

CHARLES UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Political Studies

Department of International Relations

Master's Thesis



2024

Alison Gryzlo

CHARLES UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Political Studies

Department of International Relations

**Chinese Involvement in Latin America Post-2009: A Study of the Relevance of Defensive,
Offensive, and Postclassical Realism**



Master's Thesis

Author: Alison Gryzlo

Academic advisor: doc. PhDr. Jan Karlas, Ph.D., M.A.

Study Programme: Master's in International Relations

Year of Project Submission: 2024

Declaration

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on

2024-27-4

Alison Gryzlo

References:

GRYZLO, Alison. *Chinese Involvement in Latin America Post-2009: A Study of the Relevance of Defensive, Offensive, and Postclassical Realism*. Prague, 2024. Pages. Master's thesis (Mgr.). Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Political Studies. Department of International Relations. Supervisor Mgr. Jan Karlas, Ph.D.

Length of the thesis: 117,048 characters

Abstract:

China has intensified its cooperation with states in Latin America since 2009 in the economic, political, and security spaces. Amidst a backdrop of China's immense unprecedented economic growth while US sits as the global hegemonic power in a unipolar international order, China could approach and eventually surpass the US for global hegemony. Is Chinese involvement in Latin America a response the US policies such as the 2011 Pivot to Asia strategy, or a strategy to gain allies abroad while securing a steady source of natural resources? To what extent can this cooperation be attributed to China's concern about the threat that the US poses to its national security? This thesis examines trends of China's forms of cooperation in the economic, political, and security realms to gauge to what extent the state's behavior is motivated by security pressures. Using congruence analysis, I will test three related yet opposing theoretical approaches to determine which, if any, provide sufficient explanatory power for China's recent comprehensive involvement in Latin American states.

Key Words:

China-Latin America relations, China, Latin America, Security, Defensive Realism, Offensive Realism, Postclassical Realism, Hegemony

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. Short historical overview of the relations between China and the Latin American countries.....	7
3. Literature review.....	14
4. Theoretical and Methodological Framework.....	20
<i>4.1 Theoretical Explanations.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>4.2 Methodology.....</i>	<i>30</i>
5. China’s relations with the Latin American countries: A Descriptive Analysis.....	33
<i>5.1 Political Realm.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>5.2 Military Relam.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>5.3 Economic Realm.....</i>	<i>40</i>
6. Evidence for the Realist Explanations.....	44
<i>6.1 Evidence for Defense Realism.....</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>6.2 Evidence for Offensive Realism.....</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>6.3 Evidence for Postclassical Realism.....</i>	<i>51</i>
7. Conclusion.....	54
Citations.....	60

1. Introduction

The People's Republic of China (PRC) has experienced an exorbitant amount of economic development in the twenty-first century. It has transitioned with relative rapidity, evolving from one of the world's poorest countries, into the second largest economy in the world in the present day (Roy, 2023). China is now home to a booming manufacturing industry, an arsenal of nuclear weapons, and sits as the state with the second largest domestic population on the globe (Worldbank, 2023). In 2009, China became the world's largest exporter of goods and second largest importer, and in 2013 China became the world's largest trader in goods (Ibid). With a history punctuated by Western and Japanese imperialism, a "century of humiliation", and war both civil and international levels, China has ascended in modern day to rival the United States (US) as a global hegemon.

It is important to explore the potential security implications behind China's rapid rise. China is currently listed as the second largest economy in the world, behind the US which has reigned supreme on the world economic scale since the inception of trade liberalizing efforts following the end of the Second World War. A major reason for the speed of China's economic ascension has been its leveraging of liberalizing economic market reforms which came into effect in the late twentieth century, namely the complex "going out" policy which enabled Chinese enterprises to invest and operate abroad (Wang, 2016). Further intensifying China's market access, China's joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 made it possible for the nation to introduce its industrial products to other countries in order to gain from trade. The economic rise of China is remarkable, as it has altered the balance of power in the international system, strengthening its position relative to other states without using military force. While

China seems to be gaining relative power compared to the US, it is worth exploring how the state is leveraging its external relationships with other states as a potential hedge against the threat that the US may pose to China's security.

Economic and security tensions have informed the China-US relationship in the past decade. In 2009, former US President Obama announced additional tariffs on imported Chinese tires for certain passenger vehicles and light-trucks as a protectionist measure to prevent domestic job loss. China challenged this and requested a WTO dispute settlement panel which did not come to fruition (Hufbauer and Lowry, 2022: 2-3). Shortly after in 2010, China announced it would impose tariffs on US chicken parts, seen as a retaliatory act for the US's initial tariff. A key policy decision made shortly thereafter was the US's Pivot to Asia policy, which was announced in 2011 by President Obama at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit. This policy shift involved a relative shift of US foreign policy attention and resources towards the Asia-Pacific region. This strategic commitment to rebalancing US priorities away from the Middle East and towards Asia was the first policy to "explicitly elevate Asia to the primary global regional strategy priority" (Shambaugh, 2013: 10). This includes strategic-military, foreign policy, and economic measures. The US upgraded its military posture and promised to relocate 60% of its naval and air capabilities to the Asia-Pacific region, citing security concerns over China's aggressive behavior in the East China Sea and South China Sea (Zhang, 2022: 799). A few years later, the US established the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), a regional free-trade group which was formally signed in 2016 which deliberately excluded China. The US also forged strategic partnerships with countries in the Asia-Pacific such as Vietnam, India, and Indonesia (Zhang, 2022: 801).

Tensions escalated further in 2015 regarding claims of Chinese militarization in The South China Sea (SCS). Since the 2010s, the SCS has emerged as a focal point for confrontation between the US and China, China claims contested sovereignty (nine-dash-line) over large portions of the SCS, which is against international law. China's claims and actions became increasingly extensive and aggressive, deploying missile systems and creating military bases and docks on artificial islands. China has attempted to match the US' naval capabilities, moving away from being a primarily continental power. Recent reports suggest that vessels engaged in commercial fishing operate alongside Chinese military and law enforcement. China's unilateral actions have been claimed to undermine peace and security in the region, but concerns have spread globally. In addition to its strategic value, the SCS is of economic importance: approximately fifty percent of maritime trade passes through the SCS and it contains significant amounts of energy reserves (Scobell, 2018: 202). The US, as a dominant navy power, has ratified collective defense treaties with Japan and Philippines, and strategic partnerships with other local actors, citing defense in the Asia-Pacific as a strategic priority due to China's aggressive stance in the SCS. Militarization of the SCS both displays and exacerbates rising tensions in China's relations with the US, posing a significant threat to international economic and political stability.

Since the beginning of the escalation of China-US tensions, China has entered a new phase of comprehensive cooperation with developing countries as the basis of all of its external relations, known as *fazhanzhong guojia shi jichu* (Yu, 2015). These cooperation efforts include states within Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC), and this relationship has since evolved to become an essential axis in South-South cooperation (Lehoczki, 2015: 380). China-Latin American relations have increased to different degrees at economic, political, institutional, and security levels. Economically, China has surpassed the US as Latin America's primary trading

partner, and it currently sits as the largest trading partner of Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay (Barrios and Rios, 2023; Roy, 2023). Trade with the region in 2022 has been estimated to be \$482.6 billion, an over thirty-three percent jump from \$14.6 billion in 2001 (ibid). China's entities and state-owned enterprises (SEOs) have also invested \$148.9 billion to countries in the region between 2005 and 2022, with a heavy focus on energy projects, which account for 62% of their investments in the region, and metals and mining accounting for 21% (Barrios and Rios, 2023). China even became Latin America's leading lender, surpassing total combined loans to the region made by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and World Bank (Guo, 2023). Additionally, China maintains cooperation with diverse Latin American countries in areas such as aviation, biofuels, nanotechnology, satellites, and telecommunications (Ellis, 2011). Twenty-two out of the total thirty-three nations within LAC have signed on to be a part of China's global infrastructure project, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China has also increased its participation in Latin American multilateral bodies such as the Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation, Inter-American Development Bank, and the Organization of American States (OAS) (Blanchard, 2016).

These efforts focused on cooperation may seem puzzling- China and the region of Latin America could not be further from each other geographically, yet their ties have been intensifying since the start of the twenty-first century. I have chosen Latin America for two main reasons. Firstly, it is the geographic antipode to China, situated far from China and seemingly immaterial to its interests. However, the region's proximity to the US makes Latin America an important geographic space regarding US security. Secondly, the research available on China's rapidly increasing relationship with Latin American regions has been studied largely in terms of economic factors, focusing on China's extraction of natural resources to sustain its manufacturing

industry. This explanation overlooks potential security factors that may account for China's budding relationship with Latin America. Given the changing international order regarding global hegemony, it is worth exploring to what extent security or power-based motivations also underpin China's involvement in the region.

The scholarship on this subject largely focuses on the economic benefits that China is obtaining from trade, tariff reduction, and free trade agreements with the region, simplifying China's *raison d'etat* to continuing its economic ascension by maintaining access to key markets of raw materials that Latin America possesses. Bearing the current geopolitical context, specifically the current tensions between the US and China, ranging from the issue over the sovereignty of Taiwan, the 2018 trade war, and territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas, the relationship between the two major global powers has been characterized as a "rivalry" likened to a new Cold War (Goldstein, 2020: 49). I will explore underlying factors rooted in *security* or *power maximization* to account for China's deepening ties with nations in the Latin American region over the past fifteen years starting from 2009. Exploring the motivations behind China's foreign policy decisions towards Latin America, with a focus on underlying security concerns and power-based interests, is useful in order to see how a major world power leverages its external relations as a means to ensure its security in opposition to competition (in this case, the US). In this thesis, I will approach this topic by using three similar yet alternative theoretical approaches to explore if security and power concerns related to the balancing the US's global power preponderance can account for China's underlying motivations of spearheading engagement with states in Latin America. I will distinguish my findings between defensive realism, offensive realism, and postclassical realism. I have chosen branches of realism to better assess underlying motivations related to security, as realist theory focuses on concepts of power

maximization related to maximizing state security in relation to threats that other states may pose. By stipulating the expectations for China's behavior according to each theory, I will then assess which theory, if any, can provide a convincing explanation for China's involvement in the Latin American states. In this thesis, I pose three research questions. Each of these questions reflects one of the three theoretical approaches used in the thesis:

1) Is China's behavior towards Latin American states primarily driven by security concerns and defensive efforts to balance the US's global power preponderance (defensive realism)?

2) Is China's behavior towards Latin American states driven by security concerns, but simultaneously offensive and expansionary, trying to maximize the country's capabilities and influence to challenge the US hegemony (offensive realism)?

3) Is China's behavior towards Latin American states primarily driven by power concerns and the efforts to maximize economic capabilities, relative to the USA (postclassical realism)?

To answer these questions, I will develop hypotheses and expectations for China's behavior in Latin America based on each of my three chosen theories. I will collect the data based on scholarly literature, arms data bases, news sources, and documents from various cooperation plans. The data will be focused on the realms of economic, political, and military to allow for a more comprehensive analysis. After compiling the data, I will apply my hypotheses to assess to what extent each of my theoretical approaches can suitably account for China's underlying motivations for involvement in Latin America.

The text is divided into five chapters. The thesis will begin with a brief introduction on China's history of foreign policy with Latin American states and a brief description of the existing China-

US rivalry to contextualize my analysis. I will then provide an in-depth analysis of my chosen theoretical framework and two related but alternative theories in order to highlight the notion that China views the US as a threat to its security, in a timeframe starting in 2009, and is thus engaging in efforts to intensify its position and influence in the region as a careful and prudent balancing measure. I will then highlight my research methodology, followed by expectations for how China will engage with Latin American states based on each of the three theories. Lastly, I will provide my analysis of specific forms of cooperation by China with Latin American states to uncover if any of these theoretical frameworks provide a convincing explanation for China's intensifying cooperation efforts in Latin America after 2009.

2. Short historical overview of the relations between China and the Latin American countries

Initial contacts between the areas date back to the 1570s, but to provide a fitting context for my analysis, I will devote this chapter to relations beginning in the second half of the 20th century. In 1949, the People's Republic of China (PRC) was established to what is now known as modern China by former Chairman, Mao Zedong. The PRC replaced the government of the Republic of China (ROC) and ended its historical status (The one China principle and the Taiwan issue, 2003). The armies of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) defeated the Kuomintang-led government of the ROC, causing ROC leader Chiang Kai-shek to retreat the ROC central government to Taiwan, a multi-island Province located on the southeast of mainland China. Following this defeat the ROC maintained claim as the legitimate government of all of China, prompting a long-standing dispute about the sovereignty of Taiwan. The US, at

this time, supported Chiang's exiled government in Taipei, which set the tone for decades of limited interaction between US and mainland China. This conflict has since remained politically relevant and has informed the development of the "One China" principle which maintains that Taiwan is an "inalienable" part of China (Albert, 2016: 1). This principle, which has evolved to be equivalent with an "Anti-Taiwan" sentiment, guides much of China's foreign relations today and serves as one of China's primary national security interests.

Among the backdrop of the US's policy of containment, a foreign policy strategy leveraged by the US to preclude the spread of communism and Soviet expansionism, China's overall policy toward Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s has been seen as ideologically motivated. Anti-imperialism reigned as the dominating political spirit within the framework of the Cold War rivalry between the US and Soviet Union. China, facing embargo by Western powers, leveraged people-to-people contacts with other countries to foster relationships, leading to the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) to be founded in May of 1954. An estimated twelve hundred people from nineteen Latin American states visited China throughout the 1950s, including high profile cultural and political figures such as Pablo Neruda and Jose Venturelli. CPAFFC led to the establishment of the Association of China-Latin American Friendship (ACLAF) in 1960, which served as a bridge between the region and China (Shixue, 2006).

The first official diplomatic relation by China with a Latin American nation was formed with Cuba in 1960 after the Cuban revolution. In 1959, Fidel Castro's victory in Cuba garnered "moral and political support" from China (Shixue, 2006: 22). Fomenting Chinese antagonism towards the US, the Chinese government denounced American plans to intervene in Cuba and stood in direct opposition against US imperialism. This theme remained in the 1960s, as China

maintained its support of Latin American countries against the US. This was typified in 1964 during the Panama Canal Crisis, in which US control of the Panama Canal Zone was contested in what became a violent demonstration by native Panamanians. Former Chinese Chairman Mao Zedong expressed anger with the US, stating that the Chinese people fully support “their fight against the American aggressors and their just struggles to take back the Panama Canal” (quoted from Zhang Guang, 1995: 91, as cited in Shixue, 2006: 22). It is clear that anti-US imperialism has served as the primary ideological motivator which underpinned the relationship between China and Latin America during this time, fostering a strained relationship in the following years.

Diplomatic relations between China and Latin America intensified in the 1970s signified China’s foreign policy becoming more focused on international legitimacy, modernization, and economic development. In 1971, The People’s Republic of China took its lawful seat in the United Nations as a permanent member, a spot previously occupied by the Republic of China (ROC) (Bingwen e. al., 2012: 2). Shortly after, former Chairman Mao Zedong’s concept of “three worlds” emerged, which equalized the experience of China with Latin America, stating that “Asia is the third world except Japan, the entire Africa is the third world, and Latin America is also the third world” (Zedong, 1994: 600-601). Latin America and China’s status as developing nations served to level them on the same playing field and helped foster a foundation of solidarity and common experience on the world stage and also balance the hegemonic threat of the US and Soviet Union thereafter (Mora, 1997: 36) This is also typified in Mao’s “Ya-Fei-La” strategy, also known as the “Asia-Africa-Latin America” plan, which represented “a movement to promote developing country solidarity” in a new world order (Myers, 2012 as cited in de Arimatéia da Cruz, 2014). Trade relations between Latin America and China soon after

evolved and foreign relations were established with seven states in the region by 1971(Bingwen et. al, 2012: 3).

