

SUMMIT DIPLOMACY AND CHINA-CELAC FORUM



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SUMMIT DIPLOMACY AND CHINA-CELAC FORUM

Lecture Series
Chair in Contemporary China
2024

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(FLACSO)



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Lecture Series 2024

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Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences
(FLACSO)

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PRESENTATION

PRESENTATION

The 21st century presents an international landscape marked by rapid and profound transformations. These include the sustained rise of China, not only from a commercial standpoint but also a political one, implying shifts in the systemic order; and the weakening of certain traditional frameworks of global coordination, particularly those related to the international financial order and the international regimes established in the 20th century, such as the United Nations.

It is within this context that the relationship between the People's Republic of China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), commonly referred to as the China-CELAC Forum (FCC), has gradually become one of the main platforms for political dialogue and cooperation between the region and China. Its relevance lies not only in the trade, investment, and cooperation proposals and promises that emerge from its forums, but also in its role as a structured space for encounter between diverse actors. It projects a willingness for sustained, respectful, and strategic interaction among parties that, despite their differing trajectories and models, share common interests and complementary development goals. Moreover, it has significant repercussions, both bilaterally and locally, through a multilevel perspective.

For Latin America and the Caribbean, having such mechanisms is crucial. The FCC allows for ongoing political dialogue with one of the central actors in today's international system and offers the region the opportunity to position itself as a block, despite its internal heterogeneities. It is a valuable opportunity to build consensus, make regional agendas visible, strengthen shared capacities, and identify areas of convergence with a global partner of growing economic, diplomatic, technological, and cultural influence. In an international scenario marked by fragmentation and great-power rivalry, such platforms enable the construction of bridges for dialogue.

In this context, emerged the motivation to hold the fourth edition of the lecture series in August 2024 under the title "Summit Diplomacy and the China-CELAC Forum", jointly organized by the Contemporary China Chair and the Latin American Association of Asian and African Studies (ALADAA

International). The cycle, held entirely in a virtual format, brought together researchers from various parts of Latin America and China, providing a pluralistic space for collective reflection on the current dynamics of biregional relations.

One of the greatest strengths of this initiative lay precisely in its capacity to gather diverse perspectives from multiple points in the region in dialogue with colleagues from Chinese academic institutions. This multiplicity of approaches, experiences, and national contexts (viewed through a regional lens) greatly enriches the understanding of ongoing processes, prevents uniform or oversimplified interpretations, and enables the weaving of a regional network of analysis and exchange that transcends national borders.

The lectures were structured around six thematic conferences held over two weeks. Each session addressed a different dimension of the relationship between China and Latin America and the Caribbean within the framework of the FCC, featuring specialists from prestigious universities and research centers. The variety of topics covered, as well as the geographic diversity of the participants, reflected the inclusive and pluralistic nature that has defined this initiative since its inception.

The decision to focus this fourth edition on summit diplomacy and the role of the FCC stems from a strategic reading of the current regional and international moment. The forum has driven cooperation agendas in numerous areas: trade, investment, technology, sustainable development, culture, education, and political dialogue, among others. However, there is a pressing need to better understand how its mechanisms operate, which actors are driving them, what outcomes they have generated, and what challenges lie ahead. In this sense, the cycle did not aim to offer definitive answers but rather to contribute to informed analysis and critical debate from both Latin American and Chinese perspectives.

Another noteworthy aspect of this edition was the multi-level approach adopted. The relations between China and Latin America and the Caribbean cannot be fully understood solely from the perspective of central governments or foreign ministries; they also involve local actors, the private sector, universities, civil society, and increasingly, younger generations. This multilevel approach allows for a more accurate grasp of the complexity of these ties and opens pathways for more dynamic, inclusive, and sustainable forms of cooperation. Summit diplomacy, in this regard, is not merely ceremonial or declarative: it is also a driver that pushes forward new agendas,

activates articulation processes, and serves as a catalyst for concrete projects and initiatives between countries, institutions, and communities.

Along these lines, the cycle also reaffirmed the importance of promoting ongoing dialogue spaces between academia, decision-makers, and interested citizens. The knowledge generated in our academic institutions and research centers plays a key role in understanding contemporary international relations and can offer tools, diagnoses, and proposals that enrich public debate and contribute to the design of more coherent, informed, and strategic foreign policies. Therefore, initiatives such as this cycle should not be seen as isolated events, but rather as part of a sustained policy for the construction of regional thinking, aimed at strengthening Latin America and the Caribbean's analytical capacities regarding China in particular, and Asia more broadly.

The continuity of such initiatives is especially valuable in a scenario where fragmented or short-term approaches often dominate discussions about biregional ties. The fourth edition of the lecture series "*Summit Diplomacy and the China-CELAC Forum*" continued a line of work that has initiated years ago, one that has systematically sought to create spaces for exchange, training, and dialogue among specialists, students, and professionals interested in the relations between both sides. In this regard, the cycle has fulfilled a dual function: on the one hand, as a space for collective reflection on a key forum for the region's present and future; and on the other, as a training platform for new generations of analysts, researchers, and decision-makers.

Moreover, the lecture series helps highlight the role that regional academic networks like ALADAA, along with initiatives such as the Chair in Contemporary China —implemented by the General Secretariat of FLACSO— can play in promoting strategic, rigorous, and independent debates on Latin America and the Caribbean's place in the world. Such partnerships make it possible to combine institutional capacities, connect national experiences, generate context-specific knowledge, and build proposals with real impact potential. Far from replicating exogenous models or top-down approaches, what is being proposed is a distinct way of seeing and thinking about international relations from the region, with a historical, critical, and forward-looking perspective.

Andrés Raggio
ALADAA International's General Secretary



INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Relations between China and Latin America and the Caribbean have taken on unprecedented strategic importance in recent decades. The intensification of trade, investment, and diplomatic exchanges has placed the region in a key position within Chinese foreign policy, characterized by its emphasis on South-South cooperation and shared development. This link, far from being circumstantial, responds to a series of structural transformations that have redefined the international order, in which China has consolidated its role as a central player in the economic, political, and technological spheres.

In this context, summit diplomacy has been a fundamental mechanism for the consolidation of Sino-Latin American ties. Globally, China has used this strategy as a pillar of its foreign policy, aligned with its projection as a global power with influence in multiple regions. Summit diplomacy, based on high-level meetings between state leaders and representatives from various sectors, allows China to strengthen its international presence through direct dialogue and the signing of strategic agreements in key areas. In Latin America and the Caribbean, this approach has served to deepen cooperation in priority areas such as trade, infrastructure, investment, and technology transfer.

The expansion of summit diplomacy by China responds to an evolution in its international role. Since the launch of its Reform and Opening Up policy in 1978, China has transitioned from a developing economy to become the world's second largest economic power. With this, its approach to foreign relations has shifted from a strategy more focused on economic pragmatism to a model in which it seeks to establish leadership based on cooperation, multilateral diplomacy, and the promotion of long-term strategic partnerships. In this regard, China has successfully used summit diplomacy as a key tool to consolidate its influence in emerging regions, presenting itself not only as a trading partner but also as a player committed to global development and stability.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, this strategy has become particularly relevant in the last two decades. Unlike other powers, whose presence in the

region has been marked by a logic of subordination or economic dependence, China has promoted a discourse of cooperation among equals, based on the principles of non-interference, mutual benefit, and shared development. This has allowed its summit diplomacy initiatives to materialize in concrete mechanisms such as the China-CELAC Forum, the China-LAC Business Summit, and the China-LAC Think Tank Forum. Through these spaces, China has sought to institutionalize its relationship with the region, establishing permanent dialogue frameworks and action plans that reflect both its interests and the priorities of Latin American countries.

Summit diplomacy has proven to be an effective tool for facilitating large-scale cooperation agreements. In the field of infrastructure investment, for example, China has promoted key projects through mechanisms such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a global connectivity strategy that has driven the development of ports, railways, and energy systems in Latin America. In the technology sector, summits have served to strengthen collaboration in digital innovation, artificial intelligence, and telecommunications. Furthermore, in a context of global transformation, these forums have allowed China to position itself as a key player in cooperation for sustainable development, addressing challenges such as climate change, food security, and energy transition.

In this way, summit diplomacy has not only consolidated China's presence in Latin America and the Caribbean but has also opened up new opportunities for the region. However, this process raises questions about the ability of Latin American countries to take full advantage of the benefits of this relationship. The need for greater regional coordination, the formulation of more robust negotiation strategies, and the strengthening of internal capacities to manage cooperation with China are central challenges that will determine the future of this relationship in the medium and long term.

It is within this framework that the Lecture series *Summit Diplomacy and the China-CELAC Forum*, organized in collaboration between the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) and the Latin American Association of Asian and African Studies (ALADAA), sought to create a space for critical reflection on the development of these relations. Through this initiative, the aim has been to strengthen the participation of Latin American sinologists in the analysis of Chinese foreign policy and its impact on the region, promoting

a plural and multidisciplinary dialogue that contributes to the formulation of strategic policies for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The articles in this book offer an overview of key issues that have shaped the bilateral agenda in recent years. The chapter “*China's Agricultural Mechanization and Cooperation with Latin America*” by Yang Minli explores the transformative role of agricultural mechanization in China, highlighting its impact on food security and sustainable development, especially for small farmers. The text shows how public policies and technological advances have positioned China as a global leader in sustainable mechanization and analyzes the growing cooperation with Latin America through projects aimed at modernizing family farming.

For her part, Megumi Terui, in the article “*Evolution, historical context, and future projections of the China-Latin America and Caribbean Business Summit*”, examines the evolution of the China-Latin America and Caribbean Business Summit since its creation in 2007, its articulation with initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the China-CELAC Forum, and the current challenges to consolidate itself as a platform for regional cooperation in areas such as innovation, sustainability, and the inclusion of MSMEs.

From an environmental and sustainable development perspective, Min Zhou's chapter, “*The Promotion of Sustainable Development and Environmental Protection in the China-CELAC Relationship: A Humanistic Perspective*”, highlights the urgency of integrating an ethical and ecological vision into bi-regional cooperation. Faced with the challenges of the Anthropocene, the author emphasizes that the solution cannot be limited to technology but must address the relationship between humanity and nature from a logic of shared responsibility. The text highlights the potential of China and Latin America to coordinate policies and exchange technologies that balance economic development and environmental protection, within the framework of a shared vision of the future.

In turn, Andrés Borquéz's chapter, “*Studies on Sino-Latin American Relations: Challenges for New Generations*,” examines the evolution and growing strategic importance of these relations, drawing attention to the obstacles faced by young researchers, such as language barriers, the lack of adapted theoretical references, and the impact of digitalization. The author advocates the development of specific skills and the strengthening of academic cooperation

as ways to consolidate a critical and interdisciplinary field capable of interpreting this complex and changing relationship.

In the following chapter, “*Implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Urban Practice in China*,” Wang Mou analyzes the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in China, with an emphasis on urban policies that have enabled the country to make significant progress in integrating the SDGs into its national strategies. Through case studies such as Shenzhen, the text shows how urban planning has become a key tool for harmonizing economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. It also points out the opportunities that this experience offers for cooperation with CELAC, especially in adapting Chinese practices to Latin American urban contexts.

Closing the volume, Diego Telias, in his article “*The China-Latin America and Caribbean Think Tank Forum: the importance of academic exchange*,” examines the role of the China-Latin America and Caribbean Think Tank Forum as a fundamental component of the China-CELAC Forum. His chapter highlights the strategic function of this subforum as a space for academic dialogue, knowledge generation, and the formulation of proposals aimed at strengthening a bi-regional relationship based on multilateralism, South-South cooperation, and mutual understanding.

This publication is part of an ongoing effort to promote dialogue and research on relations between China and Latin America and the Caribbean. We hope that this work will contribute to academic debate and serve as a reference for researchers, decision-makers, and all those interested in understanding the dynamics of cooperation between the two regions.

Nathalia Vince Esgalha Fernandes
Editor

CHINA'S AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION AND COOPERATION WITH LATIN AMERICA

This report is based on the paper: “China's agricultural mechanization and cooperation with Latin America” , presented on August 19, 2024 in the IV Lecture Series developed within the framework of the Chair in Contemporary China.



CHINA'S AGRICULTURAL MECHANIZATION AND COOPERATION WITH LATIN AMERICA

YANG Minli¹

Introduction

This article explores the transformative role of agricultural mechanization in shaping modern agricultural practices in China and its expanding cooperation with Latin America. It highlights the profound impact of small farmers on food security, poverty alleviation, and sustainable development, underscoring the pivotal contributions of mechanization and digitalization. By delving into the evolution of China's mechanization policies, technological advancements, and legal frameworks, the discussion offers valuable insights into the strategies that have positioned China as a global leader in sustainable agriculture. The article also examines how these innovations are fostering international partnerships, particularly with Latin America, where agricultural collaboration serves as a cornerstone for shared development goals.

This exploration is highly relevant to the challenges of contemporary food security and sustainability, demonstrating how lessons from China's experience can inform global agricultural modernization. In particular, the analysis provides a nuanced understanding of how targeted policies and innovative technologies can empower small farmers, enhance productivity, and promote equity, offering a roadmap for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in agricultural development.

The importance of small farmers in agricultural production

Small farmers are fundamental to the global agricultural framework, especially in China, where their contribution is both substantial and critical.

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Globally, small-scale family farms—defined as those operating on less than two hectares—comprise over 84% of all farms but utilize only 12% of the world's agricultural land. Despite this limited land access, they produce approximately 36% of the global food supply, illustrating their pivotal role in ensuring food security and promoting sustainable agricultural practices.

In China, the significance of small farmers is magnified by their dominance within the agricultural sector. Small farmers represent over 98% of all agricultural entities in the country. Approximately 95.8% of farms fall under the category of small-scale, cultivating plots smaller than two hectares. These farmers account for 90% of the agricultural workforce and manage 70% of China's cultivated land. With an estimated 230 million farming households averaging 0.52 hectares per household, the characterization of China as “a big country with small farmers” accurately reflects its agricultural structure.

The role of women in this demographic is particularly noteworthy. Women constitute nearly 48% of the agricultural workforce, amounting to approximately 150 million individuals. Their active participation underscores the need for inclusive policies that empower women through mechanization, training, and access to modern agricultural tools. Such integration is essential for enhancing productivity and fostering equity within rural communities.

Contribution to Food Security and Poverty Alleviation

Small farmers are instrumental in maintaining China's food security. For nine consecutive years, the country's grain output has exceeded 650 million tons, a testament to the effectiveness and resilience of smallholder farming systems. Mechanization has played a crucial role in this achievement, enabling small farmers to optimize their productivity while preserving natural resources.

Furthermore, the modernization of agriculture has significantly contributed to poverty alleviation. Over 55.75 million rural residents have been lifted out of poverty, marking a milestone in global poverty reduction efforts. Mechanization has not only enhanced agricultural productivity but has also facilitated urbanization, with over 100 million agricultural workers transitioning to urban areas. This migration has increased China's urbanization rate to 65.22%, illustrating the socioeconomic impact of agricultural development.

