

Within and/or Beyond Perception and Ideology: The U.S., China and Their Relationship towards Latin America*

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ABSTRACT

Why do leftist governments in Latin America prefer building relationships with China rather than with the U.S., particularly in the twenty-first century? This paper examines the nature of the interrelationship between the U.S. and Latin America, and that between China and Latin America, and argues that the embedded political and ideological aspects are key factors to consider when answering the question, albeit in a prevailing capitalism-oriented world economy. This has been evident in the historical trajectory of China's relationship with Latin America, which has evolved in a manner quite different from the way in which the U.S. has interacted with Latin America. While this paper acknowledges that economic factors are more important in shaping the nature of relationships among nation-states, this research explores the extent to which the elites' individual levels of perception and their embedded ideological orientation towards the third party plays a critical role in guiding the interaction which they carry out among themselves.

Key Words: U.S.-China-Latin America trilateral relations, Political elites, Cognitive map, South-South Cooperation, Leftist government

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Perception and ideology play a [vital] role
in the foreign policy of every state.
(Levine 1994, 45)

INTRODUCTION

China's growing presence has been felt in Latin America as they invest in local economies. The President of China, Xi Jinping, proposed an infrastructure related bid in 2014—a railway project that crosses the Andes—linking Brazil's Atlantic coast to Peru's Pacific coast. Chinese Premier Li Keqiang announced \$50bn in Chinese investment, primarily intended for this mega-railway project while visiting Brazil (Anderlini 2015; BBC 2015). In this vein, 2015 was the second highest year on record for Chinese finance in Latin America, and 2015 was the year that Chinese finance to Latin America was more than that of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) combined (Myers et al. 2016, 1).

Arguably, one of the more recent responses to the growing Chinese presence in Latin America is the restoration of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Cuba, which, as of 20 July 2015, demonstrates the end of the Cold War in this region of the western hemisphere (U.S. Department of State 6 July 2015; Schwartz 2015). This is a remarkable moment, and indicates the U.S.'s attempt to reconcile with its ideological foes for political purposes, while counterbalancing the emergence of China in the region. In this sense, this paper argues that the U.S. and China have distinctive roles in shaping and influencing the nature, or at least, the orientation of Latin American societal economic structures, as well as the region's political and economic map. Whereas, the latter has come upon the scene more recently, the former has been continuously influencing the region for some time. With respect to the two key actors in this region, the purpose of this paper is to understand why Latin America, particularly South America, (arguably) favors China more than the U.S.

The above-stated argument will be elaborated in the following manner. First, a framework of analysis, which consists of the role of perception and ideology, will shed light on how these are related to shaping behavior, the action of political elites, and thus their decisions. The second section shows how the U.S. has historically perceived Latin America as a whole. The second portion of this section will examine how China has recognized Latin America. The third section then turns its attention to Latin American views of the U.S. and China, particularly in the twenty-first century. This

study will conclude that Beijing is arguably both directly and indirectly a more favourable partner for Latin America in the international system than the U.S.

ANALYTICAL LENS: BROAD FRAMEWORK

As Steven I. Levine (1994) points out, “perception and ideology play a [vital] role in the foreign policy of every state” (45). This study argues that the overarching analytical lens needed to understand politics in the Latin American region, vis-a-vis the U.S. and China’s foreign policy, is one that prioritises the perceptions and ideologies that respective national leaders hold. For this matter, perception (and cognitive mapping) and ideology, are a fundamental basis that require definition and conceptualization for this particular area of study. As will be discussed and analyzed, this cognitively embedded perception and ideology shape the way and space in which political and economic interests are expressed amongst nation states, including the U.S., China, and Latin America.

Perception and Cognitive Map

In order to extract the notion of perception and in order to frame a way to conceptualize and contextualize it for this study, it is helpful to consult Robert Axelrod’s edited volume, *Structure of Decision: The Cognitive Maps of Politics Elites* (1976) and Robert Jervis’s *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (1976). Considering how the cognitive mapping approach influences the decision maker, Axelrod argues that “individuals do express choices, predictions, and explanations that are consistent with the functioning of the cognitive map corresponding to their assertions about their beliefs” (57). Accordingly, Jervis (1976) studies the terrain of perception and misperception emerging from the field of psychology, so as to provide a better understanding and explanation of how foreign policy makers diagnose and deal with international politics. Thus, Jervis (1976) believes that the perceptual psychology of individuals illuminate the rationale behind their decision making behavior in a certain way in foreign policy. In accordance with a striking statement by the philosopher Joseph Jastrow, the “mind is a belief-seeking rather than a fact-seeking apparatus” (quoted in Axelrod 1976), as Ole Holsti (1976) implicitly states, this study avers that the small unit is perception and it crafts and enhances belief.

Starting from these series of processes, this study views these small units, belief and perception, as mutually interacting, influencing and shaping certain behavior. Through the process of accumulation of this interaction, the cognitive map is established. This map can be seen as functioning as a feedback apparatus (via an iteratively visiting) through which people classify, order, and interpret the world. In this analysis, the natural question might arise as to the derivation of this perceptual disposition. As argued by Jervis (1976), this study views life experience as the source of these predispositions, particularly in early life. That is, a person's mind and his or her perception of others, once established, is difficult to change (Jervis 1976, 10).

In accordance with this logic, this study echoes the analysis of Lars Schoultz (1988), who wrote a history of U.S. foreign policy towards Latin America since the early nineteenth century. His academic study and insight will be analyzed in the following to see how U.S. decision maker's perceptions of Latin America have influenced foreign policy decision making. While this study recognizes that perception comes from the individual level, this individual level of perception is at least partly shaped and driven by an ideological framework, which is more situated in the institutional realm. Thus, the notion of ideology, which explicitly or implicitly shapes the decision-making process, needs to be noted.