In 1978, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping and his open door policies, a phase of modernization was initiated, spearheading a focus on external trade, foreign investment, and the introduction of advanced science and technology. Xiaoping noted that the purpose of this reform was to develop “socialism with Chinese characteristics” (Xiaoping, 1984, as cited in Tisdell, 2009: 272). China leveraged Latin America as a space to broaden its political and economic ties, and the first high-level Chinese delegation occurred in 1981, followed by another in 1984 (Mora, 1997: 42-44). China’s new economic strategy was to accelerate its domestic industrialization and thus needed raw materials and equipment. Abundant with natural resources and endowed with land suitable for agriculture, Latin America was a perfect market for raw materials and exports. Trade between the regions surged from \$4 billion in the 1970s to \$18.5 billion in the 1980s (Ibid). China also formed cooperation and joint venture projects as well as technological cooperation in states such as Brazil, Chile, and Venezuela (Bingwen et. al, 2012: 4).

In the 1980s, China began to emphasize the importance of developing a cooperative relationship with Latin America on the basis of five principles of peaceful coexistence between nations. Ironically, in the same decade, China supported Latin American attempts to achieve a negotiated settlement to the Central American conflict under the Contadora Group. As a result, most South American countries supported Beijing’s “One China” policy. During this time, high-level diplomatic visits rose, as ten Latin American presidents from six states visited China (Mora, 1997: 43-44). At the same time, China was mainly dependent on the US market and capital, and it proceeded to expand its market. By 1989, China had established seventeen joint ventures focused on scientific and technological advancement in Latin America with investments

totaling \$22 million USD. A majority of these investments were in natural resources, construction, and industrial ventures (Mora, 1997: 46).

The 1990s and end of the Cold War led to a period of intensifying economic exchanges and business relations. When the Soviet Union collapsed, China endeavored to fill the gap as well as continue to isolate Taiwan. This led to China reducing its dependency on the US by broadening trade links and diversifying its market to Africa and Latin America. In 1992, Shougang Group, the state-owned mining company acquired Hierro Peru, a Peruvian iron mining company for \$120 million USD, which was China's largest investment in the region up until then. Oil extraction became a key industry of interest for China and investment in joint ventures surged. Military cooperation was limited, however a bilateral cooperation agreement began with Bolivia (Lafargue, 2006). Then-Chinese President Jiang Zeman visited the region multiple times, but overall cooperation was relatively limited.

The first decade of the 2000s saw a bilateral trade boom and China became the region's main Asian partner and the biggest economic partner of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile (Santoro, 2020: 25). China's entrance into the WTO in 2001 served to reduce trade barriers and ignite China's overseas foreign direct investment (OFDI) opportunities. In 2004, then-President Hu Jintao cited that one of the new historic missions given to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was to support overseas interests and diplomacy, which ushered in a wave of high-level visits to the region (Li, 2014: 266). Jintao visited multiple states in the region in the fall of 2004 and made one-off visits to Peru and Brazil in 2008 and 2010 respectively (Ibid). Starting in 2006, China began opening Confucius institutes in the region. These institutes are focused on promoting Chinese culture and language, sometimes facilitating exchange trips for students to come to China. They have been classified as soft power initiatives with "the greatest long-term

potential impact” for China to promote its culture abroad (Hubbert, 2019: 10). New institutions have continuously been opened in various states, and there now exist a total of forty-four institutes in the region, citing China’s commitment to deepening relations with the region as a whole.

In 2008, China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs published its first ever White Paper outlining guidelines for its strategy towards Latin America and the Caribbean. The cornerstone of the document specified that China “seeks to build and develop a comprehensive and cooperative partnership featuring equality, mutual benefit and common development” with states in the region (*Full text: China’s Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2008). Cooperation was expected to produce “win-win results” for both parties in the political, economic, cultural and social, and peace, security, and judicial affairs (Ibid). To spearhead the notion of cooperative partnership, China became increasingly involved with military activities and security cooperation in the region, In 2010, China contributed peacekeeping personnel in UN peacekeeping operations (PKO) to Haiti following a catastrophic earthquake (Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2011: 66). Additionally, the PLA conducted a joint counter-terrorism exercise with Brazilian special operations, and later that year conducted a humanitarian medical exercise with Peru (Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2011: 8).

In line with the goals outlined in the 2008 White Paper, China became the top export destination for South American goods in 2010 (Myers and Ray, 2019: 1). In the next few years, China financed a multitude of construction projects in the region, the largest being under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in 2013, a global infrastructure project. As of 2024, twenty-two states in Latin America have been formally integrated into this project, with infrastructure such as roads, railways, fiber optic cables, and energy projects. Xi Jinping became President of China in

2013, and one of his first visits outside of China was to Latin America, citing its importance for China's global strategy. China elevated its relations with string of Latin American states in the following years, as comprehensive strategic partnerships were formed between China and Argentina (2014), Brazil (2013), Ecuador (2015), Mexico (2013), and Venezuela, (2014), Peru (2013) (Quan and Ye, 2019). Additionally, China established strategic partnerships with Costa Rica (2015), Uruguay (2016), and Bolivia (2018), highlighted a period of enhanced relations between China and the region overall (Guo, 2023). Enhanced relationships have assisted China with their diplomatic goals, as Panama, the Dominican Republic, and El Salvador switched recognition to China over Taiwan between 2017 and 2018, with Nicaragua turning in favor of Beijing in 2021 (Shullman, 2024).

China has also intensified its development practices in the region, establishing multilateral institutions to facilitate dialogue and finance projects in the region. In 2014, China established the China-CELAC forum, a summit to further develop mutual cooperation with the region. In 2016, China released another policy paper highlighting the importance of economic strategy with the region, emphasizing industrial investment, financial cooperation, and infrastructure cooperation as priorities (Hernandez, 2023). In the same year, China established the Asian Infrastructure Bank (AIIB), a multilateral development bank to finance development projects across the globe, primarily with countries with which it has strong trade and investment relations, namely Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, and Uruguay (Ray et. al, 2021: 13). The Chinese Development Bank (CDB) and Chinese Export-Import Bank (Eximbank) followed by providing various large-scale loans to Latin American states to finance infrastructure and social projects in the region that surpassed total loans made to the region by the World Bank and

the Inter-American Development Bank from 2004 (Hernandez, 2023). Much of these projects are backed by commodities (Myers and Ray, 2023: 4).

During the covid-19 pandemic, Chinese aid agencies donated masks, tests, and ventilators to twenty-four states in the region (Telias and Urdinez, 2021: 111). The largest share of donations went to states with strategic partnerships with China and states that recognize the One China Policy, with Paraguay and Nicaragua (at the time), receiving the least amount of support from China during the pandemic (Ibid). Diplomacy and alignment with China's interests appear to be linked to the degree of support that states received during the covid-19 crisis. In 2022, trade with the region rose to its highest levels, and as of 2023, China expanded its free-trade agreement (FTAs) network to include Nicaragua and Ecuador, joining the existing agreements made with Chile, Costa Rica, Peru. There has been an ongoing dialogue with Honduras and Mercosur, the South American trade bloc comprised of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Another related focus of China's has also included extraction of natural resources in the region, namely cooper, lithium, and crude oil. Overall, China's relations with Latin American states has intensified since the start of the twenty-first century in the realms of economic, political, and security cooperation.

3. Literature Review

China's rapid development has been a hot topic for scholars of international affairs in the past few decades. There are a milieu of publications by various authors within the last decade with titles such as *The China Question* and *The Rise of China*, using rhetoric which functions to create a sense that China's political and economic motivations are elusive, dynamic, and potentially

threatening to other states. China's deepening ties with the Latin America region has been positioned “taking a foothold on the US’s doorstep”, painting China as an unwelcome intruder in a region formerly dominated by US influence (Seldin, 2023). Scholars have largely focused on the economic relations between China and Latin America as part of China’s overall development strategy (Carol and Wise, 2017). Latin America has even been described as being a “fulcrum” in China’s rise, serving as an ideal market for China’s exported goods while also providing necessary primary commodities and raw materials that China needs to supply its rapidly growing industrial sector (Jenkins, 2012; Yu, 2015). It has been painted as a relationship of mutualism, in which China gains raw materials to sustain its manufacturing industry while in turn, Latin America’s economy is stimulated. It has also been found that growing foreign economic ties may translate into political influence abroad, providing a foundation for cooperation from which additional influence can be exerted (Wang et. al, 2023).

A key reason mentioned for China’s involvement in Latin American states is due to the US’s decreasing hegemony in the region due to a posture which has been touted as “benign neglect” (de Arimatéia da Cruz, 2014). Scholars largely agree that 9/11 marked a turning point of intensifying neglect of the region as the US focused on the war on terrorism in the Middle East while Latin America simultaneously experienced the pink tide movement in which primarily leftist, anti-US governments came into power (de Arimatéia da Cruz, 2014; Milani, 2021). The prioritization of other issues has been seen to open up space for China to take advantage of what resulted in a “political vacuum” (ibid). China has since been able to foster bilateral agreements with governments in Latin America, such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

Literature on the topic of China's investment in Latin America has largely supported the idea that *economic factors* are the impetus for intensifying Chinese-Latin American relations (Yu, 2015). Citing the fact that the majority of Chinese investment in the region is resource-seeking, China's motivations have been described as mutually-beneficial, gaining access to vital natural resources to support its manufacturing industry while in exchange for financial loans, diversification for trading, and infrastructure development (Bernal-Meza, 2016; Jenkins, 2012). Latin America is home to almost 20% of the globe's oil resources, while Chile and Argentina hold 30.3% and 11.5% of the world's lithium brines, which are used in electric vehicles and emerging battery technologies (ECLAC, 2023; Coles, 2020). These specific minerals, as well as the heavy source of oil, are vital to sustaining China's current manufacturing economy. Scholars have noted that Chile is responsible for around 25% of global copper production and Brazil is the third-largest global producer of iron, citing these key raw materials as the motivation for Chinese lending and investments in the region (ibid). Other agro-commodities, including soy oil and fishmeal constitute the main primary products exported from the region to China, which is responsible for feeding around 1.4 billion people (Jenkins, 2012).

Citing Latin America's relative scarcity of natural resources, the literature has made it clear that China's primary interest in fostering cooperation with nations in Latin Americas is due to the region's abundance of natural resources, namely precious metals which are deemed as "critical minerals" used to sustain China's manufacturing industry (Jenkins, 2012). Wise and Ching have taken a practical needs-based approach to account for Chinese investment in the region, favoring the argument that China, "by necessity, has had to internationalize its development strategy in order to compensate for its serious natural resource deficit, feed the world's largest domestic population, and fuel the soon-to-be largest economy in the world" (2017). The relative scarcity

of natural resources in China and its recent stage of export-led development due to its entry into the WTO in 2001, have been largely viewed as the impetus for Chinese-owned companies to provide resource-based investments en masse to these regions (Wise, 2016).

On the contrary, it is also argued that because of China's focus on natural resources in the region, that China has cultivated a utilitarian relationship with Latin America through its strategy of providing major loans to these low and medium-income countries, which has been described as "predatory lending" (Goetze, 2019). The practice of loaning of exorbitant funds that these countries cannot feasibly pay back is feared to be cultivating a potential long-term dependence of these nations on China (Bernal-Meza, 2016). In the case of Venezuela, a crisis-ridden nation rich in oil, China has provided various loan-for-oil agreements that enable China to have a competitive advantage to be less expensive and more streamlined (Kaplan, 2016). Two main financiers, the China Development Bank (CBD) and the Export-Import Bank of China (CHEXIM), have accounted for \$813 million in new loans to Latin America and parts of the Caribbean, which Chinese Direct Foreign Investment (DFI) between 2005-2022 totaling over \$136 billion (Yovanov, 2021). The relationship has been viewed to primarily serve China's interests, namely securing a market in Latin America for its exports of manufactured goods. The practice of China providing huge loans to a region composed of developing countries highlights concerns which have been viewed by scholars as having a "distinct North-South structure" characterized by asymmetry and exploitation (Bernal-Meza, 2016). Due to the amount of commodity-based investments that China has offered to nations in Latin America, dependency theory has been used to as a framing mechanism, with China even being deemed as a "new colonial power" in Latin America, hearkening to an unequal relationship based on exploitation (ibid). The patterns of bilateral trade between China and Latin America have given rise to

concerns that Latin America is “returning to a dependence on primary commodities and that its manufacturing industries are being increasingly displaced by competition from Chinese imports” (Jenkins, 2012). This observation shows China’s economic involvement as being disruptive and inhibiting the domestic success of Latin American states.

China’s motives in Latin America have also been viewed as political and strategic, albeit more briefly than economic factors (Lam, 2004; Landau, 2005). Since President Xi Jinping took office in 2013, China has been seen as taking a “charm offensive”, attempting to create a sphere of influence in close proximity to the US potentially in retaliation for perceived containment and encirclement by the US during the Cold War (Cui and Garcia, 2016: 3; Yu, 2015). This line of thinking paints China’s behavior in the region as retaliatory and in direct opposition to the US’s interests on issues such as the sovereignty of Taiwan. It is mentioned that some global experts fear that China is spreading anti-democratic and anti-capitalist views (Roby, 2020: 233). Yu points out that China has interconnected objectives- maintenance of China’s economic and social progress and “restoring China to its former glory” through hard and soft power tactics to ascend the global power hierarchy (2015). However, Erikson and Chen note that, challenging “China’s One China Policy”, Taiwanese influence in the region has been “sustained to some extent by values-based affinities stemming from the anti-communist orientation of most Central American governments during the 1970s and 1980s (2007). It is noted that historically, Taiwan’s norms generally align with those of Latin American nations, though this contest for recognition resulted in Costa Rica switching its affiliation in 2007, in favor of China and severing ties with Taipei. It has been observed that nations in the region that still recognize Taiwan, such as Paraguay, have also been far less involved in the upswing of the region’s exports to China (Jenkins, 2012).

Scholars have also explored the idea of China leveraging Joseph Nye's concept of soft power in Latin America as a deliberate strategy to advance its security objectives (Ellis et. al, 2022). Soft power involves improving one's public image abroad through means other than hard power (Nye, 1990). Ellis et. al note that President Xi Jinping, in a CCP senior leader study group in December 2013, formally linked China's use of soft power as a policy tool, specifically in the Latin American region, as Jinping stated that improving soft power projection is vital to "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" (2022). A primary soft power tactic that was referenced is China's opening of forty-four Confucius Institutes and eighteen Confucius Classrooms throughout the region. These institutes are aimed at spreading Chinese values and fostering an appreciation for the nation's culture. However, after their analysis, it was found that public Latin American attitudes about China are becoming more negative, revealing that a nation employing an influx of soft power tactics does not necessarily bolster public opinion (ibid).