Mechanization and Sustainability for Small Farmers

Mechanization tailored to the needs of small farmers has been a transformative force in China. The integration of sustainable mechanization practices allows for increased efficiency, reduced labor intensity, and enhanced resource management. By adopting modern tools and technologies, small-scale family farms can achieve higher yields and improve their economic viability.

China's approach to agricultural modernization emphasizes the integration of mechanization, industrialization, and digitalization. This strategy aligns with global objectives to create more efficient, inclusive, and resilient agri-food systems. Initiatives such as government subsidies for machinery purchases, technical training programs, and the promotion of lightweight and user-friendly equipment ensure that small farmers can participate in the modernization process. These measures also contribute to gender equality by empowering women to adopt mechanized farming practices, thereby increasing their economic decision-making power.

Challenges and Future Directions

Despite their contributions, small farmers face significant challenges, including limited access to resources, market fluctuations, and environmental pressures. Addressing these challenges requires targeted policies and investments in infrastructure, education, and technology. China's emphasis on sustainable development through mechanization provides a blueprint for supporting smallholder farmers while balancing economic growth and environmental stewardship.

As the world seeks solutions to global food insecurity and rural poverty, the experience of China underscores the vital role of small farmers. Their integration into modern agricultural systems, supported by sustainable mechanization and inclusive policies, not only enhances productivity but also ensures the resilience and equity of the agricultural sector. Small farmers remain indispensable to the pursuit of a sustainable and secure food future, both in China and globally.

Policy and Technological Insights from China

To ensure the success of small farmers, China has implemented various supportive policies and technological advancements. Subsidies for agricultural machinery purchases encourage farmers to invest in efficient

equipment. Programs like "Field Day" activities and mobile apps such as the "Agricultural Machinery Know-It-All" provide farmers with hands-on training and easy access to essential information.

In addition, China has emphasized the need for gender-inclusive mechanisms within agriculture. Empowering rural women through simplified and intelligent agricultural technologies has enhanced their participation in farming. These efforts not only contribute to gender equality but also increase overall productivity in the sector.

The integration of data-driven platforms has also been pivotal. Systems like the National Agricultural Machinery Big Data Platform enable efficient resource allocation and monitoring, improving decision-making processes at both the governmental and individual levels. By leveraging these tools, China continues to lead in creating resilient and innovative agricultural systems that prioritize the inclusion and advancement of smallholder farmers.

Overview of Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization in China

China has emerged as a global leader in the field of sustainable agricultural mechanization, leveraging advanced technology, efficient systems, and comprehensive policies to transform its agricultural landscape. This transformation underscores the nation's commitment to achieving high-quality and sustainable development in its agricultural sector. The following sections delve into various dimensions of China's sustainable agricultural mechanization.

A. Evolution and Integration of Agricultural Mechanization Systems

China's agricultural sector has transitioned through distinct production systems, integrating mechanized, traditional, and intelligent/digital methodologies. Central to this evolution is the development of intelligent agricultural equipment and production modes. The country has implemented digital management platforms that facilitate the modernization of its agricultural practices, focusing on achieving a balance between efficiency, ecological responsibility, and economic benefit.

By 2023, China's comprehensive mechanization level for tilling, planting, and harvesting reached 74%, with full mechanization achieved for staple crops like wheat, rice, and corn. The application of intelligent agricultural machinery has revolutionized the sector. These technologies include information systems, mobile applications, and big data platforms such as the

National Agricultural Machinery Big Data System Platform. By August 2024, this platform had tracked nearly 1.90 million agricultural machines, collected 500 billion data points, and covered 200 million hectares across 28 provinces. The platform supports decision-making for government policies, enterprise strategies, and farmer operations, enabling remote operation and maintenance of machinery and fostering an efficient and resilient agricultural framework.

Farmers benefit from accessible learning tools such as the "Agricultural Machinery Know-It-All" app, technical promotion training, and Field Day activities. These resources empower farmers to adopt mechanized practices, enhancing productivity and reducing operational costs.

B. Legal and Policy Support for Mechanization

China's robust legal and regulatory framework underpins its mechanization efforts. The agricultural mechanization management service system integrates multiple levels of governance, from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs to county-level bureaus, ensuring coordinated efforts across the nation. Additionally, the government's financial support for research and development (R&D) has been instrumental. National projects such as the development of intelligent agricultural machinery, agricultural robots, and weak link machinery receive funding exceeding one billion yuan per project. Provincial governments complement these efforts with localized financial initiatives tailored to regional needs.

C. Industrial Advancements and Mechanization Extension Services

The agricultural machinery industry in China is both extensive and advanced. The country boasts over 8,000 agricultural machinery enterprises, including 2,200 above a designated size. The sector generates annual revenues exceeding 311.6 billion yuan and meets 90% of the domestic market demand. The industry's product portfolio spans 14 categories, 50 subcategories, and over 4,000 types of machinery. Policies such as machinery purchase subsidies encourage the adoption of advanced equipment among farmers and cooperatives, enabling the acquisition of more than 3.8 million units of machinery from over 4,000 enterprises.

China's extension system plays a pivotal role in disseminating technology and best practices. Universities, research institutes, production enterprises, and cooperatives collaborate to promote mechanization technologies. Demonstration projects and hands-on training activities ensure that farmers

can effectively utilize new machinery and techniques. The hire service system, another critical component, supports small-scale farmers who may not afford to own machinery. This system includes cooperatives, integrated agricultural service centers, and machinery leasing companies, enabling broad access to mechanized farming.

D. Empowerment and Sustainability in Mechanization

Mechanization has significantly contributed to the empowerment of women and small farmers. Lightweight and simplified machinery designs ensure ease of operation, while training programs enhance technical proficiency. Intelligent technologies narrow the urban-rural development gap and increase the economic autonomy of rural women, promoting gender equality within the agricultural workforce.

China's mechanization efforts prioritize environmental sustainability alongside economic efficiency. The nation's focus on minimizing input costs and maximizing output benefits reflects its commitment to sustainable agricultural practices. Policies emphasize the rational use of resources to safeguard ecological balance while supporting high-quality development.

As China continues to refine its agricultural mechanization strategies, the integration of digital technologies, intelligent machinery, and inclusive policies will remain central. These efforts not only enhance productivity and resilience but also serve as a model for other nations aiming to modernize their agricultural systems sustainably.

E. International Cooperation with Latin America

China's international cooperation with Latin America in agricultural mechanization showcases a comprehensive approach to fostering sustainable agricultural development through the integration of advanced technologies, educational initiatives, and collaborative research. This section elaborates on the agreements, projects, and achievements that have defined this partnership, with an emphasis on the milestones and unique aspects of this relationship.

Historical Context and Foundational Agreements

The foundation of China's cooperation with Latin America lies in strategic agreements aimed at mutual development. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Agricultural Mechanization and Agricultural Energy Cooperation signed with Brazil in September 2022 marked a critical

starting point. This agreement laid the groundwork for future collaborative projects, integrating mechanization tailored to family farming. Another milestone occurred in September 2023, when the China Agricultural University (CAU) and the University of Brasilia established the China-Brazil Family Agricultural Mechanization Joint Research & Development and Technology Promotion Center.

These agreements underscored the commitment to advancing family farming in Latin America by transferring knowledge and applying innovative agricultural technologies.

Major Projects and Achievements

A. Brazil: Leading the Charge

Brazil stands as the centerpiece of China's agricultural cooperation in Latin America, with numerous impactful initiatives:

A.1. China-Brazil Agricultural Mechanization Demonstration Farms:

On February 2, 2024, the launch of the Demonstration Farm in Apodi, Rio Grande do Norte, symbolized a major advancement in agricultural collaboration. Over 1,000 participants, including high-ranking officials, local farmers, and representatives from China, celebrated the introduction of mechanized farming tools tailored to local needs.

Technological Adaptations: Small and medium-sized agricultural machinery, such as combine harvesters and tractors, have been integrated into Brazil's family farms. These tools drastically reduced manual labor, with harvest durations dropping from 25 days to as few as six in regions like Maranhão.

A.2. Educational and Capacity-Building Initiatives:

Training sessions for local farmers have been a core focus. Platforms like the multilingual China-Brazil Agricultural Mechanization Advanced Technology and Equipment Portal facilitate knowledge sharing in Portuguese, Chinese, English, and Spanish.

International Summer School Programs: Hosted in Beijing during August 2024, these programs attracted participants from Brazil and provided workshops, technical seminars, and field demonstrations on intelligent agricultural machinery.

A.3. Testing and Feedback

By mid-2024, testing of medium crawler tractors and small harvesters in diverse Brazilian agricultural conditions showed outstanding results, particularly in muddy, rain-soaked fields. Farmers widely praised these innovations, which boosted productivity and income significantly.

B. Regional Engagements Across Latin America

B.1. Argentina:

In 2024, China signed an MOU with the Ministry of Agricultural Development of Buenos Aires Province, focusing on creating mechanization solutions tailored to Argentina's family farms.

B.2. Third China-CELAC Ministerial Forum:

Held in July 2024 in Weifang, Shandong Province, this forum convened representatives from 25 Latin American and Caribbean countries. It focused on green development, poverty reduction, and food security. Outcomes included the publication of the China-Latin America Ministerial Consensus on Key Areas of Agriculture and an Agricultural Cooperation Action Plan, which emphasized collaboration in technology transfer and sustainable agricultural practices.

B.3. Impacts of Agricultural Mechanization

The introduction of Chinese agricultural technology has had far-reaching impacts across Latin America:

Economic Benefits: Small farmers, such as those in Apodi, reported income increases of 70-80% due to mechanization reducing labor costs and enhancing efficiency. These advancements directly improved their livelihoods.

Gender Inclusion: Mechanized tools designed for ease of use have enabled greater participation of rural women in farming activities. This shift not only bolsters household income but also promotes gender equity within rural communities.

Technological Integration: Intelligent agricultural technologies, combined with data-driven platforms, have optimized crop management, resource allocation, and environmental monitoring. These innovations align with the global agenda for sustainable development.

Future Initiatives and Long-Term Vision

China's collaboration with Latin America continues to deepen, driven by ambitious plans for the future. The expansion of demonstration farms will bring advanced machinery and sustainable agricultural practices to regions like Brasília and Apodi. These sites will also feature Science and Technology Residences, serving as centers for cutting-edge research, farmer training, and the dissemination of innovative technologies.

Training and capacity-building efforts include the Belt and Road International Agricultural Equipment and Smart Agriculture Conference, which aims to foster global collaboration in the sector. Regular training programs will focus on adapting intelligent agricultural machinery to suit local conditions.

Strategic investments will provide additional financial support for mechanization projects through partnerships between Chinese enterprises and local governments, paving the way for enhanced productivity and growth in the region.

Future Prospects

China's agricultural mechanization is oriented towards a future that prioritizes technological innovation, global cooperation, and sustainable development. This approach seeks not only to transform domestic agriculture but also to position China as a leader in agricultural modernization at the international level. The proposed strategies encompass various key areas, including personnel training, technological promotion, scientific research, and the implementation of demonstration projects.

A. Projects, Technology, and Innovation

China plans to establish agricultural mechanization demonstration farms in strategic locations such as Brazil, Thailand, and other regions of interest, focusing on advanced technologies for family farming. For instance, the China-Brazil Modern Agriculture Zone will integrate intelligent agricultural machinery and innovative technologies to enhance sustainable production in Brazil. Locations like Apodi in Rio Grande do Norte will serve as hubs for experiments in crop management, soil monitoring, and environmental assessments. Similarly, Science and Technology Residences will bring together researchers, farmers, and industry leaders to foster collaboration and hands-on training in mechanization and smart agriculture. These

initiatives, with examples like residences in Brasilia and Apodi and similar projects planned in Kampangsae, Thailand, exemplify China's commitment to global agricultural progress.

In addition to these projects, the future of agricultural mechanization in China will be driven by the integration of advanced technologies. Specifically, the development of intelligent agricultural machinery, such as autonomous tractors, drones for crop monitoring, and robotic systems for planting and harvesting, aims to improve efficiency and sustainability. Moreover, the expansion of the National Agricultural Machinery Big Data Platform will enable real-time data sharing, optimizing decision-making for farmers, enterprises, and policymakers. Equally important, sustainable mechanization practices will focus on green technologies that minimize environmental impacts, promoting research into eco-friendly machinery and efficient resource utilization. By combining these efforts, China underscores its dual focus on innovation and environmental stewardship.

B. Capacity Building and Financial Support

China's future strategy emphasizes education and knowledge transfer to empower local communities and foster social inclusion. For example, International Summer Courses will focus on intelligent agricultural technologies, offering practical training in mechanization, digital agriculture, and environmental sustainability in Beijing and partner countries. Simultaneously, International Conferences and Exhibitions, such as the China International Agricultural Machinery Exhibition, will serve as key platforms for sharing innovations and building global networks, creating opportunities for both knowledge exchange and technological dissemination.

Complementing these initiatives, the Chinese government will continue to provide financial backing to ensure the sustainability of agricultural mechanization projects. Expanded subsidy programs aim to make advanced machinery accessible to small and medium-sized farmers, while the establishment of special economic zones like the "China-Brazil Family Farming Mechanization Science and Technology Backyard" integrates agricultural mechanization with local economic development. Together, these measures reflect a cohesive approach to building capacity and supporting financial sustainability in agricultural modernization.

C. Social and Global Impact

China's vision also includes a strong focus on empowering marginalized groups, particularly women, through the design of lightweight and easy-to-use equipment. Such innovations not only increase women's participation in farming but also enhance their economic decision-making power and promote gender equity across rural communities. This emphasis on inclusion aligns with China's broader commitment to social impact within its agricultural development strategies.

At the global level, China emphasizes partnerships with countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. For instance, China-Latin America Cooperation focuses on strengthening food security and technology transfer with countries like Brazil, Argentina, and CELAC members. Concurrently, projects in Asia and Africa promote agricultural modernization and sustainable development in regions such as Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. These collaborative efforts, alongside China's inclusive vision, highlight its dedication to advancing agricultural practices worldwide.

With these integrated strategies, China is poised to lead the future of global agricultural mechanization, consolidating its role as a key partner in advancing more sustainable and inclusive agri-food systems.

EVOLUTION, HISTORICAL CONTEXT, AND FUTURE PROJECTIONS OF THE CHINA-LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN BUSINESS SUMMIT

This report is based on the lecture: 'Evolution, Historical Context, and Future Projections of the China-LAC Business Summit,' presented on August 21, 2024, in the IV Lecture Series developed within the framework of the Chair in Contemporary China.



EVOLUTION, HISTORICAL CONTEXT, AND FUTURE PROJECTIONS OF THE CHINA-LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN BUSINESS SUMMIT

TERUI Megumi²

Introduction: Historical Background of China-Latin America Relations

The trans-Pacific relationship between China and Latin America dates back to the period of the Ming dynasty, during which the well-known "Silver Route" or "Manila Galleon" was established, a maritime channel through which goods were exchanged between China and the Spanish colonies in the Americas and Asia. This link, which Gordon and Morales (2017) consider one of the first manifestations of globalization, not only inaugurated trans-Pacific trade but also laid the groundwork for future encounters between these regions. Despite its historical relevance, trade and cultural exchange between China and Latin America remained in the background until the second half of the 20th century due to geographical, political, and economic constraints.