Ideology (and Pragmatism)

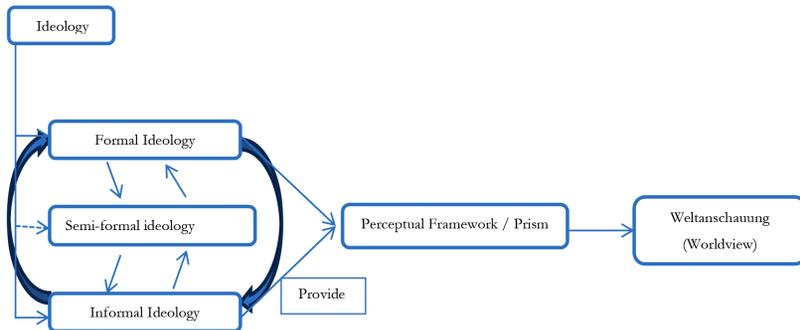
“The word ideology points to a black box” (Sartori 1969, 398), that is, ideology per se, is not an easy concept to unpack and define. To aid in overcoming this difficulty, this study adopts the broad domain of ideology in politics.¹ This questions whether ideology is an essential feature of politics and, if so, what it explains about the nature of politics. This then is concerned with functional value rather than truth value (Sartori 1969). As stated by Sartori, “ideologies are no longer ideas, in the sense that ideological doctrines no longer fall under the jurisdiction of logic and verification” (1969, 399). Rather, ideology can be situated in a realm in which pragmatism is confronted dichotomously. Given the understanding that ideology can be placed beyond the rational boundary, the concept of ideology invites various definitions. Among those, including Hunt's and Billing's, this study promotes Levine's (1994) definition of ideology

1 According to Sartori, there are two broad domains: ideology in knowledge and ideology in politics. The prior explores whether and to what extent man's knowledge is ideologically conditioned or distorted (Sartori 1969, 398).

as a “coherent and systematic body of ideas that helps to explain the nature of social reality and provides a programme of action for changing that reality in order to achieve certain desired social goods and values” (33). In this broad term, Levine divides formal and informal ideology.

The former refers to “an explicit and systematic body of thought, reasonably well-formulated and well-articulated” (Levine 1994, 33). The latter is “the complex of cultural values, preferences, prejudices, predispositions, habits, and unstated but widely shared propositions about reality that condition the way in which political actors behave” (Levine 1994, 34). Taking these broad definitions of ideology into account, this study defines ideology as a set of conscious (i.e. formal ideology) and unconscious (i.e. informal ideology) ideas, which are refracted and reflected by social reality. Ideology ultimately provides a justification for action, given the actor’s understanding of the world.

In this fashion, as shown in Figure 1, this study aims to establish semi-formal ideology, which deals with principles and doctrines that do not seem to be situated in the formal or informal spectrum of ideology. However, semi-formal ideology is a boundary in which two partially bifurcated realms can be located and produce an individual perceptual framework as a cognitive map, and in the end, provides justification for behavior and action.



Source: Reconfigured by the author, based on Steven I. Levine (1994).

Figure 1. Dynamic procedure of the construct and function of ideology

Given the importance of defining terminology, this study views perception and ideology as mutually inclusive; rather, these are mutually reinforced in formulating an analytical framework for the nature of social reality. In this spirit, studying and understanding the U.S. and China in terms

of their respective perceptions and ideologies, particularly with respect to the Latin American region, will be key. The U.S. perception and ideology towards the Latin American region will be discussed in the following section.

THE U.S. PERCEPTION AND IDEOLOGY TOWARD LATIN AMERICA

Lars Schoultz (1988) argues that the pervasive belief held by the U.S. toward Latin America is that it “constitute[s] an inferior branch of the human species” (xv). This striking argument was derived from an influential statesman’s perception at an individual level, such as John Quincy Adams. He viewed Latin Americans as “lazy, dirty, nasty and in short I can compare them to nothing but a parcel of hogs” (Schoultz 1998, 1). With this perception, then, Adams served as a secretary of state of the U.S. during the presidency of John Monroe, who promulgated the Monroe doctrine. It claimed that European countries should be less influential in the Americas.

Subsequently, Adams served as the sixth president of the U.S. after James Monroe in the early nineteenth century, during which time Latin American countries became independent from their colonizers. The influence of a leader’s prejudiced perception acted as a prism or cognitive map through which a leader viewed the world and through which, he believed he could design his legacy. Thus, it would appear that the early nineteenth century Anglo-American view of Hispanic culture is a fundamental point that permeates every aspect of U.S. foreign policy toward the Latin American region (Schoultz 1998, 379). Along with the pejorative U.S. perspective toward Latin America, it has been argued that the security and economic interests of the U.S. have played a vital role in the determination of foreign policy toward Latin America over the last two centuries, and is the rationale for the U.S. interest in Latin America.

Another central tenet that leads and legitimizes the U.S.’s imperial behavior is its political mission: spreading the gospel of democracy (Smith 2007). This is a level of ideology, particularly formal ideology, referring to the previous defined concept, which justifies and provides a cohesive interpretation of particular U.S. behavior in and for Latin America. In short, in the name of defending and spreading the gospel of democracy, a series of doctrines and policies have been put forward, which are contained

under the umbrella of semi-formal ideology. They are characteristically short-lived and relatively malleable, including the Monroe Doctrine, the Roosevelt Corollary and Dollar Diplomacy. On top of these interests and ideologically-based motivations, this study views the logical corollary of beliefs as such that U.S. foreign policy toward the Latin American region evolved from the spirit of *noblesse oblige*; yet, it seems that there is a fundamental connotation that the U.S. is superior to Latin America. Thus, particular doctrines and policies such as the Monroe Doctrine have evolved under the umbrella of these perceptions and ideologies.

On the Brink of the Cold War

The Cold War era has at least two distinctive characteristics. First, the bipolar structure of world power replaced the multipolar system which used to be a predominant feature of international society (Smith 2008). Dominated by two superpowers, the U.S. and the Soviet Union, the former and latter were bifurcated due to their formal ideological competition. The U.S. endorsed the notion of capitalism, liberalism, and democracy. Accordingly, the common denominator between these two features of the Cold War era is the emergence of the U.S. as a superpower. Given the dichotomized global context owing to ideological difference, the U.S. intended to gain supremacy over the Marxist ideology of other regions and nation-states based on capitalism and liberal democracy.

