



LATIN
AMERICAN
STUDIES
ASSOCIATION

FORUM

SUMMER 2021

52:3

LASA2022

Polarización socioambiental y
rivalidad entre grandes potencias

SAN FRANCISCO, USA • MAY 5 - 8, 2022

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Opinions expressed herein are those of individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Latin American Studies Association or its officers.

From the President

by **Gerardo Otero**, president of LASA | Simon Fraser University | otero@sfu.ca

It is with great expectations and hope that our 40th Congress in 2022 will be held with a substantial face-to-face component in San Francisco, California. It will also have a simultaneous virtual component to make it accessible to all the LASA membership and beyond.

But a word is in order to inform our members why next year's congress will not be held in Paris, as previously planned and announced. There was great enthusiasm in our membership about having the second LASA Congress in Europe, after Barcelona in 2018, which broke participation records. On February 23, 2021, however, our executive director, Milagros Pereyra at the LASA Secretariat, was notified by the Paris Convention Bureau that the hotel we had contracted, the Paris Rive Gauche, was closing for three years for renovation. Because this is a Marriott hotel, Milagros contacted its international representative to inquire what happened and whether we could postpone the contract to hold our event in a later year under similar price conditions to those agreed to for 2022. After several negotiations, Pereyra, on behalf of LASA, was able to sign a new agreement on March 23, 2021, to hold its congress in Paris at the same, renovated, hotel in 2024. The original agreement was respected in its integrity.

Pressure was now on to determine where to go hold our 40th congress in 2022. We had to consider the differential pace of vaccinations worldwide and accessibility. A few options were explored, including Vancouver, where we had to cancel our presential congress for 2021. But San Francisco, California, came out as the safest option, given the faster vaccination pace in the United States, now that it has a new administration. We will hold the 2023 congress in Vancouver, where we were able to cancel the contract for 2021 without penalty; and the same prices will be honored for 2023. There is consideration of having the 2025 congress in

Guadalajara, Mexico, given that we had to cancel our contract in 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The outstanding issue is that, paradoxically, it is overall more expensive for LASA members to hold the congress in Mexico than in the United States or in Canada. Further options will continue to be explored for 2025 and announced in a timely manner.



Before closing, I'd like to encourage you to please read our exciting call for panel and paper proposals for LASA's 2022 Congress on LASA's website (<https://www.lasaweb.org/en/lasa2022/>). The formulation of our central theme, "Socioenvironmental polarization and rivalry among great powers," was articulated with great help from the trio of fantastic colleagues that are accompanying me in organizing the congress. Here's a brief introduction to each of them:

Kata Beilin holds a PhD in Hispanic Studies from the University of Chicago. She is the academic director of the Latin American, Caribbean and Iberian Studies Program and professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Enrique Dussel Peters holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Notre Dame. He is professor in the Graduate Studies Division in the Faculty of Economics at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), where he also directs the China-Mexico Studies Center.

Birgit Müller holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Cambridge. She is a research director at the National Center for Research and professor at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales in Paris (EHESS).

Finally, I'm passing along a communiqué from LASA's Ways and Means Committee:

Comunicado de la Comisión de Ways and Means de LASA

(Nota: Este comité está integrado por el presidente, la anterior presidenta, la vicepresidenta/presidenta electa, la tesorera y la directora ejecutiva [exoficio])

En español:

Recibimos numerosas comunicaciones en torno al pronunciamiento que hiciera el Consejo Ejecutivo de LASA sobre los derechos humanos en Cuba. Estas comunicaciones fueron leídas con atención y suscitaron un productivo debate en el seno del Consejo Ejecutivo y en la Comisión de Ways & Means. Las diversas posturas, visiones y hasta contradicciones que estas comunicaciones reflejan constatan una vigorosa pluralidad entre la membresía de LASA. En los complejos tiempos que vivimos, estos debates lejos de evadirse tienen que ser bienvenidos y profundizados dentro de los valores de la tolerancia y el respeto. Les agradecemos el tiempo tomado para dirigirse a nosotros en torno a este tema y los invitamos a seguir intercambiando ideas sobre este y otras complejas problemáticas de la región dentro de los espacios que para ello existen en la Asociación. Seguiremos atentos y receptivos.

In English:

We received numerous communications in response to the pronouncement posted by LASA's Executive Council on human rights in Cuba. These communications were read with great care, and they generated a productive debate inside the Executive Council and the Ways and Means Committee. The diverse stances, visions, and even contradictions that these communications reflect confirm the vigorous plurality within LASA's membership. Far from avoiding such debates in the complex times that we are living, we need to

welcome and deepen them within our values of tolerance and respect. We thank and appreciate the time taken to send us your views about this issue and invite you to continue exchanging ideas on this and other complex matters in the region, within the spaces that LASA provides for such purpose. We will remain attentive and receptive. //

De la expresidenta

por **Gioconda Herrera**, expresidenta de LASA | FLACSO Ecuador | gherrera@flacso.edu.ec

Mi paso por la presidencia de LASA entre junio de 2020 y mayo de 2021 ha sido para mí una experiencia única por el contexto en que ocurrió y por los aprendizajes que me deja. Fue para mí un honor estar al frente de una Asociación tan consolidada como LASA, cuya membresía siguió muy activa a pesar de las dificultades y supo buscar nuevas formas de encuentro y de discusión en la virtualidad. Nuestro trigésimo noveno congreso realizado entre el 26 y el 29 de mayo de 2021 tuvo una vigorosa participación; las 6018 personas inscritas se acercan a las cifras alcanzadas por los congresos presenciales anteriores a la pandemia. Además, la membresía de la gran mayoría de las secciones ha crecido en este año y varias de estas han realizado actividades durante el período de la pandemia, lo cuál demuestra el dinamismo de la Asociación que supo aprovechar las oportunidades que ofrece la virtualidad.

En esta última carta que dirijo a la membresía quiero presentar un balance de nuestro último congreso y también informar sobre algunas de las actividades realizadas durante el año de mi presidencia orientadas a fortalecer y proyectar a la Asociación más allá de su congreso anual.

LASA2021: Crisis global, desigualdades y centralidad de la vida

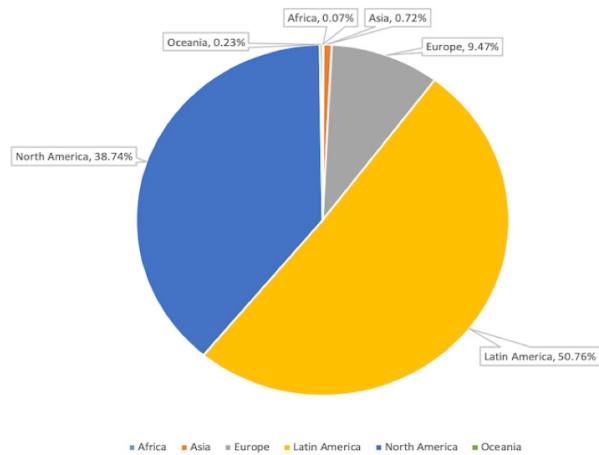
El congreso 2021 fue la segunda experiencia completamente virtual de LASA en sus 55 años de existencia y congregó a 4748 participantes con roles activos, es decir que presentaron o comentaron ponencias, participaron en talleres u otras actividades, y 1265 asistentes. Quiero destacar que alrededor del 20 por ciento de los participantes fueron estudiantes (1111), en su gran mayoría con roles activos. Me congratulo que nuestro congreso siga siendo, año a año, un espacio para que estudiantes de doctorado presenten los primeros hallazgos de sus trabajos de investigación,

tal como me ocurrió en 1995, en mi primer congreso de LASA en Washington, DC. El diálogo horizontal e intergeneracional es parte de la cultura de LASA y uno de los aspectos que orientó la concepción del programa de actividades especiales que ofrecimos dentro del Congreso.



En cuanto a la participación por regiones, el 51 por ciento provino de algún país de América Latina, siendo México, Brasil, Argentina y Cuba, en ese orden, los países con el mayor número de participantes. El 39 por ciento corresponden a personas de Estados Unidos y Canadá y, a pesar de que los horarios del congreso no les resultaban favorables, también contamos con 9 por ciento de participantes desde Europa y tuvimos representantes de África, Asia y Oceanía. Aspiramos a que el carácter global de LASA y de los estudios sobre América Latina se siga consolidando en los próximos años. Para ello, como lo informaré más adelante, hemos trabajado para realizar un primer congreso subregional.

Gráfico 1. Inscripciones por regiones



La programación académica del Congreso la realicé junto con mis colegas Ulla Berg, directora del Programa de Estudios Latinos y Latinoamericanos de la Universidad de Rutgers, en Estados Unidos, y Liliana Rivera-Sánchez, profesora del Centro de Estudios Sociológicos de El Colegio de México.

El congreso ofreció una discusión exhaustiva sobre los persistentes procesos de desigualdad estructural que se exacerbaban durante la pandemia y un análisis de aquellos fenómenos nuevos que emergieron como resultado de la COVID-19. Además, nuestra apuesta con la programación fue resaltar la importancia de la reflexión sobre la centralidad de la vida en el corazón de las respuestas sociales, culturales y políticas, al tiempo de conectar estos fenómenos con trayectorias temporales de larga duración. Las distintas mesas, talleres y paneles que se presentaron alrededor del tema configuran un primer balance único sobre la pandemia en América Latina desde múltiples aristas.

En términos de formato, en las sesiones presidenciales privilegiamos las mesas redondas con distintas voces por sobre las conferencias magistrales, los diálogos intergeneracionales garantizando la participación de jóvenes investigadores en mesas presidenciales y las discusiones abiertas entre investigadoras y activistas. En las siete sesiones presidenciales se discutieron los efectos de las desigualdades económicas y sociales en las respuestas

diferenciales a la COVID-19 y la crisis de los sistemas de protección social. Otorgamos un lugar central a la discusión entre protesta social, desigualdades sociales y democracia. Así mismo, se analizaron en tres mesas aquellas luchas sociales que colocan la reproducción de la vida al centro de sus proyectos: las luchas antiextractivistas en defensa de los territorios y los recursos naturales, las movilizaciones feministas contra la violencia y por el cuidado de la vida, las dinámicas migrantes contra la inmovilidad. Además, mantuvimos un maravilloso conversatorio con el escritor y periodista Roberto Lovato sobre su libro *Unforgetting: A Memoir of Family, Migration, Gangs and Revolution in the Americas* (Harper Collins, 2020) en el que se abordaron también las huellas de la violencia y la muerte en la construcción de la vida y la identidad personal y colectiva de los salvadoreños en Estados Unidos. Todas estas discusiones se encuentran disponibles en la página de YouTube de LASA.

Adicionalmente, mantuvimos un taller sobre los desafíos éticos y metodológicos del oficio de investigar que deja la pandemia, organizado conjuntamente con la sección de estudiantes de LASA. Este taller estuvo conectado con el trabajo realizado en los dos números de *LASA Forum* de invierno y primavera 2021, dedicados a reflexiones sobre experiencias individuales y colectivas de investigación durante la pandemia y su vinculación con comunidades en distintas geografías. Esperamos que este esfuerzo pueda tener continuidad en el futuro como un aporte de LASA tanto para la formación de nuevos investigadores como para la reflexividad necesaria sobre el trabajo que realizamos.

Respecto a la organización de los distintos ejes temáticos del Congreso, el equipo académico estuvo compuesto por 69 colegas quienes se hicieron cargo de la selección de ponencias y organización de mesas dentro de veintinueve ejes permanentes y cuatro ejes temporales. Contamos con un total de 1082 sesiones. En cuadro 1, se presenta el número de sesiones que registró cada eje.

Cuadro 1. Número de sesiones en ejes permanentes

Agrarian and Food Studies	22
Art, Music and Performance Studies	28
Childhood and Youth Studies	16
Civil Societies and Social Movements	28
Culture, Power and Political Subjectivities	67
Democratization and Political Process	29
Economics and Political Economy	23
Education	35
Environment, Nature and Climate Change	29
Feminisms and Gender Studies	59
Film Studies	21
Health Policies	7
History and Archaeology	41
Human Rights and Memory	28
International Relations / Global Studies	33
Labor Studies	24
Language and Linguistics	4
Latinx Studies	11
Law and Justice	12
Literature Studies	97
Media Studies	26
Migration and Refugees	43
Political Institutions	25
Public and Social Policies	30
Race and Ethnicities	24
Religion, Politics and Society	17
Scholarly Resources	6
Security and Violence	34
Urban Studies	33

Quiero resaltar la participación especialmente vigorosa de los ejes de Cultura, Poder y Subjetividades Políticas, Feminismos y Estudios de Género, Historia y Arqueología y Migraciones y Refugio. Por supuesto que el eje de Literatura es el

que más trabajos concentra y sugiere la necesidad a futuro de pensar en una división en varios ejes que reflejen las distintas especializaciones que se producen en este campo en el cual participan un gran número de académicos y académicas de nuestra membresía.

Respecto a los ejes especiales organizados para este congreso, cabe resaltar que el primero reunió una gran cantidad de sesiones pues aludía al tema central del mismo (Fighting COVID-19: Pandemics, Past and Present). En los otros tres la respuesta de la membresía fue también muy buena, lo cual demuestra la necesidad de conservar estos temas en nuestros próximos congresos.

Cuadro 2. Ejes especiales LASA2021

Fighting COVID-19: Pandemics, Past and Present	49
Sexualities and LGBTIQ Studies	18
Asia and the Americas	13
Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendants and Other Epistemologies, and Co-production of Knowledge	44

En ese sentido, el Consejo Ejecutivo de LASA decidió volver permanentes el eje de Epistemologías indígenas y afrodescendientes y el de Otros saberes y metodologías alternativas, y también conservar para el siguiente congreso de 2022 el eje de Sexualidades y Estudios LGBTIQ. Con esto se garantiza que los intereses temáticos de la membresía estén asegurados en la estructura del congreso. Además, las distintas secciones de LASA organizaron 106 sesiones y tuvimos 24 presentaciones de libros.

Quiero agradecer a todas las personas -estudiantes, investigadores, docentes, activistas- que le apostaron a LASA2021 como un espacio plural, diverso y comprometido con el devenir de América Latina. El debate y la discusión son vitales en el momento actual así hayamos tenido que prescindir del contacto cercano y de la alegría de los reencuentros.