Evolution of China-Latin America Relations in the Contemporary Era (1960-2000)

With the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the subsequent Cold War, the political and economic context made it difficult to establish formal relations between China and Latin American countries, a region predominantly influenced by the United States. However, the Cuban Revolution in 1959 and the diplomatic recognition of China by Cuba in 1960 marked the beginning of a formal relationship that progressively attracted other countries in the region.

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The 1970s: During this decade, countries such as Chile, Peru, Argentina, Jamaica, Mexico, Guyana, Brazil, and Venezuela established diplomatic relations with China. Despite these advances, relations remained at the political and diplomatic level, without significant commercial exchange due to the limitations of economic development and the restrictions of the time (Fonseca & Su, 2024).

Economic Opening and Reform in China (1980-2000): China's economic reforms in the 1980s began to transform the relationship. With China's expanding economy and an emerging domestic market, the country began to attract the attention of Latin American businessmen. In the 1990s, China began its transition to a global market-oriented economy, a trend that intensified with its entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001. This facilitated the flow of goods and services, boosting the demand for raw materials from Latin America, such as minerals, oil, and agricultural products, essential for Chinese industrialization and growth (Terui Villegas & González García, 2024).

Emergence of the China-LAC Business Summit: First Phase (2007-2010)

The China-LAC Business Summit was founded in 2007 as an initiative of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). This event, initially held in Santiago, Chile, brought together more than 500 participants from 16 countries and was supported by ECLAC and the International Labor Organization (China-LAC Business Summit, 2007). The context in Chile was propitious due to its recent Free Trade Agreement with China, signed in 2006, and its historical relationship with the Asian country as the second country in the region to establish diplomatic relations with China.

The context of the China-LAC Business Summit also responded to concerns about the competitiveness of Latin American industries in the face of China's growth. In particular, the impact of China's expansion in the manufacturing market generated a displacement of factories to China, affecting jobs in industrial sectors in the region, especially in countries such as Mexico, where the relocation of factories to China impacted regional manufacturing employment (Pérez Santillán, 2019).

Harbin, China (2008): The second edition of the summit was held in Harbin, China, and attracted more than 800 attendees from 25 countries. More than ten cooperation agreements valued at approximately US\$500

million were signed. This edition began to consolidate the summit format, emphasizing business networking and promoting strategic alliances between chambers of commerce and business associations (China-LAC Business Summit, 2008).

Bogota, Colombia (2009): The third edition set a record for participation with more than 1,000 attendees (China-LAC Business Summit, 2009), and was the first following the publication of China's White Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean, a document in which the summit was mentioned as a key space for bilateral dialogue and cooperation (Xinhua, 2008). The 2008-2009 economic crisis underscored the importance of China-Latin America cooperation, especially in the context of falling commodity prices and rising unemployment in Latin America. China played a crucial role in the global recovery, maintaining strong demand for Latin American commodities and demonstrating its ability to stimulate the world economy.

Evolution of the Business Summit in the context of the financial crisis of 2008-2009

As a result of the global financial crisis, which originated in the United States and was comparable in its severity to the Great Depression of 1929, major financial institutions collapsed, severely affecting international trade and causing a drastic fall in commodity prices. In Latin America, the repercussions were notorious, with a decrease in income from natural resource exports and an increase in unemployment.

In this environment, China played a crucial role in the global recovery and was one of the few major economies to maintain significant growth during this period. In contrast to other world economies, China's GDP continued to grow, thanks to massive fiscal stimulus and credit expansion, which allowed it to maintain a solid pace of economic growth. This sustained growth allowed China to continue to demand large quantities of raw materials for its production, an aspect that particularly benefited Latin America.

The economic environment of those years not only strengthened the trade relationship between China and Latin America but also redefined the dynamics of global trade, evidencing China's growing importance as a global economic engine and its ability to influence the development of Latin American economies.

Prepared by the authors with data from the World Bank (2024)

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Summit Consolidation: Second Phase (2010-2015)

Starting in 2010, the China-LAC Business Summit broadened its focus to long-term investment and economic cooperation. This period was characterized by the increasing participation of banks and transnational corporations from both sides, which boosted the diversification of the areas of cooperation.

Chengdu, China (2010): The fourth summit was held in Chengdu and was attended by representatives from 34 countries and more than 1,000 attendees, including not only participants from Latin America and China but also from third countries. This edition extended the duration of the event to include presentations on investment opportunities, with the participation of important financial institutions such as the China Development Bank, Minsheng Bank of China, Import-Export Bank of Korea, and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation. In addition, the presence of multinational companies such as Haier and Cementos Mexicanos was highlighted, reflecting the growing importance of the summit in attracting investment and fostering economic cooperation between the two sides (China-LAC Business Summit, 2010).

Lima, Peru (2011): The Lima edition marked a strategic shift, geared not only to trade but also to investment in Latin America (China-LAC Business Summit, 2011). The signing of the Free Trade Agreement between Peru and China in 2009 had established a precedent that encouraged Chinese investment in strategic sectors in the region.

Hangzhou, China (2012): This summit established the first joint Chamber of Commerce, called the China-Latin America Business Council, which represented a milestone in the institutionalization of the summit (China-LAC Business Summit, 2012). The participation of multinational companies such as Huawei and Baosteel reflected the growing dimension of the event, which began to include both the private sector and Chinese provincial governments interested in attracting foreign investment to their regions.

San José, Costa Rica (2013): The 2013 summit, held in San Jose, Costa Rica, maintained the format established in previous editions, geared towards business exchange and networking. This event continued to consolidate ties between Chinese and Latin American entrepreneurs and demonstrated a growing interest on the part of regional companies and organizations in exploring business opportunities with China (China-LAC Business Summit, 2013).

Changsha, China (2014): The 2014 Summit, held in Changsha, China, would begin to question whether its nature would change with the formation of the China-CELAC Forum, a platform that would henceforth serve to organize the China-Latin America relationship through specific sub-forums. This forum, officially announced in 2014 during Xi Jinping's visit to Brasilia, projected a more formal cooperation structure between China and the Latin American and Caribbean region, thus providing an institutional framework that expanded the scope of the summit by including it as a key space for China-Latin America and the Caribbean cooperation from its next edition (China-LAC Business Summit, 2014; China-CELAC Forum, 2015; China-CELAC Forum, n.d.).

Guadalajara, Mexico (2015): The 2015 summit, which took place in Guadalajara, Mexico, broke attendance records with more than 2,000 participants, highlighting a large Mexican representation. Approximately three-quarters of the attendees were Mexican entrepreneurs, while Chinese participants made up about 20% and the rest came from 23 other countries. This event reflected a growth in local interest in cooperation with China and marked a milestone in the participation of the business sector of both blocs (China-LAC Business Summit, 2015).

Summit Expansion in the Era of the Belt and Road Initiative: Third Phase (2016-2019)

During this phase, the summit began to align with China's Belt and Road Initiative, expanding its scope into sectors such as infrastructure, technology, and sustainability.

Tangshan, China (2016): The 2016 summit in Tangshan further strengthened the cooperation framework in the context of the China-CELAC Forum, with explicit references to this regional collaboration platform. This event was highlighted by the signing of agreements worth approximately US\$17 billion, focused on infrastructure projects and

financing, underscoring Chinese interest in supporting infrastructure development in Latin America through large-scale contracts (China-CELAC Business Summit, 2016).

Punta del Este, Uruguay (2017): In 2017, the summit in Punta del Este set a record for participation with more than 2,400 attendees from 40 countries, including 140 companies and agencies. This event reflected a growing interest in the region towards establishing business relations and attracting foreign direct investment from China, consolidating the summit as a key space for economic-commercial cooperation between both regions (Uruguay Presidency, 2017).

Zhuhai, China (2018): In this edition, the summit made direct reference to the Belt and Road Initiative. China extended a formal invitation to Latin America to join this initiative, positioning the region as a natural extension of the Maritime Silk Road (China-LAC Business Summit, 2018).

Panama (2019): This summit focused on establishing lasting ties in areas of transportation, communications and energy, central aspects of the Belt and Road. China and Panama signed collaboration agreements for the improvement of port and logistics infrastructure, consolidating Panama as a key node for the expansion of the Belt and Road in Latin America (China-LAC Business Summit, 2019).

Chongqing, China (2021): After a pause in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the summit was resumed in Chongqing in 2021. Due to health restrictions, the event was mostly held in a virtual format, but significant progress was still made, such as the US\$700 million agreement between the government of Salta, Argentina, and Tibet Summit Resources for the exploitation of lithium carbonate, a strategic resource for both economies (China-LAC Business Summit, 2021).

Guayaquil, Ecuador (2022): Guayaquil, Ecuador (2022): The 2022 edition, held in Guayaquil, marked a significant breakthrough in the business cooperation structure between China and Latin America. During this summit, the "Guayaquil Initiative on China-Latin America and the Caribbean Business Cooperation" was presented, which established five strategic priorities to strengthen collaboration. These points include: (1) deepening regional interconnectivity, (2) fostering cooperation in innovation, (3) promoting green transition, (4) accelerated development of

the digital economy, and (5) fulfilling corporate social responsibility (Xinhua News en Español, 2022).

The Guayaquil Initiative not only reflects the need for sustainable development and digitalization in Latin America but also responds to China's interest in strengthening a "Green Belt and Road" and a "Digital Belt and Road," key areas in China's vision of global cooperation.

Consolidating a Comprehensive Cooperation Platform: Fourth Phase (2023-present)

In its most recent edition, held in Beijing in 2023, the China-LAC Business Summit reaffirmed its focus on economic integration, with a structure of specialized sub-forums addressing topics such as the digital economy, culture, tourism, and sustainable development. The summit was held in parallel with the Sixth China International Import Expo (CIIE), marking the first time Latin American exhibitors participated significantly in this trade fair, promoting their products directly to the Chinese market. This synchronization of events reflects a strategic effort by China to deepen cooperation at bilateral and multilateral levels, aligning the Business Summit with other trade initiatives (Xinhua News en Español, 2023).

A. State of the China-LAC Business Summit

The China-LAC Business Summit, since its first edition in 2007, has evolved to adapt to the commercial and diplomatic dynamics between China and Latin America, consolidating itself as a strategic cooperation platform. The following are the main current features of this summit:

A.1. Dependence on Chinese Institutionalization: Both the summit and the China-CELAC Forum, of which it has been a part since 2015, rely heavily on the Chinese counterpart for their sustainability and continued development. Alden and Alves (2016) highlight that this feature is common in China-driven regional diplomacy platforms, in which institutionalization is supported by the resources and organizational structure of the Chinese government.

A.2. Trade Promotion Agencies as Main Actors: The main actors of the summit are trade promotion agencies, such as the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). However, the scope of the summit extends beyond trade, incorporating additional actors such as the Economic Commission for

Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), which contribute to the organization and coordination of the summit.

A.3. Role of Chinese Provinces in Local Editions: In the editions held in China, the driving force of the summit is predominantly at the provincial level. Chinese provincial authorities not only organize the logistics of the event but also finance and support the infrastructure necessary for the participation of Latin American companies, reflecting a regionalized interest within China to attract investment and trade from Latin America.

A.4. *China-LAC Business Matchmaking* as the Central Event: The "China-LAC Business Matchmaking" is the central event of the summit, and is the main attraction for participants. Under this mediation format, semi-formal networking meetings are organized where potential business partners from both regions can establish contact. The meetings are pre-selected according to the interests declared at the time of registration and usually include, for example, Chinese companies seeking importers in Central America or Chilean companies seeking to expand their market in specialized supermarket chains in specific provinces of China, such as Zhejiang.

Challenges and Opportunities for the Future of the Summit

Despite its achievements, the China-LAC Business Summit faces several challenges that must be overcome to consolidate its impact in both regions:

MSME participation: Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) represent a large part of the economy in Latin America, but their participation in the summit remains limited. The summit could benefit from the creation of specific training programs and financial support for these companies, allowing them to access the benefits of trade and investment with China. The IDB has been an important ally in this regard, but a more inclusive approach is needed to facilitate the participation of smaller-scale entrepreneurs.

Follow-up of the Agreements: One of the main challenges is the follow-up and implementation of the agreements signed at each summit. Although contracts and memorandums of understanding are signed, they often fail to materialize due to the lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The summit could implement a reporting system that would allow governments and entrepreneurs to evaluate the progress of the agreed projects.

Inequality in the Distribution of Benefits: The summit has been criticized for concentrating economic benefits in the host country, especially in editions organized in Latin America. This aspect limits the perception of the summit as a regional forum. To strengthen its regional identity, it would be useful for the summit to establish mechanisms to ensure that benefits are extended to other countries in the region, not just the host.

Impact of the Belt and Road Initiative: Latin America's participation in the Belt and Road Initiative has added a new dimension to the summit, particularly in infrastructure development and the expansion of digital trade. However, this new framework presents the challenge of balancing each country's national interests with China's strategic objectives. It is crucial that the summit facilitates transparent and sustainable cooperation, allowing Latin American countries to benefit from infrastructure and investment without losing autonomy in their development policies.

Conclusions

The China-LAC Business Summit represents a fundamental point of convergence in the relationship between China and Latin America. Since its inception in 2007, the summit has served as a space for dialogue, exchange and economic cooperation that has evolved to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of an interdependent world. Through a chronological approach, this article highlights the key phases and events that have driven its development, each reflecting a greater level of sophistication and scope. However, the summit faces significant challenges that it must focus on to consolidate its effectiveness and broaden its benefits.

Consolidation as a Regional Integration Platform: The summit has facilitated numerous meetings and trade agreements that have benefited key sectors in Latin America and China. However, further institutionalization is needed to ensure its continuity and effectiveness in the long term. Becoming more formally integrated into the framework of the China-CELAC Forum is an opportunity for the summit, as it will allow it to establish clear objectives and align itself with regional development strategies. This is especially relevant as the summit faces growing expectations about its ability to make an impact. By working in a more coordinated manner with the China-CELAC Forum, the summit can strengthen its role in trans-Pacific cooperation and promote a more comprehensive approach that embraces the interests and particularities of each Latin American country.

Balance in the Distribution of Regional Benefits: A recurring challenge has been the concentration of benefits in the host countries, especially in editions held in Latin America. Although it is natural for the host country to obtain greater economic benefits, it is essential that the summit maintains its regional character and avoids generating a perception of exclusivity or bias. To this end, it would be beneficial to consider regional cooperation strategies, such as the implementation of programs that include all participating countries in the sharing of investment and development opportunities. This would help the summit to function as an engine of economic integration, promoting alliances that benefit the entire Latin American region in a more equitable manner.

Promoting the Participation of MSMEs and the Diversified Private Sector: One of the main challenges of the summit is to ensure greater participation of Latin America's micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), which make up 99% of the business sector in many countries in the region. Although the summit has seen significant growth in the participation of large corporations, MSMEs are still constrained by a lack of resources, experience in the Chinese market, and government support. Facilitating access to training, financing and advice for these companies would help diversify Latin American products and services in the Chinese market, in turn boosting local economic development and mitigating dependence on raw material exports. In addition, this could help balance the trade balance of many countries that currently face a deficit vis-à-vis China.