Thus, while the U.S. also directed its attention to other parts of the world, Latin America is still taken into account as a special region in which the U.S. continuously engages in light of political, economic and strategic interests (Keen and Haynes 2000). While Jorge I. Domínguez (1999) supports the notion that economic and security-based strategic interests drove the U.S. to involve itself in Latin American domestic politics over before and during the Cold War, he stated that the national behavior of the U.S. was in some respect irrational, particularly in the Cold War era. By pointing out the importance of ideology-driven behavior, Domínguez (1999) argues that the Cold War proved distinctive because the bi-polar international system, linked to “anti-communist ideological objectives”, served to “overwhelm [...] US foreign policy goals towards Latin America” (48).

In this vein, one of the examples of irrational U.S. anti-communism prior to the end of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 was the overthrow of Guatemalan President Jacobo Arbenz in 1954. As Lowenthal (1972) and Domínguez (1999) stressed, after Fidel Castro took power in Cuba,

U.S. foreign policy was that a “second Cuba” is without further consideration not acceptable. Therefore, during the Cold War period, the U.S. foreign policy, particularly toward Latin America was excessively focused on the threat of communism. Thus, anti-communism was no doubt a crucial motivating element that shaped U.S. policy, which several scholars have argued to be illogical (Krasner 1978; Meernik et al. 1998; Dominguez 1999). Throughout the Cold War era formal ideology functioned as an embedded institution that was a more salient characteristic than any other (i.e. pragmatism).

In light of U.S. concern over the spread of communism, the Kennedy administration (1961-1963) proposed and implemented an ideologically motivated programme for the Latin American region: Alliance for Progress. As shown in the Charter of Punta del Este in 1961, proposing “to complete the revolution of the Americas” (John F. Kennedy statement, cited in Smith 2008, 136), this plan had comprehensive dimensions, aiming to promote economic growth, social development, and political democracy for this region. Smith (1991) and Smith (2008) pointed out, as this plan emerged after it became clear that Latin America was no longer a safe region with respect to communist expansion in light of Cuba’s unexpectedly successful communist revolution. The Alliance for Progress demonstrated a dramatic and central reorientation of Washington’s policy toward the Latin American region. In other words, as implied by the Marshall Plan, which targeted Europe for the purpose of buffering and protecting Western Europe from communist influence after World War II via socio-economic and political aid, this U.S. priority was modified or at least diversified to include Latin America. As many scholars indicate, U.S. foreign policy’s anti-communist ideological objective was threatened and blemished its pride because its backyard, which was supposed to be managed by the U.S.’s influence, was out of control, even in the nearest Latin American country to the U.S. other than Mexico.

In this line of heightened anxiety due to anti-communist ideology, a fundamental causal link in implementing the Alliance for Progress, Latham (2000) provides a further analytical insight based upon the intellectual and cultural dimensions of the Cold War era. Given that the Third World is vulnerable to the perils of poverty, Latham (2000) argues that to contain communism in the developing world, global modernization was a timely method of shielding these underdeveloped nations from communism. Modernization as a new ideology, recasting old ideologies in the line of imperialism including Manifest Destiny, reflected “a world view through which America’s strategic needs and political options were articulated,

evaluated, and understood” (Latham and Gaddis 2000, 8). In short, given the change of global context in the Cold War era, related to the ideological confrontation between the U.S. and U.S.S.R., the U.S. had to reconsider and re-clothe its imperialist ideology along more benevolent lines because of the changed external context. Thus, it seems that modernization as an ideology provided justification for all U.S. foreign policies, particularly the Alliance for Progress, which emerged from it. However, in the end, this Alliance for Progress was a failure. With no great care to understand Latin American social reality, Washington implemented this program with own interpretation and interests.

Subsequently, a rash of military coups occurred throughout the region in the 1960s. Given the emergence of military dictators in this region, as pointed out by Smith (2008), the U.S. government chose to cooperate with military regimes rather than promote and consolidate democratic civilian rule. Tulchin (1988) and Smith (2008) have argued that Washington found no strong objection toward these military regimes or authoritarian rule as long as they favored U.S. policy, which meant denouncing communism. Accordingly, it is shown that the U.S. anti-communist geo-political preoccupation, along with the economic interest hidden behind the rhetoric of idealism shaped U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America in the Cold War era. In other words, in the name of national interest, mainly security-focused, the U.S.’s idealistic facade, composed of political democracy and socio-economic growth, can be unmasked without much hesitation.

Throughout the Cold War era, this research asserts that anti-communism ideology was a key motivator that drove the U.S. foreign policy toward Latin America. As discussed above, the U.S. policy in some respects shows a lack of pragmatism due to the ideology obsession. Thus, it is rational for Washington to co-operate with types of political regimes as long as partner meets the ideological needs of the U.S., namely the denunciation of communism. U.S. political behavior, based on its strategic national interest, and embedded “superiority”, with Anglo-Saxon versus Latino in the hierarchy of race, a perception that has existed from the beginning of the nineteenth century and even during the Cold War era, has unsurprisingly been negatively understood in Latin American society. Thus this is a critical legacy that arguably permeates the nature of Latin American political society, particularly leftist political elites of the twenty-first century.

CHINA AND LATIN AMERICA

The following study examines China's relations with Latin America, which can be explained by means of the three ideological spectrums presented above. Some scholars note that there has been less noticeable contact between China and Latin America prior to the end of 1970s² (Mora 1997; Armony and Strauss 2012). However, as Lee (1964) pointed out, given the geographical hurdle (e.g. long distance) and lack of economic resources, the establishment of formal ideological leadership was the main goal of Communist China in Latin America in the 1950s and 1960s.

There has been a different level of relationship between China and Latin America and this ideological level of contact has been largely embedded and remained continuous. It seems that this functions in some respect as groundwork for a cooperative relationship between Beijing and Latin America in contemporary politics. This point will be further examined and explored in order to understand and explain why and how China has used its position as or more effectively than the U.S. in the Latin American region.