Por último, uno de los aspectos al que le dimos mayor visibilidad en este congreso virtual fue la entrega de los once reconocimientos que incluyeron tres premios a personas con trayectorias académicas excepcionales. Este año tuvimos el gusto de premiar a Dolores Juliano, Susan Stokes y Sueli Carneiro. Estas académicas no solamente han producido importantes textos sobre temas cruciales en/sobre América Latina como son los estudios sobre democracia, feminismos y racismos, sino que su oficio de investigar estuvo ligado a luchas por los derechos y la justicia de amplios sectores sociales. Además, este año se premiaron cinco libros, dos tesis doctorales y el mejor artículo de la revista LARR. Es imprescindible reconocer aquí también el trabajo de 38 académicos y académicas que conformaron los distintos jurados que se conformaron para seleccionar estos reconocimientos.

Por último, por primera vez contamos en el congreso con un aula de bienestar y autocuidado, organizada por Mónica Maher, con sesiones de meditación y yoga que fueron muy exitosas durante el congreso.

La tarea de reflexionar sobre los impactos y transformaciones que nos deja la pandemia es sin duda inagotable. Pasarán varios años antes de que podamos comprender y procesar a cabalidad todo lo sucedido. LASA2021 fue un primer camino en esta larga ruta que nos espera.

Resolución

Mientras concretábamos las distintas actividades del congreso, fueron apareciendo diferencias importantes en la forma en que cada una de nosotras experimentaba la pandemia. Si bien al inicio la enfermedad parecía golpear a todos por igual, pronto se empezaron a perfilar diferencias y desigualdades cruciales, entre países, regiones, grupos sociales y personas. Luego de más de un año de convivir con la COVID-19 está claro que el lugar donde habitamos determina nuestro acceso a la alimentación, al trabajo, a la salud, a la vacuna, es decir determina el ejercicio a derechos básicos. En este mismo instante vivimos realidades paralelas. Mientras los países del norte empiezan

a retomar lentamente sus vidas, en la región nos enfrentamos al recrudecimiento de los contagios, a los confinamientos y a la muerte.

Los accesos diferenciados y desiguales a la vacunación y a la sanación son un hecho que los estados y la comunidad internacional no puede seguir eludiendo. En ese sentido, desde la Presidencia presentamos una propuesta de Resolución sobre la liberalización de las patentes de las distintas vacunas de COVID-19, que fue aprobada por el Consejo Ejecutivo y es sometida ahora a la membresía para su aprobación definitiva, cuyo texto propone dos puntos fundamentales: (1) Demandar a la comunidad internacional, a los diferentes gobiernos, a los organismos internacionales, y a las industrias de la salud, que se permita el acceso a las vacunas contra el COVID-19 en igualdad de condiciones a todos los pueblos de mundo; (2) Requerir a los gobiernos e industrias médicas que se tomen las disposiciones pertinentes para que las patentes de las medicinas y vacunas contra la COVID-19 no generen regalías ni rentabilidad alguna para sus propietarios más allá de las necesarias para cubrir los costos de investigación, y sean, por tanto, liberadas.

LASA más allá del Congreso

Las particulares circunstancias que acompañaron la organización de este congreso demandaron pensar en políticas específicas orientadas a viabilizar la participación de la membresía en estas circunstancias adversas sin por ello sacrificar la calidad de nuestro congreso o la sustentabilidad de la Asociación. Por ello, en este año el Consejo Ejecutivo aprobó la exoneración del pago de renovación de la membresía al momento de la inscripción de ponencias, en septiembre de 2020, y una medida excepcional de pago voluntario de las inscripciones al Congreso 2021. Estas medidas fueron posibles por el carácter virtual del congreso y garantizaron su carácter inclusivo.

Además, el Comité Ejecutivo ha trabajado durante todo este año, primero en la identificación de nudos críticos y luego en la puesta en marcha de mecanismos que fortalezcan a la Asociación en varios niveles. Se ha creado un enlace directo entre el Comité Ejecutivo y las secciones para responder

a sus necesidades de forma más acertada; hemos empezado un trabajo de articulación de nuestras tres publicaciones, *LARC*, *LARR* y *LASA Forum*; también hemos avanzado en mecanismos para fortalecer la comunicación con la membresía y en la proyección de LASA en términos globales. Tengo el gusto de anunciar que en 2022 realizaremos nuestro primer congreso virtual regional en asociación con la Red EANLAS (East-Asian Studies on Latin America). Por último, una de las noticias más prometedoras para LASA es la firma del contrato de publicación de nuestra revista *Latin American Research Review* con Cambridge University Press. Este es un trabajo que llevó a cabo nuestro anterior editor de *LARR*, Anibal Pérez-Liñán y continuó Carmen Martínez Novo, la actual editora y que ha contado con todo el apoyo de la presidencia. Sin duda, esto permitirá no solamente un trabajo más eficiente para nuestra revista sino también una proyección importante.

Si bien éste ha sido un año particularmente extraño en muchos sentidos también nos ha traído cambios interesantes en nuestras formas de trabajo. La virtualidad nos permitió tener un congreso más inclusivo y también se dinamizaron actividades de la Asociación y de las secciones todo el año. La virtualidad ha venido para quedarse y sin duda es uno de los factores que debemos incluir en nuestras reflexiones sobre cómo imaginar nuestros próximos congresos y el futuro de nuestra Asociación. Por último, quiero señalar que los desafíos de la presidencia de LASA en ese año pandémico fueron superados gracias a un equipo profesional de primera línea en el Secretariado y a un Consejo Ejecutivo profundamente comprometido con su membresía. Para ellos, mi gratitud por acompañarme en esta ruta. //

Would-Be Authoritarians and the Pandemic in the Americas

by **Susan Stokes** | Chicago Center on Democracy, University of Chicago | [sstokes@uchicago.edu](mailto:ssokes@uchicago.edu)*

A half century ago, Guillermo O'Donnell identified a distinctive type of autocratic regime. He traced its roots to the economic impasse that Latin America's more advanced economies encountered in the course of import-substitution industrialization. This impasse gave rise to economic crises and social conflict and, eventually, to the militaries' seizure of power.

Thus were born bureaucratic-authoritarian (BA) regimes in the Southern Cone of South America (O'Donnell 1973). O'Donnell observed that BA regimes differed from other forms of military and autocratic rule familiar to Latin American societies. The BA regimes had more ambitious objectives. They sought to remake the societies over which they governed, deactivate the popular sectors, and win the confidence of business and international investors. They were as ambitious as they were nefarious.

The BA regimes contrasted with earlier military leaders who had stepped in for short spells, and with those who had remained in power for lengthier periods but without an ambitious social vision. BA leaders planned to stay in power for extended periods. They would return power to civilian politicians only when their states and societies were institutionally protected from the what the military rulers viewed as the perfidy of elected leaders. Compared to other forms of authoritarianism, O'Donnell wrote (1976, 54), "the [bureaucratic-authoritarian] state is more:

1. comprehensive, in the range of activities it controls or directly manages;
2. dynamic, in its rates of growth compared to those of society as a whole;
3. penetrating, through its subordination of various 'private' areas of civil society;
4. repressive, in the extension and efficacy of the coercion it applies;
5. bureaucratic, in the formalization and differentiation of its own structures; and
6. technocratic, in the growing weight of teams of *técnicos*, expert in the application of 'efficientist' techniques of formal rationality."

The BA regime's ambitiousness had implications for its organization. It required strong state capacity, which meant placing capable individuals in positions of leadership. Hence, O'Donnell wrote, "higher governmental positions are usually occupied by persons who come to them after successful careers in complex and highly bureaucratized organizations—the armed forces, the public bureaucracy, and large private firms" (O'Donnell 1978, 6).

Ten years after O'Donnell's death, we again find ourselves struggling—as scholars and as citizens—with the fragility of democracy and with rising authoritarianism. Yet the manifestation of autocracy, in the Americas and around the globe, seems almost the inverse of bureaucratic-authoritarianism. In the largest countries in the Americas, and not a few smaller ones, we now experience authoritarianism not as a blow

* I am grateful for the help and guidance of Gabe Aguilera, Serena Fang, Agustina Giraudy, Bob Kaufman, Melis Laebens, Jim McGuire, Kevin Middlebrook, Marcelo Nazareno, Steve Pincus, Adam Przeworski, and César Zucco.

from the military but as corrosion from within. More frequently than through coups, today's autocrats come to power through elections, and then chip away at the democracies that brought them to power. They are responsible for democratic backsliding, defined by Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman (2021, 1) as "the incremental erosion of democratic institutions, rules, and norms that results from the actions of duly elected governments, typically driven by an autocratic leader."

Whereas bureaucratic-authoritarians exalted technocrats, many would-be autocrats distrust them. Not policy expertise but loyalty is what would-be autocrats value. Whereas bureaucratic-authoritarianism was in most regards an ambitious, state-building effort, democratic erosion frequently involves the erosion not just of democracy but of the state itself. And whereas bureaucratic-authoritarianism was an ambitious, though nefarious, project, democratic erosion is often a tawdry grab for power.

The incentives at work on would-be autocrats contrast not just with those faced by BA officials but also with those of more conventional democratic leaders. To the extent that the latter anticipate being held to account by voters at the next election, they have incentives to evince competence and to maintain a professionalized bureaucracy. (Of course, many factors can interfere with these incentives.) The would-be autocrat, by contrast—typically operating in a highly polarized environment—often identifies a professionalized bureaucracy as a *deep state* bent on frustrating his goals. Many would-be autocrats are willing to trade expertise for loyalty. Still, most would-be autocrats will eventually face the electorate, which makes them more sensitive than full-on autocrats to short-term economic performance under their rule.

Backsliding elected leaders attempt to weaken institutions that would impose on them what O'Donnell called "horizontal" and "vertical accountability."¹ Their prime targets are therefore the press, the courts, legislatures, civil servants, and election administrators.

They also undertake what might be thought of as a *cultural* assault on democracy. For instance, they excuse their own attacks on democratic institutions by purveying the notion that all actors in the public sphere seek nothing more than their own advantage. They broadcast the idea that democracy-sustaining norms are quaint, for suckers. In short, the would-be autocrat may be a scoundrel but so is everyone else in public life.

Would-Be Autocrats in the Americas

The Western-hemisphere leaders whom scholars most frequently identify as would-be autocrats include Jair Bolsonaro (Brazil), Donald Trump (US), Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro (Venezuela), Evo Morales (Bolivia), Rafael Correa (Ecuador), Álvaro Uribe (Colombia), Daniel Ortega (Nicaragua), Enrique Peña Nieto (Mexico), and, more recently, Nayib Bukele (El Salvador) and Andrés Manuel López Obrador (Mexico).² These leaders have eroded democratic institutions by harassing or repressing the independent press (Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Venezuela, the US), reducing judicial independence (Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, the US), repressing the opposition and reducing legislative oversight (Mexico, Nicaragua, Venezuela), weakening the civil service (Brazil, the US, Venezuela), and curtailing civil liberties and systemically reducing the freedom or fairness of elections (the US, Venezuela).³

¹ O'Donnell (1998) distinguished "horizontal accountability," the capacity of state actors to hold governments to account, from "vertical accountability," the capacity of voters to hold them to account.

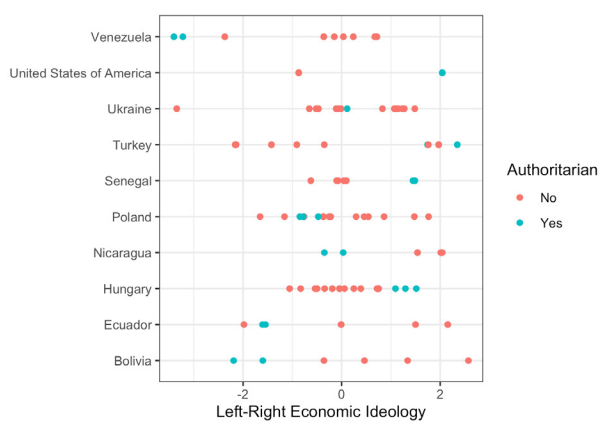
² The list draws on Haggard and Kaufman 2021; Laebens 2021; and Coppedge 2017.

³ The Democratic Erosion consortium maintains a detailed, and frequently updated, database of erosion events: <https://www.democratic-erosion.com/event-dataset/project-summary/>.

It should be clear from this list that would-be autocrats are ideologically diverse.⁴ For every Bolsonaro there is a Chávez; for every Bukele, a Correa.

This ideological heterogeneity is driven home by Figure 1. It shows the location, on a left-right dimension, of political parties in a set of countries from diverse world regions, countries commonly identified as having undertaken democratic backsliding. The parties' ideological placement is as assessed by expert coders for Varieties of Democracy.

Figure 1. Left-right economic ideology placement of democracy-eroding and non-democracy-eroding political parties, various countries.



Note: Data from Varieties of Democracy (2009–2019), www.v-dem.net/en/data/data/v-party-dataset/; dots represent the ideological placement of parties measured at different points in time. Note that the US parties are represented by one dot each because V-Dem experts did not identify movements of the parties over the 2009–2019 period. The following parties are included; parties listed in bold are coded as democracy-eroding ones. Venezuela: Justice First, A New Era, Democratic Action, Fatherland for All, Political Electoral Independent Organization Committee / Social Christian Party / Green Party, **United Socialist Party of Venezuela**, Democratic Unity Roundtable, Popular Will, Great Patriotic Pole (alliance); US, Democrats, **Republicans**; Ukraine: Communist Party of Ukraine, Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc, **Party of Regions**, independent, All Ukrainian Union "Fatherland", All Ukrainian Union "Freedom" / "Svoboda", People's Front, Radical Party of Oleh Lyashko, Self-Reliance Party, European Solidarity / Petro Poroshenko Bloc, Opposition Bloc, Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform, Servant of the People, Opposition Platform / For Life, Voice; Turkey: **Justice and Development Party**, Republican People's Party, Nationalist Movement [Action] Party, People's Democracy Party, Peoples' Democratic Party, Good Party, People's Alliance (alliance),

Nation Alliance (alliance); Senegal: **Senegalese Democratic Party**, Citizen Movement for National Reform, Alliance for the Republic-Yakaar, Bokk Gis Gis, Manko Taxawu Senegal (alliance); Poland: Democratic Left Alliance, Polish People's (Peasants') Party, Palikot's Movement, Civic Platform, **Law and Justice**, National Movement, Modern, Kukiz15, Spring, Left Together, The Left (alliance), Polish Coalition (alliance), Confederation Liberty and Independence (alliance); Nicaragua: Constitutionalist Liberal Party, **Sandinista National Liberation Front**, Nicaraguan Liberal Alliance, Independent Liberal Party; Hungary: Movement for a Better Hungary, Democratic Coalition, Hungarian Socialist Party, Christian Democratic People's Party, Politics Can Be Different, **Fidesz–Hungarian Civic Alliance**, Together—Party for a New Era, Alliance of Hungarian Solidarity, Unity (alliance); Ecuador: Patriotic Society Party, Pachakutik Plurinational Unity Movement—New Country, Social Christian Party [Movement], Democratic People's Movement, **PAIS Alliance**, Advance Party, Grow, Creating Opportunities Movement, Multinational Union of the Left (alliance); Bolivia: National Unity Front, **Movement for Socialism**, Christian Democratic Party, Civic Community.

