

# Competição entre China e Estados Unidos na América Latina: evolução, perspectivas e implicações no contexto do COVID-19



*China-United States competition in Latin America: evolution, perspectives, and implications in the COVID-19 context*

*La competencia entre China y Estados Unidos en América Latina: evolución, perspectivas e implicancias en el contexto del COVID-19*

M. Florencia Rubiolo<sup>1</sup>  
Diego Telias<sup>2</sup>

DOI: 10.5752/P.2317-773X.2021v9.n3.p43

Recebido em: 31 de agosto de 2020  
Aprovado em: 29 de junho de 2021

## RESUMO

Na última década, a China se estabeleceu como um ator-chave no sistema internacional e sua influência se irradia para todos os cantos do mundo. A América Latina não é exceção a esse fenômeno. A participação econômica da China na região teve impactos políticos que levaram à competição inevitável com os Estados Unidos. É neste contexto de competição que surge a pandemia COVID-19, com profundas consequências para os países latino-americanos. O objetivo deste artigo é analisar as relações entre a América Latina e a China no contexto da competição com os Estados Unidos e a pandemia do COVID-19. O artigo aborda como a competição evoluiu, principalmente na área da saúde após o surto de COVID-19. Para isso, são discutidas as principais ações da China na região a partir de uma perspectiva teórica da economia política internacional e a partir de conceitos como diplomacia de máscaras e “wolf warrior diplomacy”.

**Palavras-chave:** China. América Latina. Estados Unidos. COVID-19. Rota da Seda Sanitária.

## ABSTRACT

In the last decade, China has established itself as a key player in the international system and its influence irradiates to all corners of the world. Latin America is no exception to this phenomenon. Chinese economic involvement in the region had political impacts that have led to inevitable competition with the United States. It is in this context of competition that the COVID-19 pandemic emerges bringing profound consequences for Latin American countries.

1. CIECS (CONICET y UNC) Doctora en Relaciones Internacionales (UNR, Argentina). Investigadora Adjunta en el Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas de Argentina (CONICET, CIECS). Correo electrónico: frubiolo@gmail.com

2. Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile & Universidad ORT Uruguay. Candidato a Doctor en Ciencia Política de la Universidad Católica de Chile (Becario CONICYT PFCHA/DOCTORADO BECAS NACIONALES/2019 – 2119032) y docente de la Facultad de Administración y Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad ORT Uruguay. Correo electrónico: detelias@uc.cl

The aim of this article is to analyze the relations between Latin America and China in the context of competition with the United States and the COVID-19 pandemic. The article addresses how competition has evolved, particularly in the health area after the COVID-19 outbreak. To this end, the main actions of China in the region are discussed from a theoretical perspective of political economy and drawing on concepts as mask diplomacy and wolf warrior's diplomacy.

**Keywords:** China. Latin America. United States. COVID-19. Health Silk Road.

## RESUMEN

En la última década, China se ha consolidado como un actor clave en el sistema internacional y su influencia se irradia a todos los rincones del mundo. América Latina no es una excepción a este fenómeno. La participación económica china en la región tuvo impactos políticos que han llevado a una competencia inevitable con Estados Unidos. Es en este contexto de competencia donde surge la pandemia COVID-19 que trae profundas consecuencias para los países latinoamericanos.

El objetivo de este artículo es analizar las relaciones entre América Latina y China en el contexto de la competencia con Estados Unidos y la pandemia de COVID-19. El artículo aborda cómo ha evolucionado la competencia, particularmente en el área de la salud después del brote de COVID-19. Para ello, se discuten las principales acciones de China en la región desde una perspectiva teórica de economía política internacional y a partir de conceptos como la diplomacia de las mascarillas y la "wolf warrior diplomacy".

**Palabras clave:** China. América Latina. Estados Unidos. COVID-19. Ruta de la Seda Sanitaria.

## Introduction

The world has profoundly changed since 1978, when Deng Xiaoping took the first steps that led to China's integration into the world economy some decades later. The process of opening-up and the market-driven reforms arrived at a major milestone in 2001 when the country entered the World Trade Organization. This symbol of the PRC's economic transformation was followed a few years later, in 2010, by its consolidation as a global economic player becoming the second largest world economy.

Today, China's role as a global power is unquestionable and its influence irradiates to every corner of the world. Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is not an exception, as Beijing's interest in approaching the region has been growing steadily in the last two decades. Almost every LAC economy has seen an unprecedented growth in its export numbers, related to China's enormous demand. Among other commodities, exports of copper, crude oil, iron ore and soybeans skyrocketed, starting a decade-long commodity boom from 2003. Given LAC countries economic structure, trade became the outstanding pillar of bilateral relations as Chinese needs of natural resources soared.

Almost twenty years went by, China already has a foot in the region in many more dimensions and multilateral and bilateral aspects than at the beginning of the century. Contemporary China's emerging impacts on the world are evolving in all manner of messy and complex ways which make analysis difficult; in that sense economic engagement has

political impacts, whether it is planned or not (GARLICK, 2020). China's engagement in Latin America, encouraged by domestic needs, have led to inevitable competition with the United States, an aspect that is observed in several regions of the world, though in Latin America acquires greater importance given that for decades it has been considered the backyard of the US. In the context of a more active Chinese policy in LAC through the Belt and Road Initiative and Trump's tougher position as a response, the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

Our goal in this paper is to analyze the relations between Latin America and China in the context of a competition with the United States and the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. While it is not the purpose of this article to delve into the differences within the region, it is worth noting that relations with China and competition have been different in each country. As a guiding question we propose to outline how the competition between the two powers evolved with a particular focus in the health area, before and after the outbreak of the pandemic. This will allow us to fully delve into the relations between China and Latin America and discuss China's main foreign policy actions in the region within the framework of this competition and COVID-19 in the health arena. The theoretical approach reflects a political economy perspective, underlining the relation between both aspects in Chinese international and foreign policy, as well as the articulation between economic means and political goals, and the use of economic incentives and sanctions or threats, to influence a third State's behavior (BALDWIN, 1985; BLANCHARD; RIPSAMAN, 2013).

The article is structured as follows: after the introduction, in section two we analyze how the competition between the United States and China took shape from the Obama's pivot to the Trump administration but also considering this competition as an inevitable phenomenon accounting Chinese foreign policy as a response to domestic needs rather than a search for positioning in the global level. In the third section, we describe in detail this competition in the health area, focusing on the Health Silk Road, the debates on the World Health Organization and contextualizing the emergence of the pandemic. In the fourth section, the central part of the article, we analyze the competition of the United States and China towards Latin America in this new context of COVID-19, considering the so-called mask diplomacy and wolf warriors' diplomacy. We conclude this article with brief final remarks.

#### China, the United States and the emerging global competition.....

Implications of a rising China have been analyzed through different theories of international relations. One cornerstone of this debate is the conclusion of Allison (2017) that war between China and the United States (US) is likely, based on the "Thucydides Trap" which means that when a rising power threatens to displace the incumbent, war is the likeliest result. This pessimistic view is shared by many realists' scholars that consider that mutual fears and incompatible strategic objectives will predestinate both countries to an intense competition (FRIEDBERG, 2011;

MEARSHEIMER, 2014). As Walt said, “for realists, therefore, China’s rise is not good news and it is likely to have deleterious effects on global stability” (2018, p. 14).