As He Li (2007) pointed out, Sino-Latin American links fall into two broad realms: political and economic. Li writes, "Politically, China's policy toward Latin America is not formulated in a vacuum" (834). That is, Beijing's policy-oriented engagement with Latin America has been largely embedded in formal and informal ideological roots since the Communist revolution in 1949. To emphasize to the positivity and respect of Marxist, Leninist, and Maoist thought toward Latin America, Beijing presented similarities, such as history, goals, and interests (Alba 1961; Lee 1964; Ratliff 1972). With these elements, China penetrated into the Latin American region and even to Third World nations so as to seek to balance the threat of hegemony by elucidating the doctrine of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought. In this way, cultural diplomacy had been widely employed in encounters between China and Latin America (Lee 1964; Ratliff 1969; 1972; Mora 1997; 1999; Reiss 2000). Cultural diplomacy is defined as exchanging information, ideas, persons, and culture as a systematic and unified arm of foreign policy (Ratliff 1969; Mora 1997), and China has attempted to implant its Chinese revolutionary experience and strategy to educated and intellectual Latin Americans (e.g. journalists, trade unionists, university professors, lawyers, artists, students, and doctors)(Mora 1997).³

2 This notion will be studied further in the following section.

3 "During the mid-1950s, Beijing invited a large number of unofficial cultural, student, labor, and peace delegations to see first-hand the achievement of the PRC. Between

As stated by Lee (1964) and Mora (1997), China's ideological campaign via cultural contract, given the lack of normal diplomatic channels and lack of economic resources, was considerably successful. In short, calling for anti-imperialist solidarity, particularly targeting the U.S., Chinese propaganda and strategy were tailored to Latin American opinion makers. As China realized this sense of international community, particularly in Latin America, Beijing began to emphasize and promote "Third World solidarity" against the superpowers, showing much less concern with the immediate seizure of revolutionary power (Ratliff 1972). With this element, with Beijing re-underlying and upholding the integration of the Third World into a united front against imperialism and hegemony, many developing countries, particularly in Latin America⁴ supported the Albanian Resolution, the aim of which was to expel Taipei and include Beijing in the U.N. in 1972 (Ratliff 1972). Thus the level of fear toward radical Chinese policies was moderated or was not a priority, compared to anti-imperialism, particularly anti-Americanism.

Comparing the degree of anti-American sentiment in Third World countries of Latin America as opposed to those in Africa and Asia is outside the scope of this study. However, as Yudice rightly stated, "Latin Americans are disparate peoples, but there are few things that unite them more than their shared resentment at the persistent record of U.S. high-handedness in the region as a whole" (2004, 69). China entered into the Latin American region with the formal ideology of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought, which contains notions of anti-imperialism. Thus, for Latin America, China is a country that might have more closely allied characteristics.

In this line, Ratliff (1972) observed that "as long as the PRC [Peoples' Republic of China] does not act too much like a superpower in Latin America, and avoids becoming seriously entangled in the internal affairs of the various countries, the Chinese position will continue to improve with some Latin American governments" (863). This is a striking insight that explains one of the most vital reasons why Latin America not only welcomes China, but by the same token how China obtains and retains its position in the international arena, particularly the Latin American region.

1949 and 1960 a total of fifteen hundred Latin Americas from twenty-one countries visited China. Trade and economic relations between China and Latin America during that period were negligible" (Mora 1997, 35-58).

4 According to Ratliff, at the voting in the U.N. on the admission of the People's Republic in 1971, 12 out of 24 Latin American countries took a pro-Peking or neutral position on the Albanian Resolution, at a time when only two countries, Cuba and Chile, officially recognized the legitimacy of the Communist government (Ratliff 1972, 857).

Modernization and the Open Door Policy, 1977

As Deng Xiaoping seized power in 1976 in China, the post-Mao period began with an open-door policy, which was another turning point for China (Kim 1998) and perhaps also for international communities including Latin America (Vogel 2011). Deng Xiaoping announced the open-door policy in December 1978 “[t]o accelerate China’s modernization we must not only make use of other countries’ experience. We must also avail ourselves of foreign funding. In the past years international conditions worked against us [...] [i]t is now time to use our opportunities” (Kim 1998, 30). This shows that Deng Xiaoping in some respects provocatively transformed Chinese society and its identity to be more receptive to economic development.

The roots of Deng Xiaoping’s ideological foundation, which were gradually and eventually formulated into a principle and doctrine of semi-formal ideology, came from the line of Mao. However, there was a different element, particularly economic development that Deng emphasized. Along with the existing features of Chinese society, this element steadily converted and transformed China into an extraordinary hybrid version, a so called “socialist market economy – in essence, a communist state that uses market-based pricing principles” (Johnson 2005, 2). In short, it seems that Deng’s reformism is less an antithesis to Mao’s radicalism, but rather a post-Mao era which in some sense contains a continuous characteristic of Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought in the form of inertia, which is then blended with economic development in this ideological perspective.

While reformers including Deng Xiaoping have innately encapsulated the nature of a formal ideological framework, the nature of semi-formal and informal ideology provided a conscious intellectual structure as an objective criterion to check the degree of legitimacy which eventually orients behavior and actions. As defined earlier, semi-formal as well as informal ideology deliver and frame the understanding and explanation of particular policy-oriented principles and strategies. Given the legacy of the Cultural Revolution, economic poverty and backwardness, and socio-political turbulence, Deng Xiaoping emphasized economic growth as a national priority (Kim 1998; Eisenman et al. 2007; Shixue 2008).

Shifting from formal ideology-laden policies and their practice to more pragmatic principles, China was painted as a passive participant in world affairs, including those of Latin America. While China’s low profile seems to be more relevant for other regions than a region to which China

belongs to (i.e. the East Asian region), this paper argues that this Chinese low profile in world affairs is an important asset for Latin America. As will be discussed in the following sections, Beijing's policy of non-interference in internal affairs in Latin America combined with a predominately pragmatic approach, particularly in the South American region, has been welcomed by the (centre-) leftist governments in this region. This point is key to understanding and also arguing to some extent why China is placed in a better position than that of the U.S., particularly in South America.

For the purpose of meeting Chinese priorities in four areas for modernization, specifically agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology, Beijing developed a new identity via socialist modernization. Therefore, China's promotion of concepts like the "united front" or "national liberalization through armed struggle" via Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought seems to have been put aside. In other words, the promotion of revolutionary ideology was less an outstanding feature of Chinese policy than it appeared prior to the 1970s. However, to reiterate, this research argues that ideology provides room for preference for political and economic interests and the shape in which these are expressed.