China has historically taken interest specifically with developing countries due to similarities in historical experience. Yu maintains that China sympathizes with developing regions, as China has historically been classified as a "third world" nation (Shixue, 2006). The Chinese connection with Latin America is thus seen to "embody the foreign policy outlook and values of Chinese foreign policy" (Yu, 2015). Shared values, such as the pursuit of anti-imperialism and anti-hegemonism are the fundamental goals of both parties' foreign policy decisions, creating a sense of like-mindedness and a sense of shared history.

With the abundance of literature available on China's motivations behind the foreign policy decisions which have been related to Latin America, I have noticed a neglect of providing security and power motivations as a primary *ration d'etat*. While numerous scholars are in favor of the idea that China's main goal is to surpass the US for global hegemony, explanatory factors

for China's involvement rooted in security are scant. Given the context of the current rivalry between China and the US, power and security motivations are presumably an important factor behind China's intentions in Latin America, though the existing literature does not explore them systematically. Does China's involvement in this region reveal trends that reflect hedging against US power preponderance? Is China's behavior reflective of overt power competitive against the US? Due to the rising tensions between the two economic superpowers, China may view the US as a direct threat to its national security and thus be leveraging relationships with countries in Latin America as a strategy to hedge US influence in such a geopolitically key region.

4. Theoretical and Methodological framework

This study draws mainly on structural realism as a theoretical approach to the study of international relations. To present structural realism as my analytical starting-point, I will begin with a brief description of the core underlying notions of classical realism, as this theory serves as a springboard for analysis of the two underlying theories which fall under structural realism. I will then provide a thorough distinction between variants of structural realism, which are offensive realism and defensive realism, and include a brief description post-classical realism, to formulate hypotheses for the motivations underlying China's behavior towards Latin America. I will use defensive realism, offensive realism and post-classical realism to serve as foils for my analysis and to highlight core similarities and differences between these concrete realist perspectives . After, I present the three theoretical explanations based on different yet related strands of realism, I will present in a methodological section how I will test these explanations.

4.1. Theoretical explanations

A central concept embedded in classical realism is the concept of power. Power, defined as the influence over others, is the central goal of states. Hans Morgenthau's theory of classical realism operates based on the assumption that the desire to increase one's power is rooted in *human nature*, going as far to state that "the aspiration of power over man...is the essence of politics" (Morgenthau, 1946: 45). This theory views human nature as inherently malevolent, predicting human behavior to be strictly self-interested (Donnelly, 2009: 77). Thus, the core theoretical notion underpinning classical realism ascribes conflict to the innate human drive for power and will to dominate others. It emphasizes that this characterization of human nature is reflected by states on the international stage as a constant struggle for survival and power. Classical realism is based on the assumption that the *state* is the leading actor in international relations but reflects the pessimistic and power-hungry state of man.

Furthermore, order in international society is established horizontally, through the interaction of formally equal states, rather than imposed from a separate entity from 'above' (Donnelly, 2000: 81). Because human leaders rule and dictate state behavior, in line with a pessimistic view of human nature, it follows that it is likely for states to seek power for themselves, and this power struggle often turns violent (Baylis & Smith, 2014; Wicaksono, et. al, 2022). It is assumed that states have reserved for themselves the right of war, embedding fundamental disorder and violence at the core of international relations. Morgenthau elaborates that states will act in terms of "interest defined as power" (Morgenthau, 1978). Power, however, is largely conceptualized within the bounds of material aspects, which involve "the ability of states to use material resources to get others to do what they otherwise would not" (Barnett and Duvall, 2005: 40). This concept neglects other forms of power that states take advantage of

today, such as exercises of soft power such as diplomacy, propaganda, and dissemination of information.

Structural realism is an extension of the classical thread, but differs in that it is a systems-level approach in which the emphasis is on the structure of the *system* in which states exist, rather than the individual state. The state of anarchy is the ordering principle which provides explanations for state behavior- the fact that states lack any formal overarching authority which could enforce agreements and prevent conflict (Waltz, 1979: 103; Glaser, 1994: 50). Anarchy will “require states to worry about the relative gains of cooperation and the possibility that adversaries will cheat on agreements”, effectively making cooperation risky (Glaser, 1994: 50). This is the core underlying theoretical notion guiding all international relations under structural realism: the assumption is that states seek survival at minimum and are uncertain about the intentions of others in a system with no overarching power (Hamilton and Rathburn, 2013). Structural realism can be seen as an oversimplified approach, ascribing state behavior to the anarchic structure of the international system, neglecting decision-making factors such as domestic politics, cultural factors, and regime type (Mearsheimer, 2007: 72). However, when exploring explanatory factors for a state’s behavior through the lens of survival and state security, structural realism is a useful lens due to its emphasis on the security dilemma states may experience at the international level.

Due to the pressures of anarchy, there exists a self-help system in which states must rely on themselves to ensure their own security (Art and Jervis, 1991). As a result, structural realism ascribes *security competition* as the primary concern in international space. The core way to guarantee the survival of a state is to protect or improve its relative position in the international structure (Cardona, 2019: 80). In this vein, structural realism holds that the ever-present

possibility of conflict is responsible for shaping the actions of states, who are viewed as adopting a “worst-case perspective” where military threats take utmost priority (Brooks, 1997: 446). The emphasis is placed on a state's military capabilities in order to prepare for the worst-case scenario. Because of this assumption, it assumed that states “do not enjoy even an imperfect guarantee of their own security unless they set out to provide it for themselves” (Waltz, 1959). During peacetime, states will be inclined to gain allies and engage in arms races (Glaser, 1994: 50). It is important to note that this line of thinking downplays the economic aspect of security, as its focus on maintaining state survival is conceptualized in material terms.

In terms of distribution of power in the international system, structural realists largely agree that a bipolar system, in which two major powers exist simultaneously, are more stable and less war prone than multipolar and unipolar distributions of power (Lobell, 2017). The two major powers are expected to effectively balance each other out, as neither hegemon will usurp the other in terms of power. The concept of power is also rooted in capabilities beyond the material. Preeminent defensive realist, Kenneth Waltz, recognizes that the “size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence” are also relevant forms of a state’s degree of power (1979: 131). In today’s geopolitical context, this idea is more salient than ever as we are experiencing a rapid degree of technological advancement, ushering in an era of globalization in which states can interact via technological forms.

There are two specific branches of structural realism: aptly named defensive and offensive realism. Defensive realism maintains the core premise about the anarchical structure of international relations, due to the heightened state of insecurity that the security dilemma presents on the international playing field. Robert Jervis, defensive realist, defines this security

dilemma as a situation “in which the means of a state tries to increase its security decreases the security of others” (1978: 169). Anarchy, thus, leads to a few implications. The first is that the security dilemma is central to international politics, but that “one state’s gain in security inadvertently threatens others” (Jervis, 1978: 170). This leads to states to engage in cooperation, seeking to create mutual security to reduce the security dilemma (Jyalita, 2021). If a state becomes too powerful, balancing will occur, a situation in which other states will build up their militaries to form a coalition that will decrease the security of the great power (Mearsheimer, 2010: 75). There is a constant risk associated with aggressive behavior, the pursuit of power and expansion, as another state’s security will be threatened and thus produce unintended consequences. Conquest is seen to seldom yield benefits. Additionally, the pervasive fear about other states’ true motivations, including the possibility of cheating and deceit, permeates the defensive realist consciousness. The notion that other states’ true motivations cannot be trusted is a constant influence on the international landscape, as Waltz writes that “the condition of insecurity—at least, the uncertainty of each about the other’s future intentions and actions—works against their cooperation” (1979: 105). Thus, too much military power can actually decrease a state’s security because other states will balance against it (Johnson and Thayer, 2016: 3).

A second implication is that for states, power is viewed as a potentially useful tool rather than the ultimate goal (Waltz, 1979: 136; Jyalita, 2021). The anarchic international order compels states to *prevent relative losses*, rather than *maximize relative power* (Toft, 2005, Lobell, 2017). Thus, states should be satisfied with preserving the status quo and not seek to engage in revisionist behavior. There are too many risks associated with attempting to dominate the international system. States are encouraged to behave in terms of worst-case scenario rationale and will act

defensively rather than offensively to avoid the high costs of war, prompting them to restrain aggression and preserve the existing balance of power (Jervis, 1979; Jyalita, 2021).

Defensive realism largely views security as abundant—this is not to say that the international space is devoid of threats, but rather that the preservation of the existing distribution of power is preferable to the pursuit of conquest. States are therefore motivated to maximize their *security* by maintaining their positions in the international system through gradual, moderate, and defensive strategies (Waltz, 1979; Lobell, 2017). The primary concern would not be maximizing power, but to “maintain their position[s] in the system”, favoring the status quo in international order rather than upsetting it with aggressive behavior (Waltz, 1979: 126). The rationale that carries this assumption is that aggression, competition, and expansion to maximize a state’s power will inevitably intensify the inherent security dilemma and incite counterbalancing behavior from other states. Restraint, subtle strategies, and the idea that conquest is rarely profitable are in line with this theory, the antithesis of Mearsheimer’s view that states seek to maximize their power to ensure security (Coogan and Mearsheimer, 2002).

For defensive realists, “the international system does not necessarily generate intense conflict and war” (Lynn-Jones, 1998). Despite the anarchic nature of international relations, there is ample room to engage in behavior that maximizes the interests of multiple states simultaneously. It is not merely a brutish stage where the desire to gain is the sole focus. Defense realism is seen to assume that “the subjective probability of conflict conditions states’ behavior” (Taliafero, 2001: 146). The threat is not always impending, nor is it viewed as probable. For Jervis, a reduction in the security dilemma is possible through increasing joint gains through interstate cooperation (1978, 1985). Waltz also highlights the act of “external balancing” as a sensible behavior if one country amasses too much power (1979: 168). It is this focus on interstate

cooperation, with behavior stemming from careful and prudent balancing, which motivates state behavior that I will primarily draw upon in my later analysis.

H1: China's increasing cooperation with the Latin American states is motivated by China's effort to increase its security by balancing the US's power.

Offensive realism views international relations as also being rooted in the security dilemma. However, the behavioral implications of states are different from those of defensive realism. This theory holds that states are disposed to competition and conflict “because they are self-interested, power maximizing, and fearful of other states” (Johnson and Thayer, 2016: 2). This stems from what John Mearsheimer, the founder of offensive realism, views as the implicit security dilemma present in an anarchical system as the impetus for states to “take advantage of other states to gain power at their expense”, forcing great powers to act aggressively and engage in power competitions with other states in order to survive (Mearsheimer, 2001; Jalil, 2019:). Thus, uncertainty about other states' intentions compels states to maximize their *relative power* in order to assure safety and the primary goal of state survival (Ibid). Following this logic, he predicts conflict and frequent internationally driven expansion, as states are ultimately encouraged to engage in power competitions and act with “calculated aggression” (Ibid).

The ubiquity of security pressures present in the international system leads offensive realists to distill the international system into a “brutal arena where states look for opportunities to take advantage of each other....[in a] state of relentless security competition” because “there is little

room for trust among states" (Mearsheimer, 1994; 2001). Mearsheimer, thus, equates states maintaining a power advantage with a state's material capabilities, primarily military and land power. Thus, under offensive realism, it is presumed that it is in every state's interest to enhance their military capabilities, thus increasing their chances of survival by building up their relative power to "the point of hegemony" (Toft, 2005). Mearsheimer illustrates this idea, stating "But even if a great power does not have the wherewithal to achieve hegemony (and that is usually the case), it will still act offensively to amass as much power as it can, because states are almost always better off with more rather than less power. In short, states do not become status quo powers until they completely dominate the system" (2001). Thus, states would be expected to maximize their power through means such as amassing arms, engaging in territorial expansion, and any other means to produce a strategic advantage over others.

Offensive realism would then encourage great powers, such as the contemporary US, Russia, and China, to seek preponderance by becoming the most dominant power in the international system (Jalil, 2019: 43). They are expected to be dissatisfied with the status quo, consistently exerting efforts into tilting the power balance in their favor through actions such as continuously building up military capabilities through innovation and spending, expanding to acquire new territory, and engaging in conflict with any power that is ascending represents competition to a state's stability. Mearsheimer goes as far to refute that any state is content in the international system, stating "there are no status quo powers in the international system, save for the occasional hegemon that wants to maintain its dominating position over potential rivals. Great powers are rarely content with the current distribution of power; on the contrary, they face a constant incentive to change it in their favor" (2001). He would contend that states are inclined to be revisionist, defined as desiring alter to current international order (Davidson, 2006). Mearsheimer does offer a caveat to

this theory due to the presence of nuclear weapons in the international system, remarking that they function as a “powerful force for peace” in deterring military aggression (Mearsheimer, 2001).

H2: China’s increasing cooperation with the Latin American states is motivated by China’s effort to increase its security by maximizing power and replacing the US in the position of global hegemon.

I will now remark on the core tenets of what Stephen Brooks calls post-classical realism. The similarities between both strands of structural realism and post-classical realism are that they are all state-centric, view international politics as inherently competitive, and view states as egoistic actors that pursue self-help strategies (Brooks, 1997: 446). Post-classical realism, however, diverges from structural realism regarding the *possibility* of conflict shaping the actions of states, placing more emphasis on the *probability of conflict*. Brooks explains that states are seen as making decisions “based on assessments of probabilities regarding security threats” rather than acting based on an implicit possibility given the ever-present security dilemma (Brooks, 1997: 448). Diverging from the structural realist view, the emphasis on the probability of conflict among states does not compel states to adopt a worst-case scenario perspective like the view of structural realism. Even when the distribution of military capabilities does not change among states, the probability of conflict fluctuates due to other factors including technology, geography, and international economic pressure (ibid, 455-8; Kawasaki, 2001: 228). Thus, states are not strictly focused on a security dilemma correlated with other states’ material capabilities and can rather focus on long-term objectives when an overt security threat is not present. This is a core deviation from structural realist theory which argues that political pressure

to adopt a decisive security policy is always high under international anarchy (Brooks, 1997: 447-450).

The focus on the probability, rather than the inevitability, of security threats opens up space for policymakers to pursue power through methods other than military build-up. Rational are expected to seek to increase the economic resources under their control because “wealth...is a necessary means to power” (Mastudeno et. al, 1989, as cited by Brooks, 1997: 461). Thus, a major distinction embedded in post-classical realism that differs from both strands of structural realism is that it emphasizes accumulation of economic power because it “allows for maximum flexibility in achieving the nation’s instrumental interests” (Brooks, 1997: 462). Through means such as actively seeking changes in international trade patterns, using economic leverage to secure supplies of raw materials from weaker states, and creating more efficient institutions to reduce transaction costs, states can enhance their relative share of economic resources and thus increase their power (Ibid). Resource acquisition is highlighted as a primary means to support the long-term objective of state survival. In essence, post-classical realism hypothesizes that rational states will maximize their economic capabilities as a way to achieve power, subject to the constraint of providing for short-term military security (Ibid). This is an important deviation from both strands of structural realism mentioned above, which emphasize military power as the key means for a state to increase its relative power.

H3: China’s increasing cooperation with the Latin American states is motivated by China’s effort to increase its power by maximizing its economic capabilities relative to the US.

