Microblogging and Media Policy in China: Xinhua's Strategic Communication on the Belt and Road Initiative
Nie, Y.

Cover Page

Universiteit Leiden

The handle http://hdl.handle.net/1887/79516   holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Nie, Y.
Title: Microblogging and Media Policy in China: Xinhua's Strategic Communication on the Belt and Road Initiative
Issue Date: 2019-10-15

Chapter Six
Quantitative Outlook

In this chapter, I conduct a quantitative study to examine Xinhua News Agency's activity on the Sina Weibo and Twitter platforms. To analyse Xinhua's communication strategies on these accounts, I collected its posts and tweets on the specific topic of China's BRI from these two social media sites as a case study.

The time span in this research lasts from the first tweet on reviving the Silk Road on 4 September 2012 to the day I finished collecting tweets and posts on 4 January 2016. The BRI, an example of the Chinese government's diplomacy, is the main case in examining Xinhua's communicative patterns.

With this case study, I examine what role the state media Xinhua plays in internal and external communication, and how Xinhua reaches out to the broadest audience possible through social media platforms. It further serves to examine whether Xinhua performs different functions toward domestic and international audiences on different platforms, and if so, where the strategic differences lie in these posts.

I also intend to explore how Xinhua conceptualizes international news and both internal and external communication; whether social media messaging differs from Xinhua's traditional ways of communication; and how effective Xinhua carries on the government's diplomatic missions on Weibo and Twitter.

I collected Xinhua's posts on Weibo through its seven accounts, and Xinhua's tweets from its official Twitter account, New China. I have collected 28 English posts from Xinhua net English, 71 English posts from Xinhua iReport, 151 Chinese posts from Xinhua net, 20 Chinese posts from China Scoop, 86 Chinese posts from Xinhua International, 68 Chinese posts from Xinhua Viewpoint, and 10 Chinese posts from China Net Affairs. On Twitter, I have collected 189 tweets within the parameters of the case study from Xinhua's account, New China, all in English. Among the total 623 tweets and posts, there are 288 tweets and posts in English and 335 posts in Chinese.

6.1 Categorization

I divided the tweets and posts in my case study into different categorizations. In order to make meaningful comparisons, I calculated the frequencies of posts and tweets in each category as a percentage.

6.1.1 Categories by Topic

The first level of categorization is based on which themes the tweets and posts most frequently discuss in the context of the BRI. These are: diplomacy, economy, culture, reviews, and other. This is to analyse from which perspective Xinhua emphasizes the importance of the BRI the most, and whether there is a significant difference in which perspectives Xinhua uses to talk about the BRI in internal and external communication.

To avoid overlap, it is important to clarify the definition of these categories. The category of diplomacy includes the messages on government officials' visits abroad; the visits of officials from other countries in China; international conferences that emphasize the governments' participation; and the political speeches and opinions by officials. Since there are too many messages to reproduce all in full here, I selected several representative examples to illustrate my point. The messages that fall within this category are:

Nr.17 China beefs up maritime co-op with S Europe for 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road strategy http://xhne.ws/jhuBQ?

Nr.24 #China, #Netherlands agree to boost cooperation in Belt and Road Initiative, AIIB http://xhne.ws/Mkhv0?

Nr.53 Cultural diplomacy brings #China, Italy together on new Silk Road http://xhne.ws/hZ656?

Nr.86 Chinese official urges further Sino-Spanish co-op under #BeltandRoad framework https://amp.twimg.com/v/e45fa2f2-86f1-4319-988e-33fa3d258730

Nr.157 Xi Jinping welcomes Maldives in maritime Silk Road construction when meeting Abdulla Yameen http://xhne.ws/vJ9kW

Nr.34【习近平会见德国社民党主席、副总理加布里尔】习近平指出，中德建交 43 年来，两国关系保持平稳健康发展。双方高层交往密切，政治互信不断加强。去年，我在访问德国时同默克尔总理达成一致，将两国关系提升为全方位战略伙伴关系，目的就是进一步丰富两国合作内涵，拓展两国利益汇合点，实现互利共赢。(Translation: Xi Jinping Meets German Social Democratic Party Chairman and Deputy Prime Minister Gabriel. Xi Jinping pointed out that since the establishment of China-Germany diplomatic tie 43 years ago, the relations between the two countries have maintained a steady and healthy development. The two sides have maintained close and high-level exchanges, and the political mutual trust has been continuously strengthened. Last year, during my visit to Germany, I reached an agreement with Prime Minister Merkel to upgrade bilateral relations into a

comprehensive strategic partnership. The purpose is to further enrich the connotation of bilateral cooperation, expand the convergence of interests between the two countries, and achieve mutual benefits and win-win results.)

Nr.48【中俄发表联合声明：将丝绸之路经济带建设和欧亚经济联盟建设相对接】中华人民共和国与俄罗斯联邦 8 日在莫斯科发表《中华人民共和国与俄罗斯联邦关于丝绸之路经济带建设和欧亚经济联盟建设对接合作的联合声明》。中华人民共和国与俄罗斯联邦关于丝绸之路经济带建设和欧亚经济联盟建设对接合作的联合声明（全文）(Translation: China and Russia issue a joint statement: linking the construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt with the construction of the Eurasian Economic Union. The People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation released in Moscow on the 8th "The People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on the construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and Eurasian Joint Statement on Cooperation in Economic Alliance Construction." Joint Statement of the Cooperation between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on the Construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Eurasian Economic Union (full text).)

Nr.13【对"一带一路"，各国政党大佬怎么看？】对"一带一路"，各国政党大佬怎么看？据视点君了解，此次会议旨在促进亚洲国家和丝路沿线有关国家政党更好了解中国"一带一路"战略构想并开展相关合作。 15 日，各国政党大佬们围绕"政治引领：丝路政党新共识" "民心相通：丝路文明新对话"和"经济融合：丝路国家发展新动力"三个分议题进行了深入了交流和探讨。 10 月 15 日，中共中央总书记、国家主席习近平在北京会见出席亚洲政党丝绸之路专题会议的外方主要代表。 新华社记者黄敬文摄 (Translation: On "Belt and Road," what are the perspectives from the political parties in various countries? On the Belt and Road Initiative, what are the perspectives from the political parties in various countries? According to Xinhua Viewpoint, the meeting aims to promote the understanding of China's "Belt and Road" strategic concept and related cooperation between Asian countries and parties along the "Silk Road." On the 15th, the political parties from various countries conducted in-depth exchanges and discussion on three topics: "Political Guidance: New Consensus for Silk Road Parties," "Public Connectivity: New Dialogue on Silk Road Civilization," and "Economic Integration: New Drive for Silk Road Countries." On October 15 in Beijing, General Secretary of the CCP Central Committee and President Xi Jinping met with representatives from various countries who attended the Asian Political Party Silk Road Special Conference. Xinhua News Agency reporter Huang Jingwen.)

In the second category, economy, the messages are about investments, contracts, banking activities, projects, products, and information services, and about international conferences, such as the Asia Pacific Economic Conference (APEC) and Boao Conference. There is some potential overlap with the diplomacy category, among the messages on the international conferences that also involve governments' attendances. Of those, I put the ones with a stronger feature on economic collaboration and investment than on the political significance into the category of economy. Some messages in this category are:

Nr.23 #Europe's 2nd largest port eyes active role in China-proposed #Beltandroad initiative http://xhne.ws/q0nOR?

Nr.57 Chinese companies ink 1,401 project contracts along #BeltandRoad in H1 http://xhne.ws/vjYSh?