With this type of new economic development prioritizing identity at the forefront, Beijing was searching for new opportunities to meet its national interest by entering into the global market in the 1980s. In this period, as rightly pointed out by He Li (1991) and Reiss (2000), Latin American countries were facing economic hardship, the so-called "lost decade", and needed a platform from which to overcome this recession. As a result, the complementary interests of China and Latin America created a benign atmosphere and promoted economic exchange. Table 1 shows how actively Beijing and Latin America traded over the 1980s, particularly demonstrating the near-doubling of trade volume 1980 and 1988.

Table 1. Sino-Latin American Trade Volume in millions of US\$

Year	Total
1980	1,363
1985	2,572
1986	2,087
1987	1,728
1988	2,576

Source: Xu Shicheng (1998, 6) cited in R. Stefanie (2000, 39).

While Sino-Latin American trade-related complementarity and their mutual needs partnered to diversify trade was an asset, there seem to be multi-dimensional aspects in Beijing consideration of Latin America as a compelling partner besides economic advantage. As Li (1991) stated, Sino-Latin American economic ties are interwoven by economic and political determinants and thus neither economic nor political factors alone can successfully explain Sino-Latin American economic linkage. In this fashion, two external actors, the U.S., and more particularly Taiwan, play a role in driving Chinese foreign policy toward Latin America. In short, the U.S. is by nature containing China in the international community (Reiss 2002) and arguably, during Deng's open-door policy, China was in a position that was more supportive than obstructive of U.S. foreign policy in Latin America (Li 1991). Thus, it seems that in this period, Washington constrained and conditioned Beijing's behavior.

An interesting and seemingly very relevant observation that Li (1991) posed with regard to the Beijing-Taipei competition in Latin America was that Latin America might be maintaining a better position using the nature of Sino-Taiwanese competition in this region as leverage. It has been argued that Taiwan poured more economic and technological aid toward Latin America because China had become actively involved in this area. In this line of analysis, which is related to a better negotiating position for the region, Latin America also used the emerging role of China in this region to "break, or at least reduce somewhat, their dependence on the United States" (Li 1991, 141). In short, the presence of China functions as leverage for Latin America to offset the traditional political, economic, and institutional dominance of the U.S., providing greater freedom of action to pursue a greater level of autonomy (Ellis 2009).

“SOUTH AND SOUTH” COOPERATION AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR LATIN AMERICA

One of the most fundamental driving concepts continuously guiding, configuring, and re-configuring the identity of China at a national level is “South” and the Third World. Samuel S. Kim (1994) noted that from the very beginning of the PRC's formation, “China's Third World policy has been a function of its siege mentality – the instrument of an insecure state in search of a united global front” (Kim 1994, 130). Latin America was one of the targeted regions in which China was actively involved in the implementation of the ethos of South and South cooperation,

allowing these two parties to enjoy increasing trade, technological transfer, and diplomatic recognition (Levine 1994; Li 2007). In this vein, Li (1991) pointed out that China regarded the “South-South co-operation as the theoretical basis of China’s economic relations with Latin America” (142) by referring to Deng’s statement⁵ as an example that “China’s policy is to establish and develop relations with Latin American nations. We will work together with Latin American countries to set an example of South-South co-operation” (Li 1991, 142).

Although China emphasized South-South co-operation as a springboard to implement its modernization efforts, it seems, as Kim (1994) and Li (1991) point out, that western developed countries as North would be placed in a more important position than the South as a rhetorical stance. However, as many scholars have indicated, the Tiananmen Square incident on June 4th, 1989 has had tremendous implications for Beijing, bringing Chinese domestic problems to light. China’s dual focus toward domestic politics and foreign politics has risen to the surface. The former is ideologically rooted and the latter, non-ideologically orientated. The driving force that leads Chinese society is Marxist-Leninist-Maoist thought. This provides fundamental legitimacy for PRC’s leadership by a single party system, that of the Chinese Communist Party. The socialist, yet selectively capitalist economic system of China seems by its nature conflicting.

The Tiananmen Square massacre triggered by this innate non-coexistence seems to have reasserted the importance of South-South relationships to a large extent. In short, many western countries immediately blamed China in light of its human rights issues, marking the end of “China’s honeymoon relationship with the West” (Taylor 1998, 447). Conversely, Latin American countries and African countries were far more moderate and muted in their responses to the Tiananmen Square turmoil (Li 1991; Taylor 1998). In this line, Taylor (1998) noted that the “PRC’s attitude towards the Third World countries turned from one of benign neglect to one of renewed emphasis” (447). As rightly pointed out by Taylor (1988), judging from the events in this turmoil, old friends, particularly the South, provided China with the necessary sympathy and support.

In this respect, the reactions of Third World countries, particularly in Latin America and Africa, to the June 4th Incident were greatly appreciated because of their agreement with the principle of non-interference in internal

5 Deng Xiaoping met with Uruguay’s President Julio Maria Sanguinetti who paid a state visit to China and in this meeting, Deng Xiaoping explicitly stated that China is intended to make relations with Latin America a model of South-South cooperation (Quarterly Chronicle and Documentation, China Quarterly Oct-Dec 1988, 208).

affairs. In conjunction with this renewed recognition of these international partners, high-level Chinese officials visited their new-found southern partners and allies (Kim 1994). Just a year after the events in Tiananmen Square Chinese president Yang Sangkun officially visited five Latin American countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay) (Li 1991) to reaffirm their relationship and meet their needs.

To reiterate, the Tiananmen Square incident was one of the turning points at which when Beijing re-emphasized and re-acknowledged its solidarity and unique relationship with the Third World. Although the notion of South, which has a connotation of anti-imperialism and calls for a new international economic order, is a curious mixture of rhetoric and wishful thinking, the June 4th Incident revalidated South-South co-operation, particularly with Latin America.

The underlying characteristics of Beijing's government are linked to an ideologically broad spectrum, providing an explanation for the overall behavior and action of Beijing towards domestic and international affairs. As noted above, the post-Mao era can mainly be explained in terms of economic growth, which is not ideologically determined. However, as Kim (1994) has stated, "China is a socialist country belonging to the Third World; that support for and solidarity with the Third World is a basic principle of Chinese foreign policy" (128). This nature of nationally embedded characteristics of China came to the forefront with the Tiananmen Square incident. Therefore, the spirit of Tao-Guang-Yang-Hui as the driving principle, which is placed in the realm of informal ideology, is presented at the domestic level so as to engage the international community for the purpose of economic growth. This research demonstrates that the nature of the juxtaposition of these two different features can be reconciled and can provide a fruitful explanation for Beijing's behavior.