Innovation and Sustainability as Pillars of Cooperation: The inclusion of topics such as digital innovation and sustainability in recent editions of the summit, especially through the Guayaquil Initiative, reflects an evolution in the interests of both sides. China has demonstrated its interest in promoting a "Green Belt and Road" and "Digital Belt and Road," which aligns with Latin America's urgent need to move towards a more sustainable and less resource-dependent economy. The summit can become a key platform to promote these changes, providing a space in which to generate investment projects that drive the energy transition and the adoption of clean technologies in Latin America. The digital economy also presents itself as an area of collaboration where China can share its experience in digital infrastructure, e-commerce and capacity building, helping the region to bridge the technology gap and improve its global competitiveness.

Follow-up and transparency in the Agreements: One of the weak points of the summit is the lack of follow-up on the agreements signed. Although the contracts and memorandums of understanding reached in each edition are highlighted, there is a lack of monitoring mechanisms to evaluate their implementation and success. This not only limits the summit's ability to measure its real impact but also affects the confidence of the actors involved and reduces the potential for generating long-term projects. To solve this problem, it would be necessary to establish a system for monitoring the agreements signed under the supervision of a joint committee of representatives of the participating countries, thus ensuring transparency and accountability in the execution of the projects.

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THE PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE SINO-CELAC RELATIONSHIP

This report is based on the paper: "The Promotion Sustainable Development and Environmental Protection in the China-CELAC Relationship" presented on August 23, 2024, during the IV Lecture Series developed within the framework of the Chair in Contemporary China.



THE PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE SINO- CELAC RELATIONSHIP: A HUMANISTIC PERSPECTIVE I ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN CHINA AND THE LATIN AMERICA: A GENERAL LOOK

*MIN Zhou*³

Environmental Protection in China and the Latin America: A General Look

The theme of this year's forum is environment protection. China has long been one of the leading powers in environment protection. In 2018, the Constitution of the People's Republic of China was amended to include the concept of ecological civilization building, as part of amendments that emphasized environmental conservation and the scientific outlook on development. In 2020, President Xi Jinping announced that China aims to peak emissions before 2030 and go carbon-neutral by 2060 in accordance with the Paris climate accord.

In recent years, Latin American countries have implemented a number of strong environmental laws and policies. About half of the countries in the region have created specialized environmental units to improve enforcement in the sector. Countries like Venezuela and Brazil have established a range of targeted regulations in the past two decades. Bolivia granted legal rights to nature in 2010, following the pioneering example of Ecuador in recognizing constitutional environmental rights in 2008. Ecuador has also added specific environmental crimes to its penal code in 2020.

3 Distinguished Professor and Director of the International School of Studies at Hangzhou Normal University. Her research areas span British and American literature, Caribbean studies, and cultural theory, cementing her reputation as an interdisciplinary scholar. Founder, in 2021, of the Center for Caribbean Studies at Hangzhou Normal University.

Environmental protection cooperation between Latin America and China has gained significant momentum in recent years, driven by mutual interests in sustainable development, climate change mitigation, and biodiversity conservation. Several Latin American countries, such as Brazil, Chile, and Argentina, have established bilateral agreements with China to promote environmental protection. These agreements often focus on areas like renewable energy, reforestation, and pollution control. The China-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Cooperation Plan (2015-2019) emphasized sustainable development, including initiatives related to climate change, environmental protection, and renewable energy.

As a professor of literature, I am especially appreciative of this platform to share my reflections on promotion of sustainable development and environmental protection. Typically, discussions on sustainable development and environmental protection are framed within the domains of economics or science. However, the promotion of these crucial issues can take on a distinctly different dimension. It is my contention that a humanistic perspective is indispensable in the promotion of sustainable development and environmental protection. While economists, scientists, and technologists may provide the public with the methods and tools for achieving these goals, it is through a humanistic lens that we explore the deeper questions of why we should undertake such efforts and to what ends they are directed.

Environmental Protection: Perspectives from the Anthropocene

Before moving on, let's consider the following quotes:

“Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us. Each victory, it is true, in the first place brings about the results we expected, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel the first. [...] Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature – but that we, with flesh, blood, and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other creatures of being able to learn its laws and apply them correctly.”

— Friedrich Engels, “Dialectics of Nature”

“Since mankind entered the era of industrial civilization, while creating enormous material wealth, it has also accelerated the seizure of natural resources, breaking the balance of the Earth's ecosystem, and deep-rooted contradictions between mankind and nature have become increasingly apparent. In recent years, climate change, loss of biodiversity, intensified desertification, and the frequent occurrence of extreme weather events have posed serious challenges to human survival and development.”

— Xi Jinping, Leaders' Climate Summit, 22 April 2021

These quotes highlight the persistent and escalating tension between humanity and nature. Despite being separated by over a century, Engels and Xi Jinping offer remarkably similar warnings about the human impact on the environment. The Earth today faces more severe challenges than it did in Engels' time, and much of this is due, as President Xi noted, to human activities. The influence of humanity on the planet has become so profound that the term “Anthropocene” is used to describe our current geological epoch.

At the heart of the Anthropocene concept lies the profound impact of human activity on the planet, which, we must acknowledge, has been largely detrimental resulting in the loss of biodiversity, climate change, ocean acidification, environmental pollution, and more. It is human activity that is propelling the domino effect of extinction: fossil fuel emissions and deforestation are driving up atmospheric carbon dioxide levels, leading to global warming; the absorption of carbon dioxide by the oceans is causing seawater acidification, which in turn affects a wide range of marine organisms.

On the evening of July 21, 2022, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) updated its Red List of Globally Threatened Species, declaring the white sturgeon extinct and the Yangtze sturgeon extinct in the wild. These extinctions are stark reminders of the accelerating decline of biodiversity on Earth, which some researchers believe signals the onset of a sixth mass extinction. This extinction, unlike those caused by natural disasters in Earth's history, is largely driven by human activities. As one of the renowned scholars in the study of Anthropocene, Tom Cohen offers a particularly pessimistic view, suggesting that the Anthropocene represents the inscription of humanity's end—a self-authored epitaph, experienced by humanity itself, yet ultimately destined to remain unread.

Are we in the midst of another biological extinction event? To many researchers, this is a reality beyond dispute. Current trends suggest that humanity is entering a mass extinction event that poses a grave threat to life on Earth, with human activity being the primary catalyst for this impending catastrophe. The extinctions in the wild that have already been announced represent only a fraction of the ongoing "sixth extinction," which is rapidly spreading across the globe.

In the 1990s, renowned Kenyan paleontologist Richard Leakey introduced the concept of the sixth mass extinction, a topic that has since garnered significant attention from both the scientific and international communities. The 2020 United Nations Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 report highlighted that humanity has only a few years to avert this sixth mass extinction.

Professor Robert Cowie, of the Pacific Biosciences Research Center at the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, underscores that while the dramatic increase in species extinction rates and the decline in populations of numerous plants and animals is well-documented, there remains a denial that these phenomena constitute a mass extinction. This denial, according to Cowie, stems from a biased perspective that focuses predominantly on mammals and birds, neglecting the vast majority of invertebrates that form the foundation of global biodiversity. Cowie asserts, "Including invertebrates is essential to confirming that we are witnessing the onset of the sixth mass extinction in Earth's history." He emphasizes, "Humans are the only species capable of manipulating the biosphere on a large scale. We are not merely another species evolving in response to external influences. Rather, we are the only species that has the ability to make conscious decisions about our future and the planet's biodiversity."

However, Andreas Malm argues that the true culprits of climate change are not the billions of individuals inhabiting the planet, but rather the few who control the means of production and dictate the energy landscape. As the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk quipped during a public debate with Bernard Stiegler in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, sending an email to "humanity@planet.earth" would inevitably result in a delivery failure message. After all, an undifferentiated "humanity" does not exist. In reality, internal differences among humans have been encoded and symbolized in hierarchical forms for thousands of years.

According to the Marxist perspective, one of the primary causes of these differences among human “categories” is capital, or more precisely, the concentration of capital. According to a paper published in Los Angeles Times in 2013, wealth inequality is only getting worse today. The richest 1% own nearly half of all global wealth. Only a tiny fraction of the roughly 7 billion people in the world accounts for 46% of the estimated \$241 trillion in money, property and other material resources available. The richest 10%, meanwhile, can claim 86% of global wealth, leaving 90% of the world’s population to divvy up whatever’s left.

It is evident that certain segments of humanity, particularly those in affluent Western societies, bear a greater responsibility for the environmental catastrophes currently confronting our planet than those in the developing countries like China and countries in Latin America. However, it is tragically ironic that the latter are often more vulnerable to the devastating consequences of climate change than the former. When we think of the history of the Caribbean, it is also associated with two traumas, the virtual total and rapid removal of a large aboriginal population following the initial European contact and the forced transference of many thousands of Africans from their homelands under conditions of slavery to support a system of plantation agriculture, the third one, according to David Watts, in his study of environmental change in the Caribbean since 1492, is the third trauma of environmental degeneration which is now of equal and growing importance to the inhabitants of the Caribbean .

In the discourse about climate change, as it has developed in Western academia, media and policy-making circles over the past decade or so, another storyline has taken hold. It says that the problem has been created by all of us. Global warming is the fault of the human species as a whole. We live in the Anthropocene, the epoch when our particular species has overtaken the natural forces in determining the trajectory of this planet, most obviously in the realm of climate – and so humans in general are responsible for the ensuing catastrophes.

An explicit statement of this logic can be found in one of the most celebrated books on the topic in recent years – Indian author Amitav Ghosh’s *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (2017), where we learn that global warming “is the unintended consequence of the very existence of human beings as a species.” More than that, it is “the product of the totality of human actions over time. Every human being who has ever lived has played

a part in making us the dominant species on this planet, and in this sense every human being, past and present, has contributed to the present cycle of climate change.” On this view, the average coffee-grower in Dominica contributed to Maria merely by dint of belonging to the *Homo sapiens* species. So did her ancestor slaves who were brought to the island. So did the Kalinago people, living there in peace before Europeans made landfall on the island in 1492.

That said, our destruction of the planet, our exploitation of other species, and our contribution to climate change are not without distinction. In an Anthropocene that ostensibly equalizes responsibility for the environment, efforts to prevent extreme weather events like the hurricane that devastated Dominica inevitably bring us into direct conflict with fossil capital. This is why some scholars have proposed that the term “Capitalocene” be used instead of “Anthropocene”. Jason Moore has argued that the series of major changes in the Earth’s biosphere over recent centuries are rooted not in humanity per se, but in the operations of capital. He suggests that capital is not an external force acting upon ecosystems, but rather a “way of organizing nature.” This method of organizing nature creates an “ecological system” or “world ecology.” Moore contends that all natural environments and ecosystems are internal to capitalism, controlled by capital, and that nature and capital are interdependent—this is the essence of the “capitalist world.”

Climate change is not the creation of the mere existence of billions of humans who inhabit the planet but is wrought by the few who control the means of production and make the central decisions about energy use, argues Andreas Malm. In what is more Capitalocene than Anthropocene, a head-on confrontation with fossil capital is imperative if we are to prevent extreme climate events like the hurricanes that have devastated Dominica. On 18 September 2017, Hurricane Maria suddenly accelerated to a Category 5 system – one of the most explosive intensifications of a hurricane on record – and slammed straight into Dominica. Over one night, the green island turned brown. The extraordinarily ferocious winds simply blew away the forest cover. Five days after the hurricane, Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit, himself then homeless, addressed the United Nations General Assembly: “I come to you straight from the frontline of the war (...). As Dominicans bear the brunt of climate change, we are shouldering the consequences of the actions of others, actions that endanger our very existence, and all for the enrichment of a few elsewhere.”

The descendants of the slaves that inhabit Dominica had done nothing to heat up this planet, and neither had the tiny surviving indigenous population. Subsistence farmers who resorted to taxi-driving or street-vending to supplement their incomes, they had negligible carbon footprints and zero power over global energy supplies. Yet, in the assault from the hyper-hurricane, the main victims were precisely these farmers: they were killed, their lives laid to waste, the very land they stood on destroyed. Many scholars have expressed concerns about the universalism that the concept of the Anthropocene might engender. While the Anthropocene concept underscores the significance of human behavior in altering the global ecological status quo, it simultaneously emphasizes the distinction between humans and nature while suppressing other, potentially equally important, distinctions. The concept of the Anthropocene overlooks the violent interventions and impacts of colonialism on local natural environments and fails to confront the history of injustices wrought by colonialism. Even today, many of the colonized remain unaware of the ecological devastation caused by colonial exploitation. Kayla Anderson has proposed the term “Colonialocene” instead of “Anthropocene” to emphasize the impact of colonial plunder on the planet’s ecosystems. However, the existence of these concepts—whether “Anthropocene” or “Capitalocene”—is of little significance if they do not make us aware that humanity is on the brink of a sixth extinction unless we change our current mode of existence. As Marx succinctly put it in his “Theses on Feuerbach”: “Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point, however, is to change it.”

Peter Sutoris discusses the daunting ecological and environmental challenges of the Anthropocene, which profoundly impact how people perceive the world. Scientific studies, such as the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), indicate that it is the future of humanity, not the planet itself, that is at stake. The Earth has survived countless catastrophes throughout its history and will continue to function even if the environment becomes inhospitable for human survival. Responding to the environmental crisis is not just about saving nature but also about saving humanity itself. If humanity ceases to exist, all human civilizations—including culture, art, science, and technology—will perish with it. Today’s human society is built upon the labor and wisdom of countless predecessors, and it is our responsibility to protect these achievements, not to allow them to fade away. The humanities and social

sciences can help us grasp the stakes for human survival and the scale of potential losses.

Can human communities acknowledge their own status as agents of ecological destruction while also remembering the more vulnerable groups who bear the brunt of this violence? Conversely, can members of human communities connect their actions as environmental destroyers with the awareness that they, too, may become victims of environmental catastrophe? Obviously, the present moment of crisis demands a rethinking of the relationship between nature and humankind, and the development of a new bioethics, rather than prolonged debates over whether this era should be termed the Anthropocene, the Capitalocene, the Colonialocene, the Masculineocene, the Heterosexualocene, and so on. This is not to dismiss the real trauma experienced by the underprivileged; rather, in the face of the potential demise of the human race, we should momentarily set aside our internal contradictions and return to holistic thinking—unless, of course, humanity actually becomes the multi-planetary species that Elon Musk envisions. As we know, the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) was held in Glasgow, Scotland, from 30 October to 12 November 2021. On 29 November, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the global campaign “Don’t Choose Extinction” to highlight the impact of fossil fuels, such as oil and coal, on people and the environment. In a specially produced promotional video, a dinosaur enters the UN General Assembly session at UN Headquarters in New York. Amidst a chorus of gasps, it calmly ascends the podium and asks the audience, “You can blame an asteroid for the extinction of the dinosaurs, but what’s the excuse for mankind’s self-destruction?” This was the first short film ever produced in the General Assembly Hall using animated compositing techniques. The dinosaur in the film urged leaders to seize the last opportunity to make immediate and substantive changes to address the climate crisis and its impacts.

