

Research on the Narrative Hedging Paths of Discourse-Weak Countries Against Discourse-Strong Countries from the Perspective of International Discourse Power

-- A Case Study of Narrative Interaction Between the United States and Latin America

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of a restructuring global power landscape and intensifying great-power rivalry, how discourse-weak countries respond to the narrative hegemony of discourse-strong states has become a prominent topic in international political research. The narrative interaction between the United States and Latin America constitutes a typical case of international discourse contestation. This study employs a three-dimensional analytical framework of “actor-content-mode” to systematically examine the pathways and inherent logics of narrative resistance by discourse-weak states. The United States relies on a tripartite coordination mechanism of “officials-elites-media” to construct a “leadership” status, implement hegemonic narratives, and maintain regional dominance through such means as channel monopolization, labeling, and suppression. In contrast, Latin America consolidates narrative power through regional integration, the reconstruction of autonomous development identities, and multi-level actor interaction. Focused on deconstructing neoliberal hegemony and reconstructing the connotation of autonomous development, Latin America achieves narrative diffusion by expanding diversified channels, adopting empathetic rhetoric, and conducting dynamic interaction. The core logic of “narrative resistance by weak states” is to seek the legitimacy of independent development discourse, which centers on the synergy of three dimensions: actor cohesion, content consistency, and paradigm matching. Latin America’s practice of narrative hedging indicates that discourse-weak actors can effectively undermine the legitimacy of hegemonic narratives, build consensus both domestically and internationally, and further promote autonomous development. Currently, Latin American societies still face multiple discourse dilemmas, including discursive power asymmetries, internal fragmentation, and external oppression. Its practical experience holds significant theoretical and practical implications for developing countries to enhance their international discourse power and break free from discursive dependency.

Keywords

International Discourse Power; Narrative Hedging; US–Latin American Relations; Narrative Construction.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background and Significance

Currently, with the profound changes in the global governance landscape and the intensifying rivalry among major powers, international discourse power is undergoing drastic structural

restructuring and has gradually become an important aspect of geopolitical competition. Western countries dominate the rules of the world order and are the controllers of knowledge production and cultural dissemination, while non-Western countries have promoted the historic adjustment of global power relations through their own theoretical innovation and practice as a collective rise. A contest of anti-hegemonic narratives has unfolded between the Western hegemonic narratives led by the United States and discourse-weak countries represented by Latin America. As the “backyard” of the United States, Latin America has long been trapped in a systemic dilemma of discourse hegemony under the shadow of U.S. “Monroe Doctrine” and “colonialism”, with its geopolitical identity dissolved by other countries, which is a classic phenomenon of “discursive dependency”. At the beginning of 2026, the United States launched a military strike against Venezuela and forcibly detained Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, claiming that Venezuela had “launched deadly drug-terrorist activities” against the United States. This act of the United States seriously interfered in the internal affairs of Latin American countries and suppressed Latin America's international discourse power. Studying the narrative relationship between the United States and Latin America can provide important insights for understanding the global discourse power game and promoting developing countries to enhance their international discourse power.

1.2. Research Status at Home and Abroad

At present, existing domestic and foreign literatures have comprehensively sorted out the international discourse power game between Latin America and the United States from multiple dimensions such as history, politics, economy, and culture. Essentially, the discourse power game between the United States and Latin America reflects the unequal “center-periphery” relationship pattern at the discourse level: the United States maintains its regional dominance through a hegemonic narrative, while Latin America seeks an independent space for discourse development through theoretical innovation and practical resistance. The combined effect of various factors such as Latin America's domestic political ecology, development demands, external games, and changes in the global order has made this game pattern complex and volatile. Meanwhile, Sino-Latin American dialogue and cooperation are of great strategic significance. The two sides will establish a common dialogue system based on platforms such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the Global Development Initiative to enhance their discourse influence in the Global South. Existing studies also cover multiple levels of the U.S.-Latin America discourse competition, including theories, policies, and practices, such as the collation of theories such as the dependency theory and “defiance of state-building” of Latin American countries, as well as the analysis of new phenomena such as the “New Monroe Doctrine” and “Sino-Latin American cooperation”.

1.3. Research Methods and Innovations

Although existing research achievements cover multiple dimensions and rich connotations, they are still insufficient in pertinence and operability, and lack in-depth exploration on issues such as regional differences in Latin America, response to U.S. narrative attacks, improvement of international discourse power of discourse-weak countries, and construction of differentiated discourse strategies. This study adopts qualitative research methods such as literature review and regional and country comparison, and based on case studies, analyzes the U.S.-Latin America narrative game, so as to provide reference for the formulation of narrative strategies in the developing world.