Some of the would-be autocrats are right-wingers. Looking beyond Latin America, the US Republican Party under Donald Trump, the Turkish AKP under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Senegalese Democratic Party under Abdoulaye Wade, and the Hungarian Fidesz under Viktor Orbán are all right-wing parties that came to power through democratic means and then eroded democratic institutions. Some would-be autocrats are left-wingers: the Venezuelan, Ecuadoran, and Bolivian processes of erosion were undertaken by leftist governments. Yet in the Americas, as mentioned, democratic erosion has not occurred exclusively under the left. Colombia's Partido Social de Unidad Nacional and, later, Centro Democrático, under Álvaro Uribe, combined a pro-business, pro-law-and-order policy orientation with the erosion of democracy, as does El Salvador's Nuevas Ideas under Nayib Bukele.

Though governments of the left and the right have undertaken attacks on democratic institutions, it is worth distinguishing those that did so with an ideological vision and those that were merely grasping for power. If we think of a dimension with pure ideologues at one end and pure power-seekers at the other, Hugo Chávez and Rafael Correa fall closer to the first extreme, Jair Bolsonaro and Donald Trump closer to the second one.

⁴ Several prominent leaders whose actions and objectives overlap with those of would-be autocrats are right-wing populists. The right-wing element is their advocacy of low taxes, limited redistribution, and deregulation. Their right-wing populism resides in their energetic vilification, not of banks, corporations, or the wealthy but of immigrants, minorities, and other enemies of the true people. See Müller 2017; Çinar, Stokes, and Uribe 2020; and Przeworski 2019.

In their desire to construct a new social order, the ideologues are then more similar to rulers of the BA state (though their objectives and tactics are quite divergent, for example with regard to deactivating the popular sectors). The more ideological leaders among the would-be autocrats will eventually wish to construct strong state institutions to carry out their vision; their attacks on the deep state are a stage on the road to reconstructing a state capable of carrying out their vision. Or at least that is their aspiration.

Democracies and Autocracies (Established and Would-Be) in a Crisis: The Pandemic

Would-be autocrats' strategy of rule departs, then, both from that of officials in BA regimes and from that of more conventional democratic leaders. In contrast to the repressive state-building undertaken by BA officials, as mentioned, the would-be autocrats' project is initially one of state erosion. In contrast to democratic leaders who remain more fully bound by mechanisms of accountability, the would-be autocrats' calculation is that a mix of public acceptance, demagoguery, and institutional erosion will keep them in power. When faced with a crisis that threatens their populations, many would-be autocrats' instinct is not to strengthen state responses but to continue to surround themselves with loyalists, resist solutions proposed by deep-state experts, and identify others to blame when things turn out badly. Credit-taking and blame-diversion are normal parts of democratic politics, but they are taken to extremes by democratic backsliders.

These contrasts have come into sharp relief with the crisis of our century: the COVID-19 pandemic. No world region has suffered more than Latin America in the pandemic. Poverty and inequality have exposed Latin America's populations to terrible risks; poorly funded public health systems have been overwhelmed with need. These structural

and long-term factors could be partially mitigated by solid governmental responses to the crisis. I will suggest that democratic backsliders in the region were especially inadequate in their responses.

Of course, politics and policy are only part of the story of why some countries have fared better than others in the face of a global public health threat. Many factors contributed to the toll that the pandemic has inflicted in any given country.⁵ What's more, national successes and failures have varied over the course of the pandemic. Though a few countries (New Zealand, Singapore) evinced strong policy responses and good public health outcomes throughout, others started strong and later faced stiffer challenges (South Korea, Japan, Argentina), and yet others improved markedly over time (the UK, Israel).

A common expectation is that autocratic regimes have some built-in advantages in a public health crisis.⁶ Not unlike the Southern Cone BA regimes that O'Donnell analyzed, institutionalized and bureaucratized autocracies like China's are expected to easily impose restrictions and secure compliance from their citizens. Democracies may be both more hesitant to impose such measures, given the economic pain that they inflict on citizens, and less able to secure compliance, given the greater individual freedoms that democracy allows. In a cross-national survey undertaken during the pandemic, four times as many US respondents as Chinese said they would be unwilling to give up individual rights during a major crisis (Alsan et al. 2020).

The draconian Chinese lockdowns in the pandemic's early months seemed to confirm these expectations, though China's performance also exposed problems resulting from a lack of transparency in a society with no organized opposition and no free press.

⁵ These include the age structure and the prevalence of comorbidities of the population; the particular strains of the virus in circulation; and poverty rates, which influence, among other factors, the degree to which a population will be able to comply with mobility-reducing measures and still meet its nutritional needs.

⁶ See Greer et al. 2020. Another factor expected to influence the quality of public policy in the pandemic is the degree of federalism or centralization of a country. See Bennouna et al. 2021. Laebens and Öztürk 2021 explain that, even in centralized systems, the drive to offset responsibility and blame for response to the crisis can induce governments to decentralize, as did Turkey's AKP-Erdoğan government in 2020, though rather weakly and fleetingly.

When considering regime effects on pandemic responses, the variation in outcomes under democracy suggests that the autocracy-democracy contrast is too coarse-grained. Some democracies successfully limited mobility by using heavy doses of public information campaigns and compensation for citizens' financial hits. New Zealand became Exhibit A in the case that autocratic heavy-handedness was not a requirement for a successful response.

Exhibit A for the case of catastrophic incompetence was the Trump administration in the US. Between March 2020 and the end of Trump's term, the administration had basically no central plan for dealing with the pandemic, preferring instead to turn responsibility (and blame) over to state governments. The result was among the highest death rates in the world—as of this writing, cumulatively, 177 deaths per 100,000 residents. Brazil's response was very similar, and produced an even higher death toll: 200 deaths per 100,000 Brazilians.

Of the 3.2 million estimated Covid deaths that the world has endured as of May 2021, the two largest democracies in the Americas—the US and Brazil—have contributed more than one million, far surpassing the weight of the two countries' populations.⁷

Comparing the US with China—the latter a country with 0.35 deaths per 100,000—the economist Alex Cukierman finds that “at least two thirds of the huge difference in COVID-19 related deaths between the democratic US and authoritarian China since April 2020 is due to centralized,

strictly enforced, sanitary measures imposed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) along with pandemic denial by President Trump and absence of a centralized sanitary policy in the US” (Cukierman 2021, 2).⁸

Clearly, there was no single *democratic* national response to the pandemic.⁹ The US response under Trump and the Brazilian response under Bolsonaro were strikingly similar. But was there a single would-be autocratic one? That would be too simple. Consider two middle-income developing countries that have undergone considerable democratic backsliding—Turkey and India. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has spent the past decade undercutting Turkish democratic institutions: the independent press, the judiciary, public service, the universities. Yet, as Laebens and Öztürk (2021) show, the AKP government initially pursued strong lockdown measures and avoided the worst outcomes. These authors note that the government benefited from a universal health care system that it had earlier put in place as well as a network of hospitals, part of the AKP's construction-driven development strategy.¹⁰ The second and third waves were less successful, and the government's lack of transparency about the magnitude of infections and fatalities took a toll on its support.¹¹

A very similar story could be told of the Indian experience under the would-be autocrat, and right-wing populist, Narendra Modi. India fared relatively well in the first wave of the pandemic. But the BJP government adopted a hubristic posture in late 2020 and early 2021, when the public was not discouraged from attending large political rallies or taking part in crowded religious festivals.

⁷ The US and Brazilian responses were so similar that the following, from a report in the journal *Science* about Brazil, written in April 2021, could just as easily describe the US response under Trump: “the federal response has been a dangerous combination of inaction and wrongdoing, including the promotion of chloroquine as treatment despite a lack of evidence. Without a coordinated national strategy, local responses varied in form, intensity, duration, and start and end times, to some extent associated with political alignments. The country has seen very high attack rates and disproportionately higher burden among the most vulnerable, illuminating local inequalities. . . While the initial spread was determined by existing socioeconomic inequalities, the lack of a coordinated, effective, and equitable response likely fueled the widespread spatial propagation” (Castro et al. 2021, 1).

⁸ Cukierman 2021 shows that the apparently higher death rate across democracies disappears if one controls for the percentage of over-65-year-olds in the populations.

⁹ On the variation of COVID responses among democracies, see Cheibub, Hong, and Przeworski 2021.

¹⁰ Laebens and Öztürk (2021, 1) note that perceptions of a successful response in the first wave gave Erdoğan a boost in approval ratings, “despite the highly polarized environment of Turkish politics.”

¹¹ Estimates based on excess deaths over the average in earlier years put the cumulative number of deaths at 142,000, three times higher than official Turkish statistics. See @CucluYaman, May 22, 2021, <https://twitter.com/CucluYaman/status/1396032246834999301>.

India's second wave has been a nightmare: high rates of infection, an overwhelmed health system, and shortages of key resources. In many societies, inequality has exposed the poor to greater health risks through indirect routes, such as higher rates of morbidity or reduced ability to stay indoors because of the need to work or secure food. In the horrific Indian second wave, the effects have been quite direct: poor people die because they cannot compete with the better off in the black market for oxygen. The same was true in a number of Latin American countries, including Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and Argentina.

As the economists Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo explain, Prime Minister Modi bears significant responsibility. Like other would-be autocrats in federal systems, his government left the response to the states, but did not provide funding for aggressive state-led policies. The first lockdown came too soon and came with too little forewarning; the reopening also came too soon. In the midst of the world's most dire crisis, in May 2021, Modi's government "still appears reluctant to embrace a national strategy." (Banerjee and Duflo 2021).

A lack of transparency about the dimensions of the crisis was common to the Covid responses of would-be autocrats in Turkey and India. The lack of transparency is endemic in backsliding democracies, in which the independent press is harassed or curtailed.

Would-Be Autocrats and Pandemic Response in the Americas

Though the performance of backsliding democracies in the pandemic, world-wide, has been mixed, in the Americas it has clearly fallen short. This is not unexpected. One reason is that would-be autocrats have to come to power in highly polarized societies. Once in office, they strategically deepened partisan and ideological divides.¹² Their tactical instinct is to turn the pandemic into an opportunity for demagoguery,

claiming that their side is for freedom, the other for shutting people away in their homes. These leaders become the worst enemies of the public's health.

The second reason we expect a weak response has to do with would-be autocrats' disdain for policy expertise. Unlike BA leaders, as described by O'Donnell, many would-be autocrats favor loyalty over experience and over competence in high-level ministerial positions. This includes in key posts like health and finance ministries. In April 2020, Jair Bolsonaro fired his health minister, Luiz Henrique Mandetta, who had urged Brazilians to follow social-distancing guidelines and praised state governors—whom the president belittled for their aggressive responses. Anthony Fauci, the top US infectious disease official, barely managed to hold onto his job and was sidelined by Trump. These autocratic presidents preferred to message their ways out of the crisis, rather than take on the challenge of managing it.

Statistics bear out our low expectations. At the moment the pandemic hit, several presidents whom scholars identify as would-be autocrats held power in the Americas. A systematic study by Adolfo Martinez-Valle (2021) includes two of these countries (Brazil under Bolsonaro and Mexico under López Obrador) and four others—Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Peru—led by more traditional democratic politicians. These latter countries faced distinct challenges: widespread poverty in Peru forced many residents to venture outside of their homes during lockdowns; a governmental crisis in Chile delayed the solid policy package that the government eventually put in place; and the age structure of Argentina, with relatively more people over the age of 65, produced higher mortality rates among those who fell ill. As I write, Colombian protesters, police, and military officers are clashing on the streets, complicating the public health scenario in that country.

But when researchers focus on the quality of the governments' responses, countries led by would-be autocrats fell especially short. Figure 2 tracks the Oxford Government Response Index from March

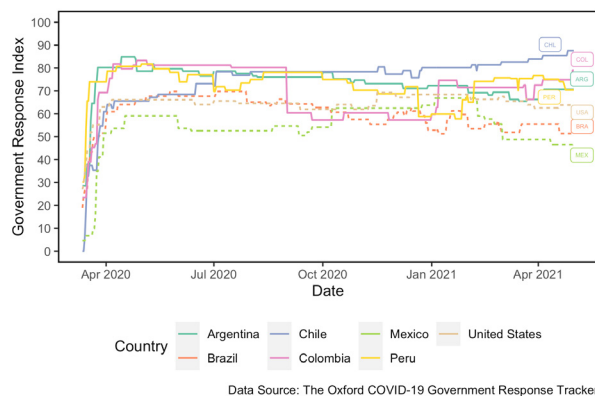
¹² Ideological or partisan polarization as a precursor to—and cause of—backsliding has been emphasized by many authors, in particular Milan Svolik (2020). See also the discussion in Haggard and Kaufman 2021.

2020 to April 2021.¹³ It follows the six countries studied by Martinez-Valle, plus the United States. Argentina, Colombia, and Peru maintained a strong policy response throughout. Chile’s policies improved but were less stringent than in the other three countries just mentioned. Brazil, Mexico, and the United States languished at low levels of policy effort.¹⁴ Despite the many challenges and tragic outcomes in their countries, Argentina, Colombia, and Peru implemented stringent policies earlier and maintained them for longer. Mexico and Brazil, which implemented policies later and with less stringency, had less success at reducing the mobility of their populations, costing lives (Martinez-Valle 2021, 34–35).

“did not deliver an effective communications campaign.” Worse, their presidents’ communications did more harm than good:

The presidents of Brazil and Mexico minimized the severity of the pandemic at its start. “You have to hug, it’s okay!” insisted López Obrador, the president of Mexico, at one of his press conferences. Even on March 22, 2020, he invited Mexicans to eat at restaurants and enjoy in public spaces. In March, Brazil’s president commented at a news conference: Obviously we have a moment of crisis, but it’s a small crisis. From my point of view, the issue of coronavirus is much more fantasy and is not so much the case as the great media spreads and propagates all over the world. (Martinez-Valle 2021, 35)

Figure 2. Oxford Government Response Index: Comparing seven countries, March 2020–May 2021



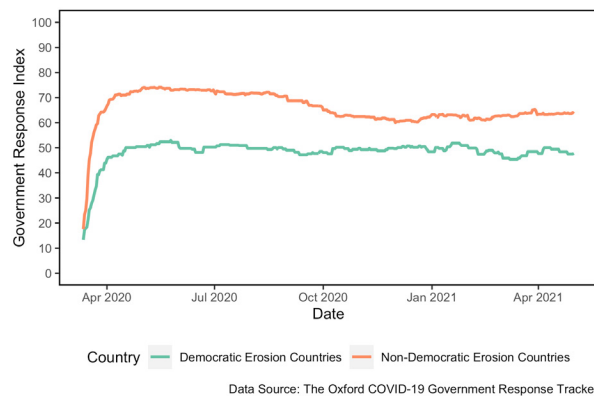
The pandemic response among the broader set of Latin American countries clarifies the picture of backsliding democracies falling short in the public health crisis. Figure 3 shows the average responses among countries often cited as backsliding democracies and the countries not typically so identified. The lower, green line is the average index of government pandemic responses in Brazil, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. The upper, red line is the average index of responses in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Uruguay.

