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European Approaches to Chinese Foreign Policy – a Text-as-Data Approach

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As Sino-American competition becomes a key factor in structuring 21st century international relations, researchers and policymakers are interested in how third states align in relation to China and the US. So far, research on this topic has been qualitative –scholars have speculated as to the alignment of various actors vis-à-vis China and the United States, but no analysis has systematically arranged and compared a group of states or offered a consistent set of measurements for alignment. This limitation impedes replicability and generalizability of analyses. We introduce a dataset that uses text as data to systematize discursive alignment of up to 34 European states for as many as 50 years, using two different automated content analysis techniques. In more recent years (since 2014), we focus on alignment specifically regarding China’s “Belt and Road Initiative.” We discuss the main features of this data in the paper, and the replication files will enable other scholars to build on our work in the future. In addition to automating the extraction of quantitative sentiments from key documents, we make our library of documents available for other researchers to analyze along other dimensions of interest to them. We illustrate the utility of the dataset by describing differences across countries and over time. By focusing on European states, we shed light on Europe’s relationship with both China and the United States, as well as the concept of European strategic autonomy.

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No

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Political Economy, International Relations, Computer Science

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