Environmental Protection: Toward a Community of Species

Today, many people look to scientific and technological innovation to solve the environmental crisis, with renewable energy generation, energy-efficient buildings, electric and hybrid vehicles, and carbon capture and storage identified as key areas for a green and low-carbon transition in economic and social development. Although geoengineering is a new and controversial field, it has been presented by some as an alternative—or even a “lifesaver”—

for addressing the climate challenge. However, technological solutions may “treat the symptoms but not the cause.” In Peter Sutoris’s view, throughout history, human societies have relied on technological progress to solve their challenges. In technology’s early days, this worked well. It is hard to dispute, for example, the invention of the wheel helping to alleviate hunger through more efficient agriculture. But as both societal challenges and technology became more complex, the line between “problem” and “solution” has blurred.

The Cold War is perhaps the most salient contemporary example. Leaders on both sides of the Iron Curtain came to view nuclear weapons as a way to achieve peaceful coexistence in a world of incompatible ideologies. The doctrine of mutual assured destruction, made possible by the most powerful weapons ever made, was to guarantee peace. And while proponents would argue that it worked — the Cold War never erupted into World War III — nuclear weapons did not make nationalist sentiments, historical grievances, or expansionist tendencies go away, of which the war in Ukraine is a painful reminder. Technology can, at best, kick conflicts down the road. Peace cannot be engineered. Environmental sustainability cannot be engineered, either. Like peace, it is a social and political challenge. Key tenets of Western civilization’s economic and political systems rest on the commodification of nature. A dead tree has economic value; a living tree typically doesn’t. Nature conservation is only considered a good idea insofar as it benefits economic growth. The notion of nature having an intrinsic value might exist in philosophy classrooms but not in mainstream legal, political, and economic systems. Achieving sustainability requires confronting these uncomfortable truths about Western civilization.

How should we, in the Anthropocene, reflect on our “crimes” against the Earth? How do we narrate the story of our relationship with the Anthropocene, our relationship with the Earth? The Earth itself does not care how we tell the story of the Anthropocene or how we think about it; it responds only to human behavior. Thus, what is most critical is our actions. If we fail to act, we align ourselves with the forces we remain oblivious to.

In response to today’s crisis, what is needed is not just incremental change, but a radical revolution—a transformation in the way we live, produce, and survive. This revolution also requires a form of salvation. Yet, this Messiah who bears the burden of salvation is not the angel of Talmudic legend, the one who rescues humanity from the quagmires of progressivism and fascism,

as Walter Benjamin suggested. Rather, this Messiah is each and every one of us. We are our own Messiahs; we are our own angels. How do we become the Messiahs or angels of salvation? Perhaps the actions of eco-sexual artists can offer us some insight. In 2008, Annie Sprinkle and Beth Stephens held a “Green Wedding” to marry the Earth. This event took place in Santa Cruz, California, with more than 300 joyful guests dressed in green attire for this unique wedding to the planet. For them, the Earth is not merely a resource but a source of life and health, intrinsically linked to pleasure and well-being. Notably, they do not see the Earth as a mother, but as a lover, and their weddings symbolize a deep, passionate love for our planet—not only for the Earth itself but also for lakes, trees, land, and other natural elements. “We embraced the trees unashamedly, massaged the earth with our feet, and spoke to the plants with seductive words.” This mode of relating to the Earth and nature, through the metaphor of marriage, offers profound inspiration for reconsidering our relationship with the planet.

We all understand that marriage is not solely about love; it also involves responsibility, compromise, negotiation, and mutual respect. Similarly, we have a responsibility to the Earth and to other life forms, requiring us to make concessions and engage in negotiation with them. The crisis of the Anthropocene, after all, is not merely a geological or economic problem; it is a profound ethical and existential challenge. We must, in a sense, “marry” the Earth, building a global system of co-immunity, where we practice what Sloterdijk calls the “spirit of co-immunism.” In this sense, the Anthropocene calls for a new model of “big politics”—one that has yet to be invented. It is also in this context that the current anti-globalization narratives and separatist discourses are destined to exacerbate the crisis of the Anthropocene.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic is a stark reminder of the broader global challenges and disasters that have confronted humanity in recent years. As ecological degradation intensifies, climate change accelerates, and geopolitical conflicts escalate, more natural and man-made crises are likely to unfold. This moment of crisis offers an opportunity to deeply reflect on the system of values and beliefs that have guided our actions. Should we not return to the origins of philosophical inquiry to rethink a series of fundamental questions about our place in the world?

German philosopher Markus Gabriel has argued that “the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed a systemic weakness in the dominant ideology of the

21st century—namely, our persistent belief in human and moral progress based solely on scientific and technological advancement.” Every human being must receive ethical training to be able to fully apprehend the enormous danger that lies in blindly following science and technology. After the virus pandemic, we will need a metaphysical pandemic, a unification of all people under the all-embracing sky of which we will never be able to escape. We are, and will continue to be, part of this Earth. We are, and will continue to be, mortal and fragile. So let us become citizens of this Earth, cosmopolitans in a metaphysical pandemic. Everything else will be the end of us, and no virologist will be able to save us.

The COVID-19 pandemic may well have been the final blow to anthropocentrism, one of the conceptual cornerstones of modern society. In the modern era, humanity has believed that it has transcended its “inferior” animal origins, gaining control over nature and achieving dominion over other species. This view holds that nature’s value lies primarily in its capacity to be used and exploited by humans. As the most ‘honorable’ form of existence, it has been deemed natural for human beings to use, develop, and transform all aspects of nature to serve their own interests. In modern society, human subjectivity has reached its zenith, placing humanity on a god-like pedestal. This god-like subjectivity, combined with the logic of capital, the drive to maximize profit and wealth, and the power of technology, has led to the current situation in which humans act with unrestrained dominion over the natural world.

The environmental crisis we now face, including the sixth mass extinction that has already begun, entails a new way of thinking. On 22 April 2021, at the invitation of U.S. President Joe Biden, President Xi Jinping attended the Leaders’ Climate Summit via video from Beijing. During his address, President Xi emphasized that “all things thrive in harmony and are nourished by nature.” He underscored that nature is the cradle of all living beings, including humans, and is the fundamental condition for human survival and development. Nature nurtures and sustains humanity, and thus, humans must regard nature as their foundation, respecting, adapting to, and protecting it. Ignoring or violating the laws of nature will inevitably lead to natural retribution. When nature is systematically destroyed, the survival and development of humanity becomes like water without a source or wood without roots. We must protect nature and the ecological environment with the same care as we protect our eyes, fostering a new pattern of harmonious coexistence between humanity and nature. The international community,

with unprecedented ambition and action, should assume its responsibility and work together to build a community of species between humans and nature.

To understand such a community of species, we must first understand Speciesism. “Speciesism” is a term coined by Oxford professor Richard Ryder in 1970. It refers to the widely held belief that humans are inherently superior to other species and therefore possess rights or privileges that other sentient animals do not. Ryder argues that speciesism is as illogical as racism. Peter Singer’s “Animal Liberation”, published in 1975, further popularized the concept. Singer defines speciesism as “a prejudiced or biased attitude that favors the interests of members of one’s own species over the interests of members of other species,” arguing that it is a form of prejudice akin to racism and sexism. Just as racists violate the principle of equality by prioritizing the interests of their own race over those of another, and sexists by favoring their own gender, speciesists prioritize the interests of their own species over the greater interests of other species. The pattern is consistent across all these forms of prejudice.

This community of species should be free of speciesism although it is guided by human beings. In constructing this community of species, scholars in the humanities have a critical and indispensable role to play because it compels us to rethink the system of thought that governs our understanding of human beings and other forms of existence. It necessitates placing humanity in its proper context and even transforming our perception of what it means to be human.

Toward a New Narrative of Sustainability

In 2022 I published a paper entitled “Toward a Community of Shared Future for Mankind”, in which I wrote about how the age of Anthropocene entails a new narrative because we are of a shard community in the sense of the common danger we face a species-beings. We must view our world holistically, recognizing that we now share a common fate: the potential for extinction driven by climate change. The age of the Anthropocene and the crisis of climate change demand a new discourse on sustainability. We must realize that sustainability is more important than speed. Net-Zero world won’t lead to true sustainability. We should set aside what divides us and unite as one global community, for if we fail to do so, we may face extinction as a species. Climate change is our collective fate, but through communal

effort, we have the potential to alter that fate and build a community with a shared future for ourselves, for our children, and for all of humanity.

Against the background of global climate change, resource depletion and ecological crisis, cooperation between China and Latin American countries in the fields of environmental protection and sustainable development has attracted increasing attention. As important forces in the global South, China and Latin American countries not only face similar environmental governance challenges, but also show great potential for cooperation in the field of sustainable development. The two seek a balance between economic growth, social equity and environmental protection in their cooperation, and jointly contribute to the realization of global sustainable development goals. The theory of sustainable development emphasizes the need to achieve a balance between economy, society and environment. For China and Latin American countries, this theory provides a basis for cooperation. China has made significant economic achievements in its industrialization process over the past few decades, but it has also paid an environmental price; while Latin American countries, especially Brazil, Chile and Peru, as important biodiversity hotspots in the world, they also face enormous between resource development and ecological protection.

Therefore, both parties have a common pursuit of achieving a win-win situation between economic development and ecological protection. Although China and Latin American countries face different challenges, both sides have their own strengths: China has rich experience and strong manufacturing capabilities in the field of green technology, while Latin American countries have unique experience and resources in ecological protection and biodiversity. Through cooperation, both parties can complement each other's strengths and jointly promote sustainable development. The cooperation between China and Brazil in the field of green energy is a model for China-Latin America cooperation. Chinese companies have invested heavily in wind and solar energy projects in Brazil, which has not only helped Brazil increase the proportion of clean energy, but also created local employment opportunities. This cooperation model effectively promotes the green transformation of Brazil's energy structure while strengthening China's influence in the global green technology market.

There is huge potential for cooperation between China and Latin American countries in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development. In the future, both parties should deepen cooperation in the

following aspects: First, strengthen policy coordination and promote the docking of China's "Belt and Road" initiative with Latin America's regional development plans, so as to Achieve strategic integration of green development; Secondly, deepen technological exchanges and innovation, especially cooperation in new energy, green agriculture and ecological restoration technologies, to jointly address environmental challenges; finally, enhance the public's understanding of sustainable development through transnational education projects and cultural exchanges, and provide Cooperation lays a more solid social foundation.

In general, cooperation between China and Latin American countries in the fields of environmental protection and sustainable development is an urgent need to respond to global challenges and an important practice in building a community with a shared future for mankind. This kind of cooperation not only helps improve the ecological environment and economic development of both parties, but also provides other developing countries with governance experience and development paths that can be used for reference, which is of great global significance.

STUDIES ON SINO-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS: CHALLENGES FOR NEW GENERATIONS

This report is based on the paper: “Studies on Sino-Latin American Relations: Challenges for the New Generations”, presented on August 26, 2024 at the IV Lecture Series developed within the framework of the Chair in Contemporary China.



STUDIES ON SINO-LATIN AMERICAN RELATIONS: CHALLENGES FOR NEW GENERATIONS

BORQUÉZ Andrés⁴

Relations between China and Latin America have acquired strategic relevance in recent decades, marked by growing dynamism in the economic, political, and cultural spheres. This link, which has evolved from initial cultural contact to become a multidimensional interaction, represents one of the most outstanding phenomena in contemporary international relations. In this context, an in-depth and academic analysis of these relations is an essential task in order to understand not only their current implications, but also the opportunities and challenges they offer for the future.

This lecture addresses this topic with academic rigor, combining the experience of having studied in China with an analytical approach based on comparative research between Latin America and China, as well as specific studies on bilateral relations between Chile and the Asian giant. It raises the importance of developing a theoretical and methodological framework to strengthen academic studies on these relations, in order to provide a more structured and relevant understanding from a global perspective. It also highlights the need to address challenges such as digitalization, cultural and linguistic barriers, and the development of skills for new generations, key aspects for the study and interaction between the two regions.

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Early cultural encounters and the geopolitical context of the 1950s and 1960s

During the 1950s and 1960s, the People's Republic of China sought to position itself on the international stage." In this period, the world was marked by intense ideological polarization due to the Cold War, which conditioned relations between China and Latin America. Latin America, influenced by the United States, mostly maintained diplomatic ties with Taiwan. This situation limited any kind of official interaction with Beijing, although it did not prevent the development of connections through cultural and intellectual exchanges.

At this stage, Latin American writers and activists traveled to China. These unofficial exchanges introduced narratives about Maoism and the Chinese revolutionary process in Latin America, which helped build a cultural bridge between the two regions. For its part, China saw in these contacts an opportunity to generate ideological affinities and strengthen its global influence, resorting to the use of culture as a strategic tool.

However, U.S. hegemony in Latin America remained a significant barrier to any deeper interaction between these regions. Despite these constraints, these initial encounters laid the groundwork for more structured relations in the future. This early phase allowed for a first rapprochement that, although limited, created a mutual interest that would be key to the development of a stronger relationship in later decades.

Diplomatic recognition and ideological affinity in the 1970's

The 1970s marked an important change in relations between China and Latin America. In this period, China, already consolidated as the People's Republic in the international system, began to develop an autonomous foreign policy based on its distancing from the Soviet bloc and the formulation of the "three worlds" theory. This strategy sought to unite developing countries in an effort to counteract the dominance of the superpowers.

Latin America began to respond to this call at a time when several countries were seeking to diversify their international alliances. Chile was the first South American country to establish formal diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1970. This act set a precedent in the region and encouraged other nations to follow suit. This diplomatic recognition represented a fundamental step in consolidating China's presence in the region and allowing for closer cooperation in economic and political areas.

The "three worlds" theory played an important role in the ideological affinity between China and certain Latin American countries, especially those with anti-colonialist principles and a strong interest in reducing their dependence on the superpowers. Although economic relations were still limited, formal recognition allowed interactions to expand to other fields. This period not only strengthened diplomatic ties, but also set the stage for both regions to begin collaborating on issues of mutual interest, laying the groundwork for a strategic relationship that would evolve in the years to come.

Consolidation of relations in the 1980s: Pragmatism and trade expansion

In the 1980s, relations between China and Latin America began to consolidate, marked by a pragmatic approach that reflected both changes in China's foreign policy and the economic and political needs of Latin American countries. At this time, China was seeking to position itself globally while dealing with a complex internal transition. Following its economic opening initiated in the late 1970s under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, the country implemented reforms that boosted its insertion into the global market. These reforms led to a growing interest in diversifying its economic partners, and Latin America emerged as a region with strategic potential.

Latin America was going through a period of economic and political tensions. In several countries, military regimes were still predominant, which conditioned foreign policies towards a more conservative approach. Despite this, economic needs led some Latin American governments to seek trade and investment opportunities outside the traditional blocs, which allowed China to begin to establish stronger ties with the region.

Pragmatism defined the interactions of this period. Although diplomatic relations remained limited, bilateral trade began to increase. This exchange was particularly significant in sectors such as agriculture and natural resources, areas in which Latin America could supply the needs of a modernizing China. Although this relationship was not yet fully institutionalized, trade exchanges and the initiation of economic cooperation projects marked the beginning of a more consistent stage in bilateral relations. This period laid the groundwork for the expansion of the economic relationship that would take place in the following decades.