2. The Theoretical Connotation of International Discourse Power and Narrative Hedging

2.1. The Core Connotation and Influencing Factors of International Discourse Power

International discourse power refers to a comprehensive force through which a country or region independently determines its development paradigm, forms a consensus awareness, and leads rules within the global governance system. Its core connotation cannot be summarized in a single sentence, but consists of two dimensions: “interpretation” and “dominance”. It is defined by core concepts such as “development”, “democracy” and “justice”, and transforms its own practical experience into a universal narrative paradigm. Essentially, the contest over international discourse is a game between “hegemonic narratives” and “anti-hegemonic narratives”, whose core lies in emphasizing “subjectivity” and “knowledge and power”, thereby forming implicit control over the global governance agenda, development paths, and interest distribution patterns. Latin America strives for development autonomy and cultural interpretation rights through three levels of transmission: knowledge system reconstruction, narrative content innovation, and regional cooperation [10].

A country’s acquisition and maintenance of international discourse power are influenced by multiple factors: Knowledge production is its basic support, whose core components include theoretical innovation capacity, knowledge system autonomy, and the influence of academic discourse. By proposing original theories and building local knowledge system communities, a country can break the hegemonic knowledge monopoly of other nations. Narrative communication is an important practical approach, which includes narrative adaptability, control of communication channels, and discourse resonance. It must conform to the common requirements of local historical conventions and communication objectives, and expand its communication scope through regional organizations, media groups, cultural products and other channels, on the basis of which cross-regional consensus is formed. Institutional embedding is a key guarantee, mainly divided into capabilities such as international institutional participation, rule-making power, and regional mechanism construction. Through leading the agenda of multilateral institutions and formulating technical standards, discourse advantages can be transformed into institutional construction, or independent regional organizations can be built to form collective discourse power to counter external suppression. Material foundation is the fundamental support, including economic strength, sovereign autonomy, and regional coordination capacity. Economic strength provides material guarantee for discourse autonomy, and the stronger the sovereign autonomy, the more capable it is to resist external discourse coercion. In contrast, regional national coordination and collective voice can make up for the weak discourse of a single country and enhance global discourse power, while economic dependence and political division will directly hinder the formulation and optimization of discourse strategies.

2.2. The Definition and Three-Dimensional Analytical Framework of Narrative Hedging

Narrative hedging is a dynamic narrative strategy adopted by discourse-weak or small countries in the international discourse system with intensifying major-power competition. To avoid being forced to take sides and maintain their own space for independent development, these countries balance narrative interactions with major powers and avoid risks brought about by single dependence[6]. Its core goal is to compete for the discursive legitimacy of independent development under structural pressure and reduce narrative oppression caused by major-power competition.

The effect of narrative hedging is reflected in the coordination and adaptation of three dimensions: the actor dimension is the power foundation of narrative hedging, the content dimension determines the legitimacy and acceptability of narrative risk avoidance behaviors, and the approach dimension is the flexibility and sustainability of narrative risk avoidance strategies. Against the background of intensifying major-power competition, small countries need to maintain the effectiveness of narrative hedging by strengthening regional actor cohesion, optimizing narrative content, and focusing on discourse forms. Once one of the dimensions loses balance, narrative resistance will move towards the direction of “taking sides”. The actor dimension emphasizes the integration and cooperation of actor forces, whose core is to use domestic political consensus, policy autonomy, and social cohesion, and carry out coordinated cooperation with the external narratives of other small countries, regions, or third-party major powers to make up for the weaknesses of individual narratives, thereby forming a joint force to resist major-power narratives. The content dimension focuses on the construction and adjustment of narrative subjects, centering on “security guarantee”, “economic development”, and “sovereignty maintenance”. It dynamically adjusts its core interests according to national interests and international situations, and ensures the flexibility of the strategy through expressive means such as “balanced benefits” and “multilateral cooperation”. The mode dimension focuses on the formulation and adjustment of narrative interaction strategies, whose core is to maintain balance with major powers through dynamic interaction, constantly adjust its own narrative stance with the intensity of major-power competition, transmit stories through multiple channels to avoid dependence on a single path, and quickly change the narrative mode and make timely corrections when problems occur, so as to reduce dependence risks.

