

Jonathan A. Solis

jsolis@aidatata.wm.edu • <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jacheesolis/>

POSITION

AidData Research Lab

College of William & Mary, Global Research Institute

Research Scientist, Dec. 2023-present

Senior Research Analyst, Jan. 2021-Dec. 2023

Research Analyst, Jan. 2019-Jan. 2021

International Panel on the Information Environment (IPIE)

Scientific Panel on Indexing the Information Environment

Panel Member, Aug. 2024-present

University of Houston

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences

Dissertation Completion Fellow, Aug. 2017-May 2018

City of New Orleans

Office of Community Development/Code Enforcement Bureau

Outreach Coordinator, Sept. 2009-Aug. 2013

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Department of Political Science, May 2018

University of Houston

- Dissertation: Media Attacks and Political Institutions
- Committee: Ryan Kennedy (chair), Eduardo Aleman, Lydia Tiede, and Elizabeth Stein (outside reader)

M.A., Department of Political Science, May 2009

University of New Orleans

B.A. in Mass Communication, May 2007

Louisiana State University

minors: political science, history

POLICY REPORTS

Resilience and Vulnerability to Misinformation and Disinformation in Political Information Environments: A Comparative Review of Ten Indexes. 2026. International Panel on the Information Environment [F Esser, **JA Solis**, M Chan, P van Aelst, D Madrid-Morales, T Bosch, M Botan, E Humprecht, J Labarre, R M Santini, A Schulz, B Seim, M Wack, and PN Howard (eds)]. Zurich, Switzerland: IPIE, Technical Paper 2026.1. *forthcoming*

Building the Future: Development Partnerships of the U.S. and Japan in Southeast Asia. 2026. D Mathew, B Burgess, and **JA Solis.** [link](#)

What China's Economic Slowdown Means for Key Countries: Case Studies. 2025. A Horigoshi, **JA Solis**, R Knight, and B Burgess. [link](#)

Balancing Risk and Reward: Who benefits from China's investments in Indonesia? 2025. S Custer, B Burgess, HK Kim, MF Krisnadi, K Marshall, D Mathew, F Patrick, AD Saputra, **JA Solis**, and N Sritharan. [link](#)

Winning Hearts, Changing Minds: A Data-Driven Approach to Measure China's Influence in Latin America. 2025. N Sritharan and **JA Solis**. [link](#)

Investing in Narratives: How Beijing promotes its development projects in the Philippines. 2024. B Burgess, TJJ Henares, YE Kim, D Mathew, **JA Solis**, and N Sritharan. [link](#)

Beijing's Big Bet on the Philippines: Decoding two decades of China's financing for development. 2024. S Custer, B Burgess, **JA Solis**, N Sritharan, and D Mathew. [link](#)

Innovators and Emulators: China and Russia's Compounding Influence on Digital Censorship. 2023. C Andrzejewski, A Horigoshi, AI Maher, and **JA Solis**. [link](#)

Standing Firm? Measuring Resilience to Malign Foreign Influence in European & Eurasian Media. 2023. VV Choo and **JA Solis**. [link](#)

Collected Profiles: Media Ownership and Potential Foreign Influence Channels in Europe & Eurasia. 2023. E Dumont, **JA Solis**, and L Zaleski. (compiled 17 country profiles into a single report) [link](#)

Looking West? Gauging Perceptions of the U.S. in Europe and Eurasia. 2020. T Sethi and **JA Solis**. (available upon request)

Silk Road Diplomacy: Deconstructing Beijing's toolkit to influence South and Central Asia. 2019. S Custer, T Sethi, **JA Solis**, JJ Lin, S Ghose, A Gupta, R Knight, and A Baehr. [link](#)

Influencing the Narrative: How the Chinese government mobilizes students and media to burnish its image. 2019. S Custer, M Prakash, **JA Solis**, R Knight, and JJ Lin. [link](#)

**POLICY/
RESEARCH
PROJECTS**

Reimagining Development Data (RD²) (2025–)

Ongoing project examining how development data can be funded, maintained, and used more sustainably over time. Leads the governance sector, contributing to the systematic review and collection of data assets. Funded by the Hewlett Foundation.

Indexing the Information Environment (2024-2026)

Serves on the International Panel on the Information Environment's (IPIE) Scientific Panel on Indexing the Information Environment. The project aims to improve the measurement of political information environments across countries through three outputs: (i) a report reviewing the strengths and limitations of 10 existing indexes measuring countries' resilience and vulnerability to mis- and disinformation; (ii) a second report presenting an improved, unified framework based on those lessons; and (iii) a pilot study producing improved measures of media resilience in political information environments. Lead co-author of the first report.