The end of the Cold War and Globalization (1990-2000): Latin America moves closer to Asia

The end of the Cold War in the early 1990s significantly transformed the global landscape, influencing the dynamics between China and Latin America. With the fall of the Soviet Union, the world was no longer polarized into two large blocs, which opened up new possibilities for the diversification of alliances. In this context, China took the opportunity to strengthen its presence in Latin America, while Latin American countries, facing the challenges of globalization, began to look for alternatives to integrate into a new world order.

During this decade, Asia and the Pacific consolidated their position as regions of great economic dynamism. This growth attracted the attention of Latin America, which began a strategic approach to the Asian market, with China as one of its main focuses of interest. Global economic integration allowed trade relations between the two regions to expand, although they were still limited compared to Latin America's relations with its traditional partners in Europe and North America.

The development of multilateral forums, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in the 1990s, facilitated this rapprochement. China actively participated in these forums, seeking to position itself as a key player in the Asia-Pacific region and strengthening its ties with Latin America in the process. Although Chinese direct investments in Latin America were still incipient, bilateral trade increased significantly during this period, especially in sectors related to raw materials and agricultural products.

This period marked a change in relations between the two regions, as the end of the Cold War allowed Latin American countries to explore new alliances and strengthen their presence in the dynamic Asian market. For China, Latin America represented a strategic opportunity in its transition to a more open and global trade-oriented economic model. The 1990s, therefore, laid the groundwork for the more intense economic and political interaction that would take place in subsequent decades in an increasingly interdependent world.

Chinese Economic Expansion and the First Wave of Investment in Latin America (2000-2013)

During the first decades of the 21st century, China experienced unprecedented economic growth, which increased its demand for natural

resources and consolidated its influence as a global economic power. This context favored the intensification of its trade relations with Latin America, which became a strategic partner to supply its demand for raw materials such as minerals, energy and agricultural products. In this phase, China not only sought resources to sustain its growth, but also increased its investments in infrastructure throughout the region, from construction and energy projects to technology and communications. This growing economic presence led to the first wave of significant investment in Latin America, as regional economies began to integrate Chinese products and services into their domestic markets and projects.

The deepening of these relations led several countries, such as Chile, Peru, and Costa Rica, to sign free trade agreements with China, expanding their trade opportunities and promoting economic liberalization. These agreements not only facilitated the flow of goods and services, but also allowed preferential access to Latin American products in the vast Chinese market, creating favorable conditions for trade growth. This period was also marked by the role of Chinese development banks, which became important sources of financing for large infrastructure projects in Latin America. While this injection of capital was welcomed by many countries in the region, it also generated an economic dependence that has been the subject of debate among analysts and policymakers, who examine the long-term risks and benefits of this close economic relationship.

China's New Integral Role and the Silk Road: Relevance Today

Under Xi Jinping's leadership, China developed a more comprehensive strategy towards Latin America, marked by the Silk Road initiative and the intensification of its political and economic ties with the region:

- **The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI):** Launched in 2013, the BRI marked a turning point in China's foreign policy, focused on building a network of infrastructure and economic links spanning Asia, Europe, Africa, and Latin America. Latin America was included in this initiative, reflecting China's interest in deepening its presence in the region not only as a trading partner, but also as a key player in infrastructure development and global connectivity. This inclusion was seen as a paradigm shift, as the BRI went beyond bilateral treaties, implying a long-term commitment from China to Latin America.

- **China-CELAC Forum and multilateral diplomacy:** China sought to consolidate a broader relationship with Latin America through the establishment of the China-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Forum in 2015. This multilateral forum allowed Latin American countries to collectively negotiate and cooperate with China, discussing issues of common interest and articulating joint policies. This meant a diversification in the methods of cooperation, giving space to a multilateral diplomacy that sought to go beyond bilateral relations.
- **Strategic partnerships:** At this stage, China developed the concept of "integral strategic partner" with several Latin American countries, which elevated the relationship to a multidimensional level of cooperation. This comprehensive relationship not only encompassed economic and trade aspects, but also included cooperation in areas such as science, technology, education, and security. This was a reflection of China's strategy of building long-term alliances, beyond immediate commercial interests, seeking to influence the comprehensive development of its partners.
- **Financial presence and new development institutions:** Through institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and the BRICS New Development Bank, China increased its financial presence in Latin America. These institutions offered financing for infrastructure and development projects in the region, promoting an alternative to traditional sources of financing, such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank. This financing reinforced China's role as a key partner for Latin America in infrastructure development, although it also generated discussions about the long-term effects of this financial dependence.
- **China's tensions with Western powers:** In the current context of an increasingly globalized world, we observe growing complex interdependencies between various actors in different regions. These global dynamics are also accompanied by tensions, inherent to international relations, where certain strategic actors compete or are considered rivals, generating frictions that may exceed their direct interactions and extend to the extraterritorial level. For example, when two powers have common interests or systemic rivalries, a more complex and challenging international framework is established. In the

current scenario, tensions between China and the United States, or between China and the West in more general terms, also have repercussions in Latin America, generating the need for the region to observe and understand these dynamics. Latin America must, therefore, pay attention to this dynamic context and learn to navigate in a scenario of growing systemic pressures.

Academic Challenges for the Study of China-Latin America Relations

It highlights the key challenges facing academic studies of China-Latin America relations, which require innovative theoretical and methodological approaches to understand this complex relationship:

Integration of regional theoretical perspectives. There is a need to go beyond traditional theoretical approaches (such as realism and liberalism) and to include emerging theories from Asia, such as the relational theories proposed by Chinese scholars like Qin Yaqing, as well as the diplomatic and pacifist theories developed in Japan and India. The integration of these perspectives could enrich studies on international relations between China and Latin America, providing more adequate conceptual frameworks to capture the particularities of these interactions.

Differences between normative and formal theories. The distinction between normative theories, which advocate ethical principles and values, and formal theories, based on empirical hypotheses, presents a challenge for academic studies in this area. Theories that can be operationalized in quantitative and comparative research are essential for solid empirical studies. The lack of formal theories in the field of China-Latin America relations hinders the systematization and objective analysis of these links.

Development of Latin American literature. There is an opportunity for Latin American scholars to develop their own approaches and theories that respond to the particularities and needs of the region. This includes theories such as peripheral realism and open regionalism, which offer frameworks of analysis that could be applied to the relationship with China. The creation of its own theoretical literature would allow Latin America to consolidate its voice in the study of international relations.

Academic Cooperation, Language Barriers and the Role of Digitization

Academic cooperation between China and Latin America has gained prominence as part of a strategy to promote mutual understanding and

overcome cultural and language barriers that have historically limited interaction between the two regions. Through the expansion of Confucius Institutes in Latin America, Latin American students and scholars have had greater access to learning Mandarin and understanding Chinese culture. However, there is still a perceived need to create similar centers that promote the study of Spanish and Latin American culture in China, as this would allow Chinese students and scholars to better understand the region, thus fostering a more balanced dialogue and deeper cultural understanding.

Digitization has emerged as a powerful tool in the development of this cooperation, allowing researchers to access academic resources and databases essential for conducting empirical research. Digital technologies have facilitated data analysis and remote collaboration, which has been critical in a context where language and geographic barriers still pose significant challenges. As artificial intelligence and machine translation tools become more sophisticated, access to knowledge and the ability to conduct comparative research in both regions expands, providing a bridge to overcome language barriers. This digitization allows scientific collaboration and academic exchange between China and Latin America to be strengthened, promoting the creation of a robust and inclusive academic network.

To meet the challenges in the study of relations between these regions, combined efforts in academic cooperation, overcoming language barriers and harnessing digitalization are essential elements. Through this synergy, both China and Latin America can advance their mutual understanding, while researchers and scholars in both regions gain the necessary tools to effectively study and analyze the complexities of this bilateral relationship.

Skills for New Generations

Several skills needed to strengthen academic and scientific relations between Latin America and China are highlighted, focusing on the development of competencies for the new generations in the field of China studies. They are noted below:

A. Importance of continuous learning: Constant updating in bilateral relations studies is essential. Learning should not be limited to formal programs such as a PhD, but should continue throughout one's academic career, involving reading new publications and incorporating current theories and approaches.

B. Language and intercultural skills: Overcoming language barriers and fostering greater cross-cultural understanding are key to strengthening ties with China. Knowledge of language and culture, not only Chinese but also Asian in general, is vital. Institutes such as the Confucius Institutes in Latin America are key points for this learning.

C. Competence in digital tools and data analysis: Digital literacy is crucial for researchers and practitioners to access relevant information, interact globally, and engage in interdisciplinary research. The ability to analyze data with digital tools also enables more effective collaboration on international projects.

D. International and interdisciplinary collaboration: Promoting academic cooperation between universities in Latin America and China enables the generation of joint research that addresses common challenges, such as climate change or food security. These exchanges strengthen the capacity to solve global problems by integrating diverse perspectives.

E. Specialized programs and courses: Master's programs, diploma programs, and other specialized courses in Asian studies are essential to form a critical mass of professionals and academics with the necessary tools to negotiate, interact, and develop trade, economic, and cultural relations with China.

F. Scholarships organized by Latin America: It is crucial that Latin American governments promote scholarships and funding programs for students and future leaders to train in China. Such initiatives should also strengthen cooperation among Latin American countries, promoting stronger regional integration in Asian studies.

The relationship between China and Latin America has evolved from its first cultural contacts in the 1950s to a complex network of economic, political, and cultural cooperation today. In each of its stages, this relationship has been marked by the global context and by the internal transformations of both actors, adapting to changes in the international order and exploring new forms of interaction.

The academic challenges facing the study of this relationship are equally complex. The need for adequate theories, the development of interdisciplinary approaches, overcoming language and cultural barriers, and access to digital resources are areas that must be addressed by researchers. Through greater academic cooperation, the development of its own

theoretical literature, and the strengthening of empirical studies, Latin America can consolidate its position in the study of relations with China, contributing to the advancement of scientific knowledge in this area.

The position of the academic community to continue advancing in this line of research, promoting constant dialogue and enriching collaboration with China is highlighted. The evolution of the relationship between these regions shows that, although the challenges are considerable, so are the opportunities for learning, growth, and development.

Recommendations for the Future of Academic Studies and International Cooperation

1. Expansion of Theoretical and Methodological Frameworks:

- Develop theoretical approaches that include both Asian and Latin American perspectives. The incorporation of relational theories, along with peripheral realism and open regionalism, would enrich the academic literature and allow for a deeper understanding of China-Latin America dynamics.
- Promote the use of formal theories that can be applied in empirical and quantitative studies. The generation of specific theoretical models for interactions with China will facilitate a more rigorous systematization and analysis of the data.

2. Incentive to Intercontinental and Multilateral Cooperation:

- Strengthen academic cooperation through exchange programs, research networks and joint projects. The inclusion of students and researchers from both regions in these projects would foster lasting collaboration and the development of shared knowledge.
- Integrate research perspectives that include common problems, such as climate change and sustainability, to generate knowledge that can be applied in joint policies.

3. Development of Digital Tools and Accessible Databases:

- Establish open databases and advanced data analysis tools to conduct comparative and quantitative studies on China-Latin America relations.
- Promote digital literacy and access to data analysis resources in both regions to reduce the digital divide and facilitate greater inclusion in academic studies.

4. Strengthening Cultural and Linguistic Exchange:

- Create centers for teaching Spanish and Latin American culture in China, as well as promote greater participation of Confucius Institutes in Latin America. These institutions would be key to overcoming cultural and linguistic barriers, fostering deeper mutual understanding.
- Encourage the learning of the languages and culture of both regions at basic and advanced educational levels, in order to form a generation that can interact effectively in a global context.

Conclusion

The transformation of China-Latin America relations over the decades demonstrates the impact of globalization and interdependence on the configuration of strategic alliances. In academia, this phenomenon poses a continuous challenge for researchers, who must adapt their methods and approaches to the needs of a changing world. Academic collaboration, cultural exchange and the development of digital tools are essential to advance the study of these relationships, offering knowledge that will not only enrich the scientific literature, but will also provide valuable perspectives for the formulation of public policies and cooperation strategies between the two regions.

The future of China-Latin America studies depends on the ability of scholars and decision-makers to identify and overcome contemporary challenges. The evolution of these relations toward broader and deeper cooperation requires that both researchers and educational institutions, foster a continuous learning approach and be open to the integration of new theories, methodologies, and technologies.

The development of Latin America's own literature, reflecting both the particularities of its international relations and its links with non-Western actors, will help build a more balanced and multidimensional understanding of the world. Cooperation with China offers the region an opportunity for mutual learning, where each country can contribute its perspectives and benefit from the exchange of knowledge and experience. With greater investment in academic infrastructure, digital resources and interdisciplinary training, Latin America can strengthen its role on the global stage, promoting balanced and sustainable relations with China for the benefit of both societies.

PROGRESS ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: URBAN PRACTICE IN CHINA

This report is based on the paper: “Assessment of the Progress Made in the Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Urban Practice in China”, presented on August 28, 2024 in the IV Lecture Series developed within the framework of the Chair in Contemporary China.



PROGRESS ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: URBAN PRACTICE IN CHINA

WANG Mou⁵

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have emerged as a universal framework aimed at addressing the most pressing global challenges, from environmental degradation and social inequality to economic instability and health crises. The SDGs are rooted in a series of historic agreements, beginning with the 1972 Stockholm Declaration and advancing through international frameworks such as the 1992 Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 (United Nations, 1972; United Nations, 1992). The culmination of these efforts, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, was adopted in 2015 with the goal of fostering a holistic approach to development that addresses social, environmental, and economic dimensions (United Nations, 2015). China has demonstrated a strong commitment to the 2030 Agenda, incorporating SDGs into its national strategies and setting ambitious goals that reflect its unique development model. The growing partnership between China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) through initiatives like the China-CELAC Forum provides a valuable platform for cross-regional collaboration. By examining China's progress with the SDGs and identifying areas for collaboration, this paper explores pathways for shared sustainable development.

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Background of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a culmination of decades of international collaboration to define and advance sustainable development. The journey began with the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, where countries collectively recognized the need to integrate environmental preservation with economic progress, marking the first global acknowledgment of the interconnectedness between these domains (United Nations, 1972). Building on this foundation, the 1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development introduced 27 principles to guide sustainable development globally. This declaration has since become a framework document for global cooperation on environment and development, promoting shared responsibilities and collective action. Complementing the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 established a strategic framework and rules of action to mitigate the impacts of human activities on the environment, serving as a global action plan to ensure the common future of humanity (United Nations, 1992).

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted in 2000, prioritized poverty alleviation and health improvements but fell short of addressing broader aspects of environmental sustainability and social equity. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, introduced in 2015, was crafted to fill these gaps, presenting 17 SDGs and 169 specific targets that emphasize human prosperity, ecological balance, and inclusive growth. This agenda underscores the importance of universal applicability, requiring all nations to adapt the goals to their unique contexts while fostering global partnerships to ensure no one is left behind (United Nations, 2015).

Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

The MDGs marked a significant milestone in the global effort to improve living conditions, with annual reports tracking progress since their adoption. By 2005, a comprehensive progress diagram was introduced, highlighting advancements in poverty reduction, child mortality, and access to clean drinking water and improved living environments. The MDGs encompassed 21 specific goals and 60 indicators, which provided a structured framework to measure development outcomes globally. Despite these achievements, significant gaps remained in addressing systemic issues such as inequality and environmental sustainability.

The transition to the SDGs in 2015 sought to address these shortcomings by adopting a more inclusive and comprehensive framework. The SDGs expanded the focus to include 17 goals, and 169 targets aimed at balancing economic, social, and environmental dimensions of development.

A. Assessment of Global Sustainable Development Goals

While the SDGs have driven substantial progress in many areas, significant challenges persist:

- **Persistent Inequality:** The progress made varies widely across regions and countries, with fragile and conflict-affected areas facing the most significant obstacles. These nations often struggle with high poverty rates and limited access to essential resources. Gender inequality remains a critical issue, hindering the participation and empowerment of women in many societies.
- **Extreme Poverty and Hunger:** Approximately 800 million people still live in extreme poverty, many of whom also suffer from chronic hunger. This stark reality underscores the need for targeted interventions in the most vulnerable communities.
- **Environmental Challenges:** The environmental dimension of the SDGs present a growing concern. Since 1990, global carbon dioxide emissions have risen by 50%, contributing to climate change and its cascading effects. Additionally, water scarcity impacts 40% of the global population, a figure projected to increase as demand outpaces supply.
- **Conflict and Development:** Conflict remains a significant barrier to sustainable development, undermining progress in regions already burdened by poverty and inequality. Nations in conflict or post-conflict settings often face systemic instability that hinders the realization of SDGs.

Despite these challenges, the global SDG framework provides a roadmap for collective action and innovative solutions. The integration of economic, social, and environmental priorities underscores the need for coordinated efforts among governments, organizations, and communities to achieve sustainable development universally. Addressing these systemic issues will require collaborative partnerships, resource mobilization, and a renewed commitment to leave no one behind.

The Practice and Progress of Sustainable Development

The process of sustainable development governance has been shaped by a series of global commitments and frameworks that provide guidance for achieving the SDGs. The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development remains a cornerstone document, offering 27 principles that emphasize sustainable resource management, equitable development, and the integration of environmental considerations into economic policies. It has played a crucial role in fostering global cooperation and setting the foundation for subsequent sustainability efforts. Building on this, Agenda 21 provides a strategic framework to address the environmental impacts of human activities, aiming to establish global rules and actions for the 21st century. It serves as a roadmap for nations to work collaboratively in securing a sustainable future for humanity.

Additional milestones include international agreements such as the Montreal Protocol, which addresses ozone layer protection, and the Basel Convention, which regulates the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes. The Convention on Biological Diversity and the Statement of Principles on Forests highlight the importance of preserving ecosystems, while the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change has driven global action on climate issues. Collectively, these agreements reflect the growing recognition of the interconnected nature of sustainability challenges and the need for collective, integrated solutions.

China's Approach to Sustainable Development

China's approach to sustainable development is shaped by its unique concept of "ecological civilization," which integrates environmental stewardship into the core of its socio-economic policies. This approach reflects the SDGs' emphasis on balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability, social inclusivity, and resource efficiency. The foundation of China's commitment to sustainable development was laid with "China's Agenda 21," released in 1994, which set out priority actions for promoting sustainable development within its national planning process. This commitment intensified after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, with SDGs becoming integrated into key policy documents such as China's 13th and 14th Five-Year Plans, which emphasize innovation, environmental health, and poverty alleviation.

China's ambitious targets in sustainable development include reducing extreme poverty, improving air and water quality, enhancing public health systems, and transitioning to renewable energy sources. By 2020, China had successfully reduced rural poverty to nearly zero, marking a major achievement under the SDG framework. Moreover, China is implementing a "green development" model that focuses on sustainable industrial practices and environmentally friendly urbanization. In 2020, President Xi Jinping announced China's commitment to peak carbon emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060, an unprecedented target for a country with such a high level of industrial output and energy consumption (Xi, 2020). Achieving these targets will require profound structural changes in China's energy sector, which currently relies heavily on coal. To this end, China has committed to increasing its share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to above 25 percent by 2030 and expanding forest coverage to serve as natural carbon sinks.

Progress in Implementing the SDGs: Urban Practices and Case Studies

Urban areas have become critical to implementing the SDGs, given that cities are responsible for a significant share of global resource consumption and emissions. Chinese cities, particularly Shenzhen, have become laboratories for sustainable urban practices. Shenzhen's approach to sustainable development demonstrates a model of balanced growth, emphasizing green development, technological innovation, and public welfare. The city has implemented a series of goals aligned with the SDGs, such as improving public health infrastructure, enhancing air quality, increasing public green spaces, and optimizing land use. By 2025, Shenzhen aims to become an international leader in sustainable urbanization, and by 2030, the city intends to serve as a model for global sustainable development practices that can be replicated in other urban areas worldwide.

A key component of China's SDG framework at the urban level is the Chinese City SDGs Assessment Index (CCSAI), which measures progress across the SDG framework's "Five Ps" — People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership. This index incorporates a wide range of indicators, including air quality metrics, water management practices, and renewable energy usage, to assess each city's progress in achieving the SDGs. Shenzhen's comprehensive approach highlights the critical role of local governments in implementing national SDG strategies. The CCSAI model provides a

structured approach to tracking and improving SDG outcomes, offering valuable lessons for other countries that aim to improve urban sustainability.

Challenges and Areas for Improvement

Despite China's progress in implementing the SDGs, several challenges persist. A significant issue is the fragmentation of SDG targets, which makes cohesive implementation difficult. This fragmentation, particularly when SDGs are not fully integrated at local levels, can lead to inconsistencies in policy and create inefficiencies. The lack of alignment among various government departments also presents obstacles, as does the gap in capacity at the sub-national level. In smaller cities and rural regions, limited financial resources and technical expertise hamper effective monitoring and implementation of SDG targets.

Another pressing challenge is the limited availability of localized data, which complicates the measurement and assessment of progress. Many SDG indicators rely on national or regional data, which may not reflect the specific circumstances of smaller cities or rural areas. For instance, indicators for clean water and sanitation may need to be tailored to account for rural infrastructure, while urban areas may require indicators focused on air quality and transportation. This gap suggests a need for more context-specific indicators and localized frameworks to improve the adaptability of SDGs across China's diverse.

Opportunities for China-CELAC Collaboration on SDGs

The China-CELAC Forum represents a promising avenue for advancing SDG implementation through cross-regional collaboration. By leveraging China's expertise in sustainable development and aligning it with CELAC's priorities, both regions can foster more effective and localized solutions for sustainable growth. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has already facilitated partnerships across Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly in infrastructure, renewable energy, and technology transfer, which are closely aligned with several SDGs. In 2017, China's Ministry of Environmental Protection, in collaboration with UN Environment, launched the International Coalition for Green Development on Belt and Road, which emphasizes sustainable practices in BRI projects, including those in CELAC countries (UN Environment, 2017).

CELAC countries face distinct challenges, such as biodiversity loss, water scarcity, and significant income inequalities, all of which align with China's

experience in addressing similar issues. Collaborative projects could focus on climate adaptation, green finance, and sustainable urban planning, with both regions benefiting from shared technological innovations and policy insights. For instance, China's work on urban SDG implementation offers insights into how Latin American cities might approach challenges such as rapid urbanization and resource management. By promoting joint research and capacity-building initiatives, China and CELAC can make meaningful progress in their shared goals of environmental sustainability, social equity, and economic resilience. The China-CELAC Forum thus provides an essential platform for translating SDG principles into action across both regions.

Conclusion

China's commitment to the SDGs is evidenced by its ambitious national policies, urban initiatives, and international collaborations. The focus on ecological civilization, carbon neutrality, and inclusive development underscores a comprehensive approach that serves as a model for sustainable development worldwide. However, significant challenges remain in achieving cohesive SDG implementation, particularly in areas like regional capacity-building and policy integration. For CELAC, the partnership with China offers valuable opportunities to address local challenges while drawing on China's resources, expertise, and successful practices in urban sustainability. As China and CELAC deepen their collaboration, they can enhance SDG progress and reinforce a model of sustainable growth that prioritizes inclusivity, resilience, and environmental stewardship.

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THE CHINA-LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN THINK TANK FORUM: THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC EXCHANGE

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THE CHINA-LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN THINK TANK FORUM: THE IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC EXCHANGE

TELÍAS Diego⁶

Introduction

The evolution of relations between China and Latin America has transformed the global dynamics in a context of questioning the liberal international order. In this context, the China-CELAC Forum emerges as a space for multilateral cooperation and diplomacy that fosters a strategic dialogue between the two sides. This chapter addresses, chronologically and in detail, the milestones of the China-CELAC Forum, highlighting China's participation in the international arena and its implications for Latin America. From its creation in 2014 to its most recent developments, the forum represents a joint effort that drives a reconfiguration of the global order, prioritizing a South-South perspective and establishing an alternative of cooperation in times of rivalry between China and the United States.

Questioning of the Liberal International Order (LIO)

The Liberal International Order (LIO), characterized by the presence of binding security institutions, multilateral rules, US hegemony, and global economic openness, is facing a period of crisis (Lake, Martin, and Risse, 2021). This crisis seems to be brewing from within the OIL promoter countries themselves. For example, the arrival of leaders such as Donald Trump in the United States and the Brexit process in the United Kingdom evidenced the loss of consensus around multilateral institutions and free

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trade, pillars of the established order since the post-war period. However, the OIL structure shows no signs of immediate collapse within the Western sphere, where there is no direct rival to the hegemony of the United States.

The current global context invites us to question the sustainability of OIL. According to Ikenberry (2011), an order fragments when its rules and agreements are contested, or when the forces that sustain it cease to operate. In this sense, the context of the U.S. elections, as well as China's economic growth and international projection, suggest a potential reordering of power relations and the role that new actors will play in the global system. This change is already evident in the shift in economic dynamics towards the Asia-Pacific, and in particular towards China. The influence of emerging powers and challenging events on the international scene, such as the war in Ukraine, the crisis in Gaza, and the situation in Venezuela, reflect the tensions that are reshaping the structure of the OIL.

Latin America in the Hegemonic Dispute between the U.S. and China

In the Latin American context, China's presence and influence has grown significantly, especially in trade and investment relations, since the beginning of the 21st century (Alden and Mendez 2023; Wise and Chonn Ching 2018; Xing and Vadell 2024). These increased interactions have diversified into strategic sectors, including concessional loans and infrastructure projects, in addition to tangible support such as vaccine donations during the COVID-19 pandemic (Telias and Urdinez 2020). China has become a multidimensional player in the region, with participation in technological, scientific and innovation areas.

Despite this expansion of China's presence, the United States remains a priority partner for Latin America. However, the influence of both countries places the region in a complex position, where Latin American nations must balance their ties with both powers to avoid being trapped in a dynamic of geopolitical confrontation. In response, some countries have adopted positions of Active Non-Alignment, as suggested by Heine(2021), seeking to identify "red lines" that allow for beneficial interaction with both powers without compromising their autonomy or strategic development. This approach implies a cautious position to avoid pressures that could generate internal or international conflicts, especially in the context of global competition between China and the United States.

The Forum in the Framework of China's Foreign Policy

A. China and its Incorporation into Multilateral Agendas

Since the mid-20th century, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has undergone a transformation in its foreign policy, moving from a relatively isolated stance to an active insertion in the international arena. Its foreign involvement dates back to the Korean War, its ties with the Soviet Union, and the formation of alliances with so-called "Third World" countries (Garver 2015). However, with the deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations and the changing international context, China sought a strategic reconfiguration, which culminated in 1979 with the formal establishment of diplomatic relations with the United States (Chen 2005). This milestone ushered in a new era of diplomatic normalization that resulted in the end of its isolation in the United Nations, particularly through Resolution 2758 of 1971, which restored China's status in the organization and opened a process of reintegration into the international community.

During the 1970s, China began a gradual participation in various UN agencies, taking on limited roles that then evolved to full participation by the end of the decade (Sutter 2021). As its economy and capacity for influence grew, China moved from an "outsider" position in the international order to a more active one, which was reflected in its involvement in international declarations on labor rights and in the organization of the 1995 International Women's Conference. Throughout the 1990s, its foreign policy sought to preserve an international environment that facilitated its domestic development, which increased demands for China to take a role in critical global issues, such as peace in Cambodia, nuclear non-proliferation, and the situation in North Korea. International pressure for China's greater inclusion in economic issues culminated in its entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, marking its full integration into the global economy and multilateral bodies.

In the 21st century, China is fully incorporated into international bodies, but has pushed for its own vision of how the international order should function, promoting concepts such as "peaceful development" and a "harmonious world." These principles reflect its vision of an international system based on cooperation and stability, aligned with its aspirations for consolidation and legitimacy in the global framework (Kastner, Pearson, and Rector 2018).

B. Consolidation as a Power and Institution Building

With Xi Jinping's rise to power, China has assumed a more visible and proactive role in the international sphere, seeking to consolidate its position as a power and demanding greater representation in international institutions (Economy 2018). Xi Jinping's strategy stands out for a push towards the center of the global stage, where China advocates the creation of a multilateralism founded on mutual respect and equality of interests. In this context, China has proposed major initiatives, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to connect various countries through infrastructure and economic cooperation, and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which supports regional development in Asia and other regions (Serrano Moreno, Telias, and Urdinez, 2021).

China has increased its financial contributions to the UN budget and actively participates in UN programs, recognizing the central role of the UN in international affairs (Fung and Lam 2021). For China, the UN represents a key platform where it can project its global aspirations, which is reflected in its increasing participation in peacekeeping missions, both in terms of personnel and budget. In addition, China has promoted its agenda in the Security Council and has increased the presence of Chinese nationals in the international civil service, taking leadership roles in specialized agencies. However, the total representation of Chinese personnel in international bodies remains lower compared to other powers, highlighting China's demand for greater representation commensurate with its global weight (Breslin, 2010).

C. Creation of Institutions

China's consolidation as a world power has led to the creation of new multilateral institutions with different characteristics, which play complementary, substitute, divergent or competitive roles with respect to the pre-existing institutions (Stephen, 2021). In its role as an emerging leader, China has promoted formal organizations and forums of a less institutionalized nature, both universal in scope and exclusive "club" style. Originally focused on Asia, these institutions have been expanding geographically to encompass other regions (Jakóbowski, 2018).

Among the institutions created, those focused on specific issues such as security, economics, or space cooperation stand out. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, for example, focuses on security issues and

regional cooperation, while the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank has an economic focus (Telias, 2020). Other institutions address more particular issues, such as the Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization, while initiatives such as the China-Africa Cooperation Forum cover multiple areas, adapting to the needs of different regions (Kastner, Pearson, and Rector, 2018). This diversity of institutions demonstrates China's active role in shaping a multilateral system that caters to its own interests and strengthens its influence in different fields.