3. The Actor Dimension of U.S.-Latin America Narrative Hedging: Identity Construction and Alliance Integration of Discourse-Weak Countries

In the discourse game between the United States and Latin America, the United States holds a position of sole discourse hegemony, while Latin America, a region that has long been in a discourse-weak position, has begun to construct collective identity and diverse alliances to counter U.S. narrative dominance.

3.1. The Narrative Actor Characteristics of the United States: A Discourse-Strong Country

The United States’ narrative dominance is based on a highly cooperative single-actor framework, on which a tripartite cooperative narrative system of “officials-elites-media” is constructed. The federal government, centered on national will, formulates narrative agendas through formal channels such as foreign policy declarations and regional cooperation initiatives; various think tanks, relying on their unique academic resources, conduct theoretical packaging and policy interpretation for these agendas, thereby providing theoretical support for the formation of government narratives; with the help of strong network advantages, mainstream media transform government discourse into narrative content understandable to the public, thus forming a comprehensive and multi-level narrative communication closed loop[39].

The United States has always justified itself with the identities of “leader of the Americas”, “beacon of democracy” and “defender of order”. By packaging its own interest demands as regional public interests, the United States legalizes and moralizes its hegemonic behaviors. According to the U.S. narrative logic, the identity of “leader” represents dominant position in regional affairs, while the so-called “normative development paradigm” becomes an ideological pretext for its interference in Latin American internal affairs. The “defender of order”, on the other hand, is a discourse tool to restrict Latin America’s independent development and

maintain its dominance. This “solidified” identity of the United States enables it to occupy a moral and power high ground in the discourse agenda of the Latin American region.

3.2. The Narrative Actor Strategy of Latin America: A Discourse-Weak Region

Under the U.S. “discourse oppression”, Latin America has realized the limitations of a single country fighting alone, and thus adopted a strategy of transforming from “single country” to “regional alliance”, concentrating discourse power on the basis of collective identity. Latin America has developed a collective consciousness on the common basis of geography, history and culture, and further strengthened institutionalized cooperation, thus forming a multi-level regional alliance system. By coordinating the positions of various countries in the region and speaking with a unified voice on the international stage, this system endows Latin America with certain discourse power in international negotiations, thereby reversing the weak position of a single country against U.S. hegemony.

At the level of identity construction, Latin America seeks to deconstruct the “dependent” identity shaped by the United States for a long time. The development and evolution of dependency theory is the theoretical basis for the identity reconstruction of Latin American countries. From the traditional dependency theory criticizing the capitalist world system, to the “dependent development coexistence” of dependent development theory, and then to the viewpoints of “peripheral autonomy” and unorthodox autonomy, Latin American political science has been exploring theoretical and practical approaches to get rid of dependent relations and achieve autonomy[30]. This theory is closely related to the reality of Latin American countries, emphasizing that Latin American countries have the right to take their own independent path of development without external interference. To strengthen its voice, Latin America has adopted a “subjectification” strategy, constructing a cross-level narrative alliance at the international and regional levels. Latin America is also actively engaging in diplomacy with other developing countries, relying on the power of the “Global South” to counter the discourse hegemony of the Western world. Within the region, the left-wing forces are a major political force promoting independent narratives, and their advocacy of “anti-dependence” and “independence” is highly consistent with the interests and demands of the Latin American people.

3.3. The Core Logic of Hedging in the Actor Dimension

The core logic of Latin America’s actor dimension strategy lies in filling the lack of discourse power of “single weak countries” through “collective identity” and “alliance”, thereby forming an effective check and balance on the United States’ “single” core actor, and thus providing strong “actor support” for the narrative of “independent development”. While strengthening regional identity, Latin America has also promoted regional cooperation from institutionalized cooperation to overall action, realizing the unification from scattered national forces to overall strength[30]. The U.S.-centered narrative actors have a synergistic effect; Latin America, with alliances as the link, uses “collectiveness” to counter “singleness”, effectively offsetting the U.S. advantage in individual action efficiency. Identity reconstruction is an important pillar of Latin America’s narrative hedging. The identity of “independent decision-maker” corresponds to the U.S. narrative identity of “leader”, denying the legitimacy of U.S. intervention in Latin American issues; while “regional social identity” enhances the cohesion of Latin American society, making its collective behaviors and speeches more rational and appealing. Through cross-level actor connection, Latin America integrates internal regional forces and external support, further expanding the influence and coverage of autonomous narratives. The multi-level power integration enables Latin America to shift from a passive defensive position to actively setting its own narrative agenda and conveying its ideas and demands for independent development in the process of hedging against the United States, thus creating a favorable international discourse environment for Latin America to achieve independent development.