It is the above three hypotheses that I will test in my analysis section. I will analyze concrete examples of China's cooperation in the Latin American states and to what extent these examples reflect a trend in accordance with defensive realism, offensive realism, and postclassical realism. Through analysis of these indicators, I will explore if China's cooperation tactics are rooted in defensive realism, and if either of my two alternative theories provide a better explanatory framework through which to approach China's recent strategies in the Latin American states.

4.2 Methodology

The analysis will be conducted using the qualitative research method of congruence analysis. Congruence analysis is a theory-centered approach focused on drawing inferences from the congruence, or lack thereof, of concrete expectations deduced from specified theoretical frameworks to provide explanatory power for the case under study (Blatter and Blume, 2008: 325). It allows the researcher to collect a diverse set of observations, known as indicators, and then reflect intensively on the relationship between empirical observation and abstract concepts related to the chosen theories (Blatter and Haverland, 2012: 144). This is valuable because the empirical information can be analyzed to judge the explanatory power of each theory by comparing actual observations with expectations deduced from one theory as opposed to another (ibid: 145). This method affords a robust theoretical analysis of a state's behavior and helps identify the best theory to provide explanatory power for certain indicators. This approach is suitable for my analysis because it "seeks cohesion and consistency on the level of the abstract concept and not on the level of the empirical case", an ideal methodology to complement my

predominantly theory-based analysis (Blatter and Blume, 2008: 334). I will leverage this methodology inductively to determine which of my theories provides the most suitable explanation for my dependent variable: China's forms of cooperation with Latin American states post-2009.

I will employ a competing theories approach of congruence analysis, testing China's cooperative efforts in Latin America through each of my three theories. I will first form concrete expectations for China's methods of cooperation in the military, political, and economic realms. These expectations will be tested in my analysis section to determine the validity of each theory providing explanatory power in line with each theory to interpret if they can provide a meaningful explanation for China's involvement in Latin American states. This will allow me to identify any matches between my empirical findings and concrete expectations deduced from the core elements of my theories (ibid: 319). This analysis will test the conceptual validity of my theoretical framework to explore my hypotheses: whether China's behavior is primarily driven by security concerns and the effort to balance the US's global power preponderance; if China's actions in the region are more offensive and aggressive with the intention to displace the US a hegemon; or conversely motivated by explicitly by an effort to maximize economic capabilities.

The core premise of China behaving in accordance with defensive realism would be to maximize immediate state security by implementing gradual policies while maintaining the status quo in international order. China would be expected to engage with Latin American states in a way that both increases state security and balances US power. Waltz argues that states "may seek goals that they value more highly than survival; they may, for example, prefer amalgamation with other states to their own survival in form" (1979: 92). One goal that is related to state survival is establishment of partnerships with other states in order to cultivate trust and

gain informal allies as protection in the event of a direct security threat. In China's case, this would look like China gaining critical allies in Latin America as a means to balance the US's power preponderance both regionally and globally. China would thus be expected to position itself as benevolent to Latin American states by engaging in mechanisms to support states in the region both bilaterally and regionally to enhance the relationship as a means to potentially gain strategic positioning in close proximity to the US. Defensive realism would highlight the fact that China is simply attempting to maintain the status quo of international order by employing moderate policies in Latin America. As China has a recent past of budding relations with Latin American states, it would be expected that China would maintain and potentially enhance these relationships through conducting high-level visits to these states. Similarly, China would implement moderate, reserved policies regarding Latin American states to maintain the international balance of power rather than upset it (Jalil, 2019: 42). This could also be seen as China gradually building up its defensive security mechanisms as a hedge against the threat of the US due to the region's geographic proximity to the US and majority status as developing nations. Additionally, participation in multilateral institutions in Latin America conveys that China is in favor of playing its part in the international system and not disrupting the international order.

In line with offensive realism, China's main priority would be to displace the US and seek global hegemony by engaging in overt power competition. This could take the form of engaging in an arms race or seeking new territory. Realistically, as far as Latin America is concerned, China would engage in power competition directly with US-backed projects in the region, expand Chinese military bases states close to the US, and attempt to stifle US economic success in regional projects.

In line with a post-classical realist approach, China would focus mainly on long-term objectives through maximizing its economic capabilities relative to the US. Given Latin America's abundance of natural resources, China could capitalize on partnerships with Latin American states in order to acquire natural resources and maintain favorable relations. It would also be expected for China to enter the process of internationalizing its currency in an attempt to displace the US dollar on a small scale with the intention to continue at a larger scale.

5. China's relations with the Latin American countries: a descriptive analysis

In the following chapter, I will present a comprehensive overview of China's forms of cooperation in the political, military, and economic arenas. Following this analysis in a second empirical chapter, I will explain to what extent these observable implications hold as related to the behavioral logic of my three theoretical frameworks. My primary aim is to identify trends, rather than specific events, however due to a lack of data available about specific military involvement, some of my indicators represent stand-alone examples. I will synthesize my findings to see if they match with the behavioral expectations presented in my theoretical framework to explore if one, or any, of these theoretical frameworks are satisfactory frameworks to explain China's cooperation with Latin American states since 2009.

5.1. Political Realm

In the political and institutional space, a trend that China has displayed recently is being involved with Latin American states through increased participation in multilateral forums directly with Latin American states. I will first mention China's engagement with the Community of Latin American states (CELAC), a regional bloc established in 2010 made up of thirty-three states in South America, Central America, and the Caribbean to engage in a platform to exchange political dialogue to deepen Latin American integration. It is important to note that CELAC has been viewed as an alternative to the Organization of American States (OAS), a multilateral regional body formed in 1948 in Bogota, Columbia during the advent of the Cold War to "promote and consolidate representative democracy" embedded in the Charter (Part I, Article 2b of Organization for American States Charter, 1948). The OAS excludes Cuba due to its "authoritarian" and "dictatorial" regime and includes the US and Canada. There has been rampant criticism of the OAS by leaders of Latin American states, claiming that the OAS functions to serve mainly US interests (Escobar, 2021). In a working paper from the Cuba-Europa Summit of 2022, the OAS is described as an international organization "dominated by one superpower in a context of continental asymmetry", referring to it being a driver of US influence (Geoffray, 2022: 2).

Not long after CELAC's creation, the Chinese government spearheaded the creation of the China-CELAC Forum (CCF) in July of 2014. The CCF is a summit which touts "mutually beneficial cooperation" and cites its creation as a means to establish a comprehensive cooperative partnership based on "equality, mutual benefit, and common development between China and LAC states" (Department of Latin American and Caribbean Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 2016). The first Ministerial Meeting of the CCF Forum was held in Beijing in January 2015, serving as a milestone in the history of China-LAC relations. In a list of

fourteen fields of cooperation, “Policy and Security” is listed as the first. This indicates the salience of mutual security as a priority issue for both China and Latin American states. Additionally, in the Declaration of the Third Minister’s Meeting of the CCF, published in December of 2021, states that member states of the CCF are “important forces for the maintenance of international peace and security” with a commitment to “intensify communication and coordination on issues of common interest to in multilateral and international forums, and to jointly address global challenges together” illustrating that this intentional display of mutual cooperation may be aimed at solidifying a region of allies for China, as an alternative to the OAS as a form of careful balancing (2021).

Another multilateral body involving Latin America which China joined is the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), which China formally joined in 2009 as a voting member. The IADB, formed in 1959 by the US and Argentina, serves as the main source of financing for Latin America and the Caribbean with goals of poverty reduction, social inclusion, economic integration, and to ensure environmental sustainability (Retzl, 2016: 40-42). The US initially opposed allowing China to join the IADB in 1989, but changed its stance and later permitted China to enter. China joining the IADB is another example of the trend of China increasing its involvement and cooperation in multilateral bodies regarding supporting Latin American states. Two years after China’s entrance, in 2011, the IADB and the Export-Import Bank of China (China Eximbank) signed a letter of intent to establish an infrastructure investment mechanism to finance both public and private infrastructure projects in the IADB borrowing member states. China joining the IADB reflects the aim of financially assisting Latin American states’ domestic priorities while also capitalizing on increased trade and investment.

In the same vein, China has elevated its status of bilateral relations with Latin American states in the last fifteen years. It is important to note that China has employed a non-alliance policy since 1982, thus its strategic partnership diplomacy is a “mechanism used to build ties without the formal commitments of an alliance” (Fulton, 2020: 8). This gives China the freedom to cooperate with states regardless of their affiliation with other states, as these partnerships are not taken as seriously as formal alliances. Nonetheless, China has a total of forty-one comprehensive strategic partnership with other countries, seven of these being with states in Latin America. Comprehensive strategies partnerships are regarded at the highest level of bilateral relations between China and states in Latin America (Guo, 2023). The timeline of when these partnerships were enacted or upgraded may reflect a trend rooted in defensive realism. China has leveled up to the status of comprehensive strategic partners with Argentina (2014), Brazil (2013), Ecuador (2015), Mexico (2013), and Venezuela, (2014), Peru (2013) in the respective years (Quan and Ye, 2019). Additionally, China established strategic partnerships with Costa Rica (2015), Uruguay (2016), and Bolivia (2018) (Guo, 2023). Related to the string of partnerships that China has established in the region, there has also been intensifying cooperation at the diplomatic level between leaders of China and those of Latin American states. President Xi Jinping, who came to power in 2013, has visited more countries in Latin America more often than US Presidents Obama, Trump and Biden combined during their collective fifteen years in office (Mendez and Alden, 2023). Xi’s visits to Latin American states have been completed in waves. In 2013, Xi visited Mexico, Costa Rica, Trinidad and Tobago and arranged high-level diplomatic visits with leaders in the Caribbean including Antigua, Barbuda, the Bahamas, and Jamaica (van de Maele, 2017: 45-46). In 2014, Xi visited Brazil, Argentina, Cuba, and Venezuela. Again in 2016, he visited the region again to Peru, Ecuador and Chile (ibid). The

2016 trip culminated with publication of China's second White Paper exclusively devoted to strengthening cooperation with Latin American states. It may be that Latin America has not been a top priority for US foreign policy, as is revealed in the lack of high-level visits. The continuous high-level visits to Latin America by Xi Jinping, conversely, illustrates two things China may be opting to fill this void by prioritizing diplomatic cooperation with the region while also taking advantage of the US's "benign neglect" of Latin America (Peterson, 1973: 598). The frequency of Xi's visits in such a short time reveal that Latin America is a site of strategic importance for China's success and can also be viewed as a strategy to balance US influence, as China may be taking advantage of the US's lack of visibility in the region and promoting itself as a viable alternative for cooperation.

5.2. Military Realm

There has been a recent tendency of China to increase its military relationship with Latin America states. While China has not established a permanent military presence in the region as it has done in Djibouti, Africa, military engagement in arms sales, training, and joint military exercises have expanded (Ellis, 2017: 5). From 2011-2016, China evolved to become the third largest arms exporter in aggregate terms behind the US (\$46.9 billion) and Russia (\$36.2 billion) with \$8.5 billion in total arms exports, revealing an expansionary behavior in terms of global arms sales (U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2016: 226). The primary recipients of arms were Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Venezuela respectively. Interestingly, the first three top recipients are located in Asia, China's geographic region, while the fourth largest recipient, Venezuela, is located in Latin America. China and Venezuela made a \$500 million USD deal in 2012 which involved China supplying weapons such as infantry

fighting vehicles, armed personnel carriers, self-propelled rocket launchers, self-propelled mortars, and tanks (Gurrola, 2018: 129). It is important to note that the US remains the world's leading exporter of major weapons, constituting 40% of the global market share between 2018-2022, while China sits as the fourth largest with 5.2%, behind Russia and France (Statista, 2023).

In 2002, a US law preventing military training and aid to twelve Latin American countries that refuse to exempt US citizens from the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court was enacted, thus opening a space for these states to pursue military cooperation with other states (Salinas de Dosch, 2012: 58). A wave of bilateral defense agreements have been established between China and Latin American states in the following years. China established defense cooperation agreements with Ecuador (2010), Argentina (2015), and Peru (2015), and Uruguay (2022) (Hughes, 2023: 53). Additionally, a specific forum dedicated to mutual defense, known as the China-Latin America High Level Defense Forum was established in 2015 as a sub-forum of the CCF. This forum is a platform for dialogue about military education and defense cooperation between military leaders from China and twenty-four Latin American states. There have since been five forums since its inception with the most recent occurring in December of 2022. While data on the discussion details of this forum are difficult to access, highlighting the creation of a forum dedicated solely to defense cooperation reveals China's commitment to involving Latin American states in its military defense strategy.

The vast majority of arms sales from China in Latin America go to countries whose leaders are explicitly anti-US and communist, namely Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia (Gurrola, 2018: 125). Additionally, in Cuba, China has an alleged physical presence at at least three Soviet-era monitoring facilities (Ellis, 2011: 39). The historic implications of China possessing

the ability to collect signal intelligence in such close proximity to the US can be seen as an offensive attempt to maximize China's share of world power through cultivating alliances with nations who are historically anti-US. This is also evidenced through a majority of China's sales of military equipment in the region going to member states of Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América, also known as the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), an intergovernmental organization formed in 2004 through the Cuba-Venezuela agreement between Presidents Castro and Chavez to promote nonmarket-shaped structures and patterns of economic cooperation (Payá, 2015). It is important to note that ALBA identifies itself as an "anti-imperialist" and "anti-neoliberal" organization that advocates for a socialist economic model (as cited by Gurrola, 2018: 125-126). ALBA currently consists of eleven member states including Bolivia, Cuba, Ecuador, Nicaragua and Venezuela. These countries comprise a large majority of the market share of total arms imports from China, especially Venezuela (Ellis, 2011: 27). From 2009 to 2019, China sold over \$615 million worth of arms exports to the Chavez and Maduro regimes that have been classified as authoritarian and corrupt (House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2022). In terms of activities done by China's People's Liberation Army (PLA), there is a lack of any standard model for cooperation with states in Latin America (Ellis, 2020). China has conducted multilateral humanitarian operations such as sending a peacekeeping force to Haiti from 2004-2012, but the activities have since escalated to involve jungle warfare training from Brazil (Blake, 2015). Additionally, China has leveraged joint military exercises between the PLA and states in the region including Chile (2013), Brazil (2014), Peru (2015), Argentina (2019). Joint military exercises do not correlate to the forming of a formal military alliance, however they do signify a cooperative approach to address common threats, cultivate defense ties, and signify a growing alliance between China

and specific states. It is important to note that China has conducted similar exercises with external states including Russia, Pakistan, India, Kenya, and Nigeria. Exchange of professional military education (PME) boomed after 2008, in states such as Ecuador, El Salvador, Venezuela, and Bolivia, and Argentina. It is notable that since 2015, China has trained more Latin American military officers than the US, and the difference has increased each year thereafter (Farah and Babineau, 2019: 105).