China Foreign Policy and Influence Portfolio (2024-2025, 2019)

Multi-project research portfolio on China's foreign economic, political, and informational influence across Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), often situating China alongside the United States and Japan. Outputs included publicly available reports on East Asia and the Pacific and Central and South Asia, as well as in-depth work on the Philippines and Indonesia. The portfolio also included internal work for U.S. embassies in LAC. Contributions included technical analysis, analyt-

ical writing, qualitative interview data collection, and fieldwork in the Philippines to train stakeholders in the use of project data. Served as operational lead for a report on China’s media strategy in the Philippines. Five public-facing reports and ten client-facing briefs. Funded by the U.S. Department of State.

Risk and Resilience to Malign Influence, Global South (2023)

Led the technical development of the Democratic Resilience to Malign Influence (DRMI) Index, a nine-month applied research project producing a composite measure of country-level risk and resilience to external malign influence in low- and middle-income countries (2005-2022), with full methodological documentation, indicator datasets, and policy-facing visualizations. Funded by USAID (ATARI).

Digital Censorship in Autocratizing Countries (2023)

Operationally led IRI-funded project mapping the digital censorship tools of China and Russia and investigating their influence in five autocratizing countries. Led grant-writing efforts for the project. Throughout the project, the team included four AidData staff members and one student research assistant. Project produced the report *Innovators and Emulators: China and Russia’s Compounding Influence on Digital Censorship*. Research from the project was also published in *Orbis*, a peer-reviewed policy journal.

Europe & Eurasia Media (2020-2022)

Operationally led a USAID-funded, three-year project examining the influence of foreign, malign actors in the media space across 17 Europe and Eurasian (E&E) countries. Work was part of USAID’s broader Countering Malign Kremlin Influence development framework. The team included four AidData staff members and more than 30 student research assistants. The project included five focus areas: (i) constructing an index measuring a country’s resilience to foreign, malign influence (Media Resilience to Malign Influence Index); (ii) mapping the presence of Russian state-owned media and the owners of domestic media in E&E countries; (iii) quantifying sentiment in E&E domestic media content; (iv) measuring citizens’ media literacy through self-report and objective instruments in E&E countries; and (v) measuring elite perceptions of the media environment, including resilience, transparency, and disinformation, in E&E countries.

Congress 3.0 Project (2015-2018)

Collaboration project among U.S. Congressional members, the Democracy Fund, the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF), and academics from Ohio State, UC-Riverside, Northeastern, and Harvard on improving Congress-constituent communication. Contributed to data collection by running telephone town halls, training others to run those town halls, and cleaning data. Research assistance provided under the guidance of [Ryan Kennedy](#).

**PEER-
REVIEWED
ARTICLES**

“Innovators and Emulators: China and Russia’s Compounding Influence on Digital Censorship.” 2023. C Andrzejewski, A Horigoshi, AI Maher, and **JA Solis**. *Orbis*, 67(4), pp. 626-654. [doi](#)

“Defending the Watchdogs: How Citizens and Courts Protect the Press.” 2023. **JA Solis** and K Zvobgo. *Journal of Human Rights*, 22(3), pp. 367-385. [doi](#)

“The Press-safety Paradox of Democracies: Regime-type Duration and Journalist Killings.” 2021. **JA Solis**. *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 17(1), pp. 1-22. [doi](#)

“Measuring Media Freedom: An Item Response Theory Analysis of Existing Indica-

tors.” 2020. **JA Solis** and P Waggoner. *British Journal of Political Science*, 51(4), pp. 1685-1704. [doi](#)

“The Media Smells like Sulfur!!! Leaders and Verbal Attacks against the Fourth Estate in Unconsolidated Democracies.” 2020. **JA Solis** and I Sagarzazu. *Political Communication*, 37(1), pp. 20-45. [doi](#)

“Constituent communication through telephone town halls: A field experiment involving members of Congress.” 2019. C Abernathy, K Esterling, J Freebourn, R Kennedy, W Minozzi, MA Neblo, and **JA Solis**. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 44(4), pp. 617-646. [doi](#)

“Leaders, Tenure, and the Politics of Sovereign Credit.” 2018. P Shea and **JA Solis**. *International Interactions*, 44(2), pp. 294-320. [doi](#)

“Corruption is bad news for a free press: Reassessing the relationship between media freedom and corruption.” 2017. **JA Solis** and L Antenangeli. *Social Science Quarterly*, 98(3), pp. 1112-1137. [doi](#)

REVISE AND RESUBMIT

“Shaping Perceptions: The Impact of Chinese Aid and Domestic Media Freedom on Public Attitudes Toward Chinese Leadership in Developing Nations.” 2025. **JA Solis**, N Sritharan, and S Wozniak. *Journal of International Relations and Development*.

“Building Balkan Bridges: Navigating China’s Influence and Public Perception.” 2025. A Gafuri, **JA Solis**, and N Sritharan. *Problems of Post-Communism*.