Alongside the weak institutional response was a failure of these presidents to communicate to their populations the dangers of the virus and the need to abide by public health recommendations. Instead, they advocated bizarre treatments: hydroxychloroquine (Bolsonaro and Trump), beaming cleansing lights into the afflicted human body (with a bleach chaser—Trump), or folksy amulets like a four-leaf clover, US two-dollar bill, or prayer card (López Obrador) (Benounna et al. 2021, 15), Martinez-Valle notes that Brazil and Mexico, in contrast to Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Peru,

¹³ The Oxford index combines 13 measures of central governments’ policy responses during the pandemic, from school closures, to income support for those who cannot work, to the presence of public health information campaigns. See Hale et al. 2020.

¹⁴ Though US policies appear not to improve much with the transfer from the Trump to the Biden administrations, the data collectors explain that strong improvements were in fact registered in public health messaging and, eventually, in vaccine delivery.

Figure 3. Oxford Government Response Index: Average of democratic erosion countries vs. non-democratic erosion countries, March 2020–May 2021



Note: Democratic erosion countries include Brazil, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Non-democratic erosion countries include Guatemala, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Columbia, Peru, Bolivia, and Dominican Republic.

The distinct reactions of autocratic, would-be autocratic, and democratic regimes to a global public health emergency tells us much about the advantages and vulnerabilities of each kind of regime. Full-blown autocracies can quickly impose big changes to their populations' daily patterns of life. But the lack of transparency and independent sources of information creates other difficulties, which ultimately may provoke stirrings of resistance from the population. Democracies are forced to show more deference to the public's resistance to painful measures. They can persuade and offer incentives for behavior that protects public health. They can expect much critical monitoring from the opposition and the press, which can also help them identify real problems as they arise.

Eroding democracies seem to distill the disadvantages facing the other kinds of regimes. They cannot force people to take up their campaigns; operating in polarized contexts, they have incentives to pander to people's fears and biases; and they often disparage and demean expertise. Large swaths of the world's population suffered a stroke of bad luck, then, when the pandemic coincided with assaults from within against their democracies.

Looking to O'Donnell for Insights into Twenty-First-Century Authoritarianism

Guillermo O'Donnell linked the emergence of bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes to a crisis of dependent capitalism: the failure of relatively advanced industrializing countries in South America to shift from the production of low-cost consumption goods to the production of consumer durables and to capital goods. Economic stagnation led to social conflict and political crisis and the emergence of a terrifying, but ambitious, kind of autocracy.

O'Donnell's narrative of economic roots of the BA regimes has been subjected to considerable critical scrutiny. Some noted that the BA states did not try to push the ISI project forward, but turned instead to a more orthodox, in some cases anti-industrial, set of policies. Others faulted him for excessive determinism, noting that some countries, especially Colombia, escaped the obstacles to vertically integrated ISI while avoiding military authoritarianism.¹⁵ Yet others questioned the generality of the sequence that O'Donnell observed and found that few countries beyond Argentina fell to dictatorship at relatively high levels of income and industrialization (Przeworski and Limongi 1997).

In our efforts to explain the recent autocratic threat, scholars have also searched for common economic causes. A populist backlash against neoliberalism and globalization, the trend toward heightened income inequality, the delayed effects of the Great Recession; all have been explored as possible structural causes of democratic backsliding (for a discussion, see Przeworski 2019).

As of yet we have little cross-national statistical evidence in favor of these structural accounts, though undoubtedly they are relevant in particular cases. For my taste, the genius of O'Donnell's analysis lay less in the origins story he told than in his insights into the nature and dynamics of harsh military dictatorships that were taking hold in South America. He grasped something very

¹⁵ These criticisms and others are laid out by contributors to Collier 1982. See in particular the chapters by José Serra and Albert Hirschman.

important, and not widely noticed, about these cruel regimes when he observed their ambitious goals of state building and societal transformation.

As we turn our analytical gaze to the threat of authoritarianism in our own day, perhaps we will look in vain for common structural or economic roots. We, too, may make more headway by exploring the logic and dynamics of these regimes. Since all elected governments push against the limits of democratic accountability to some degree, are the backsliders just different in that they do these things to an exaggerated extent, and with the cumulative effect of threatening the democratic regime?

The distinction between would-be autocrats who simply lust for personal power and those with societal ambitions may help explain some of the variation we detected in pandemic responses. That said, there is a list of leaders who pushed ruthlessly through democracy's constraints so that they could construct a different kind of society, only to end up gutting the state and exposing their populations to great harm.¹⁶

Returning to the legacy of Guillermo O'Donnell, he would urge us to ask the most important questions. What are the vulnerabilities of would-be autocrats? How do they fail? How do opposition politicians, judges, bureaucrats, civil-society leaders, election administrators, dissidents in their own parties, and voters stop democratic erosion? How do we reverse it?

Our great, departed, colleague had no illusions about democracy. He knew it to be uneven, to contain "brown areas" (O'Donnell 2004). He knew it too often fails to produce accountable government or the rule of law. But he would abhor the drift away from democracy undertaken by leaders in whom we have invested the highest authority and the greatest trust. He would want us to use our wits and efforts to strike back, for democracy.

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¹⁶ It includes, for instance, Hugo Chávez as well as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

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Fixing US Immigration and Asylum Policy: Making Roof Repairs during a Hurricane

by **Wayne A. Cornelius***

The hurricane in my subtitle alludes to the surge in asylum seekers who have been making their dangerous way through Central America and Mexico to the US-Mexican border since the November 2020 US election. Unaccompanied children and families traveling with children under 18 have attracted most of the attention, but single adults constituted over two-thirds of migrant encounters with the Border Patrol during the first quarter of 2021 (American Immigration Council 2021).

We can argue about what is causing it. How much is seasonal? How much is due to changes in policy and rhetoric from the Trump to the Biden administration? How much to the severe damage to the economies of Central American countries caused by the pandemic and by natural disasters? We lack the direct evidence, from face-to-face interviews with migrants participating in the surge, that would enable us to sort out and weight these various explanations.

The numbers are inflated by a high rate of recidivism among migrants who are being encountered by the Border Patrol and immediately tossed back into Mexico, without a deportation order. Because most of them have family members already living in the United States, their goal is to reunite with those relatives. They keep trying—and getting caught—until they succeed.

The United States also experienced large Central American migration surges in 2014, under Obama, and in 2019, under Trump. But the current one has

been intense enough to cause policy paralysis on immigration in Washington, and there is no end in sight.

Continuing my metaphor, the challenge of repairing the roof is huge. Donald Trump and Stephen Miller, the chief architect of Trump's immigration policies, left about a thousand holes in the roof. That is the most authoritative tally of anti-immigrant policy changes, new regulations, and legal reinterpretations that the Trump administration made during just four years (Hausman 2021).

Trump and Miller's overall goal was to reduce all forms of immigration to as close to zero as possible, including permanent legal immigration with green cards. In fact, Trump's most consequential changes were those made in the legal immigration system—not in enforcement against undocumented migrants inside the country or at the border. Some of the most significant changes were in the area of asylum and refugee resettlement. Donald Trump essentially shut down the US asylum system. Using a slew of regulations and policy changes, the Trump administration made it virtually impossible to get asylum protection. Refugee admissions plummeted from over 100,000 in Obama's final year to fewer than 15,000 in Trump's last year. The Trump administration justified the dismantling of asylum by citing the public health laws being used to protect Americans from COVID-19. But that public health shield was basically the cover for an ideological and racially driven assault on asylum. Stephen Miller has deep roots in the white nationalist movement. The changes in

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immigration regulations that he pushed through were deliberately designed to reduce the entry of low-income immigrants and people of color.

The Trump administration also forced asylum-seekers who presented themselves at ports of entry to go back to Mexico, to wait indefinitely for their day in US immigration court. They were deposited in squalid camps in dangerous Mexican border cities, where conditions were often as bad as in refugee camps in places like Syria. The approximately 62,000 migrants returned to Mexico were highly exposed to criminal violence. According to recently collected data from the Mexican Migration Field Research Program at UC San Diego, nearly one out of five migrants had suffered physical violence at the hands of Mexican authorities in Tijuana—about the same percentage who reported that they had experienced violence from drug cartels.

Joe Biden quickly ended the notorious “Remain in Mexico” program. Ending it probably encouraged some Northern Triangle families with children to try their luck at the US-Mexico border, along with Biden’s more welcoming rhetoric about immigration. There is no direct evidence of this effect, but the policy shift under Biden is likely to have emboldened more parents to send their unaccompanied children to Mexico and northward to the US border. This component of the current surge represents pent-up demand for protection that was blocked for four years by the Trump administration.

Conservative politicians and media like to paint what is going on as “human trafficking”: greedy, reckless people-smugglers taking chances with children’s lives and collecting thousands in fees from the parents and relatives in the United States. The reality is that the people-smugglers are mainly the instrument, not the driver, of the migration. The goal of the vast majority of people who hire them is to get themselves or their unaccompanied children into the hands of US-based relatives as quickly as possible. The coyotes are the most efficient—and often the safest—way of accomplishing that.

Yes, there is more demand for smugglers’ services when there is some prospect of success in getting asylum—not a door slammed shut, as it was under Trump. But the true drivers of Central American migration to the US border today are the ones that the same ones that have driven it for decades: extreme poverty, high levels of violence from criminal gangs, and weak rule of law. In addition, recent years have brought environmental disasters related to climate change: severe drought that impacted agricultural production and increased food insecurity, and mega-hurricanes like the two that decimated Honduras and El Salvador in November 2020. People in these countries are not calmly “deciding to migrate”; they are desperate people, fleeing intolerable conditions.

President Biden has some options for dealing with this mess that are theoretically available, but most of them are politically unpalatable. Take, for example, the so-called “root causes” approach, which Biden championed during his presidential campaign. It focuses on reducing the push factors in Northern Triangle countries, by investing in development assistance, antiviolenence, and rule-of-law programs. Biden proposed investing \$4 billion in these types of programs during his first term. Trump had cut off all assistance to these countries as punishment for failing to prevent emigration. All independent experts on migration agree that reducing push factors in Central America—and Mexico, for that matter—will be essential to gaining control of these migration flows. The problem is that these kinds of investments take considerable time to show results—probably at least five to ten years. That is a politically prohibitive time frame in Washington for just about any kind of policy intervention. But you have to start somewhere.

Another eminently sensible approach would be to increase the number of legal-entry opportunities that the United States offers to would-be migrants who do not qualify for asylum under the strict US legal standard: being a victim of “well-founded persecution” based on race, religion, or group identity. A large proportion of the people leaving Northern Triangle countries today are mainly economic migrants: they just cannot earn enough to feed and shelter their families. Providing

opportunities for them to enter the US legally will require new legislation, probably as part of a comprehensive immigration reform bill.

Biden rolled out a comprehensive immigration reform plan during his presidential campaign. He announced a more fully elaborated legislative proposal on his first day in office. It is a bold, progressive plan, including a generous program to legalize most of the roughly 11 million undocumented immigrants already in the United States, as well as major increases in the number of green cards and other types of visas. Republicans in Congress immediately called the plan “dead on arrival.” It may not be dead, but it seems to be on life support.

How did increasing the number of legal entry tickets get to be a politically toxic idea? Because historically, immigrants have been demonized as threats to jobs, lower taxes, public health, and all manner of other good things. Trump and his minions took the level of demonization to new heights. Meanwhile, the United States has not adjusted its visa ceilings since the 1990s. Lack of effort to enforce penalties against employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers—penalties included in the immigration reform bill passed by Congress in 1986—allowed the undocumented population to regrow after the legalization programs of the late 1980s. Border enforcement schemes since the early 1990s created a more formidable physical obstacle course, but fences and vehicle barriers failed to keep determined migrants out of the country.

Politicians have also convinced themselves that the United States has no need for additional, so-called low-skilled immigrants in the age of high tech—even if the productivity and incomes of high-skilled, native-born workers depend on their having access to low-skilled labor (East and Velásquez 2020). Consider the young professional woman with small children, or the grocery store clerk who has children at home. Access to affordable childcare (and often elder care) is a necessity for them. There are strong economic and social equity arguments for increasing legal immigration all along the skill distribution—not just at the high end.

On a per capita basis, the United States has one of the lowest immigration rates in the developed world. It is experiencing a demographic implosion, not the “population explosion” driven by immigration that conservatives decry. In the last decade, the US population grew at the slowest rate since the 1930s, due to a historically low birth rate and reduced immigration. The working-age population is shrinking even faster, as baby boomers age out of the labor force. Depletion of the economically active population is collapsing public finances in small cities and rural counties, which no longer have enough taxpayers to support essential services. In this context, more generous immigration and asylum policies could come to the rescue. If you have taken an economics course, you probably learned that an expanding labor force is needed to support economic growth. Without that, businesses wanting to grow will not be able to find the workers they need.

Why, then, is sensible immigration reform such a heavy lift? Congress has failed repeatedly since 2006 to pass comprehensive immigration reform bills. The last time it succeeded, Ronald Reagan was in the White House! National-level polling data, including some gathered since the pandemic started, consistently reveal that large majorities of Americans see immigrants as contributors to the country, not burdens. The research evidence strongly supports that widespread public perception. Why such a large disconnect with legislating?

Rahm Emanuel, the former mayor of Chicago and White House chief of staff under Barack Obama, used to call immigration the “third rail of American politics”—touch it at your peril. In Emanuel’s reckoning, whatever a politician does on immigration, they end up losing more votes than they gain. That kind of thinking is a sure prescription for congressional gridlock. Because of the disproportionate weight that the US electoral system gives to smaller, predominantly conservative states where immigrants are viewed more negatively, all those people who tell pollsters that immigration is a good thing do not translate into votes in Congress for immigration reform. Perhaps

the United States will need to tumble farther down the rabbit hole of population decline before that political calculus can change.