From another perspective, particularly with Latin America, it seems that this region has reacted to voluntary-based interactions, with the emergence of Beijing's international involvement. In short, while China has increasingly become a major player in the Latin American region, providing a source of trade, credit, technical assistance, and political support for Latin American countries, other, more important, factors have emerged. As Santiso (2007) observed, China is playing more than the role of an economic and political sponsor in Latin America; rather, China has a "cognitive impact"⁶ upon the Latin American region. That is, China's successful story, a testament to its remarkable economic pragmatism in

6 See also this point discussed by Ellis (2009, 28).

promoting reforms and productive restructuring as led by the state, was directly and indirectly leaving a striking impression on the Latin American people. This so-called “cognitive impact” can be termed the “Beijing Consensus”, in response to the Washington Consensus.

In short, while the Washington Consensus is “an economic theory made famous in the 1990s for its prescriptive, Washington-knows-best approach to telling other nations how to run themselves” (Ramo 2004, 4), it proved not to result in a generally healthy and successful outcome, particularly in Latin America (Ellis 2009). As defined by several scholars and also stated above, the basis of the Beijing Consensus is bringing the state back in driving and carrying out development. Based upon the success of Beijing with this strategy, as Ramo (2004) notes, China is making a different path for other countries who are attempting to figure out not merely how to develop their nations, but also “how to fit into the international order in a way that allows them to be truly independent to protect their way of life and political choices in a world with a single massively powerful centre of gravity” (Ramo 2004, 4). It seems that this is a very compelling alternative to Washington’s stance in the Latin American region. With the arguable failure of the Washington Consensus in the 1990s, and the emergence of Beijing with complementary economic interdependence⁷ and the familiarity of its ideologically led policies, close relations with China seem to be a great asset for twenty-first century Latin America, particularly South American states under centre-leftist governments.

THE U.S. CONTEXT, THE LATIN AMERICAN RESPONSE, AND CHINA’S EMERGING CONTEST IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY LATIN AMERICA

There seems to be no obvious relationship between the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and Latin America. However, it is surprisingly and closely linked to an understanding of U.S. foreign policy toward

⁷ This is somewhat arguable based on the region and more specifically countries. Chile, Peru and Venezuela where are mainly exporting their natural resources and importing manufactured commodities from China are less in a competitive basis, while Brazil and Argentina’s domestic manufactured goods are negatively affected by low priced goods imported from China in these countries.

Latin America in the twenty-first century. As many leading scholars of Latin America, such as Smith, Castañeda, and Hakim, and leading media organizations, like the BBC and CNN, have noted, September 11th, 2001 changed everything, including the shift in U.S. priority from Latin America to the War on Terror. George W. Bush during his presidential campaign of 2000 vociferously expressed his interest in Latin America by vowing to “look south [referring to Latin America], not as an afterthought but as a fundamental commitment of my presidency” (NYT, 18 December 2000). A few days prior to the events of 9/11, President Bush met his counterpart, Vicente Fox, the Mexican president and Bush pledged the twenty-first century to be the “Century of the Americas” (Hadden 2011). Thus, with no such miscalculation, it seems that the continuation of the Monroe Doctrine, arguably in a positive sense, would be shown in this new century.

The ideas developed by Monroe, however, rather appeared as the “Bush Doctrine” to Central and South Asia and the Middle East, broadly speaking the Muslim world. This is because Washington’s regional priorities have shifted due to the War on Terror (Smith 2008). While the U.S. continuously prioritized its foreign policy agenda toward al Qaeda and Iraq, Bush did not even make a single reference in his 2003 State of the Union address with respect to Latin America. According to that address, his administration paid close attention to its Middle Eastern agenda, with Bush even touching on African issues, particularly new health initiatives, rather than return to his pre-2001 view of Latin America (White House, 28 January 2003).

According to Encarnación (2008), given a sense of disappointment that the Bush era did not explicitly deliver toward Latin America in the decades-long common agenda of fighting poverty, inequality, and strengthening democracy, trade was an area which was relatively on track. The Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA)⁸ was ratified by the U.S. Senate in June 2005 to “reinforce their progress toward economic, political, and social reform, and to take another step toward completing the FTAA” (Pelzman 2011, 16). However, as viewed by Smith (2008), it seems that the creation of CAFTA was more associated with geo-political concern rather than the geo-economic focus of the 1990s. The impact on the U.S. economy of the free trade agreement with these Central American countries was surprisingly small at approximately 1% of trading relations in 2004; nevertheless, for the Central American counterparts it had an extremely different meaning (Pelzman 2011). Trade relations

8 It was later called CAFTA-DR as the Dominican Republic has participated in this Free Trade Agreement since 2004.

of Central American countries with the U.S. were heavily disproportionate: for Costa Rica, 40%; for El Salvador, 47%; for Guatemala, 48%, for Honduras, 63%, and for Nicaragua, 43%. Given this trade-based asymmetry between the U.S. and Central America, as stated above, it seems that the U.S. used this leverage to endorse its purposes.

In fact, it was clearly demonstrated that the fact that CAFTA functioned as a political apparatus in the decision of the U.S. to take action in Iraq. Amongst the Latin American countries that supported the war, six, five Central American countries and the Dominican Republic, were engaged in FTA with the U.S. and the seventh, Colombia, was receiving more than \$600 million a year in U.S. military aid (Hakim 2006; Smith 2008). Thus, by nature, given the geographic, economic, and political significance, Central America, including Mexico, is still linked with and dependent on the U.S., but this is less true in the case of South America.⁹ This research avers that this point is key to an understanding of why the South American region as a whole has a different voice than that of Central America, and this ultimately has a somewhat different linkage with the advent of China in Latin America. This stance will be discussed in the following section.