Liberal scholars offer more optimistic visions as they focus on the interdependent condition of our world which connected with global institutions and skillful diplomacy have consequences of discouraging war, so it could limit potential rivalry and offer a cooperation path. Ikenberry (2018) underlines, from a liberal perspective, the capacity of the American liberal order to survive due to its integrative tendency, shared leadership, how economic gains are spread, and the capacity to accommodate different models of capitalism and strategies of development. Following this idea, this author argues that even if China’s rise could end US hegemony, the liberal world order will hardly be undermined.

This debate goes beyond this simplification between realist and liberal approaches. Some scholars prefer a state’s agency approach instead of structural explaining forces that prioritize only changes in distribution of power. Foot (2014), for example, focuses on constraints on conflict that are insufficiently appreciated in the realist approaches, as the domestic political-economic priorities of both countries. Others also argue that China has not enough power to challenge the US position in the world order (SHAMBAUGH, 2013) and its capabilities are far behind as it does not have a high GDP per capita, its military gap with the US is still huge, and its soft power is not well developed yet.

Going beyond the theoretical aspect, it is necessary to analyse the growing competition between China and the United States in recent years, of which BRI seems to be one of the latest chapters. Actis and Creus (2020) distinguish three moments in this dispute: the pivot strategy during the Obama administration starting in 2011, Xi Jinping’s arrival to power in 2013, and Trump’s election. The accusations by former US President Donald Trump appear to have marked a turning point in relations. While the concerns and discussions about China’s growth precede this, his rhetoric about the trade imbalance marks one of the key points in this competition. However, the US accusations went beyond the trade balance and pointed to China’s subsidies in key sectors, the issue of intellectual property rights and the difficulty of participating in public acquisitions in China (ROSALES, 2020).

In that sense, US competition with China is not merely commercial but also technological. The main concern seems to be centered on China’s advances in science and technology. This competition in the technological dispute implies a structural and systemic conflict, a tension between an established and an emerging power. However, it is worth noting that this conflict or competition is prior to the pandemic and what COVID-19 did was to make it more evident (ACTIS; CREUS, 2020). So what is explained below is part of a much more complex scenario of this competition.

In 2019 this competition seemed to focus on the Belt and Road Initiative which is a Chinese emblematic economic and political strategy, with a focus on investment in infrastructure designed to “improve physical connectivity along a maritime and continental silk route” (MAYER,

2018, p. 1228). According to Nolan (2019, p. xxi), Xi Jinping has made the new Silk Road “a key part of China’s international relations”. This Initiative was first introduced as the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) in September 2013, during Xi’s speech at Kazakhstan’s Nazarbayev University, where he proposed to build a “Silk Road Economic Belt”. In October 2013, he proposed to build a “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” during his speech at the Indonesian House of Representatives.

In 2015, this project was renamed as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in an official document released by the National Development and Reform Commission (2015). The “belt” was designed to connect China to Europe through Central Asia and Russia; to the Middle East through Central Asia; and to Southeast Asia, South Asia and the Indian Ocean. The “road” seeks to connect China with Europe through the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean; and the South Pacific through the South China SEA (ALON; ZHANG; LATTEMANN, 2018). Six economic corridors were designed to meet these connectivity goals<sup>3</sup>. Seven years after the official launch, the Initiative has already surpassed the original territorial scope, becoming a global enterprise.

Since its inception, the Initiative has generated a great amount of academic discussion. Views among political analysts and intellectuals are diverse. Chinese motivations behind the BRI have become a central concern for studies around the world, ranging from a purely economic interpretation, to a geopolitical and strategic-centered approach. According to the first group, BRI is focused on enhancing an open economy and improving Chinese domestic development, as well as fostering international cooperation (ZHOU, 2019; ZOU, 2018). This perspective is in line with the official statements regarding the purpose and goals of the Initiative. In May 2017 the CCP released a guiding document, stating that the Belt and Road Initiative “is a Chinese proposal whose aim is to promote peaceful cooperation and common development around the world” (OFFICE OF THE LEADING GROUP FOR THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE, 2017). Party leaders, and particularly Xi Jinping, have also stressed that BRI is a fundamental part in the path to achieving the “Chinese dream”, understood as the construction of a moderately well-off society, a rich and powerful country and a dynamic and happy people (PARRA PÉREZ, 2017; JOHNSON, 2016).

Domestic concerns come to the front when considering the economic motivations. Some of the interests fueling the plan are the need to consume China’s industrial over-capacity; to expand or find new markets for Chinese exports; the need to secure access to natural resources; and find new uses for surplus (CLARKE, 2018; YU, 2018). As Zhou (2019) points out, the BRI complements China’s economic restructuring and vice versa. The Initiative helps transform and upgrade the manufacturing industry and alleviate the problem of overcapacity in traditional Chinese industries increasing the demand of building materials (JOHNSON, 2016) and hi-tech industrial supplies for infrastructure projects abroad.

But besides the centrality of the domestic economic and political aspects of the plan, BRI also reflects strategic and geopolitical intentions and concerns related to China’s role as a leading world power (ALON;

3. The six corridors are the New Eurasian Land Bridge, the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor (CMREC), the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the China-Central and Western Asia Economic Corridor, the China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor, and the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIMEC).



ZHANG; LATTEMANN, 2018) and to the need to maintain regional stability. In line with this assertion, a common vision suggests that the Initiative is in fact a grand strategy. As Rolland (2018) argues, it is “an instrument at the service of the PRC’s vision for itself as the uncontested leading power in the region in the coming decades”. Clarke (2018) also adds that “BRI is an attempt to resolve the geopolitical dilemmas arising from China’s ‘hybrid’ strategic orientation [maritime and continental]; and as a response to the opportunities and challenges presented by the United States’ ‘pivot’ or ‘rebalance’ to the Asia Pacific from 2011”. According to Liang (2019), BRI is also pursuing the goal of becoming an alternative idea to complement and challenge existing international institutions.

Competition turned out to be inevitable given US perceptions and reactions to Chinese international behavior. But also, because of a more assertive and confident international policy emanating from Beijing, which was mainly a response to domestic needs. In this sense, it can China ends up emerging as a global power even if it was not a preconceived goal, mainly because of the multiple interlinkages between China’s domestic political economy and its external relations (GARLICK, 2019).

#### The health silk road and the WHO in China’s policy.....

Besides the highlighted economic and geopolitical dimensions of the Belt and Road Initiative, there are several other aspects included in this ambitious plan. Cultural, educational, and professional fields are also addressed as part of the Chinese strategy, and people-to-people diplomacy is fundamental in the diffusion of skills, knowledge, and cooperation (BENABDALLAH, 2019). The health dimension was considered as a part of the first documents issued by the government to materialize the BRI. As stated in the 2015 Vision and Actions document: “We should strengthen cooperation with neighboring countries on epidemic information sharing, the exchange of prevention and treatment technologies and the training of medical professionals, and improve our capability to jointly address public health emergencies”. (NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND REFORM COMMISSION, 2015).

China’s engagement with global health is not a new trend. During the sixties, Africa became a destination of China’s health programs. Following Algeria’s war against French colonialism, Beijing sent its first overseas medical team in 1963 to the country (BRAUTIGAM, 2011). From then on, China’s aid and programs towards the continent increased, paralleling the deepening of diplomatic ties. Most recently, during the Ebola crisis in 2012-2014, China launched an unprecedented response to the epidemic in west Africa, which became its largest ever health emergency relief overseas (TANG; ZHIHUI; WENKAI; CHEN, 2017).