5.3. Economic Realm

China's status as "the world's factory", emphasized by its predominant manufacturing industry, translates to an increased need for raw materials (Heine, 2006: 144). Despite the nation's massive size, China possesses only 8.5% of global coal reserves, 8.5% of iron ore, and 2% of global oil reserves (Freitas da Rocha and Bielschowsky, 2018: 11). As mentioned, Latin America is home to an abundance of natural resources, namely crude oil, iron, copper, making many of their economies export-driven (Ibid). Latin America's thirty-three countries and over 650 million people provide an attractive market for Chinese manufactured products (Statista, 2024). It appears that in the realm of economic exchange, the relationship is symbiotic. Any cooperative efforts can enhance both China's cooperation with Latin American states in the economic realm revolves around resource acquisition practices, namely crude oil from Venezuela, Ecuador, and Brazil, copper and lithium from Chile and Peru, and soya from Brazil and Argentina. A notable trend in China's economic statecraft has been providing financial loans to Latin American governments in exchange for rights to their sources of oil. The region's leading lenders of oil-backed loans are the state-owned China-Development Bank and the Export-Import Bank of China. This practice is especially prevalent in Venezuela, which holds

the largest global share of oil reserves at around 19% (Worldometer, 2024). The oil-for-loan deals have been providing liquidity for infrastructure projects in the region, and the financial mechanisms behind them include joint funds, concessional and commercial loans, and currency swaps (Sun, 2014: 176). China has also become the main lender and investor in Ecuador, and in 2012, the General Manager of PetroEcuador went to China to sign a loan agreement for \$ 2 billion USD, with terms being that Ecuador was to sell most of its oil stock to China (Monni and Serafini, 2017: 215). A \$10 billion loan agreement was signed in 2009 by the CDB and Petrobras, a state-owned Brazilian corporation in the petroleum industry, during former Brazilian President Da Silva's visit to China. As collateral, Petrobras signed a ten-year oil supply contract with Sinopec, China's energy and chemical company (Alves, 2013: 116).

Additionally, China has enhanced its proliferation of bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) with states both inside and outside of Latin America. Since 2009, China has established five FTAs with states in Latin America, including Chile (2006), Peru (2009), Costa Rica (2010), Nicaragua (2023), Ecuador (2023), and most recently, Honduras (2024). There are current talks of establishing one with Uruguay. Most of the states with which China has established FTAs are heavily involved with China's resource acquisition strategy.

China has also pursued acquisition of strategic ports in Latin America. China's practice of economic statecraft in Latin America through the well-known mega-project, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), started in the year 2013 on September 7th. A key aspect of this project is the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) which serves as a strategy to enhance China's global connectivity through the development of ports (Clarke, 2020). Since 2020, China has twenty-two port assets in twelve countries with Latin America and Caribbean. This has explicitly been referred to in a US technical report as a threat to current US maritime superiority (Clarke, 2020). Of significant

importance is China-based Shandong Landbridge Group's acquisition of control of Panama's largest port, Margarita Island in 2016 in a deal worth \$900 million. Construction of the port will be carried out by state-owned China Communication Construction Corp (CCCC) (Huo et. al, 2019: 449). While this case does not represent a classic case of territorial expansion, China's pursuit of gaining access in such a strategic zone can be seen as a direct form of challenge against US hegemony. In the event of a direct conflict between the US and China, the PLA would be able to leverage its port access in support of operations against the US (Ellis et. al, 2022). Interestingly, Landbridge's chairman is Ye Cheng, a Senior Communist Party who works with the Chinese military and Landbridge Group even has its own militia (Clarke, 2020). The militia, formally established in August of 2014, supports the fact that Chinese national defense is directly related to its infrastructure projects. It is also noted that less than a year after Landbridge invested in Panama, the country ceased its recognition of Taiwan (ibid). This reveals that China's ambitious infrastructure projects have also been assisting with China's diplomatic goals in promoting international agreement on the One China principle, revealing that their cooperation efforts in the region are multi-faceted, also assisting with China's political goals.

A stand-alone example of China's involvement with Latin America in the economic realm is the initiative to construct a separate canal located in Nicaragua, a project which was announced in 2013. This canal would serve as a rival to the Panama Canal, the strategic canal which spans through Panama constitutes the main trade routes between the US and the Far East as well South America (Portal Logistico de Panamá, 2023). This project was worth an estimated \$50 billion and deemed the "Interoceanic Grand Canal". The contract was between the Nicaraguan government and Chinese billionaire, Wang Jing, but was ultimately not pursued due to backlash about environmental impacts and displacement of the Nicaraguan population

(Muller, 2019). The fact that such a contract existed reveals that this project was not simply talk, rather there were firm plans to engage in a highly significant infrastructure project that would alter the course of trade in Latin America and alter the neutrality of the Panama Canal. Over sixty percent of goods transiting the canal originate or land in US markets, which is seen to intrinsically tie Canal access to US security (Runde and Doring, 2021). This involvement by China can certainly be perceived as a threat to the US, threatening the supremacy of their maritime presence and power projection in the region.

China has also introduced its “1+3+6” cooperation framework. In this plan, the “1” represents establishment of the China-LAC Cooperation Plan (2015-2019) with the goal to achieve growth and sustainable development through “3” ways- trade, investment, and financial cooperation. This would enhance the China-LAC relationship in “6” fields: energy and resources, infrastructure, manufacturing, scientific and technological innovation, and information technology (Cui and Garcia, 2016: 4). This recently implemented framework highlights a commitment to China establishing a comprehensive plan with Latin America regarding as a key partner in this endeavor.

Another trend that China has employed which shows a focus on maximizing economic capabilities is engaging in bilateral currency swap agreements with Latin American states. In 2009, China actively began promoting the internationalization of its currency, the renminbi (RMB) (Wang, 2016). To further support its economic expansion, China’s central bank, the People’s Bank of China, started engaging in bilateral currency swap agreements (BCS) with external countries in 2009. A bilateral currency swap is a mechanism through which economies trade in local currencies, facilitating the exchange of commodities with a hedge against exchange rates (Yelery, 2016: 138, 144). It also serves to promote internationalization of the RMB and

assists with the “de-dollarization” of the US dollar (ibid). China began engaged in BCSs in 2009, beginning with Hong Kong, Malaysia, Belarus, and Indonesia spanning from January to March of that year (The People’s Bank of China, 2-23: 44). Argentina became the first country in Latin America to sign a BCS with China in March of 2009 and renewed the agreement in 2014(ibid). In 2013, China signed another BCS with Brazil and in 2015 signed two with Chile and Suriname. Each of the countries in Latin America that China has signed BCSs with are highly important regarding their resource acquisition endeavors, revealing this strategy of China focusing on long-term stability rather than short-term profits (Yelery, 2016: 145). While this trend of China spearheading BCSs is not limited to states in Latin America, it is reflective of an overall trend to enhance its global economic position while also serving to ease global reliance on the US dollar.

6. Evidence for the realist explanations

6.1. Evidence for Defensive Realism

In order to engage with Latin American states in a manner that aligns with defensive realism, China would employ modest and restrained strategies to focus on their own state survival while balancing US power in the region. As security is perceived to be relatively abundant, China would foreseeably engage with states in Latin America which serve to enhance the relationship through setting up mechanisms for institutional dialogue explicitly with states in the region and increasing high-level diplomatic visits to the region relative to the US. One mechanism that can be used as a form of what Joseph Nye calls “new power” is the capacity for effective communication through participation in multilateral institutional structures with Latin

American states (Nye, 1990: 164). By the logic of defensive realism, this can help a state achieve its security goals by fostering an alliance during peacetime (Glaser, 1994: 50).

In the political and institutional space, China's increased participation in multilateral forums directly with Latin American states through the CCF can be seen as being rooted in the logic of defensive realism. The aspect of CELAC being an alternative to the US-dominated OAS may enable China to balance US power in Latin America, while also increasing China's security as evidenced through the CCF's emphasis on the pillar of policy and security. While the establishment of such an institution is not a display of typical defensive realist behavior, the context and timing may constitute a calculated effort to hedge US influence in the region and position China as an alternative great power that can foster mutual cooperation. Overall, the creation of the CCF can be seen as a subtle strategy to balance the allegedly US-centric OAS while also serving as a platform for dialogue with states in the region and deepening the overall relationship with states in Latin America. The tenets behind the creation of CCF reflect a focus on common security, which is a tool to maximize China's security while also deepening its alliance with the region. The establishment of the CCF does not alter the international status quo in any way or reflect an attempt by China to maximize their share of world power, nor does it reflect a purely economic aim on China's part. This dispels both offensive and postclassical realism as fitting theoretical frameworks regarding China's engagement in the CCF. While China is deepening ties with the Latin American states through this institutional mechanism, it is not disrupting the international order in doing so, thus exhibiting status-quo behavior while also cultivating a balancing strategy against the US's power preponderance.

Similarly, from a defensive realist standpoint, China's entrance into the IADB further helps in deepening the relationship with the region as a means to balance US preponderance.

China joining such multilateral institutions also may assist with the political goals of isolating Taiwan, which stands as a primary security concern of China. China's membership in the IADB can be regarded as a means to hedge US dominance in Latin America, also serving to provide an alternative major power as a source of financial assistance and forming an implicit alliance with the region. However, it is not obvious to what extent China's joining of such institutions is rooted in an attempt to balance US power in the region.

The above logic also holds in the political example of China's wave of establishing comprehensive strategic partnerships with Latin American states, as this strategy can help to gradually broaden China's sphere of influence in Latin America as a careful strategy of balancing against US global hegemony and building up a regional alliance. As Waltz notes, "We do not expect the strong to combine with the strong in order to increase their power over others, but rather to square off and look for allies who might help them" (1979: 126). A majority of these comprehensive strategic partnerships were finalized within three years after the US's Pivot to Asia strategy was implemented, which may support the notion that this US policy posture constituted a threat to Chinese security, provoking a gradual response by China elevating its bilateral relations with states in the US's geographic space to balance US influence in the Asian region. This strategy is moderate and ambiguous, as there is no way to quantify what a strategic partnership constitutes. Building partnerships with external countries instead of formal alliances is a distinctive feature of Chinese diplomacy, and China's focus on states in Latin America reflects the strategic importance that the region has for their foreign policy goals of offsetting US preponderance at a hemispheric and global level while actively integrated into the global world order.

As a strong state, China's pursuit of cultivating an alliance with the Latin American bloc, composed of relatively weaker states, in a key geographic position near the current hegemonic leader as a way to balance the US's power and influence in the region while also creating their own sphere of influence as a potential counterweight to the US's Pivot to Asia strategy. Excluding Brazil, Latin America comprises relatively weaker states which may not enhance China's security to a large extent. Nonetheless, the development of defense agreements with states in the region can be seen as a defensive strategy that would assist in developing mutual trust with Latin American states and help create an alliance in a key geographic location. China's forming of comprehensive strategic partnerships and engaging in frequent high-level visits reflects a subtle plan to increase ties with specific nations in the region and in no way reveals a competitive struggle against the US. Establishing partnerships with these states is not zero-sum, and some of the states also maintain formal alliances with the US, such as Argentina. Defensive realism and its focus on employing subtle strategies to balance against a major power can best explain China's trend of establishing a wave of partnerships in such a short period of time out of the three theories, but does not capture the full picture

Defensive realists maintain that the offense-defense balance tends to favor the defense (Jervis, 1978: 167-214). With this in mind, China would be expected to maximize its security by engaging in defense agreements and joint military exercises with states in Latin America. This would serve to strengthen their military partnerships and provide an alternative to the US. In the military realm, the conducting of joint military exercises between the PLA and some states in the Latin American region to some extent reflects a strategy aligned with the core logic of defensive realism. However, a majority of the PLA's joint military exercises are conducted in Southeast Asian countries and Russia. Thus, it is unclear how big of a relative role Latin American states

play in terms of China's overall security. Nonetheless, China's presence in the region has been gradually increasing in recent years and may reflect the importance of the region's strategic position relative to the US.

Based on the factual evidence presented in the above empirical chapter, China's cooperation efforts with Latin American states, to a small extent, appears motivated by efforts to balance US power while also enhancing their own security. China's focus on entering and forming multilateral institutions explicitly with the region through mechanisms such as China-CELAC forum may support the notion that China is gradually pursuing a strategy to balance the US's existing multilateral mechanisms for dialogue such as the OAS, but it can also be seen as a means to simply enhance the relationship with the region in absolute terms. China's trend of engaging in defense cooperation with states in the region since and elevating the status with certain states to comprehensive strategic partners also do not fully reflect the behavioral logic of defensive realism. These efforts do not reveal a desire of China to alter the status quo, but rather point to the pursuit of deepening the relationship between China and the region overall. While these agreements also enhance the overall relationship between states, the focus on defense and common security is rooted in defensive realism. It is unclear whether the attempts to enhance relationships with these states are relative to the US or if China is simply expanding its global presence. China's high-level diplomatic visits to the region relative to the US support the notion that China may be employing a strategy to express the impotence of Latin America while also taking advantage of the US's focus on other priorities, serving as a counterweight to balance against US influence in both Latin American and the Asia-Pacific region. In the economic space, none of my observations hearken directly to the logic of defensive realism. Taking the whole

picture into consideration, the observable implications of China's behavior in line with the behavioral logic of defensive realism hold to a small extent.

6.2. Evidence for Offensive Realism

Offensive realism contends that maximization of power is the best way to ensure one's own survival (Mearsheimer, 2010: 72). As mentioned, power is based on material capabilities that a state controls (Ibid). In my above analysis, there are limited examples of China displaying a tendency to maximize its material power by attempting to engage in an overt power competition with the US that can be seen through Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism. These tactics have sometimes leveraged states in Latin America, primarily to enhance China's relative security, provide a competitive edge against the US, and disrupt the status quo.

The example of China's strategic acquisition of ports in Latin America and most notably, the unsuccessful plan to build a canal to rival the Panama Canal, can indeed be seen through the behavioral logic of offensive realism. This plan would directly oppose the US's material power in the region and serve to incite a power competition. This strategy falls in line with expectations of offensive realism, as it reflects China's attempt to maximize its power relative to the US. Securing a route which could potentially rival the Panama Canal can be seen as an indirect form of attempted territorial expansion. As Mearsheimer asserts, "state seeks opportunities to weaken potential adversaries" as a way to maximize their own security due to the inherent scarcity of security due anarchy (1990: 12). While the Interoceanic Grand Canal plan did not come to fruition, this plan is reflective of China behaving in line with the logic of offensive realism. This example would not fall under the expectations of defensive realism, as the route through

Nicaragua would serve to disrupt the status quo of countries' reliance on the Panama Canal and ignite a power competition between China and the US. It is for this reason that this act cannot be seen through the lens of defensive realism: this plan, while it did fail, was an explicit attempt to alter the status quo in the region and provide China with the competitive edge. Thus, China has been seen to pose a serious threat to US maritime superiority in Latin America due to its perceived ambitions to overtake US global preponderance. This example could also fit under post-classical realism due to the aspect of China's economic capabilities being maximized in the region, however the fact that this acquisition could undermine US dominance in the Western hemisphere and assist in bolstering China as the regional hegemon in Latin America makes offensive realism a better-suited theory to view this example.