Nr.83 #BankofChina lists 322-mln USD bond for #BeltandRoad initiative on @NasdaqDubai http://xhne.ws/7ELP4?

Nr.139 China's 40 billion-U.S. dollar Silk Road Fund, with senior management team seated, to start investment soon:…

Nr.153 Maritime Silk Road expo ends in S. China, deals worth US$28.6 bln signed http://xhne.ws/Gwbrv?

Nr.27【企业借道"新华丝路"进军"一带一路"市场】"新华丝路"是基于互联网的信息产品，主要包括四类产品：数据库、征信服务、信息咨询和智库服务、交易撮合，通过提供高效便捷、实时实用的经济信息服务，为沿线各国政府和企业搭建商品贸易和投资合作平台。"新华丝路"为"一带一路"投资者提供个性化信息服务 (Translation: Enterprises take the route of "Xinhua Silk Road" to enter the "Belt and Road" market. "Xinhua Silk Road" is an internet-based information product that mainly provides four types of products: databases, credit information services, information consulting and think tank services, and transaction integration. It provides efficient, convenient, real-time and practical economic information services, and it aims to build a platform for commodity trade and investment cooperation for governments and enterprises along the route. "Xinhua Silk Road" provides personalized information services for the "Belt and Road" investors.)

Nr.43 #聚焦 5·18#【首届海丝博览会暨第 17 届海交会重点"三维"项目签约超 800 亿】5 月 18 日，首届 21 世纪海上丝绸之路博览会暨第十七届海峡两岸经贸交易会重点"三维"项目签约仪式举行。本次签约仪式现场上台重点"三维"项目 59 项，总投资 814.01 亿元，总投资比去年增加 143.56 亿元。海博会福州重点"三维"项目签约 59 项 总投资超 814 亿 (Translation: #Focus 5·18# The first Haisi Expo and the 17th Haihui Meeting focused on "three-dimensional" projects signed more than 80 billion yuan. On May 18, the first 21st Century Maritime Silk Road Expo and the 17th Cross-Straits Trade Fair held the signing ceremony for the "3D" project. At the signing ceremony, there were 59 key "three-dimensional" projects, with a total investment of 81.401 billion yuan. The total investment increased by 14.356 billion yuan over last year. Haibo's Fuzhou key three-dimensional project signed 59 projects with a total investment of over 81.4 billion yuan.)

Nr.75【从博鳌论坛看资本市场四大关键词】2015 年博鳌亚洲论坛昨日正式拉开帷幕。分析人士表示，结合官方公布议程安排来看，"一带一路"、三农、"互联网+"、国企改革等四大关键词将成为博鳌亚洲论坛召开期间资本市场关注新焦点，相关概念股也将迎来新的上涨契机。 (Translation: From the Boao Forum to see the four major keywords in the capital market. The 2015 Boao Forum for Asia officially kicked off yesterday. Analysts said that in conjunction with the official announcement of the agenda, the four keywords including "Belt and Road," "San Nong," "Internet+," and the reform of state-owned enterprises will become the focus in the capital market during the Boao Forum for Asia. Relevant concept stocks will also see new rising opportunities.)

Nr.100【习近平：要以创新思维办好亚洲基础设施投资银行和丝路基金】习近平主持召开中央财经领导小组第八次会议时指出，发起并同一些国家合作建立亚洲基础设施投资银行是要为"一带一路"有关沿线国家的基础设施建设提供资金支持，促进经济合作。设立丝路基金是要利用我国资金实力直接支持"一带一路"建设。(Translation: Xi Jinping: Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and Silk Road Fund should be established with innovative thinking. When Xi Jinping presided over the eighth meeting of the Central Financial Leadership Group, he pointed out that initiating and cooperating with other countries to establish an Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank is to provide financial support for the infrastructure construction of countries along the route and to further promote economic cooperation. The establishment of the Silk Road Fund is to use China's financial strength to directly support the Belt and Road Initiative.)

The third category, culture, includes messages about the history of the ancient caravan route known as the Silk Road and the preservation of cultural heritage in the areas this route covered, among which cultural traditions in those areas that are still active until today: food culture, religious activities, and various international cultural activities and festivals. Again, to avoid overlap, I put tweets in this category where culture is the dominant topic. For instance, a tweet based on food export but emphasizing the promotion of Halal food and Muslim culture is put in the category of culture rather than economy; however, a post discussing China's relationship with African countries from a historical perspective belongs to the category of culture instead of diplomacy. Some messages from this category are:

Nr.2 200+ sculptures made of 150,000 cubic m of snow are on display in NE #China, featuring #SilkRoad cultures #XinhuaTV

Nr.20 Pieces of history! Untold story of legendary Silk Road recorded by thousand-year-old coins http://xhne.ws/mre8k?

Nr.67 Cradle of Chinese #kungfu to send monks to tour #SilkRoad for cultural exchange http://xhne.ws/MupxQ?

Nr.104 One year after Silk Road UNESCO inscription, preservation continues http://xhne.ws/cbOQz?

Nr.109 Beijing Week celebrates Marco Polo's new Silk Road at Expo Milano 2015 http://xhne.ws/fpAm7?

Nr.4【中非的"铁"超乎你想象】中国与非洲相距遥远,但中非关系源远流长。汉朝的丝绸、瓷器通过西域远销地中海海岸,郑和七下西洋四抵东非沿海诸国,古代的海陆丝绸之路早已将中非两地文明联系在一起。近代民族独立解放运动以来,共同的历史遭遇、共同的奋斗历程让中非结下了兄弟般情谊。历史见证｜中非的"铁"超乎你想象 (Translation: China and Africa's "iron" friendship is beyond your imagination. China and Africa are far apart, but China-Africa relations have a long history. The silk and porcelain of the Han dynasty were exported to the Mediterranean Sea coast through the Western Regions. Zheng He's four voyages to the West Coast arrived in the coastal countries of East Africa. The ancient land-sea Silk Road had long linked the civilizations of China and Africa. Since the national independence and liberation movement, the common historical experience and common struggle allowed China and Africa to form a fraternal friendship. Historical witness | Central Africa's "iron" friendship is beyond your imagination.)

Nr.101【国家文物局副局长：中国文化从未"闭关锁国"】考古发现认为，公元前 5 世纪中国就和中亚、西亚建立联系，之后在汉代打通了东西方交通的大道，而宋代以来"海上丝绸之路"从来未断。国家文物局副局长宋新潮提出，基于以上发现，可以说中国的文化始终是跟世界文化联系在一起的。国家文物局副局长：中国文化从未"闭关锁国" (Translation: Deputy director of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage: Chinese culture has never "closed." Archaeological discoveries suggest that in the 5th century BC, China established relations with Central Asia and West Asia, and afterwards opened the road between East and West in the Han Dynasty. Since the Song Dynasty, this road has never been broken. According to Song Xinchao, deputy director of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, based on the above findings, China's culture has always been associated with world culture. Deputy Director of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage: Chinese culture has never "closed.")