UNDER REVIEW

“The Limits of Influence: Conditional Public Perceptions of Chinese Development Finance in Latin America.” 2026. N Sritharan and **JA Solis**. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

“Journalist Safety.” 2025. **JA Solis**. In A Nai, M Grömping, and D Wirz (eds). *Elgar Encyclopedia of Political Communication*, Vol. 2, chap. 76, pp. 326–329. Edward Elgar Publishing. [doi](#)

BLOGS AND COMMENTARY

“Amidst rising tensions, Beijing bets big in the Philippines,” Blog Post. *The First Tranche*. Published Sept. 13, 2024. [link](#)

“Don’t let China and Russia export digital censorship,” Op-Ed (w/ CD Scott). *The Hill*. Published Aug. 22, 2023. [link](#)

“In backsliding democracies, governments emulate Russian and Chinese digital censorship tactics,” Blog Post (w/ S Patterson). *The First Tranche*. Published Aug. 1, 2023. [link](#)

“Media ownership profiles shed new light on the politics of Russian monuments in Ukraine,” Blog Post (w/ AI Maher). *The First Tranche*. Published July 28, 2023. [link](#)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Foreign policy influence, China’s development finance
- Comparative political communication, media resilience, media freedom
- Democratization, institutions, journalist safety

- The Balkans and Latin America

CONFERENCE 2025 AMEI-ISA Huatulco

- PRESENTATION (selected)**
- Winning Hearts, Changing Minds: A Data-Driven Approach to Measure China’s Influence in Latin America (w/ N Sritharan)

2023 Swedish Political Science Association Annual Conference

- Shaping Perceptions: The Impact of Chinese Aid and Domestic Media Freedom on Public Attitudes Toward Chinese Leadership in Developing Nations (w/ N Sritharan)

2023 Foreign Policy Research Institute–Wilson Center Geoeconomics Symposium: The Belt and Road’s Impact on Partner States

- Innovators and Emulators: China and Russia’s Compounding Influence on Digital Censorship (w/ C Andrzejewski, A Horigoshi, AI Maher)

2022 Broadening Our Approach: A Workshop on Comparative Political Communication (Duke University)

- Standing Firm? Measuring Resilience to Foreign Malign Influence in European and Eurasian Media (w/ VV Choo)

2020 American Political Science Association

- Defending the Watchdogs: How Citizens and Courts Protect the Press (w/ K Zvobgo)

2017 American Political Science Association

- Measuring Media Freedom: An Item Response Theory Analysis of Existing Indicators
- Constituent Communication through Telephone Town Halls: A Field Experiment Involving Members of Congress (w/ C Abernathy, K Esterling, J Freeborn, R Kennedy, W Minozzi, M Neblo)

2016 EITM Summer Institute, Houston, TX

- Corruption is Bad News for a Free Press (w/ L Antenangeli)

2014 American Political Science Association

- Leaders, Tenure, and the Politics of Sovereign Credit (w/ P Shea)

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

- **Empirical Implications of Theoretical Modeling (EITM)**, *University of Houston*: 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014
- **New World of Comparative Political Communication Conference**, *Texas A&M University*: May 2016

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor: Introduction to U.S. Federal Government

Lone Star College—University Park, fall 2018, summer 2017, summer 2016 (online), summer 2015, summer 2014 (online)

Instructor: Introduction to Texas Government

Lone Star College—University Park, summer 2019, fall and summer 2018, summer 2017 (hybrid), summer 2016 (online), summer 2015 (online)

Teaching Assistant: Introduction to Comparative Politics, F Cantu (professor)
University of Houston, fall and spring 2014, fall 2013

Teaching Assistant: Law and Society, L Tiede (professor)
University of Houston, fall 2013

ACADEMIC AWARDS

- University of Houston, College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences: Dissertation Completion Grant, 2017-2018
- International Studies Association Travel Grant, 2015 & 2016
- University of Houston, Graduate Institutional Grant, 2013
- Louisiana State University Study Abroad Scholarship, 2006
- Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (T.O.P.S.) Scholarship, Fall 2003-Spring 2007

SKILLS

- **Software:** R, Stata, LaTeX, Microsoft Excel, Word, and PowerPoint, Google Workspace
- **Methods/Analysis:** regression estimation and post-estimation, index construction, cross-national data analysis, survey analysis, key informant interviews, data visualization, text/sentiment analysis, time-series analysis
- **Communication:** Policy writing, report drafting/editing, dissemination through presentations, trainings, and blog/op-ed writing
- **Language:** Advanced Spanish

DISCIPLINARY SERVICE

Peer reviewer for: *International Studies Quarterly*, *European Journal of Political Research*, *Political Communication*, *International Journal of Press/Politics*, *International Journal of Communication*, and *The Journal of Information Technology & Politics*.