Regarding the Belt and Road, Beijing has not neglected the health aspect in the initiative. The flexible and adaptable nature of the strategy allowed to introduce the idea of a Health Silk Road (HSR) as an extension of an already deep Chinese engagement with global health in the last decades. The idea of a HSR was first mentioned in 2015 when the National Health and Family Planning Commission unveiled the three-year plan

for Belt and Road health exchange and cooperation (2015-2017) (NHFPC, 2015) A year later, during a speech in Uzbekistan in June 2016, Xi Jinping stressed the “need to deepen cooperation in medical care and health, strengthen win-win cooperation in the alert of communicable diseases, disease prevention and control, medical assistance and traditional medicine, and build a Silk Road for health” (WANG; LI, 2019, p. 100).

As shown in this brief overview, China has become more proactive in global health governance since the beginning of the century. But its motivations and goals, as in the cases of other major powers, go beyond the will to improve health and human security in developing countries. Health engagement -in the form of aid, assistance, and cooperation- is also used as a form of soft power that fulfills domestic and foreign policy goals, including security, economic growth, and business interests (BRÄUTIGAM, 2011).

In January 2017, Xi signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the World Health Organization that endorsed international health regulation and promoted health security on the Silk Road (REN, 2018). In August, 2017, China hosted the Belt and Road High-Level Meeting to promote health cooperation, and the resulting document was the Beijing Communiqué of The Belt and Road Health Cooperation & Health Silk Road, which was adopted, among other partners, by the WHO, the UN-AIDS and the OECD (NATIONAL HEALTH COMMISSION, 2017).

In this context it is important to address the relation between China and the WHO. As we have seen, the World Health Organization has endorsed international health regulation and promoted health security within the Silk Road. The current director, Dr. Tedros Adhanom, was elected through a secret vote by 194 member states (supported by China). A couple of days after the election, Dr. Tedros reiterated the organization’s adherence to the one-China principle (CHINA DAILY, 2017).

In his speech at the 2019 Belt and Road Forum, Xi Jinping referred to exchanges and mutual understanding and the goal of cooperation in the health area. However, beyond agreements and conferences, the Health Silk Road was still considered as a rhetorical extension of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (LANCASTER; RUBIN; RAPP-HOOPER, 2020). In LAC, health was mentioned in the “Joint Cooperation Action Plan in Priority Areas” - a document prepared in the China-CELAC Forum of 2018 - but not considered as a main area of cooperation, such as politics and security, infrastructure and transportation, trade, investment and finances, agriculture, environmental cooperation, technology, among other (CELAC, 2018).

The Ministries of Foreign Relations of CELAC and China agreed to intensify the dialogue and exchange in the health sector mainly in areas such as clinical medicine, disease control and prevention, response to health emergencies, research and development and access to medicines. They also committed to encourage and support direct cooperation between government, regional, local, and medical institutions, in order to strengthen health systems of different countries of the region.

But since the COVID-19 outbreak, the Health Silk road gained momentum within the Chinese foreign policy discourse. A highlight in

this regard was Xi's conversation with Italian Prime Minister, Giuseppe Conte, in March 2020, in which he underlined the importance of the construction of a Health Silk Road (XINHUANET, 2020). In that sense, COVID-19 became an opportunity to include the multiple actions of the Chinese government under the label of the HSR Initiative. Diverse donations of medical supplies and scientific exchanges began to be considered part of it.

On the other hand, the Trump administration responded to the health emergency by blaming China for covering up the outbreak, calling it "China's virus" and also accusing the WHO of being a Chinese puppet. President Trump and U.S. Secretary of Health Alex Azar said there was a failure by the WHO to provide information and, based on that, Trump suspended the United States' temporary contributions to the organization. It is important to note that the U.S. is the largest contributor to the WHO (15.18%), followed by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (12.12%). In contrast, China contributes 0.21% of the financial flow (WHO, 2019).

In that context, in May 2020, the WHO organized the 73rd World Health Assembly (WHA), a meeting that annually brings together its members. Taiwan participated in these meetings between 2009 and 2016 due to an agreement that had the endorsement of China (ASPINWALL, 2020). However, in the 70th Assembly (2017), Taiwan was not invited to participate as an observer, mainly because of China's pressures. This situation repeated in the following years (2018-2019) neglecting the fact that different countries, including the United States, released statements criticizing the exclusion (US DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES, 2020).

## China in Latin America: before and after covid-19

### *China - LAC Relations*

Latin America-China relations skyrocketed in the last 20 years. Bilateral relations with each country started to deepen through high profile visits from Chinese Heads of State, beginning with President Jiang Zemin's trip to the region in 2001. But, as Paz (2006) underlines, it was 2004 the actual turning point in the relations. Hu Jintao's visit to Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Cuba on that year was the strongest sign of this change of winds in the relationship (KOTSCHWAR, 2014), showing China's growing interest in gaining a foothold in Latin America. Since then, mutual links have increasingly institutionalized, both in bilateral and multilateral spaces in the economic and political arenas. It must be recognized that trade has been and still is the indisputable pillar. Conditions such as the complementarity of the economies, the ever increasing need for natural resources and raw materials from China, the pursuit of diversifying export markets from the Latin American economies, the international economic conditions -as the high commodity prices and the financial global crisis in 2008- were all factors that underpinned the boom (RU-



BIOLO, 2020). But besides the commercial relations, Beijing has shown a constant and progressive engagement with the region through diverse institutional channels.

Although in this article we argue there has been an overall Chinese approach to Latin America as a whole, it must be distinguished that the region is not intrinsically homogeneous. Even though most of the region shares significant features -such as language, religion, transnational indigenous culture and a common colonial history- from an international relations point of view, multiple variables have operated to differentiate the different parts of the continent. Regional integration processes, external trade characteristics -particularly as a primary commodity exporting countries-, intraregional interdependence, the emergence of Brazil as a global player and a regional power (BERNAL MEZA, 2008), the role of the United States since 2001, and the initiatives for political integration (CABALLERO SANTOS, 2012) have defined a clearer boundary for the South American region, differentiating it from the rest of Latin America. In this sense, South America relations with China show distinctive characteristics, in contrast with México, Central America and the Caribbean.