Where does all this leave Joe Biden? In a sense, he is paying the price for a half century of wrongheaded immigration policies. As of this writing, he and his allies in Congress can't even round up enough votes to get permanent protection for DACA recipients nor pass a narrowly drawn legalization program for undocumented farm workers—let alone for sweeping immigration reform legislation. Faced with the current migration surge, the Biden administration seems to be retreating into a bunker mentality, dragging its feet on various much-needed policy changes. For example, during the presidential campaign, Biden's immigration advisers recommended an immediate rollback of the Trump policy of requiring relatives and other potential sponsors of asylum seekers to disclose their own immigration status to government authorities. Of course, that is a powerful disincentive to come forward. The policy was ultimately reversed, but not before weeks of delay had contributed to a humanitarian disaster, with unaccompanied children piling up in federal detention centers never designed for them.

A similar pattern has been evident in Biden's hesitation on setting a more generous ceiling for refugee admissions. Candidate Biden promised that 125,000 refugees would be resettled in his first year. But once in office, Biden declined to quickly sign off on a new ceiling, leaving in place the 15,000-person cap set by Trump in his final year—a historic low for the US refugee program established in 1980. On May 3 Biden reversed himself again, setting an admission cap of 62,500 for the remainder of the fiscal year while cautioning that far fewer refugees were likely to be resettled. Administration officials blamed Trump's starving of the network of NGOs that traditionally worked with the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement, but broader political considerations reportedly influenced the back-and-forth (Shear and Kanno-Youngs 2021). Much of what needs to be fixed can only be achieved through new legislation. If legislative fixes are off the table, at least temporarily, then Biden can change things through executive orders and new regulations. To his credit, he

has issued a flurry of executive orders reversing Trump's worst nativist policies. But much remains to be done.

For example, back in 2018, Trump's attorney general Jeff Sessions "reinterpreted" US asylum law in a way that eliminated being a victim of most forms of violence as grounds for an asylum claim. Excluded as grounds were domestic violence and gang violence—huge problems in Central America. With the stroke of a pen, Sessions made nearly all Central Americans ineligible for asylum protection. US asylum law and the Constitution give the attorney general that kind of power; no congressional assent is required.

The obvious fix was for Biden's attorney general, Merrick Garland, to "re-reinterpret" asylum law to restore the status quo ante. It took until June 16 for that to happen. I suspect this was because the administration was concerned that any overt broadening of asylum opportunities would add to the ongoing surge of Central Americans to the border, which could undermine other Biden priorities, like passing major legislation on infrastructure and climate change. Moreover, Biden must use the 2022 elections to grow his razor-thin majorities in Congress. Anything that plays into a Republican election-year narrative that Biden is pursuing an "open borders" immigration policy could vastly complicate that goal.

This is a conundrum that must be solved, if the United States is going to start working its way out of the immigration mess that Trump and his minions left behind.

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The China-Latin America and Caribbean Relation: Introduction

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The growing rivalry between the United States and China places Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in a complicated situation. On one hand, since its imperial rise in the nineteenth century, the United States has been a dominant power which tries to extract the greatest advantage from the region and does not hesitate to intervene in its political processes. On the other, China has emerged in the twenty-first century with a significant presence in all imaginable ambits. How should the countries of LAC confront this rivalry among great powers to minimize conflict and maximize the benefits to their people? Politicians—and scholars—of the region could play a mediating role to promote cooperation or at least competition among powers, while reducing conflict.

The following *LASA Forum* dossier is made up of seven articles on the relations between Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Enrique Dussel Peters was the main editor for this section. Thanks to Enrique's considerable network of *LASA* experts, we were able to recruit a diversity of essays reflecting *LASA*'s pluralism in perspectives and disciplinary complementarities. Bearing in mind that the central theme of *LASA*'s 2022 Congress is "Socioenvironmental polarization and rivalry among great powers," the essays in this section pertain above all to the last point, both historically and in contemporary terms. An underlying question seems to run through this section: What are the chief challenges and opportunities for LAC with China's emerging economic power?

In the first essay, Enrique Dussel Peters proposes that we transcend the newly fashionable analyses of the relations between LAC and China, especially those that characterize it in the framework of a new Cold War. Taking a step beyond such formulations, Dussel Peters proposes several concepts that

might enable us to better understand this critical emerging relationship in the twenty-first century. He also suggests that we need to improve the quality of the dialogue on specific topics of the LAC-China relationship and, particularly, to dedicate more time and resources to public, private, and academic institutions specializing in the LAC-China relationship in LAC, China, and other parts of the world.

Evelyn Hu-DeHart offers an erudite overview of Asian diasporas in Latin America and the Caribbean, highlighting how, invariably across time since the seventeenth century, this phenomenon was closely associated with the imperial powers' emerging needs to supply labor power in their colonies and realms, or, in the twenty-first century, new areas of investment. Hu-DeHart raises important questions about why it was in New Spain and Mexico that members of the Chinese diaspora, in particular, were subject to the most violent actions against them. She also notes that the persistent Chinese diaspora into the twenty-first century has yet to be studied in depth.

The COVID-19 pandemic and responses by the international system is the subject of Andrés Serbin's essay. Co-chair of the Asia and the Americas Section of *LASA*, Serbin describes the dire situation in which LAC countries already found themselves prior to the pandemic, due to one of the region's chief characteristics: socioeconomic inequality. Such inequality was deepened gravely with the pandemic, worsened in turn by overall global inequality among states, such that the most advanced capitalist countries have concentrated vaccines well beyond their population sizes. In this context, China and Russia have been much more proactive in their assistance to LAC by developing "vaccine diplomacy" and by providing the much-

needed vaccines in large numbers. Until recently, such diplomacy has been missing from wealthy Western countries.

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched by the People's Republic of China in 2013, is no doubt a central component of how this country has been engaging globalization, argues R. Evan Ellis in his essay. Since Panama joined this initiative in 2018, a total of 19 Latin American countries have joined, highlighting the relevance of understanding its main features and development. Ellis focuses on understanding the BRI's and China's strategic focus on connectivity for its development projects. For him, the principal adverse effects for LAC will be that China and its companies will gain considerable leverage to gain contracts, market position, and value added in other sectors. Such effects could deprive domestic firms of future opportunities.

With the transition from internal combustion engines in the automobile sector to electric cars, and the general need to store energy from sustainable but intermittent sources like wind and solar, lithium mining has become a huge strategic issue for LAC. As all kinds of extractive endeavors, a central question is whether lithium mining can be compatible with green goals of sustainability, including those embedded in Latin America's new Escazú agreement and China's new commitments to greening overseas investment. Such goals are particularly challenging because lithium mining requires enormous amounts of water. And it so happens that the "lithium triangle" is located in a desert shared by Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile. This dilemma is discussed by Rebecca Ray, Kehan Wang, and Zara C. Albright. They consider past lessons of Chinese mining companies in Peru, which could serve as a model for dealing with issues of stakeholder participation and moving toward international norm building, civil society participation, strengthening central government capacity, and investor cooperation.

As anticipated in Evelyn Hu-DeHart's essay, a critical issue for Chinese diasporas and their countries of destination is how they are received and whether they are subjected to discrimination and even violence. Across the Americas, states and citizens are confronting histories of racial violence and

their legacies in the twenty-first century. Mexican president López Obrador's May 2021 apology for the 1911 Torreón massacre exemplifies this trend. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, has exposed the continuity of these racist formations and new tensions, especially in relation to China. Asian bodies and communities have been marked as contaminated virus carriers subject to anti-Chinese sentiment and violence, even as the Chinese state has become an increasingly important development partner in Latin America. Monica DeHart draws on ethnographic research in Central America to illuminate the multiple Chinas and forms of Chineseness that have been constitutive of regional development, rather than foreign to it. Her transpacific analysis offers a useful vantage point for comprehending the nature and stakes of Chinese development in Latin America at a moment of racial reckoning and beyond.

As China's urban population edges toward one billion people, demand for pork, noodles, and bread is growing. To sustain this demand requires soybeans processed into animal feed, plus wheat and barley. The resulting supply chains, largely immune to recent trade frictions, stretch from China's dinner tables to South America's soy plantations and Australia's grain fields. Brazil and Australia reflect a comparable history of food production: from Indigenous horticulture to colonial agriculture and postcolonial agribusiness. Commodity cropping in both countries has combined with urban expansion to encroach on peri-urban land, where fresh food has historically been grown for cities. Citizens are pushing back with community farms and online platforms that connect producers with inner city customers. Anthropologist Adrian Hearn finds that local food activists are responding to global pressures in Beijing as much as in Rio de Janeiro and Melbourne. In all cases, their ability to mobilize communities and secure support from governments is strengthened by the articulation of food traditions.

The Joseph Biden administration in the United States insists on continuing the rift with China started by his predecessor in the form of a trade war, making it now more encompassing and pitched as a contest between democracy and

autocracy. In the second week of June 2021, Biden tried to convince US allies in a meeting of the G7 (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States) to “curb China’s economic influence.” US allies, however, are unclear whether China should be considered as “a partner, competitor, adversary or outright security threat,” as Biden would like to put it (Sanger and Landler 2021, 9). China has responded that “the days when global decisions were dictated by a small group of countries are long gone” (*China Daily* 2021), explicitly referring to the G7, and countering with an effective multilateralism and the relevance of the G20, with the participation of China and India, as well as of Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico in LAC.

LAC countries, from this perspective, will increasingly have to deal with “big power competition” and “new triangular relationships,” as discussed by several of the authors in this issue. We at LASA can hopefully provide cultural, historical, socioeconomic, agricultural, and environmental analysis. Clearly, conditions in the short, medium, and long terms will be full of bumps and obstacles, and we should be prepared with better knowledge about LAC-China relations.

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América Latina y el Caribe-China: Más allá de la moda de su análisis socioeconómico

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La creciente presencia de la República Popular China en América Latina y el Caribe (ALC) es innegable en prácticamente todos los ámbitos imaginables de la relación bilateral: desde cultura, educación y academia, hasta las relaciones políticas bilaterales, regionales y multilaterales, y ni hablar de la economía, comercio y otros aspectos puntuales. Parto del reconocimiento de la “moda” del análisis sobre China en ALC en el sector público, los organismos empresariales, los medios y la academia. Pero aquí se trata de dar un “paso más allá” de esta moda para presentar un grupo de conceptos y resultados logrados en diversas instituciones latinoamericanas. Esta propuesta se ha logrado en un diálogo crítico con contrapartes chinas en aras de ir más allá de análisis meramente descriptivos, tales como: la tasa del producto interno bruto (PIB) aumentó, el financiamiento se redujo, los proyectos de infraestructura presentaron un crecimiento inusual, etcétera. Este tipo de análisis coyuntural usualmente no permite comprender las estructuras y sus cambios en la relación entre ALC y China y, por el contrario, confunde y frustra en muchas ocasiones. Tales enfoques descriptivos a menudo dificultan o hasta llegan a impedir un efectivo proceso de aprendizaje de la relación ALC-China en el corto, mediano y largo plazo.

En este ensayo, primero se proponen un grupo de conceptos que permiten una comprensión de la relación socioeconómica entre ALC y China en la tercera década del siglo XXI. En la segunda parte y las conclusiones se ofrece un breve análisis de un

grupo de controversias en torno a la relación ALC-China en aras de generar una discusión y, ojalá, un aprendizaje alternativo y más fructífero sobre las relaciones entre ALC-China.

Conceptos para entender la relación ALC-China

Cuatro temas nos parecen importantes para la comprensión de la relación América Latina y el Caribe-China en la tercera década del siglo XXI.¹ Primero: La importancia de distinguir y diferenciar entre aspectos específicos de la relación bilateral. En temas socioeconómicos, por ejemplo, es crítico distinguir con precisión entre inversión extranjera directa y proyectos de infraestructura. Estos últimos siempre se dan como un servicio cuya propiedad es del cliente/contratista. Hay que integrar estas distinciones a las discusiones puntuales en torno a migración, historia, comercio, financiamiento, inversión extranjera directa de China en ALC (u OFDI, por sus siglas en inglés) y proyectos de infraestructura. Pero también se requiere conocer metodologías y diferenciar entre estadísticas según diversas fuentes y sus resultados. Luego hay que integrar estos elementos conceptuales y metodológicos a debates y discusiones específicas en diálogo con sectores académicos, públicos y privados.

Segundo: La omnipresencia del sector público en China. Pudiera definirse al sector público en China, y a su omnipresencia bajo el liderazgo del Partido Comunista Chino (PCC), como la suma

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¹ Este análisis se base en el trabajo de casi dos décadas en el Cechimex y la Red ALC-China y se invita a revisar las múltiples publicaciones sobre los respectivos temas en los portales respectivos. Con el fin de permitir una fluida y breve presentación se minimizarán al máximo referencias y debates adicionales.

de instituciones del gobierno central, ciudades, provincias y municipios que —sorprendentemente para algunos— compiten entre sí (Dussel Peters 2015). Esta institución (el sector público) no existe como tal en ALC ni en otras partes del mundo y es fundamental para comprender la estrategia desarrollista y nacionalista de China al menos desde 1949. Entonces, la integración de este sector público para el análisis de China en la tercera década del siglo XXI es crítica: no se trata de “Maonomics”, “capitalismo de estado”, “state-owned enterprises”, etc., sino de una institución cualitativamente diferente a lo que se ha experimentado en ALC y otros países como Estados Unidos. Esa institución es, además, fundamental en la relación de China con ALC: para 2020, alrededor del 40 por ciento del PIB chino es de propiedad pública (con base en la definición anterior). Así pues, el sector público es probablemente el principal actor —cualitativo y cuantitativo— en la relación de China con ALC. No integrar y comprender explícitamente a este “actor” en China genera serias limitaciones para el examen de la relación ALC-China en términos generales y muy concretos, como sería en los casos del turismo, la cooperación en la educación superior y en aspectos culturales, ni hablar del comercio o proyectos de infraestructura, por ejemplo.

Tercero: El proceso de “globalización con características chinas”. China postula un proceso de globalización y de relaciones internacionales diferentes a las imperantes bajo el liderazgo de Estados Unidos e instituidas después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Desde hace varias décadas y explícitamente desde 2013, China viene planteando la Iniciativa de Una Franja y una Ruta, la cual posteriormente adoptó el título de la Franja y la Ruta (BRI, por sus siglas en inglés). La presencia internacional de China se ha reflejado tanto en el Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas como en el sistema financiero internacional mediante la participación en 2016 del *renminbi* en la canasta de monedas que componen los derechos especiales de giro (SDR, por sus siglas en inglés), así como por su creciente liderazgo en el G20 y los BRIC (Brasil, Rusia, India, China y Sudáfrica). Pero el BRI implica un parteaguas en el abierto planteamiento alternativo a la globalización occidental.