Nr.108【你想来趟丝绸之路旅行吗？】丝绸之路在我国遗产点包括：汉魏洛阳城遗址、汉长安城未央宫遗址、张骞墓、唐长安城大明宫遗址、大雁塔、小雁塔、玉门关遗址、麦积山石窟、炳灵寺石窟、锁阳城遗址、高昌故城、交河故城、克孜尔石窟、苏巴什佛寺遗址、北庭故城遗址……等 22 处。走起！via @央视新闻 (Translation: Do you want to travel through the Silk Road? The Silk Road heritage sites in China include: Han and Wei Luoyang City site, Han Chang'an City Weiyanggong site, Zhang Qiang tomb, Tang Chang'an City Daming Palace site, Big Wild Goose Pagoda, Small Wild Goose Pagoda, Yumen Pass Ruins, Maijishan Grottoes, Bingling Temple Grottoes, Suoyang City Ruins, Gaochang Old City, Jiaohe Ancient City, Kizil Grottoes, Subach Buddhist Temple Ruins, Beiting Ancient Ruins, etc. let's go! Via @ CCTV News)

Nr.135【文化古城塔什干一瞥】乌兹别克斯坦是一个有深厚文化底蕴的国家。首都塔什干是古"丝绸之路"上重要的商业枢纽之一，有文献记载的历史达 1500 多年。人口约 250 万，是乌政治、经济、文化和交通中心。按人口，塔什干是中亚最大、独联体内仅次于莫斯科、圣彼得堡和基辅的第 4 大城市。(沙达提摄）via @新国际 (Translation: A view of the historic city Tashkent. Uzbekistan is a country with profound cultural heritage. The capital, Tashkent, is one of the important commercial hubs on the ancient "Silk Road" and has a documented history of more than 1,500 years. With a population of about 2.5 million, it is a political, economic, cultural and transportation centre in Uzbekistan. By population, Tashkent is the fourth largest city in Central Asia, after Moscow, St. Petersburg and Kiev. (Photo by Shaddati) via @New International)

The fourth category is made up of reviews. The messages in this category include experts' opinions and Xinhua's editorial comments on the BRI as well as government officials' quotes. The reason to set up this category is that many messages contain the phrase "the expert says …"[37] By reading through all the tweets and posts, I found that the experts' opinions and the editors' comments or interpretation of the officials' quotes often lack detailed information, and these messages tend to be very general and positive. This is a reason to offset them from the other categories, that are markedly different in style and tone. Some tweets and posts in this category are:

Nr.40 Institutionalized platforms needed for Europe to better interact with "Belt and Road": expert http://xhne.ws/wthlp?

Nr.68 #XinhuaSilkRoad products help #BeltandRoad investors form better partnership: Aussie experts http://xhne.ws/AZFZz?

Nr.73 Kyrgyzstan to play positive role in integration of #SCO, #SilkRoad and #EEU: expert http://xhne.ws/2DPGL?

Nr.106 China's Belt and Road initiative will benefit regional countries: expert http://bit.ly/1MgkcUG?

Nr.127 U.S. scholars say China's #SilkRoad initiative "a great and historic endeavor" http://xhne.ws/taOIB?

Nr.55【一分钟读懂"一带一路"大战略】什么是"一带一路"? 谁将受益? 五大合作重点都有哪些? 亚投行对"一带一路"意味着什么? (Translation: One minute to understand the "Belt and Road" grand strategy. What is the "Belt and Road"? Who will benefit? What are the five major cooperation priorities? What does the AIIB mean to the "Belt and Road"?)

Nr.67【很火的"一带一路"将给中国、世界和你的生活带来什么】"一带一路"看起来高大上，实际上看得见、摸得着。透过这份愿景与行动，可以清晰地看到"一带一路"给中国、沿线国家和百姓带来的实实在在的利益。(Translation: What will the hot "Belt and Road" bring to China, the world, and your life? The "Belt and Road" looks grand and noble, but it is actually down-to-earth. Through this vision and action, we can clearly see the tangible benefits brought by the "Belt and Road" to China, the countries along the route, and the people.)

Nr.140【21 世纪新丝路】法国中国问题专家、巴黎第八大学地缘政治学博士皮埃尔? 皮卡尔认为，习近平有关建设"丝绸之路经济带"的倡议十分新颖，这一倡议通过与欧亚国家建设 21 世纪的新丝绸之路，使古丝绸之路的经济和文化精神得以重新体现。 via @新国际 (Translation: The 21st Century New Silk Road. French expert on China and geopolitical studies scholar at the University of Paris Eighth, Pierre Picard, believes that Xi Jinping's initiative to build the "Silk Road Economic Belt" is very innovative. This initiative has been adopted in cooperation with Eurasian countries. The new Silk Road in the 21st Century has re-embossed the economic and cultural spirit of the ancient Silk Road. Via @NewInternational)

Nr141【推动跨区域发展、合作和繁荣】印度资深战略分析家、陆军退役准将肖普拉说，习近平提出建设"丝绸之路经济带"的主张有重大意义，将推动跨区域发展、合作和繁荣。中国和印度在建设新丝绸之路方面有很大合作前景。 via @新国际 (Translation: Promoting cross-regional development, cooperation and prosperity. India's senior strategic analyst and currently retired Brigadier General Chopra said that Xi Jinping's proposal to build a "Silk Road Economic Belt" is of great significance and will promote cross-regional development, cooperation,

---

[37] During my field work, a number of interviewees mentioned that "the experts' opinions" often became titles of Xinhua's news.

and prosperity. China and India have great prospects for cooperation in building a new Silk Road. Via @NewInternational)

The last category is named "other." Coincidentally, this category contains the least number of messages. This category holds messages that pertain to the BRI, but are not written from a diplomatic, economic, or cultural viewpoint and/or do not convey a "review" style. These messages include tweets and posts about education, health, entertainment, weather, etc. Some messages in this category are:

Nr.150 A woman with her child walk on a caravansary in Iranian city of Qazvin, an important station of the Silk Road

Nr.16【中外影人丝路电影节"蓝毯"秀 成龙刘德华等大咖云集】26 日晚，来自多国的中外众多电影人踏上了第二届丝绸之路国际电影节的闭幕式"蓝毯"。陈凯歌、陈红、刘德华、唐国强、中野良子、郑淳元、吴京、杨舒婷、欧阳娜娜等国内外知名电影人如约亮相。中外影人丝路电影节"蓝毯"秀 成龙刘德华等大咖云集 (Translation: Chinese and International Silk Road Film Festival "Blue Carpet" show. Jackie Chan, Andy Lau and other movie stars gathered on the evening of the 26th. Many Chinese and international actors embarked on the closing ceremony of the 2nd Silk Road Film Festival "Blue Carpet." Chen Kaige, Chen Hong, Andy Lau, Tang Guoqiang, Nakano Yoshiko, Zheng Junyuan, Wu Jing, Yang Shuting, Ouyang Nana and other well-known actors made appearances at the festival. Chinese and International Silk Road Film Festival "Blue Carpet" show. Jackie Chan, Andy Lau and other movie stars gathered during the event.)

Nr.39【新一轮高考改革元年:语文考试有何不同?】7 日举行的首个高考科目是语文。专家指出，今年命题的一大重点是要给学生上"生动一课"。全国二卷的"一带一路"、安徽卷的亚投行、湖北卷的南水北调……今年高考语文试卷中，社会热点、新闻时事、国家大政等内容很多。专家解读 2015 年高考作文 (Translation: The first year of college entrance examination reform: What is the difference in Chinese language examination? The first college entrance examination subject held on the 7th was Chinese. Experts pointed out that one of the major focuses of this year's exam is to give students a "vivid lesson." The "Belt and Road," the AIIB, and the South-to-North water transfer... In this year's college entrance examination, there are many social hot spots, news and current events, and state affairs. Experts interpret the 2015 college entrance exam.)

