many local industries. And Chinese economic presence has grown from a provider of consumer goods for re-export to Brazil to one that is important for the economic development and progress in key Paraguayan sectors. The US also contributes capital goods, but US firms are important foreign direct investment (FDI) partners in Paraguay. In many ways, Chinese imports are balanced by US FDI and the influence of US financial (i.e., bond, role of the US dollar) and commodity markets with regard to internal economic participation. Externally, both China and the US are insignificant export markets for Paraguayan goods.

Yet, the US has had a long political presence in the country, highlighted in many respects by the Cold War and its legacy in Paraguay. Attenuating Chinese influence in Paraguay is the Paraguayan government's recognition of Taiwan, rather than mainland China in international fora. Economically, Taiwan is not critical to the development of the Paraguayan economy, though Taiwan does provide some funding support to the government. Politically, the recognition of Taiwan over China complicates Paraguay's relationship with China, particularly as a direct export market. No doubt this complication is an issue unresolved in the Paraguayan political landscape that requires further national discourse.

Continuing with politics, contemporary Paraguayan views of the trustworthiness of the governments of China and the US may be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. China is responsible for the origin of the pandemic. The US has used its access to Covid vaccines to provide vaccines to Paraguay (and many Paraguayans traveled to the US for vaccinations). The goodwill associated with the US vaccine diplomacy and the normalization of US presidential behavior with President Biden has perhaps generated a bubble of Paraguayan goodwill. On the other hand, China may suffer from the stigma associated with Covid-19. In any case, this current outlook should be monitored in the coming years, considering that trust in China by Paraguayan citizens was on the rise until 2019, according to this previous surveys.

Lastly, higher levels of education and access to media may moderate Paraguayan perceptions of the economic influence of China and the US in Paraguay. That is, more highly educated Paraguayans often are connected to the US through educational advancement and higher incomes allowing travel to the US. Broader access to media also enables Paraguayans to consume American media providing opportunities for exposure to American popular culture and perhaps a stronger connection to American cultural influence. The cultural sphere is an area where the United States still has a marked influence compared to that exercised by China, both in Paraguay and in Latin America in general. But as the views of survey respondents showed, Paraguayan citizens who have a higher level of education and greater access to the media are those who also have a more benign or favorable view of Chinese economic influence.

China and the US continue to occupy important roles in the Paraguayan economy. Paraguayans are not only aware of this influence, but also have expressed views toward their economic presence. The economic rivalry of China and the US is alive and well in Paraguay for now and into the foreseeable future.

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ANNEX

Methodology of AmericasBarometer

AmericasBarometer, housed at Vanderbilt University (Nashville, Tennessee, USA), conducts periodic surveys of 34 countries in the Western Hemisphere. AmericasBarometer has conducted eight surveys in Paraguay since 2006. The data for this essay derives from the latest AmericasBarometer Paraguayan survey conducted June through August 2021 with 3,004 adult respondents. The survey is a nationally (and geographically) representative snapshot (i.e., cross-sectional survey, dataset weights), utilizing methodologically rigorous sample designs (stratification by urban/rural areas, city size, regions, gender, age, etc., and with a sampling error estimate of 1.8%) and weighting for cross-country comparisons, undertaken in phone interviews (one respondent per household), and made available to respondents in Spanish and Guaraní. Our results are based on the totality of the Paraguayan responses, unweighted for domestic comparisons. The survey was split into two for most of the questions focused on China and the United States. By design, half of the respondents answered questions focused on China and the other half of the respondents answered questions focused on the United States [see, https://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/about-americasbarometer.php.]