4. The Content Dimension of U.S.-Latin America Narrative Hedging: Deconstruction and Reconstruction of Development Narratives

The narrative hedging between the United States and Latin America centered on “development” is a confrontation in which Latin American countries independently engage in dialogue with Western hegemony. Based on “Western-centric” values, the United States maintains its regional hegemonic position by constructing exclusive development narratives; on the basis of its own historical experience and practical needs, Latin America, relying on local theories such as “defiance of state-building”, exposes the hypocrisy of hegemonic narratives, reconstructs a narrative model consistent with its own development, and has obvious conflicts with U.S. narratives in terms of content[21].

4.1. The Narrative Actor Characteristics of the United States: A Discourse-Strong Country

Mainstream Western political economy and international relations theories represented by the United States are based on a “Western-centrism” value orientation. The essence of their narratives is to maintain the unbalanced “center-periphery” pattern, while ignoring the actual conditions and development needs of various Latin American countries. U.S. regional narratives start from “egoism” and firmly lock Latin America into the track of dependent development through one-way issue setting and cognitive structure. The neoliberal Washington Consensus promoted by the United States defines marketization, privatization and trade liberalization as the “only feasible path” for development. This assertion conceals the actual situation of developed countries’ intervention in Latin America in the early stage of industrialization and prompts Latin American countries to abandon their independent economic plans. Such narratives ignore the actual problems caused by neoliberalism in Latin America, such as debt crises and social division, and forcibly package its development path as a universal truth.

The United States also uses discourses such as the “external threat theory” and “democratic security theory” to regard the independent policies of Latin American leftists and the regional integration process as “regional instability factors”, and smears local movements of “anti-hegemony and anti-dependence” as “authoritarian regression”, thereby justifying its intervention in Latin American internal affairs and suppression of independent forces. At the same time, in relational narratives, the United States has established an unequal relational structure in Latin America through means such as trade agreements and aid bundling, strengthening economic and security dependence on the United States, thus turning the relationship between the United States and Latin American countries into a one-way logic of “compliance brings benefits”. Finally, with the help of a metaphorical system, the United States tries to shape itself as a “beacon of democracy” and define Latin America as an “underdeveloped” region that needs intervention, so as to pave the way for Latin American countries’ recognition of the so-called concepts such as “democracy and freedom” and “human rights values” [14], and consolidate the existing order of “U.S. dominance and Latin American dependence” through discourse rhetoric.

4.2. Latin America’s Narrative Content Hedging: Autonomous Narrative

With the “defiance of state-building” theory as the core ideological source, and based on its historical memory of colonial dependence and the actual interests of economic autonomy and people’s livelihood improvement, Latin America has constructed a set of autonomous discourse systems to comprehensively counter hegemonic narratives. The “defiance of state-building” theory advocates establishing “defiance” at the ideological level, reconstructing national autonomy, and advocating “struggle” and “resistance” [21]. Firstly, Latin America has conducted in-depth criticism of the destructiveness of neoliberalism, revealed the economic

imbalances and social crises it has caused, and pointed out that the essence of the “Washington Consensus” is an ideological tool used to solidify Latin America’s subordinate status.

Latin America clearly rejects the ideologicalization of “independent choice” by regarding development issues as “security issues”, and emphasizes that Latin American issues should be decided by the Latin American people themselves. The core of reconstructing development narratives is to focus on four major directions: independent development, regional integration, fairness and justice, and anti-dependence, rather than simply describing development as economic indicators, advocating the exploration of a “development path with Latin American characteristics”. Latin American narratives should be based on historical memory, arouse the common experience of regional colonial rule, hegemonic intervention and dependent development, enhance the emotional resonance and legitimacy of the narratives, and with the support of actual interests, make Latin American narratives more persuasive. Based on the practical results such as regional integration, state-led economic policies and people’s livelihood improvement, it demonstrates its feasibility.