El programa BRI integra diversas iniciativas adicionales (Ruta de la Seda, respectivas versiones marítimas y digitales, de la salud, etc.) con el objetivo central de incrementar la cooperación internacional vía la conectividad y proyectos de infraestructura mediante cinco vínculos: políticas, caminos y carreteras, comercio, tipo de cambio y un último de pueblo-pueblo (Long 2015). Tanto el establecimiento del Nuevo Banco de Desarrollo con los países BRIC, como del Banco Asiático de Inversión en Infraestructura (AIIB, por sus siglas en inglés) son potentes instrumentos de esta nueva y activa estrategia global. En el contexto del Foro de ALC-China, llevado a cabo en el Brasil en julio de 2014, el presidente Xi Jinping presentó un marco de cooperación entre ambas partes al que denominó “1+3+6”; es decir, un plan (el Plan de Cooperación 2015-2019 en el ámbito de la Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños (CELAC); más tres fuerzas propulsoras: comercio, inversión y cooperación financiera; más seis campos clave de la cooperación, que incluyen: energía y recursos, obras de infraestructura, manufactura e innovación científico-técnica. En el Foro CELAC-China, y desde la primera reunión ministerial del mismo en enero de 2015, se estableció un Plan de Cooperación de los Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños-China (2015-2019) con un amplio grupo de instrumentos concretos en los ámbitos político, cultural, educativo y económico, entre otros rubros, e incluyendo aspectos como: la promoción bilateral entre las micro, pequeñas y medianas empresas; de instituciones financieras; la infraestructura y el transporte; la industria, la ciencia y la tecnología; así como sectores específicos como la industria aeroespacial, las industrias de la información y comunicación. El documento hace referencia explícita a la “construcción conjunta de parques industriales, ciencia y tecnología, zonas económicas especiales y parques de alta tecnología entre China y los Estados miembros de la CELAC, en particular en actividades de investigación y desarrollo, con el fin de mejorar la inversión industrial y la formación de cadenas industriales de valor” (CELAC 2015, 4).

Además del establecimiento de foros especializados, como por ejemplo un Foro sobre Desarrollo y Cooperación Industrial China-América Latina y el Caribe, el Plan de Cooperación incluye la definición de un grupo de fondos específicos

según los objetivos particulares: el Fondo de Cooperación China-América Latina y el Caribe, el Crédito Especial para la Infraestructura China-América Latina y el Caribe. Plantea también la posibilidad de obtener “otros recursos financieros para apoyar los proyectos de cooperación prioritarios entre China y los Estados miembros de la CELAC” (CELAC 2015, 2). Para el sector educativo, el mismo documento propone que se otorguen seis mil becas gubernamentales y seis mil plazas para recibir capacitación en China, además de cuatrocientas becas para maestrías. La mayoría de estos instrumentos —y otros nuevos— fueron reiterados en el Programa de Trabajo para 2019–2021 (CELAC 2018). Estas múltiples iniciativas chinas en la última década orientadas hacia ALC no han recibido una respuesta puntual y regional por parte de ALC. Ha habido múltiples disputas regionales internas y en la CELAC y, por su incapacidad de fortalecerse institucionalmente, la CELAC y por ende el Foro CELAC-China rotan anualmente y su secretaría *pro tempore* depende de los países que la presiden anualmente y la capacidad de su respectiva Cancillería. Por tanto, la exigencia de una respuesta altamente especializada ante las propuestas chinas también ha generado frustraciones en la parte china, tal y como se refleja en el Programa de Trabajo del Foro CELAC-China 2019–2021. Estos instrumentos puntuales² reflejan la intensidad y profundidad potencial de la relación regional ALC-China y son relevantes para la relación bilateral en las siguientes décadas.

Cuarto. Las crecientes tensiones entre Estados Unidos y China y el concepto de “nuevas relaciones triangulares”.³ Desde 2017, bajo la Estrategia de Seguridad Nacional, Estados Unidos reconoce explícitamente la “competencia entre grandes poderes” (*great power competition*) con China. Desde esta perspectiva, las tensiones entre Estados Unidos y China van mucho más allá de la “guerra comercial” y tecnológica que se detonó desde 2018. En Estados Unidos se ha presentado un cambio estructural respecto a cómo se relaciona con China: históricamente el sector público, y particularmente su poder legislativo, había sido

más crítico de China; mientras que el sector privado y los organismos empresariales habían sido más abiertos en aras de beneficiarse del comercio y opciones de inversión. Desde 2018, sin embargo, la creciente competencia de China en cadenas globales de valor como inteligencia artificial, electrónica, telecomunicaciones, y en proyectos de infraestructura (AmCham China 2019), ha generado una áspera crítica por parte de los organismos empresariales estadounidenses hacia China. En octubre de 2018, el entonces vicepresidente Pence (2018) reiteró los argumentos gubernamentales para implementar cambios profundos en la política de EE.UU. hacia China. A través de medidas como el control de inversiones y exportaciones chinas a EE.UU. y control de exportaciones a China se trataba de impedir la creciente presencia China. El Secretario de Estado Pompeo, por otro lado, señaló reiteradamente durante 2018-2020 que minimizaría su relación con países como El Salvador, Panamá y República Dominicana debido a su reciente reconocimiento diplomático de China y urgió a la región a tener cuidado ante las múltiples trampas que China le tiende a ALC en comercio, financiamiento, tecnología, etc.

En términos prácticos, el gobierno estadounidense crecientemente ha exigido una relación de “exclusividad”, es decir, o con Estados Unidos o con China. Desde una perspectiva latinoamericana —y global— el concepto de “nuevas relaciones triangulares” entre dos grandes potencias y terceros países pareciera tener sentido en el futuro. Ese concepto sería más apto que apelar al concepto de “nueva guerra fría”, puesto que la Unión Soviética de mediados del siglo XX y China en el siglo XXI poco tienen en común. Esa analogía no se sostiene.

Algunos debates sobre ALC-China

Los conceptos propuestos tienen múltiples implicaciones. Por un lado, exigen un análisis especializado y detallado, así como una revisión de la relación ALC-China. Si bien existe un desconocimiento significativo en esta relación, también existen instituciones diversas en ALC y

² El libro de Cui y Pérez García (2016) permite una comprensión y discusión más detallada de estos instrumentos propuestos por China a ALC.

³ Para un análisis sobre el concepto por parte de diversos autores (Kevin P. Gallagher, Ping Wang, Adrian H. Hearn, Chunsi Wu y R. Evan Ellis, entre otros), véase: Dussel Peters, Hearn y Shaiken (2013).

en China que vienen analizando la relación desde hace más de cinco décadas en temas tan diversos como la historia, lengua, cultura, migración, política y economía, entre muchos otros. Es decir, la integración al análisis existente y al aprendizaje sobre temas específicos es crucial, más allá de redescubrir la rueda o de entrar en debates que se ponen de “moda” ante las tensiones China-Estados Unidos. Múltiples “*think tanks*” —también en Washington— contribuyen a este creciente autismo o diálogo entre sordos. Es decir, es necesario integrarse explícitamente a los debates conceptuales y empíricos existentes para generar un aprendizaje efectivo sobre la relación ALC-China. Los conceptos arriba propuestos permiten una integración crítica a dichos debates. Aquí presento dos ejemplos con toda la intención de generar discusión y debates en el futuro.

Primero. Existe un muy rico análisis sobre la migración china en ALC desde la *Nao* y en forma más significativa desde el siglo XIX. Visto por países y regiones, estudios de caso, y su relevancia sectorial, se revelan atrocidades individuales y sociales vinculadas a un masivo racismo existente en ALC contra los inmigrantes chinos. En 2021, por ejemplo, el gobierno de México realizó una campaña para pedir perdón ante el centenario del “exterminio” histórico de migrantes chinos y los movimientos antichinos en México (véase el siguiente ensayo de Evelyn Hu-DeHart en este número). Esta discusión y el reconocimiento efectivo de un racismo barbárico —donde legislaturas estatales prohibieron que chinos hombres se casaran con mujeres mexicanas (Gómez Izquierdo 1992)— no se ha trasladado a la tercera década del siglo XXI. Es decir, sigue persistiendo un profundo racismo, particularmente entre las élites mexicanas —¿y en el resto de ALC?— hacia “los chinos”. Es mucho más cómoda una campaña “histórica del perdón” que adentrarse al racismo antichino actual.

Segundo. Prepondera en círculos académicos una perspectiva generalizada sobre la relación socioeconómica entre ALC y China: China busca recursos naturales y profundiza las estructuras “extractivistas” en ALC; China en realidad sólo busca materias primas en ALC y profundiza una relación “centro-periferia” en ALC, ahora con un

nuevo “centro”. Estos debates se han llevado a cabo en la Red ALC-China desde hace casi una década y requieren de una profundización y concreción, ya que los viejos mitos no son aconsejables. En el caso de la inversión extranjera directa china hacia ALC (Dussel Peters 2021), por ejemplo, desde 2015 se percibe una profunda diversificación de los patrones de inversión china en ALC por países y sectores. Entre otros aspectos, si durante 2005–2009 la OFDI china se concentró en un 94.73 por ciento en materias primas, particularmente en países como Argentina y Brasil, desde entonces la OFDI china ha optado crecientemente por orientarse hacia los respectivos mercados domésticos latinoamericanos. En 2015–2020, el 62.58 por ciento del empleo generado por la OFDI china se realizó en actividades orientadas hacia los servicios y los mercados domésticos, relegando así en forma significativa el argumento de la búsqueda de materias primas. Es imperante, desde esta perspectiva, actualizar el análisis y sus implicaciones.

Conclusiones

En este ensayo he invitado a que insistamos en la enorme importancia de las instituciones públicas, privadas y académicas, entre otras, para mejorar la calidad del análisis de la relación ALC-China y su actual y futuro aprendizaje. Con base en la experiencia de la Sección de Asia y las Américas en LASA, así como del Centro de Estudios China-México de la Facultad de Economía de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México y de la Red ALC-China, entre muchas otras, la inversión en instituciones en el corto, mediano y largo plazo en esta área del conocimiento será crítica en el futuro y para la propuesta de una “nueva relación triangular”. Si ALC como región, en el ámbito de la CELAC por ejemplo, y en cada uno de sus países —desde las Malvinas a Mexicali— buscara mejorar su relación con China, será indispensable una inversión institucional en el largo plazo. Este proceso ha sido muy lento y ha resultado en una escasa comprensión estratégica para hacer frente a masivas “nuevas relaciones triangulares” concretas —desde la tecnología de la 5G, los Institutos Confucio, las hidroeléctricas o inversiones específicas.

Presentamos en este número de *LASA Forum* contribuciones relevantes por parte de colegas de LASA, de su Sección de las Américas y Asia, además de otras en ALC y China. Las élites latinoamericanas —y puntualmente las que se encuentran en sus instituciones educativas y en universidades— deberán redoblar esfuerzos si no quieren caer en decisiones y comprensiones cortoplacistas y sin una visión estratégica orientada al largo plazo.

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Asian Diasporas to Latin America and the Caribbean

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Recent scholarly attention to the Spanish Empire in the Pacific is compelling the backdating of the arrival of the first Asians to the Americas, specifically to today's Mexico, to a much earlier date than the conventional historiography has maintained. The new beginning date is now the late sixteenth century, when Miguel de Legazpi sailed from Acapulco, New Spain, across the Pacific to Cebu Island in 1564 and colonized the archipelago for Spain, naming it Las Filipinas, after Emperor Felipe II, to be administered by the Viceroyalty of New Spain. The colonial capital of Manila on the big island of Luzón became the entrepôt for trade with China, exchanging American silver from Mexico and Potosí (then Peru, today Bolivia) for Chinese silk, porcelain, and other finely crafted beautiful objects. Many traders from East and Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean world also came to trade, such as East Indians, Armenians, and Japanese.

The galleons that made yearly round trips between Acapulco and Manila for 250 years (1565 to 1815) carried people on board in both directions. It was in Spanish Manila that the first large, permanent Chinese community outside China arose, attracted to this Asian outpost of the Spanish Empire by global trade. Before the century's end, Manila's *barrio chino*, called Parián, located on the shores of the Pasig River just outside the Spanish walled city of Intramuros, numbered some 20,000, composed of merchants, artisans, and skilled craftsmen, shopkeepers, service providers, fishermen, horticulturalists, and common laborers of all kinds. As an extension of New Spain or Mexico, Manila's Parián can be said to represent the first American Chinatown. It can also be considered the beginning point of the long and vast global phenomenon called the Chinese diaspora, in both temporal and spatial senses. Soon, large Chinese communities, composed of people from the same origins in

southern Fujian Province, formed in Formosa (later Taiwan), which the Chinese themselves colonized; in Dutch Batavia (Indonesia today); in the British Straits Colonies (today Singapore and Malaysia); and throughout Southeast Asia.

For our interest in this essay, an estimated 20,000 to as high as 100,000 *indios chinos*, as they were labeled in the documents, disembarked in Acapulco in the late sixteenth through the eighteenth century, spreading out throughout New Spain and southward to Peru. Some six to seven thousand migrated as enslaved men and women, including the *beata* Catarina de San Juan, native of the Mughal Empire of today's India, transformed into the popular *la china poblana*. Less well known were the Japanese *daimyo* (feudal lord) Luis de Encio and his son-in-law Juan de Páez, converted Christians who escaped religious persecution at home via Manila to Guadalajara, Mexico, where they became successful business and family men, honored as city notables by the Catholic Church. Aside from this handful of identified Asian migrants, we do not know the precise Asian origins and ethnicities of this considerable population. The vast majority were probably Filipino natives familiar with Spanish language and culture through close interaction at home. In colonial Mexico and Peru, through intermarriage and new identity formations, they merged into local communities, unable or unwilling to maintain distinct Asian communities past the second generation. Migration from Asia effectively ended with the decline of the transpacific galleon trade when Mexico gained independence from Spain and became a republic in the early nineteenth century (Falck y Palacios 2009; Carrillo Martín 2015).

The next chapter of Asian migration to America began in the mid-nineteenth century, after the United States forced Mexico to give up half of her national territory in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, followed immediately by the discovery of gold in California on the new frontier of the looming American Empire. Slavery and the plantation economy came under serious challenges throughout the Americas, from the US South to Cuba of the Spanish Caribbean and Brazil. Latin American republics, such as Peru, and the British colonies of the Caribbean were the first to abolish slavery. By mid-century, every republic and every colony in America was looking for alternative sources of cheap labor; soon, all eyes converged on South China and British India. Three great Asian diasporas met in Latin America and the Caribbean, including the Japanese and the Chinese to Latin American (Spanish and Portuguese) and the Spanish Caribbean (summarized below). The East Indian diaspora of over half a million Hindi and Muslim contract laborers to the British Caribbean constituted the third great Asian migration to the Caribbean, but it is beyond the scope of this brief essay (Look Lai 1991).