The distribution over these categories of the number of messages that fit the case study's parameters is shown below (Table 6.1):

	Diplomacy	Economy	Culture	Reviews	Other	Total	Language
New China	55	38	42	53	1	189	English
Xinhua net English	12	4	6	6	0	28	English
Xinhua iReport	11	13	30	16	1	71	English
Xinhua net	57	16	22	47	9	151	Chinese
China Scoop	0	1	18	1	0	20	Chinese
Xinhua International	39	8	25	13	1	86	Chinese
Xinhua Viewpoint	5	14	28	17	4	68	Chinese
China net Affairs	3	2	3	0	2	10	Chinese
Total	**182**	**96**	**174**	**153**	**18**	**623**	

Table 6.1 Categorization according to topic

From the total of 623 messages, the number of the messages in English is 288: 189 on Twitter and 99 on Weibo. The number of Chinese messages in Chinese is 335, all from the five Chinese accounts on Weibo.

The percentages in each category are (Table 6.2):

	Diplomacy	Economy	Culture	Reviews	Other	Total	Language	Platform
New China	29.1%	20.1%	22.22%	28.04%	0.53%	189	English	Twitter
Xinhua net English	42.86%	14.29%	21.43%	21.43%	0%	28	English	Weibo
Xinhua iReport	15.49%	18.31%	42.25%	22.54%	1.41%	71	English	Weibo
Xinhua net	37.75%	10.6%	14.57%	31.13%	5.96%	151	Chinese	Weibo
China Scoop	0%	5%	90%	5%	0%	20	Chinese	Weibo
Xinhua International	45.35%	9.3%	29.07%	15.12%	1.16%	86	Chinese	Weibo
Xinhua Viewpoint	7.35%	20.59%	41.18%	25%	5.88%	68	Chinese	Weibo
China net Affairs	30%	20%	30%	0%	20%	10	Chinese	Weibo
Total	**29.21%**	**15.41%**	**27.93%**	**24.56%**	**2.89%**	**623**		

Table 6.2 Percentages of messages from each account, based on topic

	Diplomacy	Economy	Culture	Reviews	Other	Total	Platform
New China (English)	29.1%	20.1%	22.22%	28.04%	0.53%	189	Twitter
Xinhua's Weibo accounts (English)	23.23%	17.17%	36.36%	22.22%	1.01%	99	Weibo
Xinhua's Weibo accounts (Chinese)	31.04%	12.24%	28.66%	23.28%	4.78%	335	Weibo

Table 6.3 Percentages of messages from Xinhua's accounts in English and Chinese, based on topic

It is worth mentioning that the accounts New China on Twitter, and Xinhua iReport and China Scoop on Weibo, are all set up by Xinhua Overseas Department. Therefore, the majority of English posts from Xinhua iReport are the same as the tweets from New China.

The numbers and percentages in these categories provide an overview of Xinhua's perspectives on the BRI. Among the eight accounts on social media platforms, Xinhua Overseas Department is responsible for the Twitter account New China with 189 tweets. The account of Xinhua's official website, Xinhua net, provided the most posts, 151 posts, on Weibo. On both Twitter and Weibo, Xinhua tends to post more messages on diplomacy and culture than on the other topics. New China, Xinhua net English, Xinhua net, and Xinhua International produce the most messages on diplomacy. Xinhua iReport, China Scoop, and

Xinhua Viewpoint produce more messages on culture. Except the category for "other," Xinhua provides the least number of messages on the topic of economy. Comparing New China and Xinhua net, 20.1% of the tweets and 10.6% of the posts are related to economy. Their messages include the ones that mention figures of financial input and contracts in the economic progress of the BRI.

6.1.2   Categories by Period

To examine how the news agenda of Chinese state media changes through time, I applied a categorization in time periods to the tweets and posts in my case study. The number of messages that fall in each of these periods is shown below (Table 6.4):

Period	New China	Xinhua net English	Xinhua iReport	Xinhua net	China Scoop	Xinhua International	Xinhua Viewpoint	China net Affairs
Up to 30 Jun 2013	2	0	0	3	1	1	1	1
1 Jul to 31 Dec 2013	16	0	26	26	13	30	3	1
1 Jan to 30 Jun 2014	12	3	10	15	2	8	17	5
1 Jul to 31 Dec 2014	10	5	11	13	4	7	11	1
1 Jan to 30 Jun 2015	65	14	22	57	1	21	26	1
1 Jul 2015 to 4 Jan 2016	84	6	2	37	0	19	10	1

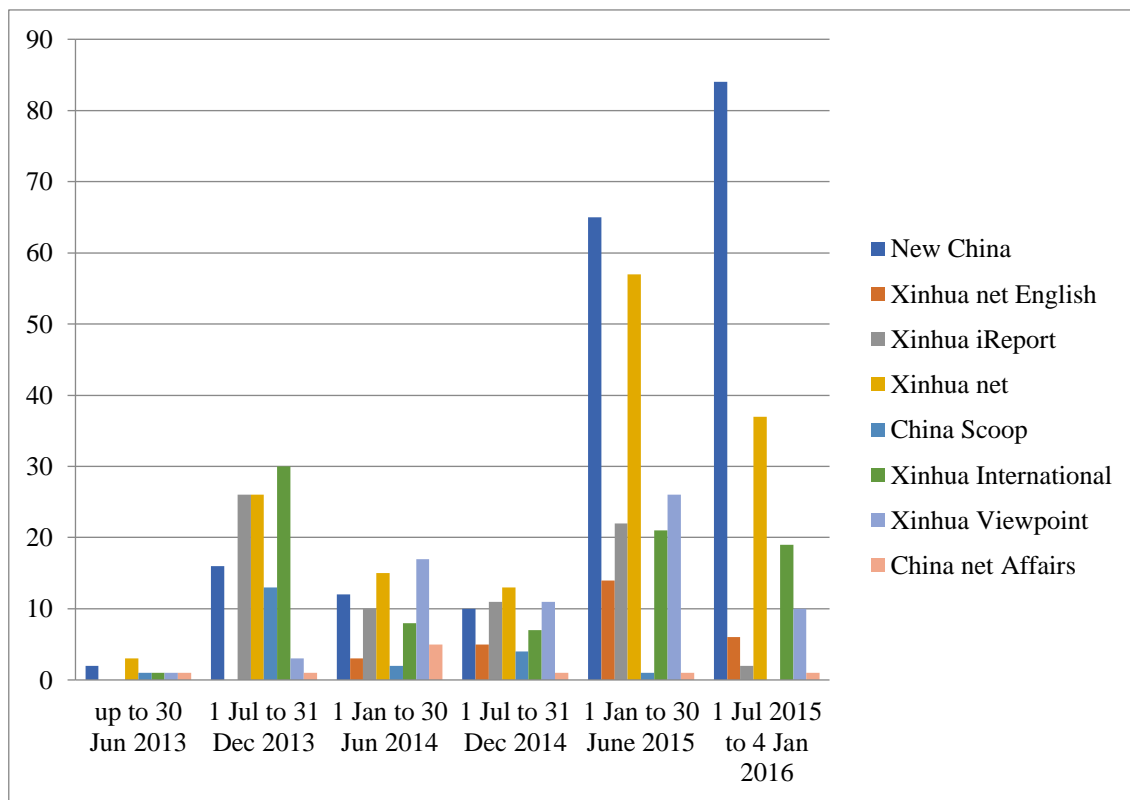Table 6.4 Categorization according to period

Figure 6.1 Message distribution according to time

The result shows different levels of activity of Xinhua's accounts in reporting the BRI through time. In 2013, Xinhua International distributed the most messages and showed the biggest growth during the second half of the year. In 2015, Xinhua's Twitter account New China distributed the most messages and saw the biggest growth. Most of Xinhua's Weibo accounts saw an increase in message distribution in the second half of 2013 and the first half of 2015, too, but a decline in the second half.