4.3. The Core Logic of Hedging in the Content Dimension

The U.S.-Latin America narrative hedging breaks through the U.S. discourse monopoly on “development” through a threefold approach of “setting alternative issues-value reconstruction-metaphor replacement”. At the issue level, Latin America replaces the U.S. “dependent growth” with “independent development” and “unilateral dependence” with “regional solidarity”, breaking the single pattern controlled by Western countries; at the value level, it replaces “Western universal values” with concepts such as “people’s sovereignty” and “multiculturalism”, reconstructing new development concepts; in terms of metaphors, it replaces negative rhetoric with the positive image of “Latin American family”, thus changing the cognitive foundation of regional development. Latin American narratives provide legitimate justification for the independent development path, which not only justifies the social welfare policies and state intervention in economic policies of left-wing governments, but also provides a legitimate basis for practices such as regional integration and South-South cooperation.

5. The Modal Dimension of U.S.-Latin America Narrative Hedging: Communication Strategies and Interactive Mechanisms

In the U.S.-Latin America narrative contest, the key to the conflict in their narrative methods lies in their different communication channels, rhetorical expressions, and interaction mechanisms. Leveraging its hegemonic position, the United States has constructed a one-way monopolistic narrative communication system. In contrast, Latin America, in the status of a “discourse-weak party”, has established a multi-level hedging strategy through means such as channel expansion, rhetorical innovation, and dynamic interaction, thereby effectively making up for its disadvantages in communication and gaining broader recognition for its narrative of independent development.

5.1. U.S. Narrative Communication Methods

The United States has built a communication system designed to advance hegemonic narratives and leverages its global influence to enforce the coercive penetration of these narratives. In terms of communication channels, the U.S. constructs a comprehensive narrative coverage network through global mainstream media, social media platforms, and transnational institutions. Mainstream media shapes regional narrative agendas by virtue of its global reach and credibility; social media platforms precisely disseminate U.S. narratives to the public via algorithmic recommendation mechanisms; institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organization of American States (OAS) embed U.S. narratives into their

rule-making and policy outputs, thereby integrating these narratives with institutional frameworks.

Regarding rhetorical strategies, the U.S. adopts a combination of labeling and double standards to shape a narrative environment favorable to itself. For instance, it brands left-wing governments in Latin America as “authoritarian” or “populist,” habitually labeling them “anti-democratic” in an attempt to undermine the legitimacy of left-wing regimes[14]. It also stigmatizes independent development policies as “anti-globalization” to create a negative public perception, while applying double standards and making arbitrary accusations regarding democracy, human rights, and other issues in Latin America.

Suppression serves as a primary method for the U.S. to maintain its narrative hegemony. It employs multiple tactics—including media smear campaigns, economic sanctions, and diplomatic isolation—to coercively strip Latin American countries of their narrative autonomy and directly suppress their independent narratives[22]. When confronting Latin American nations that challenge U.S. dominance, U.S. media launches public opinion offensives to tarnish their national images. It imposes economic sanctions and trade barriers on countries that reject U.S. narrative logic, while resorting to diplomatic isolation and exclusion to weaken their discursive power on the global stage.

5.2. Latin America’s Narrative Hedging Approaches

Confronted with U.S. narrative hegemony, Latin America has moved beyond relying solely on individual countries for resistance and constructed a flexible and effective narrative risk avoidance mechanism. Firstly, it has expanded channels and adopted a diversification strategy to break the Western European and U.S. channel monopoly; integrating regional information resources is conducive to the dissemination of regional integration narratives. At the grassroots level, it has given play to the role of social media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to enhance the affinity and communication capacity of its narratives. Internationally, it has leveraged the power of “Southern countries” to realize the exchange between Latin America’s “independent narratives” and the “Global South”, shared communication channels with other developing countries, and expanded the scope of international communication[10].

In terms of rhetorical strategies, Latin America has abandoned one-way preaching to enhance the appeal and persuasiveness of its narratives and improve discourse credibility. By exploring the common historical heritage of colonial historical memory and the course of the independence movement, Latin America tells the collective story of the nation’s struggle for independence and resistance against oppression to the people in the region, thereby evoking emotional resonance. Relying on regional organizations such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), it issues joint statements, strengthens narrative power with a collective voice, and demonstrates regional consensus. Taking the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, such as “international law”, “sovereign equality”, and “non-interference in internal affairs”, as rhetorical weapons, it criticizes U.S. hegemonic narratives and interventions, enabling Latin America’s independent narratives to gain broader international understanding.