Organized, large-scale Japanese migration overseas did not begin until after the Meiji Restoration ushered in modern Japan in 1868, opening up Japan to the world after centuries of self-imposed near isolation. At the turn of the century, a thousand Japanese immigrants arrived in Hawaii, mostly agricultural workers destined for sugar plantation labor under three-year contracts, and from there to California and the US West Coast north to Washington State. They were soon followed by Japanese state-sponsored migration to Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Colombia, Chile, and Paraguay in South America, as well as to Mexico and Cuba. These early agricultural migrants, which included many Okinawans (of the Ryuku Islands), who were subjects of the Japanese Empire, were vanguards of an imperial diaspora that fanned out throughout Asia (Taiwan, Korea, Manchuria), the Pacific, and America (Kikamura-Yano 2002).

When the US enacted very restrictive immigration laws against Asians in 1924 (the “Asiatic barred zone”), more of them turned to South America. A decade later, Latin American countries, notably

Brazil, enacted their own restrictive immigration laws targeting the Japanese, while anti-Japanese riots erupted in Peru and elsewhere. No anti-Japanese action in Latin America matched the extent and intensity of the US government’s mass incarceration of Japanese immigrants (*issei*) who had no access to citizenship for being nonwhite, and their American-born citizen children. Mexico and Peru sent some of their Japanese residents to US camps, or interned them internally. Among the so-called Japanese immigrants to Latin America during the early twentieth century were ethnic Koreans of the Japanese Empire, such as the several hundred families sent under contract in 1905 to work in henequen plantations of Mexico’s Yucatán; some remigrated to Cuba to cultivate henequen in 1921, giving rise to a small Korean community that survives to this day.

With the opening of the Pacific War in 1941, immigration to Latin America came to a standstill, but it would resume after the war through the fifties and into the early sixties, when it gradually petered out. In the twenty-first century, descendants of Japanese immigrants, commonly called *nikkei*, can be found in most Latin American countries, well integrated into their respective societies as middle-class professionals and businessmen as well as literary figures of renown and popularity, such as the poets Pedro Shimose of Bolivia and José Watanabe of Peru, not to leave out Ryoki Inoue of Brazil, author of over one thousand pulp fiction books of crime and romance and recognized as the “world’s most prolific writer” by Guinness World Records.

Unquestionably the most notorious and intriguing Japanese-Latin American is Alberto Fujimori, son of Japanese immigrants who was elected to the presidency of Peru in 1990 and served two terms. As president, he oversaw the capture of leader Abimael Guzmán of the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) guerrilla movement, which had terrorized the country for a decade. Controversies continue to swirl around him and his children; currently (June 2021) his daughter Keiko is a leading candidate for the presidency of Peru while her father sits in jail for corruption. The *nikkei* community in Brazil rivals that of the postwar, post-incarceration community in the

United States in size (approximately one million each) and prosperity as successful businessmen and professionals in many fields, as politicians and as writers and artists. Together, the nikkei of Peru and Brazil have made it impossible for the world to deny knowledge of Asian immigration and their prominent presence and social and political integration in Latin America.

By far the oldest, largest, and most widespread group of Asian immigrants in Latin America and the Caribbean are the Chinese, whose large presence in Spanish Manila was noted earlier in this essay. Since Manila, the Chinese diaspora has reached every corner of the world, an incomparable global phenomenon (Pan 2006). Among the very early migrants from Manila to New Spain, we know of only a handful who were clearly identified as *sangleys*, or ethnic Chinese. As with the Japanese, large-scale Chinese migration to the Americas did not take place until the middle of the nineteenth century, during a period which saw the decline of slavery throughout the hemisphere and the expansion and development of world markets for New World cash crops, minerals, and other raw materials, which in turn required major infrastructural improvements such as railroads and shipping. All these enterprises were labor and capital intensive, with labor supplied in large part by Asians, and capital by US and European industrialists.

Chinese migration to Latin America and the Spanish Caribbean in the modern era occurred in three movements. First, there was an impressive agricultural labor migration in the second half of the nineteenth century known as the coolie or yellow trade, *la trata amarilla*. Between 1847 and 1875, close to 250,000 working men landed in Cuba (still a Spanish colony) and Peru (a new republic) (Hu-DeHart 2002; López 2013). Their arrival in these two Spanish American locations heralded the migration during the same decades

of a comparable number of working men recruited to work in California and the US West, providing labor and services in gold mines, agriculture, and most impressively, building the massive transcontinental railroad from the East to the West Coast of the United States. Almost all these immigrants throughout the Americas hailed from the handful of counties of the Pearl River Delta of Guangdong Province, close to British Hong Kong and Portuguese Macao.

The second flow of Chinese migration to Latin America paralleled the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act of the United States, which restricted further entry of Chinese laborers. No longer under contracts, free Cantonese immigrants, mostly men, flocked to Central America, Peru, Cuba, and especially northern Mexico with its long border with the United States, from the Pacific to the Atlantic. On the borderlands, they found plentiful opportunities providing goods and services to a rapidly proletarianizing Mexican population in mining, commercial agriculture, and railroad towns, sometimes cooperating with US capitalists to operate company stores. Ubiquitous and visible in their relative prosperity, they readily formed families with local Mexican women. Not surprisingly, the Chinese also invited resentment and criticism for perceived unfair business practices, in particular among the emerging working class of the borderlands. Before, during, and after the Mexican Revolution (1910–1917), anti-Chinese violence frequently flared up on or near the border, but none so egregious as the massacre of 303 unarmed Chinese laborers and shopkeepers on May 13–15, 1911, in the prosperous northeastern town of Torreón, perpetrated by armed men of Francisco Madero’s revolutionary army.¹ Mexico dealt another harsh blow against the Chinese in northern Mexico in 1929–1931 when it expelled most members of the well-established community in the state of Sonora

¹ The 1911 Torreón massacre counts as one of the most egregious incidents of anti-Chinese violence in the history of the Chinese diaspora anywhere in the world. On May 17, 2021, Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador issued in Torreón an official apology to the Chinese community: “Petición de perdón por agravios a la comunidad china en México.” Notably, the one incident of extreme anti-Asian violence noted in history occurred a long time ago, in Spanish Manila in 1603, when the Spanish colonial government literally cleared the city of Chinese presence by allegedly massacring all 20,000 of them, a figure repeated over and over again by historians without a serious critical analysis. The figure is clearly a gross exaggeration, although equally clearly something terrible happened. Within a year, large numbers of Chinese returned to Manila and quickly rebuilt the community. The “*pequeño genocidio*” of Torreón in 1911 has been poignantly and dramatically captured by Mexican writer Julián Herbert in his bestseller *La casa del dolor ajeno* (Mexico: Literature Random House, 2015).

bordering Arizona, many of them shopkeepers and, at around five thousand strong, Mexico's largest (Hu-DeHart 1985).

With very few exceptions, Chinese can be found in every Latin American and Caribbean country in the twentieth century, with Cuba, Peru, and Mexico historically hosting the largest Chinese populations, although politics, weak economies, a long pause in immigration after World War II, and continuous intermixing with local women (and some men) have severely reduced their numbers and weakened self-identification as Chinese. Notable Chinese-Latin Americans include the internationally renowned Afro-Chinese artist Wifredo Lam of Cuba; the award-winning short story writer Siu Kam Wen of Peru; the Mexican singer Ana Gabriel of the popular *música norteña*; and the Mexican politician Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong, one step from the presidency as secretary of Gobernación (Internal Affairs) in 2012–2018.

The Asian diasporas of South Asians to the Caribbean and Japanese to Brazil and Peru have essentially ended, as appeared to be the case of the Chinese, but this latter group has been enjoying a resurgence in the twentieth-first century, giving rise to a third wave of Chinese migration to Latin America and the Caribbean. Paralleling Chinese president Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative to invest in infrastructure, telecommunication, and extractive industries (mining and commercial agriculture) around the world, especially in Africa and Latin American and Caribbean, and constituting a new era of globalization led by the Chinese state, Chinese peoples are once again on the move, this time in a way markedly different from the past. In this third wave of the Chinese diaspora to Latin America, they come from all over China, from the traditional coastal regions to interior provinces and the far north; they are families, with women and children prominently featured. Unlike the first wave in the nineteenth century, they are not agricultural laborers or construction workers. Rather, expanding on the role of the second wave of shopkeepers and service providers, the *xin yimin* (new immigrants) for the most part engage in large-scale retail trade importing cheap consumer goods of all sorts made in China, from electronics to clothing, to meet

demands of a growing class of wage earners in cities, towns, and even the countryside (the area of massive soybean cultivation in Brazil, for example). This time, globalization led by a powerful China with imperialist or neocolonial ambitions is driving a new era of the Chinese diaspora to Latin America and Caribbean.

By way of concluding this brief and cursory summary of Asian diasporas in Latin America and the Caribbean through four centuries, let me offer some observations on this long history that is not ending. First, while this essay focuses on Asians in Latin America and the Caribbean, their diasporas can best be understood in the larger hemispheric American context—North, Central and Caribbean, and South—because they are part of a global phenomenon (Kikamura-Yano 2002 is a good example).

Second, Asian migrations to America are inextricably bound to empires: European, US American, and Asian. The role of the Spanish Empire in launching the first stage of Chinese out-migration and settlement overseas, in the case of Spanish Manila in the late sixteenth century, has not been duly recognized by historians of Latin America or of the Chinese diaspora. The role of the Spanish Empire in attracting the first large contingent of Chinese labor migrants to America in the mid-nineteenth century, Cuba in this case, and in launching the vast Chinese diaspora to all the Americas, is equally under-recognized. The US Empire followed on the heels of the Spanish Empire in expanding the scope of the Chinese diaspora through its domain from Hawaii to the West Coast, up and down, with Canada following suit on its West Coast. It should be noted that an Asian empire, the Japanese, played a role in sending its people out as settlers throughout Asia and the Americas, from Hawaii and the US West Coast to Brazil. And today, China is infusing new energy into the Chinese diaspora as companion to its state-directed global reach.

Finally, reflecting on the experience of Asian immigrants and their descendants in Latin America and the Caribbean, a central paradox emerges: on the one hand, early miscegenation (race mixing) between Asian men and local women of difference

racas (white, black, indigenous, mestizo, mulatto) has led to integration and incorporation of Asians into the society at large. The distinguished careers of many Japanese and Chinese Latin Americans are testament to this simple fact. On the other hand, anti-Asian violence directed at the first generation was widespread and could be brutal: witness the Torreón massacre in 1911 and the mass expulsion from Sonora, Mexico, in 1929–1931, not to mention the 1603 massacre of a reported 20,000 Chinese in Spanish Manila. That these most violent actions occurred in New Spain/Mexico and were directed against the Chinese in particular over the course of three centuries begs some further examination and explanation, which is beyond the scope of this brief essay. The history of a persistent Chinese diaspora to Latin America and the Caribbean continues, the final chapter not yet in sight.

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América Latina: Pandemia, desigualdad y disputas geopolíticas

por **Andrés Serbin*** | CRIES

Es probable que la pandemia del COVID-19 haya causado el mayor daño económico, político y social a la humanidad desde la Segunda Guerra Mundial (Zakaria 2020, 2). De hecho, acelerará algunos de los procesos y tendencias preexistentes y nos enfrentará a nuevos desafíos y escenarios a nivel mundial, cuyos alcances apenas vislumbramos (Brands y Gavin 2020, 5).

Haciendo un primer balance a nivel internacional, sin embargo, posiblemente la primera víctima —y la más evidente— de la pandemia haya sido la cooperación internacional y su capacidad de proveer bienes públicos globales¹. Particularmente en un mundo caracterizado por las desigualdades entre los habitantes del planeta y entre las naciones, la pandemia ha generado una crisis global de la salud pública. Ésta sacude nuestras vidas, mostrando no sólo nuestra gran vulnerabilidad sino también las deficiencias de un sistema “dónde quien nace pobre sufrirá las consecuencias de la pobreza también en su salud” (*En Positivo* 2021), así sea un individuo o un país, y ante el cual, a la vez, la capacidad de respuesta colectiva a través de mecanismos multilaterales ha presentado marcadas dificultades y limitaciones.

América Latina y el Caribe es la región en desarrollo más afectada por la pandemia. Representa el 8,4% de la población mundial y, sin embargo, para fines de abril de 2021 concentraba 30% de las muertes por COVID-19. Según la CEPAL (2020), la región sufre la peor contracción del PIB en 120 años, con una caída del 7,7% en 2020 y la pandemia ha ocasionado el cierre de 2,7 millones de empresas (es decir el 19% del total de compañías

latinoamericanas), con una dramática destrucción de empleo que afecta principalmente a jóvenes y mujeres y con una caída drástica del comercio, la inversión extranjera y las remesas. La región es la más endeudada del mundo en desarrollo (79% del PIB) y tiene el mayor costo de servicio de la deuda externa en relación con las exportaciones de bienes y servicios (57%) (Zaiat 2021).

Como consecuencia de este deterioro de sus economías, la desigualdad y la pobreza se han incrementado. Si en años anteriores, América Latina había logrado reducir la pobreza de un 45,2% de la población en 2001, a un 30,3% en 2019, el impacto de la pandemia hará que el número de pobres en la región aumente en 28,7 millones de personas, hasta alcanzar la cifra de 214,4 millones. De acuerdo a la CEPAL (2020), la población bajo el nivel de pobreza superará un 33% de la población total. En líneas generales, como lo señala el mismo informe, el impacto de la pandemia en la región ha sido brutal y ha magnificado las brechas estructurales en materia de desigualdad afectando particularmente a los sectores más vulnerables de la sociedad.

De hecho, como apunta Luis Alberto Moreno (2021), expresidente del Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, “la crisis del COVID-19 de América Latina es, sobre todo, una crisis de desigualdad”, en una región con una brecha profunda entre ricos y pobres y con marcadas disparidades en el acceso a la educación, a la salud pública y a otros recursos que ha constituido un terreno fértil para la pandemia.

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¹ Probablemente la segunda víctima haya sido la verdad científica en tanto la competencia geopolítica ha incrementado las campañas de desinformación y las distorsiones y falacias propagadas en torno a los datos científicos en juego.