With the understanding that the U.S. was placing a great emphasis on the Middle East agenda because of the September 11th attacks, the South American region seems to be playing an antithetical role to U.S. interests. The obvious example of this came with the failure of the hemisphere-wide free trade deal, Free Trade Agreement of America (FTAA). Its origin and implication will be discussed in the following section to understand how Latin America has responded to U.S. influence in this region. In practice, Washington was losing its political capital not only with Latin American statesmen but also to the ordinary people of this region. As Castañeda (2008) noted, “Bush has become more unpopular in Latin America than any other U.S. president in recent memory” (126). In this line, during Bush’s farewell trip to Latin America in 2007, *The Guardian’s* report was entitled, “Bush leaves Latin America empty-handed” (Carroll, 14 March 2007). Even throughout this trip, he faced a series of anti-Bush protests while visiting all five countries: Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico. As Carroll, et al. (2007), pointed out

9 In this similar vein that Central America is different from that of South America in the sense that the U.S. treated it differently, noted that U.S. views towards Central America are more closely linked because of its geographic location as well as experiencing in some sense a more pejorative stance from the U.S. than South America (Pastor 2001).

these countries were chosen for their relatively friendly governments, however, as a consequence, these visits were blemished by vigorous street protests and were met with lukewarm or even cold reviews by local media.

The Obama administration has continued to maintain a relatively careless and inattentive policy towards Latin America (Bodman 2011; Shifter 2012). However, Latin America entered the very first decade of the twenty-first century, a so-called “Golden Decade” with the anticipation of significant economic growth. Though it will not be discussed here, one of the divisive elements is the Chinese effect. In order to maintain the logical order of this paper, the following section will discuss how the Latin American domestic condition sought to distance itself from Washington’s position and subsequently will discuss how China is situated in this way.

LATIN AMERICA’S RESPONSE

One of the key phenomena to describe this very distinctive period of the twenty-first century for Latin America, particularly South America, is the emergence of leftist governments. It seems to be a somewhat remarkable occurrence, given that the ideological debate had become outmoded. The notion of “the end of History” echoed by Francisco Fukuyama (1992) was well recognized in international society. However, this paper argues that the wave of leftist governments, which also came to be known as the “pink tide”, was not a product of chance; rather, there was an underlying cause that heralded in this societal reality. As discussed earlier, the failure of the Washington Consensus in this region was met with democracy conducive to political movements, which succeeded in establishing leftist governments.

One of the first to be elected, and was therefore the trigger who has led the wave of the twenty-first century of left-wing politics was Hugo Chavez of Venezuela in 1998. Then, Lula da Silva won the presidency in Brazil in 2002. Subsequently, Nestor Kirchner in Argentina¹⁰ in 2003; Tabare Vazques¹¹ of Uruguay, 2005; Evo Morales of Bolivia, 2006; Michelle Bachelet¹², Chile, 2006; Rafael Correa, Ecuador, 2007; Fernando Lugo, Paraguay, 2008; Ollanta Humala, Peru, 2011. Consequently, a domino effect has led the entire continent of South America to be painted a

10 As of 22 November 2015, right-wing politician, Mr. Mauricio Macri was elected president.

11 Vasquez has recently re-elected as 30 November to continue the policies of (centre-)left government from Jose Mujica who is resigning his power.

12 Bachelet has re-elected in 2014 as a President of Chile.

political pink, representing a different characteristic of this region, and largely in reaction to the international norm of market-driven economies that the U.S. in particular endorses. Particularly for Latin America in the 1990s, market-led economic policies known collectively as the Washington Consensus, were not successful in the sense that each society in this region was extensively bifurcated for those who have power (i.e. capital) and those with little power.

Thus, positioning themselves at a distance at least rhetorically, from the unpopular remedy of Washington-led policies in this region via democratically-elected leftist governments, was a legitimate aim for South American governments in order to pursue a grand strategy. In this sense, the proposal of FTAA that the U.S. actively championed ultimately disappeared in 2006 partly because of the ideological composition that left-wing governments had created. However, whether trying to distance themselves or not, the presence of the U.S. in this region, given the image of the Monroe Doctrine in politics and trade, is the key feature and the major asset (Ellis 2012).

As discussed in the section of U.S. context in the twenty-first century, the U.S. almost immediately adjusted its geopolitical interest towards the Middle East after declaring a War on Terror in 2001. In this line, ironically, the most fruitful decade for Latin America is the current period, called the “Golden Decade”, particularly in terms of economic growth. As many scholars of Latin America including Jilberto and Hogenboom (2010), point out the driving force for Latin America is to maximize the use of its

Table 2. (selected) Natural resources in Latin America

Item: Oil*						
Country	Proved Reserves (Thousand million barrels)	Share of Total (%)	World Rank	Daily Production (Ten Thousand barrels)	Share of Total (%)	World Rank
Venezuela	2,965	17.9	1	272	3.5	9
Brazil	151	0.9	14	219	2.9	11
Mexico	114	0.7	18	294	3.6	6
...
Total of Latin America	3,368	20.5	-	1,032	13.1	-
World Total (rounded)	16,526	100	-	8,357	100	-

Item: Natural Gas*							
Country	Proved Reserves (Trillion cubic metres)	Share of Total (%)	World Rank	Daily Production (One hundred million cubic metres)	Share of Total (%)	World Rank	
Venezuela	5.5	2.7	8	312	0.9	26	
Brazil	0.5	0.2	30	167	0.5	31	
Trinidad & Tobago	0.4	0.2	33	407	1.2	21	
...	
Total of Latin America	8.1	3.95	-	2,204	6.6	-	
World Total (rounded)	208.4	100	-	32,762	100	-	
Item: Iron Ore**							
Country	Criteria	Proved Reserves (Thousand million tons)	Share of Total (%)	World Rank	Mine production (million tons)	Share of Total (%)	World Rank
Brazil	Crude ore	290	17.1	2	375	12.5	3
	Iron content	160	20.0	2			
Venezuela	Crude ore	40	2.4	9	20	0.7	13
	Iron content	24	3.0	6			
Mexico	Crude ore	7	0.4	15	13	0.4	14
	Iron content	4	0.5	15			
...
Total of Latin America	Crude ore	337	19.8	-	408	13.6	-
	Iron content	188	23.5				
World Total (rounded)	Crude ore	1,700	100	-	3,000	100	-
	Iron content	800					

Source: BP Statistical Review of World Energy* and Mineral Commodity Summaries 2013 of U.S. Department of the Interior**, cited in Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Republic of Korea, and its Latin America Infra-Energy Centre.

natural resources. In short, as shown in Table 2, Latin America is the repository of abundant natural resources that many countries covet for their own development. In this sense, for China, which has a population of more than 1.3 billion, and has declared economic development its

priority agenda since the end of the 1970s, Latin America is a very attractive partner to meet its needs and goals.