D. Linkage with its Region and the World

After the Mao era, Chinese foreign policy underwent a significant change, characterized by an opening up and rapprochement towards various international actors (Garver, 2016). China strengthened its ties with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and normalized its relations with Vietnam, consolidating its influence in East Asia. In Central Asia, it established ties focused on infrastructure and the fight against terrorism, issues of strategic importance for its security and economic development (Ambrosio, 2008). Relations with Russia, especially during the Yeltsin administration, deepened, reflecting an alliance of convenience in the face of common geopolitical challenges.

Japan has also become a key partner in China's modernization, thanks to its technological expertise and support in strategic industrial sectors. At the same time, China has expanded its reach into other regions, such as Africa and Latin America, establishing economic cooperation and development relations, particularly under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (Myers, 2018). These international ties reinforce China's image as a responsible power committed to multilateralism, tailoring its foreign policy to encompass a multiplicity of interests that include both domestic development and international stability and cooperation.

E. Generalities and Characteristics

Within the framework of China's foreign policy, the China-CELAC Forum emerges in the 21st century as part of the multilateral cooperation strategy that China promotes with various regions. From a broad perspective, this platform resembles other cooperation mechanisms that China has developed with regions such as Africa, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Arab world. Each of these forums pursues varied objectives according to the needs of each

region, ranging from security issues to economic projects, promoting the creation of common policies, and addressing issues of mutual concern.

The China-CELAC Forum was created in 2014, and its first ministerial meeting took place in Beijing in 2015, marking a space for dialogue where political, economic, trade, and cultural issues were addressed in a context of significant global changes (Vadell, 2018). This initiative should be understood as a "south-south project" distinguished by the absence of external actors, such as the United States, which allows Latin America and China to strengthen their institutional ties without interference, consolidating a process of extra-regional cooperation that complements other initiatives such as CELAC's link with the European Union (Vadell, 2019).

For China, the China-CELAC Forum functions as a sort of "funnel" that organizes its relations with a group of Latin American countries, facilitating cooperation and optimizing resources. The strategy of promoting regional forums offers China the advantage of reducing the costs associated with its bilateral relations and reinforces the country's commitment to multilateralism. In Telias' words, "China's engagement today covers all areas," and the China-CELAC Forum represents the effort to institutionalize these ties in diverse sectors that go beyond the early years of the 21st century when the China-Latin America relationship focused almost exclusively on trade.

The China-Africa forum, which began in 2000, was the first such effort and is a benchmark for what China seeks to replicate in Latin America. Similarly, China has created a forum with Central and Eastern Europe, which has allowed for meeting platforms between heads of state, in addition to meetings of ministers to coordinate policies and increase investment and trade (Ekman, 2016). In the case of the China-CELAC Forum, its design, and objectives encompass both the strengthening of economic ties and the development of new areas of cooperation, including educational and cultural initiatives, in line with China's strategy to consolidate itself as an integral partner in the region (Vadell, 2018).

F. Design and Effects

The design of the China-CELAC Forum reflects the intergovernmental nature of China's multilateral fora, where supranational authority is not transferred, and the consensus is prioritized over the adoption of binding

resolutions. This informal approach allows the structure of the forum to be adaptable to the specificities of the region, promoting mutual agreement and inclusiveness (Vadell 2018). Leaders' meetings, joint declarations, and action plans form the basis of this mechanism, as seen in the 2015 Beijing Declaration, the 2018 Santiago Declaration, and the 2021 Mexico Declaration, documents that establish guidelines for China-Latin America cooperation.

Since its inception, the China-CELAC Forum has led to the creation of several specialized sub-forums that address strategic areas for both parties (Vadell 2018). Among the main forums are:

1. **China-LAC Forum of Ministers of Agriculture**, focusing on agricultural cooperation and food security.
2. **China-LAC Scientific and Technological Innovation Forum**, which promotes the exchange of knowledge and scientific advances.
3. **China-LAC Business Summit**, focused on strengthening trade and investment between China and Latin America.
4. **China-LAC Think Tank Exchange Forum**, which fosters academic dialogue and the exchange of strategic ideas.
5. **China-LAC Young Politicians Forum**, which seeks to create links between future generations of leaders.
6. **China-LAC Infrastructure Cooperation Forum**, which explores opportunities for joint infrastructure development.
7. **China-LAC Political Parties Forum**, for political dialogue and party cooperation.
8. **China-LAC Civil Society Friendship Forum**, which promotes understanding and cooperation between civil communities.

In addition to these, other forums have emerged in recent years, demonstrating the openness of the China-CELAC Forum to incorporate new actors to strengthen ties with the region. These include the Digital Technology Cooperation Forum, the China-Latin America Defense Forum, the Private Economic Cooperation Forum, the Heads of Universities Forum, the China-Latin America Military Medical Forum, and the Space Cooperation Forum (Zapata, 2023). In addition, specific seminars have been

implemented in areas such as disaster risk management, training of young diplomats, intellectual property, and humanitarian assistance.

The 2015 Beijing Declaration, together with the 2016 Policy Paper of the People's Republic of China for Latin America, provide the institutional framework that defines the principles and goals of the forum (Vadel, 2018). At the 2018 second ministerial forum in Chile, China extended an invitation to Latin American countries to join the Belt and Road Initiative, which consolidated a roadmap for cooperation during 2019-2021 (Serrano Moreno, Telias, and Urdinez, 2021).

Although the objectives of the China-CELAC Forum are broad and ambitious, which makes it difficult to assess results accurately, there has been a significant increase in areas of cooperation such as investment, tourism, and infrastructure. These forums represent a strategic effort with long-term geopolitical goals, often implicit, that position China as a relevant and multifaceted partner for Latin American countries (Soria and Herrera-Vinelli, 2020).

G. Academic and Think Tank Forums

The China-CELAC Forum has also developed academic exchange platforms and Think Tanks as a means to foster cooperation in educational, scientific, and cultural areas between China and Latin America (Vadell 2018). Since 2015, the goal has been to increase exchange and cooperation on issues related to education, human resources training, and the development of think tanks. These academic forums, according to Diego Telias, largely focus on the same topics and are aimed at similar target groups, such as young leaders, who represent the future of the China-Latin America relationship.

The China-Latin America Think Tank Exchange Forum, created in 2010 prior to the formation of CELAC, was established in Beijing as a space for collaboration between research centers and experts from both regions. This forum, later absorbed into the structure of the China-CELAC Forum, has facilitated the exchange of experiences and knowledge and has become a space for intellectual support to deepen relations and explore shared opportunities and challenges. Collaboration between think tanks in China and Latin America was officially institutionalized in 2017 with the creation of the China-CELAC High-Level Academic Forum, which aims to develop concrete proposals for ministerial meetings and contribute to cooperation plans between the two regions.

H. China-LAC Think Tank Exchange Forum

The main objective of the China-LAC Think Tank Exchange Forum is to provide a space for academic dialogue and exchange of experiences between research centers in China and Latin America. The first edition of this forum, held in 2010, was attended by researchers and experts from more than 15 countries and addressed topics on the opportunities and prospects of the relationship between China and Latin America. This initiative was later absorbed into the structure of the China-CELAC Forum, consolidating itself as an official sub-forum in this cooperative relationship.

Zapata (2023) highlights the sponsoring institutions that play a key role in this forum, such as the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA), the Institute of Latin American Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (ILAS-CASS), and the Foundation for International Studies of China (CFIS). Participants include government officials, business leaders, and media representatives, who, through this forum, can expand ties between China and Latin America. The 2021 edition, held online due to pandemic restrictions, highlighted the difficulties in continuing face-to-face exchanges, but also underscored the importance of fostering the creation of research centers and think tanks in Latin America that, without being exclusively dedicated to China studies, include sections focused on the bilateral relationship.

I. China-CELAC High-Level Academic Forum

Held in Chile in 2017 and 2021, the China-CELAC High-Level Academic Forum has been a crucial platform for formulating concrete proposals and providing valuable inputs for ministerial meetings and the development of cooperation plans. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) has acted as host for this forum, organizing high-level meetings with the participation of authorities and experts in key areas of cooperation. The topics covered include trade and financial relations, scientific and technological cooperation, and even aspects of the Belt and Road Initiative, consolidating itself as academic support for studies and strategic cooperation between China and Latin America.

It is important to give continuity to the impact studies generated in the forum, which allows for a deeper understanding of the effects of cooperation in different areas. Through the joint work of think tanks such as the ICLAC Millennium Nucleus, the need for a rigorous methodology that reflects the

specificity and diversity of Latin America and its subregions has become evident, as well as an approach from a Latin American perspective in the study of these relations (León-Manríquez and Alvarez, 2014).

Challenges and Perspectives of the China-CELAC Forum

A. Construction of the International Order

This section analyzes China's role in building and challenging the current international order, exploring its relationship with the United States and its influence on international organizations. Different International Relations (IR) perspectives on China's role and its impact on the global status quo are examined. The following points are then developed:

- **Approaches in the international relations literature: China as a revisionist power.** IR has tended to portray China as a revisionist power, that is, as a country that seeks to challenge and eventually replace the United States as the dominant power in the international system. This narrative holds that China seeks to transform the norms, values, and institutions that shape the liberal order promoted by the West in order to establish one that is more reflective of its own interests and values.
- **Critical look at the revisionist approach: non-dichotomous perspective.** In contrast to the revisionist view, some scholars and analysts argue that China's role cannot be reduced to a simple dichotomy between revisionism and defense of the status quo (Kastner, Pearson, and Rector 2018) . According to this perspective, China has shown a pragmatic approach, depending on the circumstances and the benefits it can derive from the current system. Rather than seeking direct confrontation, China acts strategically, promoting change in certain areas and maintaining the *status quo* in others.
- **China's engagement in global challenges.** There is increased engagement on crucial issues such as climate change, global trade, and nuclear nonproliferation, indicating a willingness to act as a "responsible actor" in the global sphere (Breslin, 2010). These commitments show that China does not necessarily reject the international order, but rather seeks to reform it from within, using its growing influence to modify it in its favor gradually.

- **Challenging international norms in specific areas.** Despite its involvement in the global system, China has challenged certain norms, particularly in areas where it considers that its interests are not well represented or protected. According to authors such as Kastner et al. (2018), China's position in the system depends on the strategic choices that exist around it, choosing at times to challenge norms and at other times to adapt to them.
- **China's re-emergence as a power in a system not of its own making.** China has emerged as a great power within a system of rules that was not designed by it, but in which it has sought to participate actively. Although it was not one of the original architects of the liberal system, China has made efforts to become involved, seeking a position that allows it to act as a responsible leader in the international community.
- **Call for greater representation in international organizations.** The structure of many international organizations reflects a distribution of power that favors the established powers, especially the United States and its allies. China has advocated reform of these institutions, calling for more equitable representation and a greater role in decision-making.
- **Competition and interdependence with the United States.** The relationship between China and the United States is marked by intense competition, but also by significant interdependence (Actis and Creus 2020). This duality allows the two countries to continue to collaborate in various areas, such as trade and scientific cooperation, despite tensions, which contributes to the stability of the global system.
- **China's participation in multilateral organizations and agreements.** China is a member of numerous multilateral organizations and agreements, which has allowed it to consolidate its influence in the international arena. Authors such as Weiss and Wallace(2021) suggest that to fully understand China's role in the international system it is essential to observe both its activities in the multilateral arena and its domestic dynamics.

B. South-South perspective

China presents an ambiguous identity in its relationship with the Global South, especially in Latin America, where it has established itself as a

strategic partner in development and cooperation without imposing political conditions. In the following points, we will expand on

- **China's ambiguous identity as a rising power and defender of the Global South.** China presents itself as a "rising power" that, at the same time, shows solidarity with the Global South (Zhang 2011). However, its identity is ambiguous, as its structural capacity far exceeds that of many developing countries, which places it in a leading position in the field of South-South cooperation, while still being seen as a rising global power.
- **Alignment on issues of sovereignty and external influence.** China has promoted a discourse of respect for sovereignty and non-intervention, which resonates with many developing countries. This approach allows it to align with countries that wish to reduce external influence in their internal affairs, reinforcing China's image as an advocate of national autonomy in the Global South (Strüver 2014).
- **Global South strategy from 2009.** China began to formulate a strategy that prioritized its relations with the Global South, with the aim of stimulating trade and foreign investment in these regions. This shift responds to China's need to diversify its markets and secure its influence in a key region for its global growth strategy (Vadell 2019).
- **Strategic alliances and economic ties.** China has established strategic alliances and developed strong economic ties with Latin America through investments in infrastructure, mining, and energy. Authors such as Bonilla and Herrera(2020) point out that this "agenda under construction" seeks to promote sustainable development and strengthen South-South cooperation through institutions such as the China-CELAC Forum.
- **Importance of the third Ministerial Meeting of the China-CELAC Forum (2021).** The third Ministerial Meeting of the China-CELAC Forum, held in 2021, highlighted the importance of South-South cooperation and sustainable development, reflecting China's commitment to the 2030 agenda and capacity building in the countries of the region.
- **Multilateralism as a community of shared interests.** China promotes multilateralism as a platform to unite developing countries under

shared interests, offering a vision of global cooperation that focuses on mutual benefit without political conditions.

- **Cooperation based on the 2030 Agenda.** China's cooperation agenda in Latin America is aligned with the sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda, which encourages cooperation focused on poverty eradication, infrastructure development, and access to advanced technology.

Conclusions

The context of a changing international order, China's foreign policies and their implication in Latin America, as well as the relevance of South-South cooperation, constitute the fundamental axes of this reflection, which poses challenges and opportunities for the region in a global scenario of growing complexity.

The intensification of competition for global leadership, marked by the rise of China and the response of the United States, has significantly altered the balance of power. This process opens up new possibilities for Latin America as it strategically positions itself to diversify its international relations and expand its margins of autonomy in an increasingly multipolar system.

China's approach to regions such as Latin America stands out for its ability to generate spaces for bilateral and multilateral relations, fostering a dynamic exchange that contributes to development in key areas such as infrastructure, technology, and trade. This model offers the region a platform to strengthen its international insertion from a mutually beneficial perspective.

The China-CELAC Forum and its sub-forum of Think Tanks represent a paradigmatic example of how China promotes dialogue and academic cooperation with Latin America. These forums promote a comprehensive and diversified agenda that not only prioritizes academic exchange but also reinforces the design of public policies that are more coherent with regional challenges.

Although multilateral cooperation is a declared objective in forums such as China-CELAC, bilateral relations continue to be the central pillar of ties between China and Latin American countries. This responds to the heterogeneity of national needs, especially in sectors such as investment and

trade, where bilateral agreements allow for greater specificity and adaptability.

Academic collaboration emerges as a crucial component in strengthening relations between China and Latin America. This exchange not only facilitates a deeper understanding between the two sides but also contributes to the design of more effective public policies aligned with regional priorities, such as sustainable development and technological innovation.

From a South-South cooperation perspective, Latin America has the opportunity to articulate a relationship with China that privileges its own strategic interests. Issues such as environmental sustainability, the reduction of social inequalities, and the strengthening of its regional autonomy should occupy a central place in this relationship, maximizing benefits and reducing possible asymmetries.

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The background is a solid dark green color. Overlaid on this is a pattern of interlocking hexagons. Each hexagon is rendered with a 3D effect, featuring a slightly raised, embossed appearance. The edges of the hexagons are defined by darker green lines, and the overall pattern creates a textured, geometric look.

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