The increase of the message distribution in these two periods of time correlates with the critical steps taken by the central government to roll out the BRI. The second half of 2013 was a crucial period of forming the BRI through both diplomatic ties and domestic support. In September 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a visit to Kazakhstan and officially introduced the concept of the Silk Road Economic Belt (the Belt) during his speech at Nazarbayev University; in October 2013, in his speech at the Indonesian parliament, Xi presented both the proposal of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (the Road) to build a China-ASEAN community and the plan of establishing the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB); in the following months, the central government reinforced the idea of

136

facilitating the BRI within China during the Third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee.

Compared to the policy formation period in late 2013, the first half of 2015 saw an early implementation of the BRI. In January 2015, the founding members of the AIIB increased to 26 countries; in March, the BRI became China's diplomacy in 2015 and the government officially rolled out a plan of action on the framework and priorities of the initiative (Xinhua net, 2015f). This suggests that, by announcing and making decisions, the government influences Xinhua's priorities in message distribution to a great extent.

I extracted the tweets and posts from these periods of increase, 1 July to 31 December 2013 and 1 January to 30 June 2015, for a closer look and comparison. By mapping out the topic categories specifically for the messages in these two periods, I aim to find out what perspectives Xinhua focused on during the times its messaging activity significantly increased. The result is shown below (Table 6.5 and 6.6):

	Diplomacy	Economy	Culture	Reviews	Other	Total	Language	platform
New China	0	1	14	1	0	16	English	Twitter
Xinhua net English	0	0	0	0	0	0	English	Weibo
Xinhua iReport	0	0	24	2	0	26	English	Weibo
Xinhua net	14	0	8	4	0	26	Chinese	Weibo
China Scoop	0	0	13	0	0	13	Chinese	Weibo
Xinhua International	17	0	12	1	0	30	Chinese	Weibo
Xinhua Viewpoint	0	0	1	0	2	3	Chinese	Weibo
China net Affairs	0	0	0	0	1	1	Chinese	Weibo
Total	**31**	**1**	**72**	**8**	**3**	**115**		

Table 6.5 Messages from the period 1 July to 31 December 2013, distributed according to topic

	Diplomacy	Economy	Culture	Reviews	Other	Total	Language	platform
New China	26	10	9	20	0	65	English	Twitter
Xinhua net English	3	0	3	8	0	14	English	Weibo
Xinhua iReport	2	5	2	13	0	22	English	Weibo
Xinhua net	13	9	3	29	3	57	Chinese	Weibo
China Scoop	0	0	0	1	0	1	Chinese	Weibo
Xinhua International	11	1	4	5	0	21	Chinese	Weibo
Xinhua Viewpoint	2	6	3	13	2	26	Chinese	Weibo
China net Affairs	1	0	0	0	0	1	Chinese	Weibo
Total	**58**	**31**	**24**	**89**	**2**	**207**		

Table 6.6 Messages from the period 1 January to 30 June 2015, distributed according to topic

The combined number of messages in these two periods is 322, which is more than half of the total messages of 623 in this case study. In the second half of 2013, the highest number of messages was related to culture, followed by those related to diplomacy. The first half of 2015 showed a different image: here, the categories of reviews and diplomacy had the highest numbers of messages, and messages related to culture dropped both in absolute numbers as well as relative to the total number of messages on the BRI, compared to 2013's second half.

When looking at the activity of the individual accounts, we see that from 1 July till 31 December 2013, New China provided the least number of tweets, followed by Xinhua iReport, Xinhua net, and Xinhua International. From 1 January till 30 June 2015, however, New China rose to prominence as the leading account, next to Xinhua net, in distributing messages related to the BRI.

To analyse what factors may determine the changing perspectives, from culture and diplomacy to reviews and diplomacy, between these two periods of increase, I focused on the detailed tweets and posts from the accounts New China, Xinhua iReport, Xinhua net, and Xinhua International (see Table 6.7 and 6.8).

	Diplomacy	Economy	Culture	Reviews	Other	Total	Language	platform
New China	0	1	14	1	0	16	English	Twitter
Xinhua iReport	0	0	24	2	0	26	English	Weibo
Xinhua net	14	0	8	4	0	26	Chinese	Weibo
Xinhua International	17	0	12	1	0	30	Chinese	Weibo

Table 6.7 Messages from the accounts New China, Xinhua iReport, Xinhua net, and Xinhua International
from 1 July till 31 December 2013

	Diplomacy	Economy	Culture	Reviews	Other	Total	Language	platform
New China	26	10	9	20	0	65	English	Twitter
Xinhua iReport	2	5	2	13	0	22	English	Weibo
Xinhua net	13	9	3	29	3	57	Chinese	Weibo
Xinhua International	11	1	4	5	0	21	Chinese	Weibo

Table 6.8 Messages from the accounts New China, Xinhua iReport, Xinhua net, and Xinhua International
From 1 January till 30 June 2015

Since the accounts New China and Xinhua iReport are managed by the Xinhua Overseas Department, it is worth exploring which messages are duplicates, and which messages only appear on Twitter or Weibo. From 1 July till 31 December 2013, among the 16 tweets on New China and 26 posts on Xinhua iReport, 15 messages are identical. The posts and tweets from both platforms are highly repetitive and they all start with the same hashtag (#OntheSilkRoad) at the beginning of each message. Most of the messages appear to be distributed simultaneously on both accounts from 4 July to 30 July 2013, illustrating Xinhua's campaign to raise public awareness of preserving Silk Road heritage, such as the Bingling Temple grottoes, various Buddhist statues, and a section of the Great Wall. These messages emphasize the importance of the Silk Road to be included on UNESCO's World Heritage List. In July 2013, Xinhua reported on the experts' investigation on the Silk Road, and later, in November 2013, mentioned for the first time the "Silk Road economic belt agreement," which is the earliest name for the BRI. In the following year, 2014, "Silk Road economic belt" and "Maritime Silk Road" became the frequent expressions that denote the government's initiative.

From 1 January till 30 June 2015, among the 65 tweets on New China and 22 posts on Xinhua iReport, 17 messages were posted on both accounts. In the first appearances, the messages on both accounts in January 2015 introduced the BRI, and this expression becomes the one most frequently used, compared to the previous ones. During this period, New China outdid Xinhua iReport in terms of message distribution, and became the most proactive account of all of Xinhua's Weibo accounts. The general tendency of Xinhua iReport is to post reviews on the initiative from China's perspective, and to not cover diplomatic activities, or which other governments engage in the initiative. In contrast to this, nearly one third of the tweets on New China are about diplomatic activities, relations with neighbouring countries, and how different countries have participated or have been involved in the initiative. This may mean that New China's messages with a diplomatic perspective are specifically targeted at international audiences. Even though New China and Xinhua iReport have posted about the Silk Road's UNESCO inclusion before, the perspective has shifted from its cultural significance to its role in diplomacy.

From 1 July till 31 December 2013, among the 26 posts on Xinhua net and 30 posts on Xinhua International, there are 20 duplicate messages. The time and date that the duplicate

messages were posted show that Xinhua net would repost them from Xinhua International in about ten minutes. Xinhua International played a more proactive role in this period, and more than half of the posts from both accounts were about President Xi's visits to Central Asian countries, the majority of which start with the hashtag #习主席出访# (*Xi zhuxi chufang*, President Xi's visit in translation). Those posts in the category of culture are mostly about history of different capital cities in Central Asia and their relations with historical cities in China.