In terms of interaction mechanisms, Latin America has developed a dynamic hedging model of “response-criticism-replacement”, responding to U.S. narratives in a timely manner[10]. While the United States engages in labeling and media smear campaigns against it, Latin American countries have responded through official statements, academic interpretations, and other forms to clarify facts. At the same time, they have thoroughly criticized the “double standards” and hegemonic nature in U.S. narratives, revealing their true purpose of safeguarding their own interests and suppressing Latin America’s economic development. Through alternative narrative concepts such as “regional community” and “independent development”, Latin

America has provided a clear narrative expression for Latin America's independent development path, which serves as an effective alternative to U.S. hegemonic narratives.

5.3. The Core Logic of Narrative Hedging in the Methodological Dimension

In the methodological dimension, Latin America's narrative hedging strategies, through diversified channels, empathetic rhetoric, and dynamic interaction, strive to avoid the disadvantaged position of discourse-weak countries in communication, enhance the accessibility and influence of their autonomous narratives, and thus gain international and local understanding.

In terms of channel expansion, to break the U.S. monopoly on its narratives, Latin America has built its own narrative positions domestically, strengthened the penetration of its narratives through non-governmental channels, and joined hands with Southern countries to break Western channel hegemony. Meanwhile, the internal and external linkage ensures a broader scope for autonomous narratives. This multi-channel layout makes it difficult for the United States to block Latin American narratives with a single repressive method, thereby providing space for its "counter-narratives".

Latin American countries use common historical memories and people's livelihood practice cases as narrative materials to arouse identity and emotional resonance among people in the region; based on collective voice, they enhance narrative authority and gain value recognition globally through moral principles, thus breaking the dilemma of "weak countries having no discourse power" and forming a dual-pillar narrative force of emotion and rationality. This dynamic interaction mechanism endows Latin American narratives with stronger pertinence and initiative, enabling them to not only promptly refute false accusations from the United States and reveal the essence of its narrative hegemony, but also actively convey their own development concepts and values, making narrative hedging an important way to win development space.

6. The Effectiveness, Dilemmas and Path Optimization of Narrative Hedging by Discourse-Weak Countries

As a group of discourse-weak countries, Latin America has achieved remarkable results in deconstructing hegemonic narratives, building regional consensus, and exploring paths for independent development. However, due to various factors such as power asymmetries, internal fragmentation, and external suppression, it still faces many practical dilemmas.

6.1. The Effectiveness of Latin America's Narrative Hedging

Through continuous narrative hedging, Latin America has effectively broken the U.S. monolithic narrative monopoly and gained greater discursive space and practical autonomy. In the narrative of "independent development", Latin America has effectively deconstructed the legitimacy of U.S. discourse hegemony. With localized theoretical innovations such as "dependency theory" and "defiance of state-building", it has in-depth revealed the hegemonic essence of the United States as an "order defender" and criticized the unequal status under the European and U.S. "center-periphery" pattern, thereby gradually clarifying the root causes of Latin America's development dilemmas. Through the collective voice of regional organizations such as the CELAC and the MERCOSUR, Latin America has integrated concepts such as "independent development" and "sovereign equality" into the discourse of global governance, reversing the passive situation long defined by the United States and becoming an important model for countries in the Global South to oppose hegemony[14].

Narrative hedging has provided strong discursive support for Latin America's integration and anti-dependence practices. Based on common colonial historical memories, Latin America has jointly resisted external interference, constructed a "regional community" identity, enhanced

the regional identity of various countries, and promoted the integration of mechanisms such as the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) and CELAC. In addressing issues such as countering U.S. economic sanctions and safeguarding regional common interests, the cohesion of this consensus has effectively reversed the dilemma of some countries fighting alone and formed a powerful hedging force. In the process of narrative hedging, Latin American countries have sought paths of independent development, triggering a series of economic and social policy reforms. For example, Bolivia has improved people's livelihood based on resource income, Ecuador has centered on "good living" (buen vivir) and emphasized a development model of harmonious coexistence between humans and nature, and Venezuela has established community councils to promote grassroots participation, providing new paths for independent development for discourse-weak countries.

6.2. Existing Dilemmas

Although Latin American narratives have achieved certain effects through hedging, they still face insurmountable dilemmas due to systematic suppression by the U.S. hegemonic discourse system and constraints from internal conditions. The stark imbalance of discursive power remains a core, insurmountable obstacle. The United States still occupies a dominant position globally and, leveraging its discursive power in mainstream world media and international organizations, can rapidly amplify negative coverage of Latin America, stigmatize left-wing governments in the region, and label them as "populist" or "authoritarian." By contrast, media platforms in Latin America exhibit clear disadvantages in terms of reach, influence, and technological capacity, making it difficult for independent narratives to penetrate the global mainstream discursive arena. This situation often leaves Latin American narratives in a dilemma: even when reasonable demands are put forward, they fail to achieve the same communication effects and international responses as U.S. narratives.