As Wise (2020b) points out, while there is productive complementarity between China and the South American commodity-producing countries, México and Central America have a weaker trade relation -mostly a deficitarian one- due to the fact that they have little to offer to Chinese commodities demand. On top of this, Mexico's and Central America's overdependence on the US market has also prevented a deeper trade relation with China. Another particular feature in the case of Central American and the Caribbean was, until recently, that most countries maintained diplomatic relations with Taiwan. But after Panama shifted its diplomatic allegiance from Taipei to Beijing in 2017 -which led to the Dominican Republic and El Salvador to follow suit in 2018- China's presence in the isthmus consolidated, particularly through investments in the banking sector and infrastructure projects in logistics, port services and energy. (CELADA, 2019)

Besides the heterogeneity, which still presents many features that differentiate the subregional areas in LAC, China has had an active bilateral and multilateral presence in the region as a whole. Strategic partnership (SP) diplomacy was among the first tools Beijing implemented to establish stronger and more stable political links with different countries and regional institutions since the early nineties. The first SP was signed with Brazil in 1993. Although there is no exact meaning of the concept (XU, 2017), in 2004 Premier Wen Jiabao (2004) gave some clarifications on how an ideal SP would be: by partnership it refers to cooperative and win-win relations; by strategic it implies that the relation should be long-term and stable. Besides this official view, political motives also underpin Beijing's SP diplomacy, aimed at maintaining friendly relations that favor stable economic links, while also expanding its international influence (YU, 2015). After the first SP with Brazil, which was upgraded to Comprehensive SP in 2012, several strategic partnerships were signed with Latin American countries: Venezuela (signed in 2001, in 2014 was upgraded to comprehensive), Mexico (2003, in 2013 comprehensive), Argentina (2004,

in 2014 comprehensive), Perú (2008, in 2013 comprehensive), Chile (2012, in 2016 comprehensive), Costa Rica (2015), Ecuador (2015, in 2016 comprehensive), Uruguay (2016), and Bolivia (2018) (RUBIOLO, 2020; XU, 2017).

This dynamic bilateral diplomacy towards the region was complemented by an active participation in different multilateral institutions at the regional level. The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Latin American Parliament, and the Corporación Andina de Fomento are among them (ELLIS, 2009). And the political links were also upgraded by a series of mostly Chinese-driven initiatives: 1) The China Ministry of Foreign Affairs White paper on LAC released in November 2008, spelling out China's plan for its foreign relations with Latin America; 2) the cooperation framework for 2015–2019, known as “1+3+6,” announced in July 2014 by President Xi Jinping at the first Summit of Leaders of China and Latin America and the Caribbean in Brasília; 3) the adoption of the China-CELAC Cooperation Plan 2015–2019 and; 4) the publication of the second white paper on LAC, launched to coincide with Xi Jinping's visit to the region in November 2016 (FORNES; MENDEZ, 2018).

Among these, the China-CELAC Forum is considered a cornerstone in the relation with Latin America (VADELL, 2018). It was originally proposed by Xi Jinping and approved by the CELAC countries in 2014 in La Habana. This process of institutionalization resembles the one Beijing already had started with Africa – The China Africa Forum – and, as pointed out by Yu (2015, p. 1049), “China is clearly attempting to transplant its success in Africa into Latin America in order to expedite the establishment of a presence in the latter continent and intensify economic and political cooperation with this group of states”. Thus, it is not surprising that BRI has landed through the China-CELAC Forum.

#### *Last step before the outbreak: LAC in BRI and the US response*

Without neglecting the importance and driving force that domestic economic interests and needs represent in BRI, we understand that the geopolitical and geoeconomics aspects of it are key points to analyze the extension of the initiative to other regions of the world, which were not included in the original plan. Among them, Latin America is relatively a newcomer. Although the region was not originally a part of the initiative, during the II Ministerial Meeting of the CELAC-China Forum in January 2018, the representatives stated that “Latin American and Caribbean countries are part of the natural extension of the Maritime Silk Route and are indispensable participants in international cooperation of the Belt and Road” (CELAC CHINA FORUM, 2018).

In November 2017, Panama became the first Latin American country to access the BRI. The engagement of Latin American countries in the initiative is diverse. Countries like Uruguay or Chile have shown great interest in this Initiative. Both governments signed the MoU to access the initiative, high-ranking officials attended BRI forums and applied to enter the AIIB. Uruguay was accepted as a member of the Bank in April 2020,

the second in Latin American after Ecuador (AIIB, 2020). There are also six prospective members in the region: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Venezuela. Regarding other countries we could find different approaches with governments attending forums with ministries, signing MoUs but not applying to the Bank as Cuba, Costa Rica and Panama.

Out of the twenty-four LAC countries that have diplomatic relations with China, only five have not adhered to the BRI: Argentina, Brazil, Bahamas, Colombia and Mexico. The case of Argentina is puzzling because Mauricio Macri was one of the fewest LAC presidents who attended an official forum of BRI in 2017 and the country is a prospective member of the AIIB, however, at the G20 meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina declined President Xi's offer to sign on to further BRI projects (WISE, 2020a).

One of the reasons for this decision is cost calculations in the countries with a close relation with the United States. This is the case of Colombia, Mexico, and Bahamas. Another set of reasons is that signing to BRI does not represent a clear upgrade of benefits. In other words, incentives for signing are not enough for some governments, such as Argentina and Brazil, which already have a dynamic, multidimensional, and deep economic and financial relation with Beijing. A third reason could be that there is no pressure coming from the Chinese government to sign to BRI to maintain the benefits coming from the bilateral links.

There is no doubt the United States has been following these circumstances closely. The intensification of the economic and diplomatic relations between LAC countries and China, triggered by the export boom of raw materials to China (oil, iron, copper and soy) in the last two decades (URDINEZ; MASIERO, 2015), captured US attention even before BRI. Bilateral trade with China linked LAC to the fate of Chinese economy and resulted in concentration and dependence on the Chinese market, which was not good news for the US. However, the invitation of Wang Yi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of China, to LAC countries to join the Belt and Road Initiative was a big alert for the Trump administration.

Confronting this situation, Mike Pompeo, US Secretary of State has urged LAC countries to keep "opened eyes" for Chinese investments and in December 2019, the US government launched the Growth in the Americas initiative. This new mechanism was planned to "facilitate job creation and accelerate economic growth in the Americas by promoting the private sector as the primary engine of growth to develop critical infrastructure of all types: energy, airports, ports, roads, telecom and digital networks, among others" (US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 2019). The plan had still not been activated when COVID-19 hit LAC in early March 2020.

#### *China, LAC, and the US in the COVID-19 context*

The outbreak of COVID-19 and its expansion to the region intensified the already existent trends in LAC relations with China and the US. As a starting point for the analysis of this recent development, we identified three aspects that are becoming more prominent in Chinese engage-

ment in the region, particularly in the health dimension. The first one is related to bilateral and multilateral cooperation during the outbreak of the pandemic, particularly on transfer of knowledge and experiences from Chinese officials and specialists to LAC. The second one is what mass media has called “mask diplomacy” and is related to the donations that China has given to LAC countries in the first semester of 2020. The third aspect deals with the already extended perception of Latin America and the Caribbean as an arena of competition for China and Taiwan and how the US involvement in it.

Chinese health cooperation with LAC countries expanded during the pandemic to assist the governments with their immediate responses to local outbreaks. In the multilateral arena, efforts concentrated within the China-CELAC forum. On March 24, China organized a videoconference with LAC countries, where Chinese experts described its experience with COVID-19 on prevention and control. Officials from the 24 countries which maintain relations with China, and from Nicaragua (which recognizes Taiwan), along with representatives from the WHO, UNICEF, the Pan American Health Organization, and the IADB attended the conference. Chinese experts also provided information about clinic treatment, customs administration, and quarantine (MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 2020). Additionally, this kind of event was replicated bilaterally with almost every country of the region. The conferences were held by the Chinese central government, and also by provinces, hospitals and universities.