From 1 January till 30 June 2015, among the 57 posts on Xinhua net and 21 messages on Xinhua International, there is one message that is posted on both accounts. Xinhua net, as the more active account than Xinhua International, provides 57 posts, among which 29 posts are reviews, thirteen posts are related to diplomacy, and three posts are related to culture. Compared to Xinhua International, this account distributes 21 posts with five posts of reviews, 11 posts related to diplomacy, and four posts related to culture. In the earlier period in 2013, the message distribution from the two accounts shows a high level of repetition. In contrast to this, the content in this period of 2015 from the two accounts demonstrates a distinction. Xinhua net tends to report on diplomatic activities and to provide reviews from China's perspective. Xinhua International tends to report through a perspective of foreign countries or foreign governments' officials. The reason may be that Xinhua net accounts are often updated by domestic journalists and Xinhua International by foreign correspondents.

Xinhua has different reporting strategies for internal and external news and audiences: for an intended international audience, New China reports reviews and events from an international perspective, and Xinhua iReport keeps a reporting perspective from China; for an intended national audience, Xinhua net reports reviews and events from a national perspective, and Xinhua International reports reviews and events from an international perspective.

Overall, the message distribution shows Xinhua places the government's decisions as high priorities in both internal and external communication. Comparing their message distribution in 2013 and 2015, these four accounts have increased the number of reviews and decreased the number of messages about culture. Both New China on Twitter and Xinhua net on Weibo become the two leading accounts by distributing the most messages. New China shifts its reporting perspective from culture to diplomacy through time, and the reviews and opinions it

provides, tend to be mostly from foreign experts and foreign government officials rather than Chinese. In contrast to this, Xinhua net, which distributed more reviews in 2015 than in 2013, focuses mainly on events within China, and reviews and speeches by Chinese officials. This shows that overall, Xinhua has different strategies in terms of internal and external communication.

6.1.3 *Categories by Region*

The third level of categorization is based on geopolitical regions. I divided the posts and tweets pertaining to the BRI that talk about international economic projects and diplomatic activities into the following geopolitical categories: East & South Asia, Central Asia, Russia, Europe, the United States, the Middle East, and Africa. Through collecting the quantitative data according to spatial boundaries, this geographic categorization is intended to compare the Chinese government's relations and foreign policies with different geopolitical regions.

I initially started a categorization in continents and regions. Since the infrastructure projects are distinctively separate in East South Asia and Central Asia, I decided to keep the messages related to these two regions apart. To examine whether Xinhua uses different themes and tones when reporting on these regions, initially, I attempted to make a distinction between western Europe and eastern Europe, but there were too few messages from eastern Europe to merit this distinction. Therefore, the messages are merged into one. One of the exceptions to this continent/region mode of categorization is Russia, as in the BRI, China's collaboration with Russia is independent from either Europe or Central Asia. In a similar vein, instead of using a category for the whole of North America, I created one for the United States, since the only messages that fit into this category were related to the United States.

Not all of Xinhua's social media accounts lend themselves to this categorization. China Scoop has not distributed any message relevant to this categorization, and Xinhua Viewpoint and China net Affairs have very few relevant messages. Therefore, I only discuss Xinhua's other accounts that have consistently distributed messages that fit into geopolitical categories. Messages distributed according to this categorization are shown below (Table 6.9 and Figure 6.1):

	East	Central	Russia	Europe	The	Middle	Africa	Total

	&South Asia	Asia			United States	East		
New China	18	6	3	29	5	14	2	77
Xinhua net English	3	4	0	2	1	0	1	11
Xinhua iReport	6	2	0	1	2	2	0	13
Xinhua net	18	26	3	6	1	5	1	60
Xinhua International	12	27	4	10	3	9	0	65
Total	57	65	10	48	12	30	4	226

Table 6.9 Categorization according to geopolitical regions
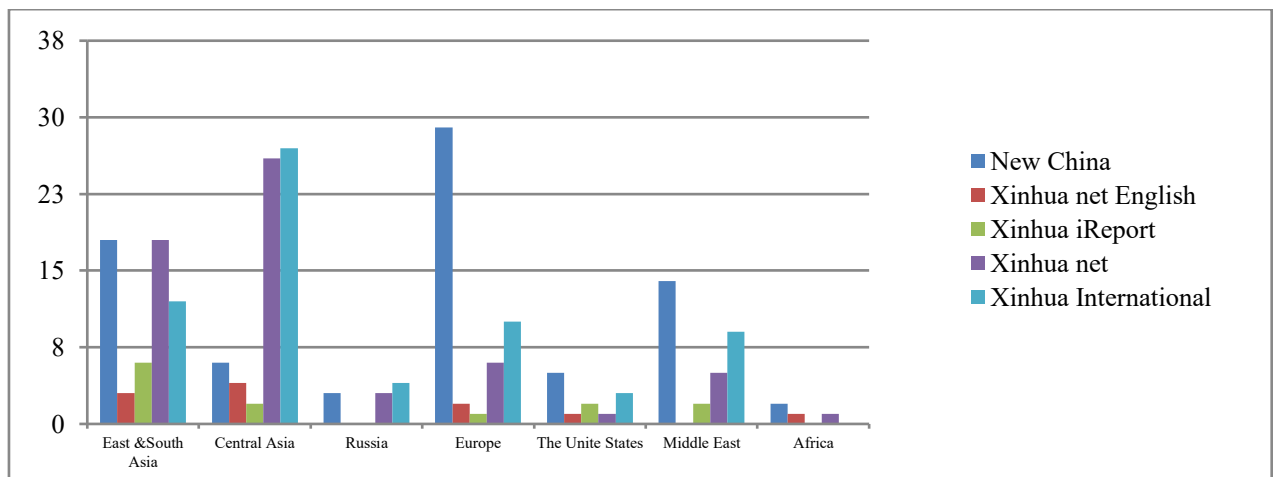

Figure 6.2 Message distribution according to geopolitical regions

The following observations can be drawn from this. First, New China, Xinhua net, and Xinhua International have distributed more messages than Xinhua net English and Xinhua iReport. Second, the categories of East and South Asia, Central Asia, and Europe consist of larger numbers of messages than the other categories. Third, New China distributes the most messages in the category of Europe, and Xinhua net and Xinhua International distribute the most messages in the category of Central Asia. Fourth, New China and Xinhua net distribute the same amounts of messages in the category of East and South Asia. What we can gather from these observations is that in promoting the BRI, Xinhua's Twitter account focuses more on China's relations with European Countries, and Xinhua's Weibo accounts focuses more on the relations with Central Asia.

As with periods, I also related these geopolitical categories to topics. In the tweets related to Europe, there is a strong emphasis on the economic cooperation between China and European countries in terms of banking, investment, and logistics. In contrast to this, the Weibo posts

related to Central Asia tend to emphasize the cultural and historical bond between China and Central Asian countries. This raises the question whether New China, managed by Xinhua's Overseas Department, has a goal of "advertising" towards the English-speaking audiences; and whether Xinhua net and Xinhua International intend to mobilize the Chinese domestic audiences in the discourse of "reviving the past glory with neighbouring countries." If so, then Xinhua functions as an outlet of public relations externally, and as a tool of ideological work internally. To understand how Xinhua carries out the different communicative strategies, I then conducted a keywords analysis in the following section and an extensive qualitative analysis in Chapter Seven.

6.2 Keywords Frequency

Two of Xinhua News Agency's social media accounts, New China on Twitter and Xinhua net on Weibo, publish the highest amount of messages about the BRI on the two social media sites, compared to Xinhua's other accounts. Therefore, I identified the keywords of the tweets and posts from these two accounts of Xinhua for further analysis.