China's trend of predominantly selling arms to ALBA countries may reveal a strategy rooted in offensive realism, as it portrays an overt attempt to maximize the power of nations with ideologies rooted in anti-imperialism by preparing for a potential conflict with the US. Additionally, growing Chinese military contacts with Latin American states are viewed as part of China's expansion as a key global actor, while not directly enhancing China's military power (Ellis, 2011: 43). While this aspect of China's cooperation can be viewed through defensive realism, the ideological aspect of the ALBA states being in opposition to US interests constitutes this example as being more rooted in offensive realism. As China expands its cooperation with ALBA countries, China is behaving in an aggressive way which is countering US preponderance in the region. China's overall rise on the world stage has been predicted to elicit "an intense security competition with considerable potential for war" (Mearsheimer, 2014). While no sign of overt war between China and the US has emerged, China has intensified its external relations with states within the US's region. China's heavy increase in arms sales specifically to

Venezuela reveals that Latin America, or at least the state of Venezuela, is a strategic priority for China's security cooperation, which supports the notion that China is concerned with its share of world power and not simply regional power in Asia. The trends and examples I have mentioned can be seen from an offensive realist standpoint, as China has leveraged its influence in Latin American states to directly combat US influence through a strategic and offensive approach. However, these are one-off examples that do not reflect a general trend of China engaging in an intense power competition with the US. Nonetheless, China's security cooperation efforts, primarily in Venezuela as evidenced through its share of arms exports, do reflect China's concerns with global hegemony as opposed to regional hegemony.

I conclude that in the context of Sino-Latin American relations post-2009, there is not considerable evidence which imbues offensive realism with suitable explanatory power to approach this topic. Latin America does not appear to have a highly relevant role when it comes to Chinese security. While we have not experienced any overt war involving military weaponry between the US and China, there are some key instances in which China is evidenced as engaging in behavior which can be seen as challenging the US in an attempt to disrupt its position as global hegemon and deter the US's relative productivity, namely arms sales to ALBA states as well as the plan to construct a canal to rival the Panama Canal which did not come to fruition.

6.3. Evidence for Post-Classical Realism

Post-classical realism would expect China to act in accordance with being less concerned with immediate security pressures, as the probability of conflict is presumed to be less of an

omnipresent threat than of structural realists. States can make decisions based on an assessment of potential security threats (Brooks, 1997: 446). Through not adopting a worst case scenario perspective regarding the possibility of conflict, post-classical realism does not assume that states will always discount long-term objectives in favor of policies that focus on short-term security, such as enhancing a state's military capabilities (ibid). In post-classical realism, states do pursue power, but the means through which they do so can be done without threatening others in a situation of the security dilemma (Kawasaki, 2001: 223). This includes the pursuit of maximizing a state's share of economic power relative to other states. Policymakers are expected to make a trade-off between military preparedness and potential gains from economic capacity are "substantial relative to the probability of security loss" (Brooks, 1997: 446-447). In terms of China's cooperation with Latin America, this would mean that the US does not constitute a big enough threat for China to ramp up military preparedness by forgoing potential opportunities to maximize its economic gain through cooperation with Latin American states. China would rationally discount any security threats that are not immediate and focus on the pursuit of long-term goals, namely resource acquisition and developing a comprehensive plan to strengthen the relationship with Latin American states in the economic realm (Brooks, 1997: 446). However, economic gain can also translate into military power as states can purchase arms and enhance their military capabilities. Below, I will analyze some strategies from my previous analysis that may be aligned with the core tenets of postclassical realism and which reflect China's focus on Latin American states being motivated by maximization of economic capabilities relative to the US as a long-term goal.

China's pursuit of implementing BCSs in Latin America may support a post-classical realist explanation, as China is seeking to maximize both power and efficiency by leveraging an

economic mechanism which supports the long-term goal of economic stability relative to the dominance of the US dollar. However, while China's internationalization efforts of the renminbi can be seen as an attempt to displace the US dollar, it is more of a means to ascend the global hierarchy and maximize their economic capabilities both in Latin America and in other regions. China's use of BCS agreements with Latin American states does appear to be a subtle strategy employed to tilt the economic scales in China's favor, but ultimately does not fit a defensive realist explanation, as this form of cooperation does not involve any indicator of hedging US influence in Latin America. Rather, it is a prudent strategy to maximize China's economic capabilities in the long-term and support the internationalization of their currency, the renminbi, in pursuit of ascending the global hierarchy. The wave of BCSs can be seen as a strategic attempt to gain economic benefits while also displacing the US dollar, though it can also be seen from a standpoint of absolute gains. The dollar still leads as the world's dominant reserve currency

While free trade is an international norm that is seen as an indicator of status quo behavior, China's FTAs could be seen as a way to secure resources for the long-term. The fourth free trade agreement between the PRC and a Latin American nation was signed in June of 2023, adding Ecuador as the newest member of the list accompanied by Chile, Costa Rica, and Peru (Urdinez, 2023). It is worth noting that China can increase its security not just by limiting directly the US influence in the region, but also indirectly. If China increases trade with Latin America, the country gets economic gains, which it can translate into arms spending, and, in this way, increase its security. Therefore, China's upswing in FTAs with states in the region can be viewed as a means to maximize its economic capabilities relative to the US to maintain its position as primary overall trading partner in the region, which would give China a competitive

edge while also in turn increasing its security in the long-term by ensuring preferential trade status and sustaining their manufacturing industry.

China has displayed a tendency to focus heavily on maximizing its economic capabilities in the long-term through leveraging its relationships with certain Latin American states. It is important to note that Chinese loans have consistently favored governments that have established diplomatic ties with Beijing over Taipei (Solomon, 2020: 55). It is unclear whether these efforts are employed relative to the US, or simply in pursuit of maximizing China's absolute economic gains. Nonetheless, the core logic of post-classical realism does not prove to be a suitable fit to comprehensively account for China's overall cooperation in Latin America. While the trend of establishing comprehensive strategic partnerships and resource acquisition practices do reveal a heavy focus on fostering long-term relationships that could benefit either party in the long-term, there is no causal evidence that supports China's economic pursuits involving outperforming the US. The remainder of examples appear to be rooted in China's desire to simply maximize profit. It is not clear to what extent the US is taken into account with China's practices in Latin America, thus I conclude that competing with the US for global hegemony is not a core motivating factor for China's cooperative efforts in the region.

7. Conclusion

China's emphasis on relationship-building in Latin America enables it to gain access and exert influence in the region. The evolution of political, military, and economic cooperation between China and the Latin American states can be ascribed to multiple factors. But exactly how important is Latin America to China's overall ascendance to hegemony? I have tested

China's expected cooperation tactics involving Latin America using three related yet alternative realist theoretical frameworks to discern the extent to which China's engagement in Latin American states is motivated by efforts to balance US power, exceed US power, or maximize their economic capabilities relative to the US. Each of these approaches have yielded different behavioral expectations for how China will engage in Latin America. Through my use of congruence analysis and comparison of key indicators of China's actual forms of cooperation with the region since 2009, I have concluded that security concerns regarding the US's status as global hegemon constitute, to a small extent, serve as a motivating factor behind China's involvement in the Latin American region. Through my analysis, I found that maximization of absolute economic capabilities along with China's endeavor to rise in the global power hierarchy, mainly through infrastructure projects and deepening economic ties with external states, serve as the primary underlying motivations for the country's heavy-handed cooperation in the region. Latin America represents an effective, yet relatively small portion of China's overall growth. Conversely, I found that China's involvement in the region can not be accounted for as offensive efforts to usurp the US for hegemonic status, while that may be a result of China's continued involvement in Latin America and other regions around the world.

Each of the three theories can to some extent provide explanatory power for the trends in China's economic, military, and political cooperation with Latin American states, but none grasps the full picture. The topic is complex and does not necessarily imply attempts to ascend the global hierarchy relative to the US, regardless of whether some of the observed trends do serve to balance or exceed the US's power. Through my analysis, I have concluded that the theory of defensive realism does not possess sufficient explanatory power to fully account for China's overall policy posture, however the core behavioral logic behind this theory does bear

some weight in explaining China's creation of the CCF as an alternative to the OAS and Thus, Hypothesis 1, to a moderate extent, is a relatively comprehensive theoretical framework to understand this topic. While some examples fit the hypothesis that China is carefully balancing the US threat, there is sufficient evidence of China's core behavioral logic behind its cooperation efforts being rooted in concerns to balance US power. Hypothesis 2, prescribing offensive realism as a theoretical framework, is the least effective theory in my lineup, as China has not employed any notable trends in the region that convey offensive, expansionary motives to exceed US power and maximize its security. While there are a few singular examples of China employing competitive offensive behavior against the US involving Latin American states, there is not any evidence of China's policy posture which fits the offensive realist expectations. Thus, offensive realism as a framework is not satisfactory to provide explanatory power for China's involvement in Latin America, functioning to disprove Hypothesis 2. Hypothesis 3, leveraging postclassical realism, has proven to be moderately comprehensive when analyzing China's consistent actions in Latin America. As reflected through China's heavy commitment to resource acquisition, infrastructure projects, and introduction of using bilateral currency swaps, this theoretical framework is decidedly the strongest amongst the three which were tested in this thesis, however it is unclear to what extent China's efforts are specifically rooted in maximizing economic profit relative to the US, or just maximizing the absolute economic gains of China. The increasing cooperation appears to be more aligned with sustaining China's overall economic growth and national strength while also forming partnerships with states in the region, most likely to maintain a market for exports and increase diplomatic support in the sovereignty dispute of Taiwan. It is not clear if China's efforts are motivated by maximizing economic capabilities relative to the US. Conversely, it appears that maximization of China's absolute economic

capabilities, while also cultivating relationships based on mutual gain with Latin American states to enhance the overall partnerships and gain support for the isolation of Taiwan, are the primary motivations for this intensifying relationship. Overall, a synthesis of each of these three theories can help construct an explanation for China's involvement in the Latin American states to a small extent. Additional theoretical approaches would help paint a bigger picture and create a more convincing explanation.

China may indeed be responding to the threat the US poses to their national security, but the analysis does not fully confirm this. In March 2023, Xi Jinping told delegates to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference that "Western countries led by the United States have implemented comprehensive containment, encirclement and suppression against us, bringing unprecedented severe challenges to our country's development" (US Department of Defense, 2023.) Such a view typifies the idea that China perceives the US interests as a threat to China's development. With this in mind, China's escalating involvement with the Latin American region may reflect retaliation efforts as an attempt to counter US influence in its own hemisphere, while also expanding Chinese influence to foment a geostrategic alliance which could assist in changing the current international structure into a bipolar order.

The implications of a shifting international order concern every state in global politics. China is well on its way to leveling up its status as global hegemon equivalent to the US, which would result in a new bipolar international structure last seen during the Cold War. While Waltz deems this to be the most stable international order, the current globalized climate may necessitate external states to choose sides, further fanning the fires of antagonism and potential aggression. A global schism could develop, and powerful states such as Russia would likely take the side of China, intensifying China's global power and inevitably fostering a situation

analogous to the Cold War, but with added powerful states. On the other hand, if China surpasses the US for global hegemony, establishing a new unipolar international structure, the US may very well push back with more than economic sanctions. Such a global power shift could derail international trade flows and enhance ongoing tensions between the two states, as well as prevent the emergence of strong third powers.

China's policy posture and pursuit of economic gain involving Latin America may result in a consolidation of power in a region made up of weaker, politically unstable states. As China continues to intensify military, political, and economic cooperation with Latin America, international politics in Latin America may become further tilted away from the US. With authoritarian China gaining power in such close proximity to the US, erosion of democracy and an increased rise in authoritarian regimes could ensue. As China and Latin America's ties become more intertwined, the political environment of Latin America could experience a shift that results in an intensification of authoritarianism as well as an increased Latin American dependency on China for loans. China's ability to potentially utilize bases in Latin American territory for espionage and technological development could fan the flames of hostility in the China-US relationship. Distrust and aggression could spill over into the US feeling justified, due to fear and concern for liberal democratic values, inciting an aggressive conflict either on Latin American soil or in the Asia Pacific.

While the theoretical frameworks I have selected reveal a piece of the puzzle as to explain China's heavy-handed involvement in Latin American states post-2009, further analysis leveraging additional theories as well as a greater number of examples for analysis would be useful to construct a more comprehensive picture. Based on my analysis, China's security strategy, political involvement, and economic cooperation do not reflect an overall ambition to

displace the US's global power preponderance. Conversely, China's strategy in the region reflects attempts to increase their power, but not necessarily in relation to the US. China seems instead to be broadening their sphere of influence in external states as they progress in the global hierarchy. While these aims support China's conquest of Taiwan, they also support the nation's overall economic growth and ascension. I conclude that a synthesis of defensive realism and postclassical realism are best suited to explain China's resource-seeking behavior, gradually increasing yet subtle degree of military involvement, and enhanced political cooperation with Latin American states, however other theoretical frameworks are needed to create a comprehensive analysis. As China's cooperation in Latin America waxes and wanes in different fields, we can garner a better picture by leveraging alternative theories to identify the root motivations that underlie this intriguing partnership.

Citations:

- ALBERT, Eleanor, 2016. China-Taiwan Relations. *Council on Foreign Relations*. Online. Council on Foreign Relations, 7 December 2016. Available from: <https://css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/resources/docs/CFR-China-Taiwan%20Relations.pdf> [Accessed 20 February 2024].
- ALVES, Ana Cristina, 2013. Chinese Economic Statecraft: A comparative study of China's oil-backed loans in Angola and Brazil. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*. Online. 1 March 2013. Vol. 42, no. 1, p. 99–130. DOI 10.1177/186810261304200105.
- ART, Robert J. and JERVIS, Robert, 1991. *International Politics: Enduring concepts and contemporary issues*. Online. Available from: <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB09910435>
- BARNETT, Michael and DUVALL, Raymond D, 2005. Power in international politics. *International Organization*. Online. 1 January 2005. Vol. 59, no. 01. DOI 10.1017/s0020818305050010.
- BARRIOS, Ricardo and RIOS, Karla, 2023. IF10982: *China's Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean* Online. *Inter-American Dialogue*. [Accessed 14 December 2023]. Available from: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10982>
- BERNAL-MEZA, Raúl, 2016. China and Latin America Relations: The Win-Win Rhetoric. *Journal of China and International Relations*. Online. 16 September 2016. Vol. 4, no. 2. DOI 10.5278/ojs.jcir.v4i2.1588.
- BERNSTEIN, Thomas P. and LI, Huayu, 2010. *China learns from the Soviet Union, 1949-present*. Online. Available from: <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB05030123>

- BLANCHARD, Jean-Marc F, 2016. POLITICAL ASPECTS OF CHINESE INVESTMENTS IN LATIN AMERICA. *Tempo Do Mundo*. Online. 10 July 2016. Vol. 2, no. 2. [Accessed 17 December 2023]. Available from: <https://www.ipea.gov.br/revistas/index.php/rtm/article/view/41>
- BINGWEN, Zheng, HONGBO, Sun and YUNXIA, Yue, 2012. The present situation and prospects of China-Latin American relations: A review of the history since 1949. *China-Latin American Relations: Review and Analysis 1*. 2012. P. 1–21.
- BLATTER, Joachim and BLUME, Till, 2008. In search of co-variance, causal mechanisms or congruence? towards a plural understanding of case studies. *Swiss Political Science Review*. Online. 1 June 2008. Vol. 14, no. 2, p. 315–356. DOI 10.1002/j.1662-6370.2008.tb00105.x.
- BLATTER, Joachim and HAVERLAND, Markus, 2012. Congruence analysis. In: *Palgrave Macmillan UK eBooks*. Online. p. 144–204.
- BROOKS, Stephen G., 1997. Dueling realisms. *International Organization*. Online. 1 January 1997. Vol. 51, no. 3, p. 445–477. DOI 10.1162/002081897550429.
- China - trade agreements, 2023. *International Trade Administration | Trade.gov*. Online. [Accessed 11 December 2023]. Available from: <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/china-trade-agreements>
- CANGARA, Abdul Razaq, 2022. China’s Responses towards The US Pivot to Asia: “The Dialectics of Hedging and Counter-Hedging.” *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*. Online. 30 September 2022. Vol. 5, no. 3. DOI 10.31014/aior.1991.05.03.363.