In Argentina, for example, the Chinese Embassy promoted a conference between the Argentinian Ministry of Health, Ginés González García, and the Hospital of the Zhejiang University, where González García expressed: “we want to learn from China, how it has managed to contain it [the disease] and how it has minimized the consequences for the Chinese people. I would like to take advantage of and use the techniques and advice of China in my country” (XINHUA, 2020). Meetings between China’s ambassadors and LAC Ministers of Health were also held with Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela, Panamá, among others.

A second trend that has characterized the relations between China and LAC countries is related to donations. Myers and Barrios (2020) argue that China’s so-called “mask-diplomacy” has been on the rise in LAC due to governments grappling with COVID-19 and its social and economic consequences. There are some features that we could identify in this regard. Donations that arrived at the region were sent by different Chinese entities: the central government, provinces, companies, foundations and also by the Chinese community of the different countries. For example Huawei, the Chinese telecommunications company that have been in the center of the trade war with the US, donated N-95 masks to hospitals in Brazil, protective goggles to the Uruguayan Government, biosafety suits to Bolivia and thermal cameras to Argentina. Regarding foundations, Jack Ma communicated that Alibaba would donate 2 million masks, 400.000 testing kits and 104 ventilators to 24 countries (SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST, 2020). Alibaba foundation was the most ac-

tive, but the region also received masks and kits from other foundations like Mammoth Public Welfare Foundation of Shenzhen. Other entities that donated medical equipment are different Chinese provinces which have friendship or twinning agreements with cities in Latin America. For example, in Uruguay the province of Sichuan donated 10.000 surgical masks to the department of Lavalleja. Sister city linkages is one example of China's expansive subnational diplomacy (MYERS; BARRIOS, 2020)

This pandemic has shown that Latin America and the Caribbean is an arena of competition between China and Taiwan. We need to consider that from the 33 CELAC countries, 24 have relations with China and 9 to Taiwan. To understand the importance of the Caribbean we should note that  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the countries that have diplomatic relations with Taiwan are located in this region. As we said before in 2020 the participation of Taiwan in the WHO became an important issue due to the COVID-19 and the accusations of Taiwan that the organization failed to communicate an early warning about transmission of the coronavirus (FINANCIAL TIMES, 2020).

In LAC countries we identify this competition between China and Taiwan in two circumstances. The first one was cross-donations: Chinese aid arrived in countries that do not recognize the PRC and Taiwan assisted countries that recognize China. And the second one is about the defense of some LAC countries of Taiwan participation in WHO. Regarding the first point, it is interesting to highlight donations from a Taiwanese foundation to Santa Cruz, Bolivia. The foundation Tzu Chi donated to the Municipal Government of Santa Cruz 30,000 masks, 4,000 safety glasses and 4,000 N-95 masks (GOBIERNO MUNICIPAL DE SANTA CRUZ DE LA SIERRA, 2020). Chinese donations of equipment to Haiti, is also an illustrative example of this cross-assistance process (LE NATIONAL, 2020). Regarding the WHO, in 2020 the Minister of Health of Belize, Pablo Marin, requested the inclusion of a supplementary item entitled "Inviting Taiwan to participate in the World Health Assembly as an observer" in the provisional agenda for the 73th session of the WHA (WHO, 2020). The governments of Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also expressed support for the Taiwan invitation to the assembly.

#### Chinese diplomatic assertiveness and the race for the narrative

Along the lines of these tensions between Washington and Beijing in the LAC region, there is also another issue that is emerging more strongly in the context of the pandemia: the campaign to shape the narrative (MYERS; BARRIOS, 2020). In this respect, Beijing has adopted a more assertive -some could say aggressive- tone, as a clear response to Washington's intention to blame the country for the global expansion of the virus. Chinese more assertive diplomatic rhetoric is known as wolf warrior diplomacy. It was dubbed with this name after the Chinese movies and refers to the combative discourse of diplomats intended at defending China's national interests, often in confrontational ways (ZHIQUN, 2020).



Before the COVID-19 outbreak Chinese diplomacy was becoming increasingly active and confrontational, both in actions and in discourse (SWAINE, 2010). As several observers pointed out, in the last decade Chinese diplomacy has become more proactive, confident (SWAINE, 2010) and assertive (CHRISTENSEN, 2012; PU, 2017; CHEN; PU; JOHNSTON, 2014; CHANG LIAO, 2018). As Qin (2014) suggests, this Chinese assertiveness discourse narrative -or new assertiveness meme in terms of Johnston (2013)-, took shape within the United States academic circles and expanded to other countries originating a heated debate over Chinese intentions, interests and conditions that explain this shift. Both Qin (2014) and Johnston (2013) underline that this assertiveness in China's diplomacy is not such a new feature. In turn, they argue that it reflects more continuity than change.

Others underline the outstanding shift Chinese diplomacy has gone through. Since 2008, and particularly with Xi's accession to power in 2013, Chinese diplomacy has changed the low profile set by Deng Xiaoping as a guiding principle for China's diplomacy, emphasizing that China should 'hide its capabilities and bide its time' (PU, 2017). The reasons behind this shift are also controversial. Most authors identify at least the following: 1) domestic reasons such as nationalism and bureaucratic conditions; 2) Chinese growing self-confidence; 3) reaction to external incentives/conditions. According to Scobell and Harold (2015), China's assertiveness in foreign policy became more evident after the 2008 financial crisis driven by a sense of self-confidence or premature triumphalism. In line with this argument, He and Feng (2012) suggest that China's diplomacy is also responding to its expanding national interests that is a consequence of its rising economic and political international status. Therefore, "it is normal for China to formulate new foreign policies compatible with the new power configuration in the international system" (HE; FENG, 2012, p. 636). Furthermore, since 2010, US growing interest and presence in East Asia under the Obama Administration and the Rebalance to Asia policy, generated feelings of reactive insecurity in Beijing, which also fueled a more confident posture (SCOBELL; HAROLD, 2015; D'HOOOGHE, 2014). But according to another line of authors, it was domestic rather than external factors, which had more influence on China's more assertive international behavior. In this perspective, Liao (2018) identifies three sets of domestic conditions: conflict among bureaucratic agents and political elites (People's Liberation Army, local government officials and managers of state-owned enterprises); the surge of nationalism, and the arbitrary power of policy makers.

One of the most outstanding episodes that evidence China's more assertive diplomacy was the government's reaction to the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Chinese human rights activist Liu Xiaobo in 2010. Besides forbidding Liu, his family and friends to attend the ceremony, Beijing also pressured diplomats from other countries into staying away from the ceremony. Chinese actions, which included severe economic and political sanctions on Norway<sup>4</sup>, created a negative image of the government around the world (D'HOOOGHE, 2018).

The recent issue with Sweden also reflects Chinese stronger diplomatic responses, in retaliation to criticism on human rights records.

4. "China cancelled high-level bilateral meetings and cultural events, denied Norwegian official visas, tightened up on imports of Norwegian products and in 2012 excluded Norway from the list of countries that no longer require a visa for a 72-hour stopover in Beijing" (D'HOOOGUE, 2014, p. 59).

