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**Abstract**

This study examined the patterns and nature of science co-publications between the USA and China. Based on a scientometric study of Scopus co-publications over the past 5 years, the results demonstrated a continuous rise of bilateral collaboration between the two countries. Challenging the US political rhetoric and attempts to curb international research engagement with China, the findings demonstrated ways that China plays a leading role in US-China research collaboration, based on first authorship and governmental funding patterns. Findings also showed that over the past 5 years, US research article publications would have declined without co-authorship with China, whereas China's publication rate would have risen without the USA. Using zero-sum and positive-sum frameworks, this study shows the benefits of US collaboration with China for both the US nation-state and global science. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)