In order to collect and compare the keywords of both the English text of New China and the Chinese text of Xinhua net, I used the software Yoshikoder 6.5.0 and CNCorpus.org (*yuliaoku zaixian*, 语料库在线) for a content analysis. In my corpus, Xinhua's account New China has published 189 tweets on Twitter with total 2249 English words, and the account Xinhua net has published 151 posts on Weibo with total 17111 Chinese characters.

There are in total 8642 words (or terms) in the Chinese text, and 2249 words in the English texts. In treating them as proper, primary sources, I kept both Weibo posts and Twitter tweets in their original formats as they appeared on social media platforms. This means that I kept the hashtags (#) and mentions (@) "as is." This has implications for the word count. In English tweets, hashtags such as #beltandroad and #silkroad occur. Here, the individual words ("belt," "and," "silk," and "road") are not divided by spaces that function as word boundaries in text-processing software. Therefore, the analysing software counts them as a single word, not as multiple words. The Chinese case is different. Word divisions are not formed by spaces, as each character counts as a word or term in itself. However, a hashtag symbol does group the characters that follow it into one word for a word-counting tool such as Yoshikoder.

So, hashtags such as #一带一路 (*yidai yilu*, Belt and Road) and #丝绸之路 (*sichou zhilu*, Silk Road) are counted as a single word/term in Chinese as well.

By referring to the original context, with the aid of Yoshikoder's concordance functions,[38] I identified the nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that describe the topic of the BRI, with frequencies of ten and higher in the Chinese messages, and frequencies of two and up in the English ones. In addition, I included some of these relevant keywords with a lower frequency. There are 124 Chinese keywords that occur with such high frequencies that they make up 2688 out of the total 8642 words. In English, 106 English keywords occur frequently enough to cover 849 out of the total 2249 words within the corpus. Due to the different corpus sizes, I divided the total number of words from the Chinese and English texts in order to produce more meaningful percentages that express the relative occurrence of these keywords. The results are shown below (Table 6.10):

Weibo Keywords	Translation	Freq.	Pct.	Twitter Keywords	Freq.	Pct.
一带一路	Belt and Road	163	1.89%	Silk road (#Silkroad)	124	5.51%
丝绸之路	Silk Road	137	1.59%	china	121	5.38%
习近平	Xi Jinping	126	1.46%	Belt and Road (#beltandroad)	85	3.78%
中国	China	121	1.40%	initiative	64	2.85%
合作	cooperation	104	1.21%	economic	17	0.76%
经济	economy/economic	87	1.01%	chinese	16	0.71%
建设	construction	84	0.97%	new	16	0.71%
新	new	83	0.96%	ancient	15	0.67%
国家	country	71	0.82%	Xinhua	14	0.62%
发展	development	69	0.80%	cooperation	13	0.58%
主席	chairman	65	0.75%	countries	12	0.53%
信息	information	43	0.50%	boost	11	0.49%
各国	all countries	41	0.48%	benefit(s)	11	0.49%
多	many	36	0.42%	world	10	0.44%
新华	Xinhua	35	0.40%	investment	10	0.44%
世纪	century	35	0.41%	official	9	0.40%
重要	important	35	0.41%	expert	9	0.40%
共同	together	33	0.38%	development	9	0.40%
战略	strategy	31	0.36%	trade	8	0.36%
共建	to construct/build together	30	0.35%	region	8	0.36%
关系	relations	30	0.35%	help	8	0.36%
文化	culture	28	0.32%	fund	8	0.36%
推动	to promote	25	0.29%	information	7	0.31%
推进	to boost	25	0.29%	promote	7	0.31%
世界	world	25	0.29%	bring	7	0.31%
沿线	regional (along the road)	23	0.27%	tourism	7	0.31%
服务	service	22	0.26%	welcome	6	0.27%
表示	express	22	0.26%	product	6	0.27%
人民	people	21	0.24%	partner	6	0.27%

[38] By applying a dictionary analysis to the results of a concordance, Yoshikoder can provide local word contexts.

论坛	forum	21	0.24%	focus	6	0.27%
地区	region	21	0.24%	build	5	0.22%
我们	we	21	0.24%	start	5	0.22%
愿景	wish	20	0.23%	global	5	0.22%
会见	meet	20	0.23%	facilitate	5	0.22%
外交	diplomacy	20	0.23%	join	4	0.18%
倡议	initiative	19	0.22%	open	4	0.18%
演讲	speech	19	0.22%	launch	4	0.18%
行动	action	19	0.22%	historical	4	0.18%
古	ancient	18	0.21%	heritage	4	0.18%
基础	base	18	0.21%	co-op	4	0.18%
发布	release	18	0.21%	construction	4	0.18%
提供	provide	18	0.21%	info	3	0.13%
投资	investment	17	0.20%	revive	3	0.13%
交流	communication	17	0.20%	cultural	3	0.13%
历史	history	17	0.20%	urge	3	0.13%
友好	friendly	17	0.20%	service	3	0.13%
出访	visit abroad	16	0.19%	seek	3	0.13%
提出	propose/mention	16	0.19%	ready	3	0.13%
繁荣	prosperous	16	0.19%	opportunities	3	0.13%
重点	key points	16	0.19%	minister	3	0.13%
两会	two sessions	15	0.17%	link	3	0.13%
总统	president	15	0.17%	key	3	0.13%
代表	representative	15	0.17%	interaction	3	0.13%
访问	official visit	15	0.17%	important	3	0.13%
互联	interconnect	14	0.16%	impetus	3	0.13%
互通	interoperability	14	0.16%	huge	3	0.13%
区域	area	14	0.16%	growth	3	0.13%
成为	become	14	0.16%	great	3	0.13%
项目	project	14	0.16%	further	3	0.13%
共赢	to win together	13	0.15%	eyes	3	0.13%
产品	product	13	0.15%	exports	3	0.13%
双方	both sides	13	0.15%	closer	3	0.13%
坚持	insist	13	0.15%	chance	3	0.13%
文明	civilization	13	0.15%	business	3	0.13%
遗址	ruins	13	0.15%	bond	3	0.13%
社会	society	13	0.15%	better	3	0.13%
金融	finance	13	0.15%	pledge	3	0.13%
促进	facilitate	13	0.15%	ties	2	0.09%
发表	publish	13	0.15%	system	2	0.09%
贸易	trade	13	0.15%	strategy	2	0.09%
中方	China side	12	0.14%	relics	2	0.09%
会议	meeting	12	0.14%	protect	2	0.09%
大学	university	12	0.14%	priority	2	0.09%
带来	bring	12	0.14%	president	2	0.09%
支持	support	12	0.14%	preserve	2	0.09%
设施	facility	12	0.14%	participation	2	0.09%
访	visit	11	0.13%	neighbor	2	0.09%
加强	strengthen	11	0.13%	nations	2	0.09%
和平	peace	11	0.13%	much	2	0.09%
自贸区	free trade center	11	0.13%	merchant	2	0.09%
伙伴	partner	11	0.13%	major	2	0.09%
对接	to connect	11	0.13%	logistics	2	0.09%
出席	to attend	11	0.13%	investor	2	0.09%
参观	to visit	10	0.12%	ink	2	0.09%