Ideological differences and diverging national interests within Latin America significantly undermine the coherence and sustainability of collective narratives. The region is divided along left-right ideological lines; additionally, influenced by U.S. inducements, economic sanctions, trade barriers, and other pressures, some countries have had to adjust their stances, tilting toward pro-U.S. positions on regional issues and thus antagonizing nations that advocate anti-dependence. Divergent economic structures and geopolitical interests among Latin American countries further impede consensus on issues such as regional integration and diplomacy toward the United States.

6.3. Recommendations for Path Optimization

Latin America should make corresponding adjustments in narrative actors, narrative content, and narrative methods to construct a more influential discourse system for weak states. At the actor level, it is necessary to strengthen the cohesion of regional alliances and build a diversified and coordinated narrative network. Within the region, efforts should be made to reform the integration mechanisms of the Latin American Community, improve policy formulation and coordination mechanisms, eliminate ideological and interest differences, and establish a unified regional narrative system. Think tanks, media outlets, and social organizations should be encouraged to participate, diversifying narrative actors and enhancing the vitality and penetration of narratives. Internationally, Latin America should strengthen dialogue and cooperation with countries of the Global South, build cross-regional narrative alliances, share communication channels and narrative resources, and thereby resist Western discourse hegemony.

In terms of content, Latin America should focus on the two common themes of "people's livelihood" and "development" to enhance both universality and resonance. First, reduce ideological confrontation and construct a narrative of "autonomous development" centered on poverty eradication, employment, health, climate change, and other issues. This will help break

geographical and ideological barriers and gain broader international recognition. Latin America should also continuously draw on livelihood-related cases from local practices, replacing abstract theoretical preaching with tangible development achievements, so that the international community can more directly perceive the practical significance of “independent development.”

In terms of methods, Latin America should actively innovate communication technologies and tools to improve the effectiveness and reach of narratives. It should fully leverage emerging communication platforms such as short-video and social media, create narrative content tailored to the cognitive habits of young audiences, and convey the idea of autonomous development in a vivid and accessible way. Efforts should also be made to strengthen the construction of regional communication platforms, enhance the professionalism of narrative exchanges, break U.S. monopolies in communication technology, and build a regionally controlled communication network.

7. Conclusion

By systematically analyzing the narrative hedging between the United States and Latin America, this study reveals the internal logic and practical pathways for discourse-weak countries to counter the narrative hegemony of discourse-strong countries. Through the hedging strategies of alliance-building in the subject dimension, deconstructing hegemony and asserting autonomy in the content dimension, and leveraging the triple-space framework in the model dimension, discourse-weak countries have effectively broken the narrative monopoly of discourse-strong countries. Latin America represents a typical “discourse-weak group”. At the subject level, it addresses the disadvantages of individual nations through regional alliances and cross-level integration, deconstructs U.S. hegemonic narratives, and reconstructs its own identity and development narratives. Methodologically, it enhances the influence of autonomous narratives by expanding communication channels, employing empathetic rhetoric, and adopting dynamic interactive mechanisms. The fundamental goal of narrative hedging is to strive for the discursive right to define “independent development”, thereby providing legitimacy for the independent development practices of weak countries. The narrative contest between the United States and Latin America is essentially a discursive struggle over the choice of development paths. The United States, through “threat narratives” and “consent narratives”, presents its own model as the sole legitimate option for Latin America’s independent development, seeking to fundamentally deny Latin America’s discursive right to independent development. Latin America’s practical actions demonstrate that the discursive resistance of weak countries is not merely a “discursive confrontation”, but a strategic means to achieve national independent development. It exposes the inequality inherent in the Western “center-periphery” structural narrative and lends moral legitimacy to national autonomy practices, such as resource nationalization, participatory democracy, and regional integration.

The practice of Latin American narrative hedging indicates that subject cohesion, content resonance, and model alignment exert a significant synergistic effect. Within a region, a narrative that aligns with people’s livelihood needs, the common interests of Global South countries, and the communication modalities required by weak countries can effectively break the suppression of “discourse hegemony”.

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