- CARDONA, Jaramillo, 2019. China in Latin America: an inconvenient guest. *OASIS*. Online. 1 January 2019. No. 30, p. 77–96. Available from:
<https://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo/7016542.pdf>
- CHAN, Steve, 2021. Challenging the liberal order: the US hegemon as a revisionist power. *International Affairs*. Online. 1 September 2021. Vol. 97, no. 5, p. 1335–1352. DOI 10.1093/ia/iiab074.
- Charter of the Organization of American States*, 1948. . Online. Available from:
<https://www.oas.org/dil/1948%20charter%20of%20the%20organization%20of%20american%20states.pdf> [Accessed 13 February 2024].
- CHEN, Joseph T., 1970. The May Fourth movement redefined. *Modern Asian Studies*. Online. 1 January 1970. Vol. 4, no. 1, p. 63–81. DOI 10.1017/s0026749x00010982.
- CHOO, 2009. China’s Relations with Latin America: Issues, Policy, Strategies, and Implications. *Journal of International and Area Studies*. Online. December 2009. Vol. 16, no. 2, p. 71–90. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43107192?seq=8>
- CLARKE, Marshalee E, 2020. AD1107142: China’s Global Port Expansion: A Maritime Security Threat to U.S. Geographic Combatant Commands Online. [Accessed 21 December 2023]. Available from: <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/AD1107142>
- COLES, Ian, 2020. Latin America mining: Some trends. *Lexology*. Online. 29 September 2020. Available from: <https://www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=3b25a1af-e94d-4584-b4d1-e7494b3b2975>
- COOGAN, Peter F. and MEARSHEIMER, John J., 2002. The tragedy of great power politics. *The Journal of Military History*. Online. 1 July 2002. Vol. 66, no. 3, p. 916. DOI 10.2307/3093434.

CUI, Shoujun and GARCÍA, Manuel Pérez, 2016. *China and Latin America in transition: Policy Dynamics, Economic Commitments, and Social Impacts*. . Springer.

DAVIDSON, Janine, 2014. The U.S. “Pivot to Asia.” *American Journal of Chinese Studies*.
Online. June 2014. Vol. 21, p. 77–82. Available from:
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/44289339?seq=2>

DAVIDSON, Jason W., 2006. *The origins of revisionist and status-quo states*. Online.

DE ARIMATÉIA DA CRUZ, José A, 2014. Strategic Insights: The Dragon in the Tropics:
China’s Military Expansion into the Western Hemisphere. *USAWC Press*. Online. 30
September 2014. Available from:
https://press.armywarcollege.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1475&context=articles_editorials

DEPARTMENT OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN AFFAIRS, MINISTRY OF
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF CHINA, 2016. Basic Information About the China-CELAC
Forum. . Online. March 2016. Available from:
http://www.chinacelacforum.org/eng/ltjj_1/201612/P020210828094665781093.pdf
[Accessed 6 February 2024].

DECLARATION OF THE THIRD MINISTERS’ MEETING OF THE CHINA-CELAC
FORUM, 2021. . Online. Available from:
http://www.chinacelacforum.org/eng/zywj_3/202112/t20211209_10465115.htm

DE SOUSA, Ana Tereza L. Marra, SCHUTTE, Giorgio Romano, ABRÃO, Rafael Almeida
Ferreira and RIBEIRO, Valéria Lopes, 2023. China in Latin America: To BRI or not to
BRI. In: *The Palgrave Handbook of Globalization with Chinese Characteristics*. Online.
p. 495–514.

- DONNELLY, Jack, 2000. *Realism and international relations*. Online.
- DREZNER, Daniel W., 2020. The song remains the same: International relations after COVID-19. *International Organization*. Online. 19 August 2020. Vol. 74, no. S1, p. E18–E35. DOI 10.1017/s0020818320000351.
- ELLIS, Evan R, PIAZZA, K, GREER, A and URIBE, D, 2022. China's use of soft power in support of its strategic engagement in Latin America. *Journal of the Americas*. Online. 2022. Vol. 4, no. 2. Available from:
<https://revanellis.com/Chinas%20Ue%20of%20Soft%20Power%20in%20Support%20of%20its%20Strategic%20Engagement%20in%20Latin%20America%20-%20R%20Evan%20Ellis%20et%20al.pdf>
- ELLIS, Evan, 2020. *Chinese security engagement in Latin America*. Online. Available from:
<https://www.csis.org/analysis/chinese-security-engagement-latin-america>
- ELLIS, R. Evan, 2011. *China-Latin America military engagement: good will, good business, and strategic position*. Online.
- ERIKSON, Daniel P and CHEN, Janice, 2007. China, Taiwan, and the Battle for Latin America. *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*. Online. season-02 2007. Vol. 31, no. 2, p. 69–89. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/45289690?seq=11>
- ESCOBAR, Facundo, 2021. CELAC vs OEA. *United World*. Online. 10 August 2021. Available from: <https://uwidata.com/20295-celac-vs-oea/> [Accessed 13 February 2024].
- FARAH, Douglas and BABINEAU, Kathryn, 2019. Extra-regional actors in Latin America: The United States is not the only game in town. *PRISM: Security in the Western Hemisphere*. Online. 1 January 2019. Vol. 8, no. 1. Available from:
<https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/srhreports/toc/toc/45/>

FREITAS DA ROCHA, Felipe and BIELSCHOWSKY, Ricardo, 2018. China's quest for natural resources in Latin America. *United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean*. Online. December 2018. Available from:
<https://repositorio.cepal.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/c6172ff4-2c3c-4472-8ffc-42d96e065572/content>

Full text: China and the world in the new era - Xinhua | english.news.cn, [no date]. Online.
Available from: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-09/27/c_138427541.htm

Full text of China's Policy Paper on Latin America and the Caribbean, 2016. . Online. Available from:
https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2016/11/24/content_281475499069158.htm

FULTON, Jonathan, 2020. *Strangers to Strategic Partners*. Online. Atlantic Council. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep26037.7.pdf> [Accessed 22 February 2024].

GEOFFRAY, Marie Laure, 2022. THE OAS AND THE REPOLITIZATION OF THE CUBAN QUESTION IN THE AMERICAS. *Foro Europa-Cuba*. January 2022. Vol. 31, p. 2.

GLASER, Charles L., 2003. Structural Realism in a more complex world. *Review of International Studies*. Online. 26 June 2003. Vol. 29, no. 3, p. 403–414. DOI 10.1017/s0260210503004030.

GOETZE, Laurent, 2019. China's Use of Predatory Lending Practices to Gain Global Influence. *Drake Undergraduate Social Science Journal*. Online. season-01 2019. Available from:
<https://www.drake.edu/media/departmentsoffices/dussj/2019documents/Goetze%20DUS SJ%202019.pdf>

- GOLDSTEIN, Avery, 2020. US–China Rivalry in the twenty-first century: Déjà vu and Cold War II. *China International Strategy Review*. Online. 1 June 2020. Vol. 2, no. 1, p. 48–62. DOI 10.1007/s42533-020-00036-w.
- GUANG, Zhang, 1995. Zhongguo de waijiao zhengce (China's Foreign Policies". *Shijie Zhishi Chubanshe (World Affairs Press)*. World Affairs Press, 1995.
- GUO, Jie, 2023. The political economy of China–Latin America relations: the making of a post-boom paradigm. *China International Strategy Review*. Online. 2 May 2023. Vol. 5, no. 1, p. 113–138. DOI 10.1007/s42533-023-00126-5.
- GURROLA, George, 2018. China-Latin America arms sales: Antagonizing the United States in the Western Hemisphere? *Military Review*. Online. 1 July 2018. Vol. 98, no. 4, p. 123. Available from: https://digitalcommons.usmalibrary.org/usma_research_papers/114/
- HAMILTON, Edward John and RATHBUN, Brian C., 2013. Scarce differences: toward a material and systemic foundation for offensive and defensive realism. *Security Studies*. Online. 1 July 2013. Vol. 22, no. 3, p. 436–465. DOI 10.1080/09636412.2013.816125.
- HAND, Keith J., 2022. Waging External Struggle through Law: China's Emerging Domestic Legal Capacity and its Legal Response to Nancy Pelosi's Taiwan Visit. *Social Science Research Network*. Online. 1 January 2022. DOI 10.2139/ssrn.4208433.
- HARDING, Harry, 1992. *A Fragile Relationship: The United States and China Since 1972*. Brookings Institution Press.
- HEINE, Jorge, 2006. China, Chile and free trade agreements. *Estudios Internacionales*. Online. 2006. Vol. 38, no. 152, p. 144. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41391864?seq=3>

- HERNANDEZ, Bruno, 2023. China-Latin America and the Caribbean: Investment, Trade, and Future Prospects. *China Briefing*. Online. 20 October 2023. Available from: <https://www.china-briefing.com/news/china-latin-america-and-the-caribbean-investment-trade-and-future-prospects/> [Accessed 23 March 2024].
- HUBBERT, Jennifer, 2019. *China in the World: An Anthropology of Confucius Institutes, soft Power, and Globalization*. Online. Available from: https://openlibrary.org/books/OL28092627M/China_in_the_World
- HUFBAUER, Gary Clyde and LOWRY, Sean, 2012. *US Tire Tariffs: Saving Few Jobs at High Cost*. Online. Peterson Institute for International Economics.
- HUGHES, Matthew A, 2023. Lessons in the Dragon's Lair: The People's Liberation Army's Professional Military Education Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean. *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*. Online. 5 October 2023. Available from: <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/3540678/lessons-in-the-dragons-lair-the-peoples-liberation-armys-professional-military/#sdfootnote30sym> [Accessed 22 March 2024].
- HUO, Weiwei, CHEN, Shun-Ling, ZHANG, Wei and LI, Kevin X., 2019. International port investment of Chinese port-related companies. *International Journal of Shipping and Transport Logistics*. Online. 1 January 2019. Vol. 11, no. 5, p. 430. DOI 10.1504/ijstl.2019.102145.
- JALIL, Ghazala Yasmin, 2019. China's rise: Offensive or defensive realism. *Strategic Studies*. Online. 24 April 2019. Vol. 39, no. 1, p. 41–58. DOI 10.53532/ss.039.01.00118.

- JENKINS, Rhys, 2012. Latin America and China—a new dependency? *Third World Quarterly*. Online. 1 August 2012. Vol. 33, no. 7, p. 1337–1358. DOI 10.1080/01436597.2012.691834.
- JERVIS, Robert, 1978. Cooperation under the Security Dilemma. *World Politics*. Online. 1 January 1978. Vol. 30, no. 2, p. 167–214. DOI 10.2307/2009958.
- JYALITA, Vincentia Vahistha Hirrya, 2021. Defensive Realism’s perspective on rising China’s behavior as a status quo state. *Sentris: Jurnal Mahasiswa Hubungan Internasional*. Online. 7 May 2021. Vol. 2, no. 1, p. 73–86. DOI 10.26593/sentris.v2i1.4621.73-86.
- KAPLAN, Stephen B., 2016. Banking unconditionally: the political economy of Chinese finance in Latin America. *Review of International Political Economy*. Online. 3 July 2016. Vol. 23, no. 4, p. 643–676. DOI 10.1080/09692290.2016.1216005.
- KAWASAKI, Tsuyoshi, 2001. Postclassical realism and Japanese security policy. *The Pacific Review*. Online. 1 January 2001. Vol. 14, no. 2, p. 221–240. DOI 10.1080/09512740110037361.
- KEEGAN, David J and CHURCHMAN, Kyle, 2022. PELOSI’S “IRONCLAD COMMITMENT” OR “POLITICAL STUNT” LEADS TO CRISIS IN THE TAIWAN STRAIT. *A Triannual E-Journal of Bilateral Relations in the Indo-Pacific*. Online. September 2022. Vol. 24, no. 2. Available from: <https://cc.pacforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/08-China-Taiwan-Relations.pdf>
- LAFARGUE, François, 2006. China’s presence in Latin America. *China Perspectives*. Online. 1 November 2006. Vol. 2006, no. 6, p. 2–11. DOI 10.4000/chinaperspectives.3053.

- LAM, Willy, 2004. CHINA'S ENCROACHMENT ON AMERICA'S BACKYARD. *China Brief*. Online. 24 November 2004. Vol. 4, no. 23. Available from:
<https://jamestown.org/program/chinas-encroachment-on-americas-backyard/>
- Largest militaries in the world 2024 | Statista, 2024. *Statista*. Online. Available from:
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/264443/the-worlds-largest-armies-based-on-active-force-level/>
- LEHOCZKI, Bernadett, 2015. Relations between China and Latin America: Inter-regionalism beyond the Triad. *Society and Economy*. Online. 1 September 2015. Vol. 37, no. 3, p. 379–402. DOI 10.1556/204.2015.37.3.4.
- LI, Nan, 2014. ASSESSING THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY IN THE HU JINTAO ERA. *Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College*. Online. 2014. Available from:
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep11946.10.pdf>
- LOBELL, Steven E., 2017. *Structural Realism/Offensive and Defensive Realism*. Online.
- LYNN-JONES, Sean M, 1998. From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role. *International Security*. season-03 1998. Vol. 23, no. 2.
- MARCONDES, Danilo and BARBOSA, Pedro Henrique Batista, 2018. Brazil-China defense cooperation: A strategic partnership in the making? *Journal of Latin American Geography*. Online. 1 January 2018. Vol. 17, no. 2, p. 140–166. DOI 10.1353/lag.2018.0025.
- MEARSHEIMER, John J., 1994. The false promise of international institutions. *International Security*. Online. 1 January 1994. Vol. 19, no. 3, p. 5. DOI 10.2307/2539078.
- MEARSHEIMER, John J., 2001. The tragedy of great power politics. *Foreign Affairs*. Online. 1 January 2001. Vol. 80, no. 6, p. 173. DOI 10.2307/20050342.

- MEARSHEIMER, John J., 2006. China's unpeaceful rise. *Current History*. Online. 1 April 2006. Vol. 105, no. 690, p. 160–162. DOI 10.1525/curh.2006.105.690.160.
- MEARSHEIMER, John J., 2010. Structural Realism. *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*. Online. 2010. Vol. 83, p. 72–86. Available from: https://www.comackschools.org/Downloads/8_mearsheimer-structural_realism.pdf
- MEARSHEIMER, John J., 2014. Can China Rise Peacefully? *The National Interest*. Online. The National Interest, 2014. Available from: <https://nationalinterest.org/commentary/can-china-rise-peacefully-10204> [Accessed 14 February 2024].
- MÉNDEZ, Álvaro and ALDEN, Chris, [no date]. Latin America Was Once an Afterthought for China... Not Anymore. Online. The China Global South Project (CGSP), Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGFoV1qbF2E>
- MILANI, Livia Peres, 2021. US Foreign Policy to South America since 9/11: Neglect or Militarisation? *Contexto Internacional*. Online. 1 April 2021. Vol. 43, no. 1, p. 121–146. DOI 10.1590/s0102-8529.2019430100006.
- Military and security developments involving the People's Republic of China*, 2023. . Online. U.S Department of Defense. Available from: <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Oct/19/2003323409/-1/-1/1/2023-MILITARY-AND-SECURITY-DEVELOPMENTS-INVOLVING-THE-PEOPLES-REPUBLIC-OF-CHINA.PDF> [Accessed 18 February 2024].
- MORA, Frank O., 1997. The People's Republic of China and Latin America: From Indifference to engagement. *Asian Affairs: An American Review*. Online. 1 March 1997. Vol. 24, no. 1, p. 35–58. DOI 10.1080/00927679709602304.