Conversely, while China needs Latin America to meet its economic needs along with its political aspirations, China is also the nation par excellence that Latin America, particularly left-wing South American countries, needs to use its influence as leverage to buffer U.S. engagement.

THE CONTEST OF AN EMERGING CHINA IN LATIN AMERICA

“China’s goal and main challenge is to deepen its relations with the countries of Latin America without irritating Washington” (Tokatlian 2008, 60). It should be simply assumed that this statement is also applicable to other regions. Arguably, China’s presence in such a place, known as the backyard of the U.S., might be more challenging in light of U.S. Monroe Doctrine. However, it is appropriate to note that, as Lanxin (2008) argued, “the Monroe Doctrine is a moribund concept in the context of a democratic Latin America, [particularly with the emergence of the leftist governments], with or without China’s presence” (57). In short, as stated above, Washington’s significant withdrawal from Latin America in particular at the start of the twenty-first century, coupled with the advent of left-wing governments, this has provided a unique context for other interested countries, such as China, to foster relations with the Latin American region in a straightforward manner (Jilberto and Hogenboom 2010).

Given the rationale that China secures its energy supply so as to sustain its economic development, China desperately needs a region that has a surplus commodity endowment (Santiso 2007; Jilberto and Hogenboom 2010). To reiterate, Latin America is a very attractive destination to meet China’s requirements under the “Go Out” policy¹³. Beyond this pragmatic basis for reaching out to Latin America, Beijing has another point of departure from which to engage with Latin America. As briefly discussed above in this paper, Taiwan is a key concern of the PRC (Li 2007; Lanxin 2008). This issue has never disappeared throughout Beijing’s new agenda

13 This state-led strategy under Hu Jintao’s leadership in 2001 primarily targeted natural resources by encouraging major Chinese enterprises to “seek out relationships abroad in order to construct global supply chains to ensure adequate material inputs to sustain Chinese economic activity” (Ellis 2009, 11)

of developing international alliances in the new millennium. As shown in Table 3 below (as of 2013), there are twenty-three countries that have official diplomatic relations with Taipei, while there are 172 with official relations with Beijing.

Table 3. Number of countries recognizing Taiwan and China (as of 2013)

Year	Recognition of Taipei	Recognition of Beijing
1969	71	48
1971	68	53
1973	31	89
1978	21	112
1986	23	134
1990	28	139
2013	23	172

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beijing and Taiwan.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing, as of 2013, twelve of the twenty-three countries in the world that officially recognize Taiwan as the legitimate government of China are situated in Central America and the Caribbean. Ellis (2009) pointed out that Central America and the Caribbean are not considered as strategically important areas by Beijing due to their limited natural resources and trade. However, Latin America, particularly these Central American and the Caribbean areas play a critical role in implementing the ‘One China’ policy, which Beijing pursues its sole recognition as the representative of China in international society (Lanxin 2008; Ellis 2009). Thus, as stated above, given these two axes, energy security driven interaction based upon a new principle the Going Out policy and sovereignty-related interest, China has found Latin America as a whole to be a compelling region to engage with. There is an additional axis that needs to be taken into account. As argued by Lanxin (2008), Chinese geopolitical factors “are still the primary drivers of Chinese policy toward Latin America, albeit in a new context” (45). In short, this research shows that China’s innate character, which has evolved from of its self-perception as the Middle Kingdom, seems to be met and coupled with the emergence of leftist governments in Latin America in this new century.

CONCLUSION

This article argues that policy makers' individual level of perception, coupled with the institutional level of ideology play a key role in shaping why China has arguably displaced or replaced the U.S.'s former position in Latin America. As stated above, the international context, particularly in light of the September 11th attacks, was a critical juncture that has drastically shifted U.S. foreign policy. This provides a favorable condition for China to enter into the Latin American region to fill the void.

Additionally, this research has demonstrated that China has had a positive image in Latin America as a whole preceding the current interrelation. In short, prior to Deng Xiaoping's placement of economic development as the priority for the Chinese government, the PRC reached out to Latin America through cultural diplomacy. Although neo-liberal bureaucratic authoritarian leaders in Latin America did not effectively engage with China in this way, this paper views that there was a largely positive legacy in acknowledging China as a potential partner in the international system. In practice, the positive engagement that evolved from the Deng Xiaoping regime, which was economic interaction and the principle of non-intervention in internal affairs, favors Latin America. This study has shown that this legacy plays an extremely constructive role in Sino-Latin America relations.

Entering the twenty-first century, coupled with the emergence of leftist governments and the events of September 11, 2001, as well as the financial crisis triggered by the U.S., these contexts provided the perfect situation for China to step into the Latin American region in order to be more fully engaged. According to data from the Pew Research Center (Chapter 4. Global Balance of Power, July 18 2013), China's influence tops the U.S. in Latin America both overall and in economic terms. In this favourable context, the Chinese strategic approach in Latin America, mainly for the purposes of securing natural resources and commodities so as to continuously meet the pace of economic development. Thus China is enjoying a renaissance in Latin America. This situation is also clearly shown by the fact that the Chinese president Xi Jinping's visit in June 2013 in Latin America was highly welcomed, whereas in a similar timeframe, American Vice President Joe Biden "got [an] earful of complaints that America no longer cared for the region" (*Economist*, June 8).

Finally, the variation of ideology as an engagement of external actors is a leading mechanism that explains why China is in a better position than that of the U.S. in this current era in Latin American affairs. This

eventually links with the argument that Latin America, particularly the regional integration effort in South America, is shaped by Chinese interests. In short, South American leftist governments drive regional integration and need to obtain financial and political support from external actors in order to sustain their legitimized rules, and on the other hand, China as a leading partner, has “customer” needs that must be satisfied. This concept can be explored and researched further, given that China currently directly engages Latin American regional development, with special focus on regional integration, including a mega-railway project that across South America.

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