The diplomatic row followed the announcement that Gui Minhai, the Swedish publisher who was kidnapped and imprisoned in China without a trial, would receive the Tucholsky Prize (OLSON, 2019). The Chinese Ambassador to Sweden, Gui Congyou, stated on a radio interview that: “We oppose even more resolutely any Swedish government officials attending the awarding ceremony. It will bring serious negative impacts on our bilateral friendly cooperation and normal exchanges. We will surely take countermeasures” (EMBASSY OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO SWEDEN, 2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic context turned out to be a catalyst to reinforce this already more assertive and self-confident diplomatic tone. These reactions emanated both as a response to US and other countries’ critics, but also as a tool to shape the discourse over China’s responsible power image during the crisis. Chinese diplomats have responded to criticism in Southeast Asia, Europe and more recently, Latin America. According to Poling and Tran (2020), “Beijing’s wolf warriors reveal an insecure, belligerent China whose assistance rarely comes without a price”. But rather than insecurity, we understand this behavior reflects deeper self-confidence. There is no doubt that China’s more confident attitude emanates in a major part from its increasing world influence and economic clout.

In Latin America one example was the controversy between the Chinese Ambassador to Chile, Xu Bu, with the Chilean representative Jaime Bellolio after the latter met Joshua Wong, one of the leaders of the protest in Hong Kong (EL MOSTRADOR, 2019). But before COVID-19 there were not many examples of this type of response. However, in this new situation, Chinese Embassies have been active in the press not only promoting its agenda but also confronting different opinions.

On the one hand, Chinese embassies and ambassadors have shown that China is working with the different governments in coping with the virus in close coordination and providing support and sharing experiences. This type of cooperative initiatives, that could be tagged as soft power, try to build the idea that China has been transparent and responsible, notifying the situation to the World Health Organization and criticizing opinions that spread xenophobia or fear. With phrases like “Los Hermanos sean unidos” (brothers be united) (ÁMBITO, 2020), the CCP is portraying its will to unconditionally support Latin American countries.

On the other hand, embassies throughout the region have responded to any kind of perceived rhetorical attack on China. One example was in Bolivia, where the Ambassador Huang Yazhong replied to an article of the colombian journalist Patricia Janiot, that was replicated by a Bolivian newspaper (TU REPÚBLICA, 2020). Other most known example was the response of the Chinese embassy to Eduardo Bolsonaro, federal Deputy and son of the Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, after he blame China for the pandemia<sup>5</sup> (EMBASSY OF CHINA IN BRAZIL, 2020). A third example in the region is the Peruvian case, where the Chinese Embassy said that Mario Vargas Llosa made ridiculous comments in an article when he stated that the “virus comes from China” (LA VANGUARDIA, 2020).

5. “As suas palavras são extremamente irresponsáveis e nos soam familiares. Não deixam de ser uma imitação dos seus queridos amigos. Ao voltar de Miami, contraiu, infelizmente, vírus mental, que está infectando a amizades entre os nossos povos”. Retrieved 18 july from: <https://twitter.com/EmbaixadaChina/status/1240456558007508993?s=20>

Although unlike the cases of Sweden or Norway, or more recently Australia, Latin America has not yet witnessed strong retaliation measures from China, previous experiences and the increasing assertiveness of Chinese diplomacy, is not to be overlooked by regional leaders. Based on the economic overdependence almost all countries in the region have on China, the potential use of economic sanctions or threats to use it, is a possible scenario, one in which Latin America will have no tools to confront.

#### Final remarks

The rise of China and its consequences for the international system are outstanding issues in international relations studies in the 21st century. In that sense, the latest manifestation of the Chinese 'going global' strategy, a deepening and extension of it, is President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative (GARLICK, 2020). This project has been considered one of the largest in China's foreign policy in modern history and from a domestic perspective, BRI represents a comprehensive and massive strategy oriented primarily to function as a catalyst for Chinese economic growth (TAUBE; LI, 2020).

It is interesting to note that while there is some conviction that China's growth will inevitably bring consequences for the global order, there are no major agreements beyond this idea (ZHANG, 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic and Trump's response has made this competition evident, exacerbating the same forces that had been shaping the policies of these great powers in the last few years. In that context, Latin America is a key region to analyze how relations with China have progressed, first through trade, then on investment and finances, to finally understand the Belt and Road Initiative in the region and how the pandemic COVID-19 impacts on it. As aforementioned, it should be noted that these last two aspects are only part of a much broader competition between the United States and China.

Our analysis of China-Latin America relations in the context of the pandemic addresses Chinese donations (the so-called diplomacy mask), a Chinese diplomatic assertiveness and a race for the narrative between China and the United States. It is important to highlight that, as we have mentioned, wolf warrior diplomacy is not something so new, and there are already antecedents prior to COVID-19. However, in Latin America we had not yet witnessed this type of "confrontations" and responses from China. Does this affirmative diplomacy imply then that the aid of the diplomacy mask comes with a price for Latin America? In turn, the soft power that China has built in Latin America is damaged after the pandemic and this assertive diplomacy? These aspects will also inevitably become central concerns for the region in the years to come.

#### Bibliography

- ACTIS, E.; CREUS, N. La disputa por el poder global: China contra Estados Unidos en la crisis de la pandemia. Buenos Aires: Capital Intelectual, 2020.
- ALLISON, G. *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017.
- ALON, I.; ZHANG, W.; LATTEMANN, C. *China's Belt and Road Initiative: Changing the Rules of Globalization*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

ÁMBITO.COM. Los hermanos sean unidos. Retrieved from: <https://www.ambito.com/opiniones/china/los-hermanos-sean-unidos-n5096032>, 2020. Acesso em: 15 de agosto 2020.

ASIAN INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT BANK. Members and Prospective Members of the Bank. Official website. Retrieved from: <https://www.aiib.org/en/aboutaiib/governance/members-of-bank/index.html>, 2020. Acesso em: 10 de agosto 2020.

ASPINWALL, N. Pompeo urges Tedros to invite Taiwan to WHA. Retrieved from: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/pompeo-urges-tedros-to-invite-taiwan-to-wha-as-more-countries-join-campaign/>, 2020. Acesso em: 12 de agosto 2020.

BALDWIN, D. *Economic Statecraft*. Surrey-UK: Princeton University Press, 1985.

BENABDALLAH, L. Contesting the international order by integrating it: the case of China's Belt and Road initiative. *Third World Quarterly*, v. 40, n. 1, p. 92-108, 2019.

BERNAL MEZA R. Argentina y Brasil en la Política Internacional: regionalismo y Mercosur (estrategias, cooperación y factores de tensión). *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, v. 51, n. 2, p. 154-178, 2008.

BLANCHARD, J.-M.F.; RIPSMA, N. *Economic statecraft and foreign policy: Sanctions, incentives, and target state calculations*. Routledge, 2013.

BRAUTIGAM, D. U.S. and Chinese Efforts in Africa in Global Health and Foreign Aid: Objectives, Impact, and Potential Conflicts of Interest. In FREEMAN, C. (ed.). *China's Emerging Global Health and Foreign Aid Engagement in Africa*. Washington: Centre for Strategic & International Studies, p. 1-12, 2011.

BUCKLEY, P.; MENG, C. The Strategy of Foreign-Invested Manufacturing Enterprises in China: Export-Oriented and Market-Oriented FDI Revisited. *Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies*, v. 3, n. 2, p. 111-31, 2005.

CABALLERO SANTOS, S. Unasur y su aporte a la resolución de conflictos sudamericanos: el Caso de Bolivia. Working Paper IELAT, 44. Retrieved from: [http://www.ielat.es/inicio/repositorio/DT-44-Sergio\\_Caballero\\_Web.pdf](http://www.ielat.es/inicio/repositorio/DT-44-Sergio_Caballero_Web.pdf). 2012. Acesso em: 10 de agosto 2020.