- MORA, Frank O., 1999. Sino-Latin American Relations: Sources and Consequences, 1977–1997. *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*. Online. 1 July 1999. Vol. 41, no. 2, p. 91–116. DOI 10.1111/j.1548-2456.1999.tb00095.x.
- MORGENTHAU, Hans Joachim, 1946. *Scientific man versus power politics*.
- MORGENTHAU, Hans Joachim, 1978. *Politics among nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*.
- MORRISON, Wayne M. and LABONTE, Jult, 2013. *China's Currency Policy: An analysis of the economic issues*. Online. Available from:
https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc228116/m1/1/high_res_d/RS21625_2013_Jul22.pdf
- MULLER, Nicholas, 2019. Nicaragua's Chinese-Financed Canal Project Still in Limbo. *The Diplomat*. Online. The Diplomat, 20 August 2019. [Accessed 20 December 2023]. Available from: <https://thediplomat.com/2019/08/nicaraguas-chinese-financed-canal-project-still-in-limbo/>
- MYERS, Margaret, 2012. "China's Engagement with Latin America: More of the same? Inter-American Dialogue. 2012.
- MYERS, Margaret and RAY, Rebecca, 2019. *China in Latin America: major impacts and avenues for constructive engagement: A U.S. Perspective*. Online. The Carter Center. Available from: https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/news/peace_publications/china-in-latin-america-major-impacts-and-avenues-for-constructive-engagement-a-u.s.-perspective/
- MYERS, Margaret and RAY, Rebecca, 2023. *AT A CROSSROADS: CHINA-LAC REPORT MARCH 2023 CHINESE DEVELOPMENT FINANCE TO LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN, 2022*. Online. The Dialogue. Available from:

<https://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Chinese-Development-Finance-2023-FINAL.pdf> [Accessed 19 March 2024].

Natural Resources Outlook in Latin America and the Caribbean. Executive summary, 2023.

Online. Available from: <https://hdl.handle.net/11362/48997>

NYE, Joseph S., 1990. Soft power. *Foreign Policy*. Online. 1 January 1990. No. 80, p. 153. DOI 10.2307/1148580.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, 2011. *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments involving the People's Republic of China 2011*. Online. Available from: https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2011_CMPR_Final.pdf [Accessed 22 February 2024].

PAYÁ, Marcos, 2015. "ALBA's 'Grand National Enterprises': tools for development?" Sciences Po Paris (PISA) Columbia University.

PILLITER, Richard John, 1969. The evolution of the U.S. Containment Policy in Asia. PhD Thesis. University of Windsor.

PORTAL LOGISTICO DE PANAMÁ, 2023. Statistics - Panama Logistics web portal. *Panama Logistics Web Portal - Plataforma Cubre Todos Los Principales Activos Logísticos De Panamá, Como El Canal, Los Puertos Marítimos, Los Aeropuertos, Las Carreteras, Las Zonas Económicas Especiales Y Las Zonas Francas, Junto Con Un Amplio Espectro De Servicios Logísticos*. Online. 14 August 2023. Available from: <https://logistics.gatech.pa/en/logistics-platform/logistics-assets/panama-canal/main-features-panama-canal/statistics/#:~:text=For%20the%20fiscal%20year%202022,that%20totalled%20USD%203%2C028%20million.>

- PETERSEN, Gustav H., 1973. Latin America: Benign neglect is not enough. *Foreign Affairs*.
Online. 1 January 1973. Vol. 51, no. 3, p. 598. DOI 10.2307/20038003.
- PENG, Xinjun, 1987. Demographic consequences of the Great Leap Forward in China's provinces. *Population and Development Review*. Online. 1 December 1987. Vol. 13, no. 4, p. 639. DOI 10.2307/1973026.
- QUAN, Li and YE, Min, 2019. China's emerging partnership network: what, who, where, when and why. *International Trade, Politics and Development*. Online. 15 July 2019. Vol. 3, no. 2, p. 66–81. DOI 10.1108/itpd-05-2019-0004.
- RAY, Rebecca, ALBRIGHT, Zara C and WANG, Kehan, 2021. *China-Latin America Economic Bulletin*. Online. Boston University. Available from:
https://www.bu.edu/gdp/files/2021/02/China-LatAm-Econ-Bulletin_2021.pdf
- RETZL, Kenneth J, 2016. The Inter-American Development Bank: Poverty alleviation and the millennium development goals. PARK, Susan and STRAND, Jonathan R (eds.), *Global Economic Governance and the Development Practices of the Multilateral Development Banks*. Online. 2016. P. 40–42. Available from:
https://books.google.cz/books?hl=en&lr=&id=iOJzCgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA39&dq=IADB+goals+inter+american+development+bank&ots=tE-CVFqQuT&sig=mE8KVMe4pkTZG3xpy3RVOBFjy60&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=IADB%20goals%20inter%20american%20development%20bank&f=false
- ROY, Diana, 2022. China's Growing Influence in Latin America. *Council on Foreign Relations*.
Online. 13 April 2022. [Accessed 5 September 2022]. Available from:
<https://www.cfr.org/background/china-influence-latin-america-argentina-brazil-venezuela-security-energy->

[bri#:7E:text=Venezuela%20is%20the%20biggest%20borrower,and%20the%20Caribbean%20Development%20Bank.](#)

RUNDE, Daniel F. and DORING, Amy, 2021. Key Decision Point Coming for the Panama Canal. *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. Online. 14 July 2021. [Accessed 20 December 2023]. Available from: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/key-decision-point-coming-panama-canal>

SALIDJANOVA, Nargiza, 2011. *Going Out: An Overview of China's Outward Foreign Direct Investment* Online. [Accessed 18 December 2023]. Available from: <https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/GoingOut.pdf>

SANTORO, Mauricio, 2020. China in Latin America in the 21st century. *Cuadernos Iberoamericanos*. Online. 5 December 2020. Vol. 8, no. 3, p. 25. Available from: https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/66102634/Artigo_Santoro_China_in_Latin_America_in_the_21st_Century-libre.pdf?1616708273=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DChina_in_Latin_America_in_the_21_st_cent.pdf&Expires=1713808764&Signature=DQD6484vdJeeIJE0181DaFqr~cGa8WqJ825u6Pt0E4EP-03RiyCKpwQwsHuKraqwiO6jLQeX-RFdVUdWbXpLt9k4HYX1kA5fWkrCSy4aiRhOxmRXGPcKUIXUErwEMlayTbylabdx11QtTKO~fLIEYLuvxjQiRha~jBtxGIs8xeQpVC2mS9kd~zKWJWg~JZj2Y03aziHoIvEOUI-j0UilW0QPZz4Z1hA1Z4iVGwRnkEozN7kw0GLb5Fx99WQefnGAbJIvxU6w7z1YHIvGbXYG8PeP8VQjxsPX8WhakYo~Gi9sAZACQLeGd6Av65eAjBD0HF8fvDSE9BrI339Divyn0w__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA

- SCOBELL, Andrew, 2018. The South China Sea and U.S.-China rivalry. *Political Science Quarterly*. Online. 1 January 2018. Vol. 133, no. 2, p. 199–224. DOI 10.1002/polq.12772.
- SELDIN, Jeff, 2023. China infiltrating US “Red Zone” with Latin American push. *Voice of America*. Online. 4 August 2023. Available from: <https://www.voanews.com/a/china-infiltrating-us-red-zone-with-latin-american-push/7212335.html>
- SHAMBAUGH, 2013. Assessing the US “Pivot” to Asia. *Strategic Studies Quarterly*. Online. season-02 2013. Vol. 7, no. 2, p. 10–19. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26270763?seq=1>
- SHIXUE, Jiang, 2006. A New Look at the Chinese Relations With Latin America. *Nueva Sociedad*. Online. Nueva Sociedad, January 2006. Available from: https://static.nuso.org/media/articles/downloads/3351_2.pdf [Accessed 8 January 2024].
- SHIXUE, Jiang, 2006b. Recent Development of Sino-Latín American Relations and its Implications. *Estudios Internacionales*. Online. January 2006. Vol. 28, no. 152, p. 19–41. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41391855>
- SHULLMAN, David, 2024. China pairs actions with messaging in Latin America. The United States should do the same. *Atlantic Council*. Online. 9 February 2024. Available from: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/china-pairs-actions-with-messaging-in-latin-america-the-united-states-should-do-the-same/>
- SIPRI Military Expenditure Database, [no date]. *SIPRI*. Online. Available from: <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>
- SOLOMON, Sarah, 2020. China’s Geopolitical Strategy in Latin America: Pursuing Hegemony. *World Outlook: An Undergraduate Journal of International Affairs at Dartmouth*

College. Online. 2020. No. 58, p. 53–59. Available from: <https://bpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/sites.dartmouth.edu/dist/9/244/files/2021/05/Issue-58-Fall-2020-World-Outlook.pdf#page=53>

SUN, Hongbo, 2014. China-Venezuelan oil Cooperation model. *Perspectives on Global Development and Technology*. Online. 8 October 2014. Vol. 13, no. 5–6, p. 648–669. DOI 10.1163/15691497-12341322.

TALIAFERRO, Jeffrey W., 2001. Security Seeking under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited. *International Security*. Online. 1 January 2001. Vol. 25, no. 3, p. 128–161. DOI 10.1162/016228800560543.

TELIAS, Diego and URDÍNEZ, Francisco, 2021. China’s Foreign Aid Political Drivers: Lessons from a Novel Dataset of Mask Diplomacy in Latin America during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*. Online. 29 October 2021. Vol. 51, no. 1, p. 108–136. DOI 10.1177/18681026211020763.

THAYER, Bradley A. and JOHNSON, Dominic D.P., 2010. The evolution of offensive realism: Survival under anarchy from the Pleistocene to the present. *Politics and Life Sciences*. Online. season-01 2010. Vol. 35, no. 1, p. 1–26. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26372766>

The one China principle and the Taiwan issue, 2003. *Chinese Journal of International Law*. Online. Vol. 2, no. 2, p. 732–746. DOI 10.1093/oxfordjournals.cjilaw.a000498.

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, 2023. *Intelligence Expert Breaks Down China’s Secret Spy Bases in Cuba..* Online. Video. 2023. Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6qY6BMvOBc> [Accessed 3 February 2024].

- TISDELL, Clement A., 2009. Economic reform and openness in China: China's development policies in the last 30 years. *Economic Analysis and Policy*. Online. 1 September 2009. Vol. 39, no. 2, p. 271–294. DOI 10.1016/s0313-5926(09)50021-5.
- TOFT, Peter, 2005. John J. Mearsheimer: an offensive realist between geopolitics and power. *Journal of International Relations and Development*. Online. 30 November 2005. Vol. 8, no. 4, p. 381–408. DOI 10.1057/palgrave.jird.1800065.
- Topic: Latin America, 2024. *Statista*. Online. Available from:
<https://www.statista.com/topics/3287/latin-america/#topicOverview>
- URDINEZ, Francisco, 2023. Economic displacement: China's growing influence in Latin America. *Wilson Center*. Online. 16 June 2023. [Accessed 11 December 2023]. Available from: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/economic-displacement-chinas-growing-influence-latin-america>
- U.S.-CHINA ECONOMIC AND SECURITY REVIEW COMMISSION, 2016. *U.S.-China Economic and Trade Relations: 2016 Annual Report to Congress*. Online. U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission. Available from:
<https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/Chapter%20%20U.S.-China%20Security%20Relations.pdf> [Accessed 14 February 2024].
- VAN DE MAELE, Diego Leiva, 2017. Xi Jinping and the Sino - Latin American relations in the 21st century: facing the beginning of a new phase? *Journal of China and International Relations*. Online. 29 June 2017. Vol. 5, no. 1, p. 35–67. DOI 10.5278/ojs.jcir.v5i1.1916.
- WANG, Yong, 2016. Offensive for defensive: the belt and road initiative and China's new grand strategy. *The Pacific Review*. Online. 9 March 2016. Vol. 29, no. 3, p. 455–463. DOI 10.1080/09512748.2016.1154690.

- WANG, Hongying, 2016. *A DEEPER LOOK AT CHINA'S "GOING OUT" POLICY* Online. CIGI. [Accessed 29 December 2023]. Available from:
https://www.cigionline.org/sites/default/files/hongying_wang_mar2016_web.pdf
- WALTZ, Kenneth N., 1959. *Man, the state, and war*. Online. Available from:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Man,_the_State,_and_War
- WALTZ, Kenneth Neal, 1979. *Theory of international politics*. Addison Wesley Publishing Company.
- WICAKSONO, Agung, SUYASTRI, Cifebrima and SUNDARI, Rio, 2022. Understanding political realism. *Journal of Government and Political Issues*. Online. 22 July 2022. Vol. 2, no. 2. DOI 10.53341/jgpi.v2i2.52.
- WISE, Carol, 2016. China and Latin America's Emerging Economies: New Realities amid Old Challenges. *Latin American Policy*. Online. 13 May 2016. Vol. 7, no. 1, p. 26–51. DOI 10.1111/lamp.12087.
- World Bank Annual Report 2023, [no date]. *World Bank*. Online. Available from:
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/about/annual-report>
- Xiaoping, Deng, 1984. The Research Department of Party Literature, Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, 1991. *Major documents of the People's Republic of China : selected important documents since the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (December 1978-November 1989)*. Online. Available from: <http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BB1831206X>
- YEE, Andy, 2011. Maritime Territorial Disputes in East Asia: A Comparative Analysis of the South China Sea and the East China Sea. *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*. Online. 1 June 2011. Vol. 40, no. 2, p. 165–193. DOI 10.1177/18681026110400020.

- YELERY, Aravind, 2016. China's bilateral currency swap agreements. *China Report*. Online. 9 March 2016. Vol. 52, no. 2, p. 138–150. DOI 10.1177/0009445515627210.
- YOVANOFF, Jason, 2021. China-Latin America Finance databases. *The Dialogue*. Online. 6 May 2021. Available from: https://www.thedialogue.org/map_list/
- YU, Li, 2015. China's strategic partnership with Latin America: a fulcrum in China's rise. *International Affairs*. Online. 1 September 2015. Vol. 91, no. 5, p. 1047–1068. DOI 10.1111/1468-2346.12397.
- ZEDONG, Mao, 1994. *Mao Zedong on Diplomacy: Issues on Division of Three Worlds (on February 22, 1974)*. Beijing, Central Documentary Press and World Affairs Press.
- ZHANG, Baohui, 2022. From Defensive toward Offensive Realism: Strategic Competition and Continuities in the United States' China Policy. *Journal of Contemporary China*. Online. 30 November 2021. Vol. 31, no. 137, p. 793–809. DOI 10.1080/10670564.2021.2010885.