外方	foreign	10	0.12%	industrial	2	0.09%
强调	emphasize	10	0.12%	gains	2	0.09%
总理	premier	10	0.12%	form	2	0.09%
政府	government	10	0.12%	foreign	2	0.09%
资金	funding	10	0.12%	exclusive	2	0.09%
共享	to share together	9	0.10%	exchange	2	0.09%
互利	mutual benefit	9	0.10%	economy	2	0.09%
小华	xiaohua (Xinhua)	9	0.10%	diplomat	2	0.09%
互信	mutual trust	7	0.08%	customs	2	0.09%
联合	to align	7	0.08%	conjoin	2	0.09%
共同体	common body	7	0.08%	concrete	2	0.09%
共商	to discuss together	6	0.07%	company	2	0.09%
互鉴	mutual reference	5	0.06%	call on	2	0.09%
联系	to connect/contact	5	0.06%	believes	2	0.09%
共舞	to dance together	4	0.05%	bank	2	0.09%
相互	mutually	4	0.05%	back	2	0.09%
联盟	alliance	4	0.05%	active	2	0.09%
联通	to connect and communicate	4	0.05%	joint	1	0.04%
共识	consensus	2	0.02%	culture	1	0.04%

Table 6.10 Numbers and percentages of keywords in both Chinese and English texts

The frequencies of keywords demonstrate some significant similarities and differences. The terms describing the government's initiative, including "Silk road," "belt and road," "丝绸之路," and "一带一路" in Chinese, all have high frequencies on both Twitter and Weibo. The word "China" has a percentage of 5.38%, and its equivalent term "中国" (*Zhongguo*, China) has a percentage of 1.40%. In the frequency tables, "China" on Twitter ranks the second after the term "Silk road" and "中国" ranks fourth on Weibo, after Xi Jinping's name "习近平." In addition, "Xinhua," the name of the news agency, has shown high frequencies on both platforms.

Aside from the words and terms mentioned above, keywords that are frequently used in both platforms include: a) "economic" and "经济" (*jingji*, economy); b) "new" and "新" (*xin*, new); c)"cooperation" and "合作" (*hezuo*, cooperation); d) "countries," "world," "国家" (*guojia*, country) and "各国" (*geguo*, all countries); e) "boost," "promote," "bring" and "推动" (*tuidong*, to facilitate), "推进" (*tuijin*, to forward); f) "development" and "发展" (*fazhan*, development); g)"information" and "信息" (*xinxi*, information).

There are some markedly different keywords, too. "Initiative," "ancient," "benefit(s)," "investment," "official," "expert," "trade," "region," "help," and "fund" have much higher frequencies on Twitter; and "习近平" (Xi Jinping), "建设" (*jianshe*, construction), "主席" (*zhuxi*, chairman), "多" (*duo*, many), "世纪" (*shiji*, century), "重要" (*zhongyao*, important), "共同" (*gongtong*, together), "战略" (*zhanlue*, strategy), "共建" (*gongjian*, to construct/build together), "关系" (*guanxi*, relations), and "文化" (*wenhua*, culture), in their turn, occur much more frequently on Weibo.

The words (and their equivalents) that occur most frequently on both platforms suggest the following: first, the importance of cooperation among different countries is addressed on both platforms; second, the issues of economy and information are highlighted on both platforms; and third, visions of progress and development are emphasized on both platforms. But, as we can see from the differences in frequencies of certain terms on either platform, Xinhua maintains certain divisions on Weibo and Twitter in terms of topics and themes. The evidence suggests the following: first, there are more voices from the official(s) and expert(s) on Twitter. Second, on Weibo "Xi Jinping" and "chairman" receive more attention. Third, Xinhua uses a financial idiom more frequently on Twitter than on Weibo, reflected by such terms as "investment," "trade," and "fund." Fourth, Xinhua adopts the word "战略" (*zhanlüe*, strategy) on Weibo, rather than on Twitter, to point out the importance of the initiative. Fifth, on Twitter, Xinhua tends to emphasize the benefits that will be brought about by the initiative, whereas on Weibo, Xinhua tends to highlight the spirit of "togetherness" (*gong*，共) that can push the initiative forward.

Some of the keywords tend to form repeated collocations. On Twitter, the English keywords tend to form collocations such as "world economic growth," "economic development," "economic cooperation," "trade economic cooperation," "trade investment," "bring benefits," "benefit the world" and "benefit the regional countries." On Weibo, the Chinese keywords tend to form collocations such as "世界/(各国)经济发展" (*shijie/(geguo) jingji fazhan*, world economic development), "经济发展" (*jingji fazhan*, economic development), "经济合作" (*jingji hezuo*, economic cooperation), "经济信息服务" (*jingji xinxi fuwu*, economic information service), and "经济发展战略" (*jingji fazhan zhanlüe*, economic development strategy), etc.

These Chinese and English collocations are not necessarily equivalent in terms of literal translation.

The keywords analysis lists the words and terms with their frequencies. A comparison of the results in the Chinese and English languages shows that there are certain terms and expressions that Xinhua favours over others. By closely examining the nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that Xinhua uses, I explored the different communicative patterns reflected from the two platforms. In this chapter, I laid out my impressions and interpretations through a quantitative analysis. To support my understanding, it is necessary to explore both the intentions and functions of the keywords and terms in the context. Do their similarities and differences tell a coherent story of Xinhua's strategic communication? What are their denotations and connotations in the context? And what do they in turn tell about Xinhua's worldview? I will further examine these similarities and differences of the keywords and terms in their original context through a dedicated qualitative analysis in Chapter Seven, in which I intend to answer these questions.

6.3 Conclusion

Xinhua sets up multiple accounts on Sina Weibo and Twitter that are managed by different departments. Xinhua's New Media Centre supervises the content on each domestic account. However, the topic selection, the style and the tone are, to a great extent, decided by each department. The goal of this de-centralized management is to ultimately attract more domestic audiences with diverse tastes and preferences. Xinhua uses one official account, New China, on Twitter. The account name, New China, is used for its all overseas accounts on different social media platforms, such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, etc. As a unified and recognizable social media presence of Xinhua for foreigners, New China is maintained and updated by the New Media Centre. Such a centralized way to tell "good China stories" to international audiences is Xinhua's strategy to avoid target conflicts in terms of content and reporting style.

In the case study of the BRI discourse, Xinhua emphasizes different themes on Weibo and Twitter. Xinhua intensifies its social media activities on both platforms over the topic of the BRI during the policy formation period in the second half of 2013 and the policy implementation period in the first half of 2015. This suggests, in terms of agenda setting, that

Xinhua's communication strategies coincide with the government's policymaking. During the time span of 2013 to 2015, Xinhua net shifted it focus on Weibo from culture to reviews, Chinese official's speeches, and events taking place within China, whereas New China on Twitter took its reporting perspective from culture to diplomatic activities, reviews from foreign experts, and opinions of foreign governments' officials. In terms of geopolitical difference, Xinhua tends to highlight China's relations with European countries on Twitter from the aspect of economic cooperation, and provides a stronger emphasis on the relations with Central Asia from the aspect of culture and history. Xinhua's preferences of themes reflect the agenda of the BRI, which is to create more business opportunities with European countries, and to develop the infrastructure in Central Asian countries.

The findings from the keywords analysis in this chapter suggests that Xinhua makes certain distinctive discursive choices on the two platforms. These findings not only reinforce my initial understanding of Xinhua communicative strategies, but also raise some critical questions that are worth further exploration. To examine how Xinhua understands internal and external communication, through which perspectives Xinhua intends to reach out to international and domestic audiences, and what factors are shaping Xinhua's communicative patterns, I take my findings and observations from this chapter to carry out an extensive qualitative analysis in Chapter Seven.