CELAC. Plan de Acción Conjunto de Cooperación en Áreas Prioritarias CELAC-CHINA (2019-2021). CELAC. Retrieved from: <https://celac.rree.gob.sv/documento-oficial/plan-de-accion-conjunto-de-cooperacion-en-areas-prioritarias-celac-china-2019-2021/>. 2018. Acesso em: 8 de agosto 2020.

CELADA, N. J. China's Foreign Direct investment in Panama: Historical Trajectory and Patterns of Investment. In DUSSEL PETERS, E. (ed.). *China's foreign direct investment in Latin America and the Caribbean: Conditions and challenges*. Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, pp. 231-253, 2019.

CHANG LIAO, N. Domestic Politics and China's Assertive Foreign Policy: Why China's Rise May Not Be Peaceful. In: LENG TK.; AOYAMA, R. (eds.). *Decoding the Rise of China*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 85-106, 2018.

CHEN, D.; PU, X.; JOHNSTON, A. I. Debating China's Assertiveness. *International Security*, v. 38, n. 3, p. 176-183, 2014.

CHINA DAILY. Major health exchange and cooperation on the Belt and Road Initiative. Retrieved from: [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/m/chinahealth/2015-12/18/content\\_22774412.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/m/chinahealth/2015-12/18/content_22774412.htm). 2015. Acesso em: 10 de agosto 2020.

CHINA DAILY. Newly elected WHO chief reiterates one-China principle. Retrieved from: [http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2017-05/25/content\\_29490575.htm](http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2017-05/25/content_29490575.htm). 2017. Acesso em: 8 de agosto 2020.

CHRISTENSEN, T. The Advantages of an Assertive China: Responding to Beijing's Abrasive Diplomacy. *Foreign Affairs*, v. 90, n. 2, p. 54-67, 2011.

CLARKE, M. The Belt and Road Initiative: Exploring Beijing's Motivations and Challenges for its New Silk Road. *Strategic Analysis*, v. 42, n. 2, p. 84-102, 2018.

D'HOOGUE, I. *China's public diplomacy*. Leiden: Brill. 2014.

ELLIS, E. *China in Latin America: The Whats and Wherefores*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers. 2009.

EMBAIXADA DE CHINA EM BRASIL. Retrieved from: <https://twitter.com/EmbaixadaChina/status/1240456558007508993?s=20>, 2020. Acesso em: 10 de agosto 2020.

EMBASSY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO SWEDEN. Ambassador Gui Congyou Gives Exclusive Interview to Valdemar Lonnroth from Göteborgs-Posten. Retrieved from: <http://www.chinaembassy.se/eng/sxw/t1624939.htm>. 2019. Acesso em: 12 de agosto 2020.

- FENG, Z.; HUANG, J. China's Strategic Partnership Diplomacy. ESPO Working Paper No. 8. Retrieved from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2459948>. 2014. Acesso em: 15 de agosto 2020.
- FINANCIAL TIMES. Taiwan says WHO failed to act on coronavirus transmission warning. Retrieved from: <https://www.ft.com/content/2a70a02a-644a-11ea-a6cd-df28cc3c6a68>. 2020. Acesso em: 10 de agosto 2020.
- FOOT, R. Constraints on conflict in the Asia-Pacific. *Political Science*, v. 66, n. 2, p. 119-142, 2014.
- FORNES, G.; MENDEZ, A. China and Latin America in the Twenty-First Century. In FORNES, G.; MENDEZ, A. (eds.), *The China-Latin America Axis*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, p. 1-15, 2018.
- FRIEDBERG, A. *A Contest for Supremacy: China, America, and the Struggle for Mastery in Asia*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2011.
- GARLICK, J. *The impact of China's Belt and Road Initiative*. London: Routledge, 2020.
- GOBIERNO MUNICIPAL DE SANTA CRUZ DE LA SIERRA. Fundación Tzu Chi de Taiwán. Dona insumos médicos para hospitales de Santa Cruz. Retrieved from: <http://gmsantacruz.gob.bo/noticia-municipal.php?mostrar=2020-05-25-E>. 2020. Acesso em: 10 de agosto 2020.
- HE, K.; FENG, H. Debating China's assertiveness: Taking China's power and interests seriously. *International Politics* v. 49, n. 5, p. 633-644, 2012.
- HUANG, Y. Tedros, Taiwan, and Trump: What They Tell Us About China's Growing Clout in Global Health. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/blog/tedros-taiwan-and-trump-what-they-tell-us-about-chinas-growing-clout-global-health>. 2017. Acesso em: 14 de agosto 2020.
- IKENBERRY, J. The end of liberal international order? *International Affairs*, v. 94, n. 1, p. 7-23, 2018.
- JOHNSON, C. President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative. A Practical Assessment of the Chinese Communist Party's Roadmap for China's Global Resurgence. Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington DC, p. 1-38, 2016.
- JOHNSTON, A. How New and Assertive Is China's New Assertiveness? *International Security*, v. 37, n. 4, p. 7-42, 2013.
- KOTSCHWAR, B. China's Economic Influence in Latin America. *Asian Economic Policy Review*, n. 9, p. 202-222, 2014.
- LA VANGUARDIA. China y Vargas Llosa se pelean por el coronavirus. Retrieved from: <https://www.lavanguardia.com/libros/20200317/474226470985/vargas-llosa-china-coronavirus.html>. 2019. Acesso em: 10 de agosto 2020.
- LANCASTER, K; RUBIN, M.; RAPP-HOOPER, M. Mapping China's Health Silk Road. Council on Foreign Relations. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/blog/mapping-chinas-health-silk-road>. 2020. Acesso em: 13 de agosto 2020.
- LE NATIONAL. Une compagnie basee en Chine vient en aide au corps medical haitien. Retrieved from: [http://www.lenational.org/post\\_free.php?elif=1\\_CONTENTUE/actualitees&rebmun=6577](http://www.lenational.org/post_free.php?elif=1_CONTENTUE/actualitees&rebmun=6577). 2020. Acesso em: 10 de agosto 2020.
- LIANG, W. Pulling the Region into its Orbit? China's Economic Statecraft in Latin America. *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, v. 24, n. 4, p. 1-17, 2019.
- MAYER, M. China's historical statecraft and the return of history. *International Affairs*, v. 94, n. 6, p. 1217-1236, 2018.
- MEARSHEIMER, J. *The tragedy of great power politics*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014.
- MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. Conferencia de Prensa Habitual Ofrecida 24 de Marzo De 2020 por Geng Shuang. Retrieved from: <https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/esp/xwfw/lxjzdh/t1760929.shtml>. 2020. Acesso em: 16 de agosto 2020.
- MYERS, M.; BARRIOS, R. China's Medical Outreach in LAC: Facts and Features. *The Dialogue*. Retrieved from: <https://www.thedialogue.org/blogs/2020/05/chinas-medical-outreach-in-lac-facts-and-features/>. 2020. Acesso em: 10 de agosto 2020.
- NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND REFORM COMMISSION. Vision and Actions on Jointly Building Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China. Retrieved <http://www.beltandroadforum.org/english/n100/2017/0410/c22-45.html>. 2015. Acesso em: 8 de agosto 2020.
- NATIONAL HEALTH COMMISSION. Beijing Communiqué of The Belt and Road Health Co-operation & Health Silk Road. Retrieved from: [http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2017-08/18/c\\_72257.htm](http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2017-08/18/c_72257.htm). 2017. Acesso em: 6 de agosto 2020.



NOLAN, P. Preface. In: FANG, C.; NOLAN, P. (eds). *Routledge Handbook of the Belt and Road*. New York: Routledge, pp. xxi-xxiv, 2019.

OFFICE OF THE LEADING GROUP FOR THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE. *Building the Belt and Road: Concept, Practice and China's Contribution*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press. 2017.

PARRA PÉREZ, A. OBOR: las 5 claves de la mayor iniciativa de infraestructuras mundial Liderada por China. Documento Opinión 113, Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos, p. 1-20, 2017.

PAZ, G. Rising China's "offensive" in Latin America and the U.S reaction. *Asian Perspective*, v. 30, n. 4, p. 95-112, 2006.

PU, X. Controversial Identity of a Rising China. *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, v. 10, n. 2, p. 131-149, 2017.

QIN, Y. Continuity through Change: Background Knowledge and China's International Strategy. *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, v. 7, n. 3, p. 285-314, 2014.

REN, M. Global health and the Belt and Road Initiative. *Global Health Journal*, v. 2, n. 4, p. 1-4, 2018.

ROLLAND, N. China's Belt and Road Initiative: Five Years Later. Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. January 25. Retrieved from: <https://www.nbr.org/publication/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-five-years-later/>. 2018. Acesso em: 11 de agosto 2020.

ROSALES, O. *El sueño Chino*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI. 2020.

RUBIOLO, F. South America-Asia Pacific relations: Belt and Road and beyond, en *Observatorio América Latina-Asia Pacífico* (comp.), América Latina y Asia: entre la revolución digital y una globalización cuestionada. Montevideo: ALADI, CAF, CEPAL. [en prensa], 2020.

SCOBELL, A.; HAROLD, S. An "Assertive" China? Insights from Interviews. *Asian Security*, v. 9, n. 2, p.111-131, 2013.

SHAMBAUGH, D. *China Goes Global: The Partial Power*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2013.

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST. Jack Ma donates masks, medical supplies to help coronavirus fight in Asia and Latin America. Retrieved from <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3076319/jack-ma-donates-18-million-masks-medical-supplies-help>. 2020. Acesso em: 7 de agosto 2020.

SWAINE, M. Perceptions of an Assertive China. *China Leadership Monitor*, v. 32, p. 1-19, 2010.

TANG, K; ZHIHUI, L; WENKAI, L.; CHEN, L. China's Silk Road and global health. *The Lancet*, v. 390, p. 2595-2601. Retrieved from: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(17\)32898-2/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(17)32898-2/fulltext). 2017. Acesso em: 5 de agosto 2020.

TOJE, A. *Will China's rise be peaceful? Security, Stability and Legitimacy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

TU REPÚBLICA. Arrogancia y prejuicio perjudican la lucha internacional contra el COVID-19. Retrieved from: <https://turepublica.com/noticias/arrogancia-y-prejuicio-perjudican-la-lucha-internacional-contra-el-covid-19/>. 2020. Acesso em: 2 de agosto 2020.

URDINEZ, F.; MASIERO, G. China and the WTO: Will the Market Economy Status Make Any Difference after 2016? *The Chinese Economy*, v. 48, n. 2, p. 155-172, 2015.

US DEPARTMENT OF STATE. Official Launch of the Growth in the Americas Initiative. Retrieved from: <https://www.state.gov/official-launch-of-the-growth-in-the-americas-initiative/>, 2019. Acesso em: 1 de agosto 2020.

US DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES. U.S. Statement on Taiwan's Participation at the World Health Assembly. Retrieved from: <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2020/05/19/us-statement-on-taiwan-participation-at-the-world-health-assembly.html>. Acesso em: 4 de agosto 2020.

VADELL, J. China-CELAC Forum and the new regionalism for a multipolar world: the challenges for South-South Cooperation. *Revista Carta Internacional*, v. 13, n. 1, p. 6-37, 2018.

WALT, S. Rising Powers and the Risks of War. In: TOJE, A. (ed.). *Will China's rise be peaceful? Security, Stability and Legitimacy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.

WANG, Y.; LI, S. The Belt and Road Initiative framework. In: FANG, C.; NOLAN, P. (eds), *Routledge Handbook of the Belt and Road*. New York: Routledge, p. 99-105, 2019.

- WEN, J. Vigorously Promoting Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Between China and the European Union. Speech at the China-EU Investment and Trade Forum. Retrieved from: <http://www.chinamission.be/eng/zt/t101949.htm>. 2004. Acesso em: 11 de agosto 2020.
- WISE, C. U.S.-China Competition in the Western Hemisphere. In: TELLIS, A., SZALWINSKI, A.; WILLS, M. (eds.) U.S.-China Competition for Global Influence. Washington: National Bureau of Asian Research, p. 276-305. 2020a.
- WISE, C. Dragonomics: How Latin America Is Maximizing (or Missing Out on) China's International Development Strategy. New Haven: Yale University Press. 2020b.
- WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO). Background on supplementary agenda. Retrieved from: [https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA73/Background\\_on\\_supplementary\\_agenda.pdf](https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA73/Background_on_supplementary_agenda.pdf), 2020. Acesso em: 10 de agosto 2020.
- WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO). Contributors Statistics. WHO. Retrieved from: <https://open.who.int/2018-19/contributors/contributor>. 2019. Acesso em: 6 de agosto 2020.
- XINXHUA. Especial: Diez preguntas y respuestas sobre COVID-19 en videoconferencia entre China y Argentina. Retrieved from: <http://spanish.peopledaily.com.cn/n3/2020/0326/c31617-9672667.html>. 2020. Acesso em: 10 de agosto 2020.
- XINHUANET. Xi says China to send more medical experts to Italy. Retrieved from [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-03/17/c\\_138886179.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-03/17/c_138886179.htm). 2020. Acesso em: 1 de agosto 2020.
- XU, Y. China's strategic partnerships in Latin America: Case studies of China's oil diplomacy in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela, 1991-2015. London: Lexington Books, 2017.
- YU, J. The Belt and Road Initiative: domestic interests, bureaucratic politics and the EU-China relations. *Asia Europe Journal*, v. 16, p. 223-236, 2018.
- YU, L. China's strategic partnership with Latin America: a fulcrum in China's rise. *International Affairs*, v. 91, n. 5, p. 1047-1068, 2015.
- ZHANG, Y. China and Liberal Hierarchies in Global International Society: Power and Negotiation for Normative Change. *International Affairs*, v. 92, n. 4, p. 795-816, 2016.
- ZHU, Z. Interpreting China's "Wolf-Warrior Diplomacy". What explains the sharper tone to China's overseas conduct recently? *The Diplomat*. May 15, 2020.
- ZHOU, F. China's economic restructuring and the Belt and Road. In: FANG, C.; NOLAN, P. (eds), *Routledge Handbook of the Belt and Road*. New York: Routledge, p. 15-20, 2019.
- ZOU, Lei. *The Political Economy of China's Belt and Road Initiative*. Singapore: World Scientific, 2018.