Alicia Bárcena, secretaria ejecutiva de la CEPAL añade, a su vez, que la recuperación sostenible con igualdad requiere acceso equitativo a las vacunas, mayor liquidez de recursos y reformas en la arquitectura financiera internacional (Comunicado CEPAL 2021).

Pero el mundo en general se enfrenta a una pandemia dispar, esparcida y amplificada por la desigualdad social, que requiere profundizar no sólo en las causas estructurales profundas que en cada sociedad han conducido a este impacto desnivelado, sino también en los efectos de la transición que vive el sistema internacional.

La desigualdad que —en su heterogeneidad y diversidad—, caracteriza a América Latina y que propicia la propagación de la pandemia por la falta de insumos médicos y de vacunas que contribuyan a una respuesta sanitaria consistente, no es una particularidad de la región. La desigualdad entre naciones a nivel mundial en su acceso a estos recursos y suministros marca también la dinámica global actual, particularmente entre los países más ricos y los países en desarrollo. Emerge un nacionalismo sanitario en las naciones con economías más poderosas que han acumulado vacunas e insumos médicos en exceso en comparación con sus necesidades, agravando la escasez de éstos entre las naciones marginadas y profundizando la brecha entre el mundo desarrollado y las naciones en desarrollo. “Los países ricos tienen 14 por ciento de la población mundial, pero han comprado más de la mitad de las dosis de vacunas mas cercanas a que se apruebe su comercialización, según señalaba para fines de 2020 la Alianza de una Vacuna para el Pueblo, una coalición internacional de organizaciones humanitarias y sanitarias” (Denn 2020). Una nota conjunta de AFE y AP señalaba que, para febrero de 2021, los estados del G-7, pese a constituir sólo un 10% de la población global, usaron 45% de las vacunas disponibles (*Clarín* 2021, 23).

Para abril de 2021, un artículo del Washington Post apuntaba que “mientras que para abril de 2021 la India anuncia el triste récord de ser el país con más contagios diarios de coronavirus en todo

el mundo, con apenas un 1,4% de su población vacunada y los hospitales desbordados y cortos de oxígeno, en los Estados Unidos uno de cada cuatro estadounidenses ya recibió la vacunación completa y más del 40% ya recibió al menos una primera dosis², al punto de que uno de los grandes hospitales de Miami anunció que desacelerará el ritmo de vacunación porque la demanda esta cayendo y tienen exceso de vacunas en *stock*” (Faiola, Rauhala y Farzan 2021).

La geopolítica de las vacunas en América Latina: Occidente, Rusia, China

En el marco de la desigualdad global, ante la escasez de vacunas en América Latina por la insuficiente producción y el acaparamiento de los países ricos, entra a tallar la “geopolítica de las vacunas”. En una región assolada por la desigualdad y la ausencia de recursos sanitarios, la “diplomacia de las vacunas” genera una estampida por proveer de un bien público global que refuerce la influencia y el “poder blando” de algunas naciones, ante la indiferencia o la concentración de los países más ricos en sus propios procesos de inmunización y de producción de vacunas, y ante la defensa de los derechos de las grandes compañías farmacéuticas en mantener la propiedad intelectual de sus productos. Si bien el presidente Biden anunció en mayo su respaldo a una liberación —así fuere transitoria— de las patentes de las vacunas, las buenas intenciones chocan con la resistencia de las grandes empresas farmacéuticas y las dificultades objetivas para desarrollarlas a tiempo, particularmente en los países sin capacidad instalada para su producción, profundizando las desigualdades existentes.

Los intentos de la Organización Mundial de la Salud (OMS) de promover el fondo COVAX de vacunas en los países menos desarrollados chocan con esta concentración en los países desarrollados, con una escasez mundial y con la limitada disponibilidad de vacunas. Como resultado, el vacío dejado por las potencias occidentales en asistir a la región es ocupado por la creciente presencia e influencia de Rusia y China e inclusive de la misma India, actualmente en plena catástrofe sanitaria.

² A la fecha de cierre de este artículo —el 21 de mayo— ese porcentaje había ascendido a 60% según reporta CNN.

Éstas tres potencias —miembros del grupo de países BRICS (Brasil, Rusia, India, China y Sud-África)— desarrollaron una serie de iniciativas para incrementar su influencia desde el suministro de inmunizadores a la creciente provisión de vacunas a América Latina y a otras regiones, en contraste con la estrategia de los países ricos de asegurarse el mayor número posible de dosis. De acuerdo con la agencia Bloomberg, el 40% de 8570 millones de dosis comercializadas para febrero de 2021 estaba en manos de los Estados Unidos, la Unión Europea, Gran Bretaña, Japón y Canadá que, en conjunto, constituyen el 13% de la población mundial (Vega 2021).

Rusia fue la primera en anunciar la producción de su vacuna Sputnik V en agosto de 2020 y poco después comenzó una exitosa campaña de suministro de esta no sólo en los países del Cono Sur, sino también en Centroamérica, inclusive antes de que la vacuna recibiera una validación internacional. Con Sputnik V, Rusia reforzó su influencia y su “poder blando” en América Latina, modificando prejuicios y percepciones negativas previas en la población.

China siguió sus pasos con la colocación de las vacunas Sinopharma y Sinovac en los países de América del Sur y CanSino en México. Y, paradójicamente, mientras Argentina, con una infraestructura instalada de una industria farmacéutica de larga data, se prestaba para las pruebas de las vacunas AstraZeneca y Pfizer sin recibir a cambio las partidas esperadas, recientemente ha logrado impulsar la instalación de una planta local de Sputnik V que debería comenzar a producir hacia fines de año. Cuba, por su parte, aprovechando su propia capacidad instalada, ha comenzado a desarrollar tres vacunas propias y Brasil impulsa una iniciativa estatal para desarrollar una vacuna local y para producir otras vacunas a través de la empresa Batuntan. De hecho, Sinovac está previendo producir 100 millones de dosis de su vacuna Coronvac en Sao Paulo, y ya se ha comenzado a producir la vacuna Sputnik V en el país, mientras que en marzo autoridades mexicanas dieron salida a los primeros lotes de la vacuna china CanSino envasada en México.

Los Estados Unidos consideran que Rusia y China representan una amenaza a su supremacía global. Lo novedoso ahora es que esta amenaza llega al hemisferio occidental y, al igual que en otras latitudes, comienza a ocupar los espacios que Washington ha desatendido.

La presidencia de Joe Biden probablemente traerá a mediano plazo un nuevo discurso para América Latina y el Caribe diferente al que tenían Donald Trump y sus funcionarios republicanos. Los funcionarios estadounidenses de alto rango que visitan la región manifiestan abiertamente su preocupación por la presencia rusa y china en un tono que recuerda la llamada Guerra Fría. La pandemia agregó una nueva preocupación, que ahora definen como “diplomacia sanitaria”, impulsada por Rusia, China y Cuba. Esto se desprende del informe presentado por Craig Faller, jefe del Comando Sur, ante el Senado. Faller plantea, algo tardíamente, que, por cuestiones humanitarias y estratégicas, EE.UU. tiene que asumir el liderazgo para vacunar a las Américas, porque Rusia, China y Cuba buscan desplazar la influencia de Washington enviando vacunas y material sanitario. El lunes 17 de mayo de 2021 la administración Biden anunció una masiva donación de sueros anti-COVID para diferentes países, incluyendo algunos de América Latina, para impedir el avance de la “diplomacia de las vacunas” de China y, eventualmente, la ruptura de relaciones de países como Honduras y Paraguay con Taiwán, bajo la presión de Beijing (*El Litoral* 2021).

De hecho, para mayo de 2021, las vacunas chinas dominan las campañas de vacunación en América Latina, en tanto la República Popular de China ha despachado más de la mitad de 143.5 millones de dosis de vacunas que recibieron las 10 naciones más grandes de la región, mientras que las farmacéuticas occidentales AstraZeneca y Pfizer juntas entregaron 59 millones (Stott y Harris 2021). Rusia —que desde agosto de 2020 fue pionera en este proceso en la región— ha enviado 8,7 millones, principalmente a la Argentina, aunque para mayo de 2021 ya tenía problemas de producción como para seguir incrementando ese número de envíos (Associated Press 2021).

La batalla geopolítica de las vacunas y de otros recursos médicos en América Latina parece que sigue siendo ganada por las potencias euroasiáticas. La excepción es la India, que atraviesa por una profunda crisis sanitaria que reduce su capacidad de proveer vacunas globalmente. Antes de la crisis se consideraba el segundo productor mundial de vacunas, pero ahora se ve obligada a solicitar ayuda y vacunas de otros países y a perder influencia en países asiáticos que actualmente son asistidos por China.

Pero las desigualdades persisten —tanto al interior de las sociedades latinoamericanas como en el marco del sistema internacional—, mientras que, parafraseando a Clausewitz, la salud pública global pareciera pasar a ser la continuación de la política por otros medios. Más allá de las desigualdades, sin embargo, la guerra de las vacunas es un ejemplo de cómo algunos estados pueden tener un comportamiento “poco saludable” cuando tienden a privilegiar sus propios intereses y cómo el sistema internacional —plagado de desigualdades y asimetrías— ha sido poco eficaz en responder colectivamente al desafío de la pandemia.

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Deconstructing the Belt and Road Initiative: China's Use of Connectivity to Advance Its Strategic Economic Position in Latin America

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The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) of the People's Republic of China (PRC), officially announced by the Xi Jinping administration in 2013, has been a key part of the PRC's narrative regarding the structure of its global engagement and philosophy behind it. Since the government of Juan Carlos Varela in Panama joined the BRI in 2018, 19 Latin American and Caribbean countries have associated themselves with the initiative. The Peronist government of Alberto and Cristina Fernández in Argentina will likely become the 20th during an expected state visit to the PRC in mid-2021 (Ellis 2021).

Despite numerous individual Chinese projects, loans, and investments linked to the BRI and the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the BRI is not, in the common sense, a binding agreement, concrete program, or organization. Rather, it is a concept through which the PRC advances a narrative linking its expanding engagement with the world with a particular representation of its history that makes its currently growing wealth and power seem benevolent, as well as potentially beneficial, to those with whom it engages. BRI arguably leverages amorphous, often unreconcilable expectations of the political leaders and businesspeople with whom China engages to secure their participation, or at least acquiescence, while providing a unifying concept for explaining and organizing (more than directing), a broad array of Chinese global economic activities.

Beyond the BRI discourse, the PRC's pronouncements, its 14th and prior five-year plans, and policy documents such as Made in China 2025

demonstrate its intention in Latin America and elsewhere to secure access to commodities and foodstuffs, markets for its goods and services, and strategic technologies. BRI, and the investments, loans, and deals the PRC has made in its name, highlight that whatever the contradictions in or lack of specificity of the concept, China's economically focused strategy is strongly influenced by its perceived interdependence between building and controlling infrastructure, achieving reliable access to needed factor inputs and markets, and ultimately realizing for itself the greatest portion of value added for the associated transactions.

China's Strategic Focus on Connectivity

As illustrated by increasing Chinese references to the "Digital Silk Road" (Kurlantzik 2020), the reach of BRI in the Chinese conceptualization increasingly goes beyond building highways and railroads or operating ports. Underlying the BRI discourse, there is arguably an evolving orientation by the Chinese government and Chinese companies to strengthen their strategic position across multiple domains of infrastructure underlying the economic functionality of Latin America and the Caribbean. Doing so affords the PRC expanded possibilities to use the leverage arising from the combination of such positions to advance its interest in other sectors of strategic value. China's evolving integrated focus on "connectivity" in Latin America can be seen in five domains: land transport, ports and riverine operations, electricity, telecommunications, and e-commerce and finance.

Land transportation

As in Africa and elsewhere, PRC-based firms have won a significant number of road, bridge, and railroad contracts in the region, particularly among leftist populist governments and smaller Caribbean states. Chinese firms were awarded a quarter of highway contracts in Bolivia during the Evo Morales presidency (*Los Tiempos* 2015). In Argentina, with the return of the Peronist government of Alberto and Christina Fernández, China Harbour was awarded \$4.7 billion in additional work to complement that previously done to expand and modernize the Belgrano Cargas rail system.

Chinese firms such as Sinohydro have also won significant work in small Caribbean states such as Jamaica, where they received almost \$1 billion in projects under the *Jamaica* Development Infrastructure Programme and Major Infrastructure Development Programme funds. More recently, Chinese companies have begun to win project bids in more strongly institutionalized states such as Colombia and Chile through public-private partnerships. In Colombia, Sinohydro won a fourth-generation highway project to improve the road from Medellín to the Gulf of Urabá. More recently a consortium of China Harbour and Xi'an Metro won a \$4.5 billion contract for the Bogota Metro. In Chile, China Railway Road Corporation won a contract to improve a section of Highway 5 from Chillán to Talca. In April 2020, China Harbour's parent company, China Communications Construction Company (CCCC) was part of the consortium receiving a \$626 million contract for phase one of the construction of the Maya train project in southern Mexico.

The PRC's ability to win public-private partnerships will likely be further expanded through CCCC's acquisition of a 30 percent stake in the Portuguese firm Mota-Engil, which has significant experience in public-private projects in Latin America and the Caribbean. The move from building land transport infrastructure to operating them for revenue, particularly with public-private partnership projects, creates longer relationships with more opportunities for both influence and conflict than simply building the infrastructure.

Port operations

In the port sector, Hutchison Port Holdings has six operations in Mexico, three in Panama, and three in Freeport, Bahamas, in close proximity to the United States, as well as a small operation in Buenos Aires, Argentina. China Minmetals, in conjunction with other PRC-based firms, has recently won a contract to build a \$3 billion 15-dock minerals port in Chancay, Peru. Similarly, China Harbour received a \$1 billion contract to expand the Ecuadorian port of Posorja from port operator DP World. Following the Odebrecht scandal in Brazil, PRC-based companies have bought into four port projects in that country, including involvement in a megaport focused on the soy industry in São Luis. China Merchants Port Holdings (CM Port) recently consolidated control over the Port of Kingston. In May 2021, a Chinese consortium made public a proposed \$23 billion project (Arroyo y Budasoff 2021) built around the port of La Union, El Salvador.

Riverine operations

Although the matter has received only limited attention in the United States, PRC-based companies are expanding into riverine infrastructure in the region. The most significant such project is for the deepening and operation of a channel at the southern outlet of the strategic Paraguay-Parana River corridor. The project is expected to go to CCCC's Shanghai Dredging, displacing the Belgian firm Jan De Nul. The river corridor is key for the agricultural exports of five South American countries: Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Bolivia (*Mercopress* 2020).

Similarly in Peru, Sinohydro is working on a project to dredge and operate part of the Amazon River near Iquitos enabling transits by larger ships, although progress has been temporarily impeded by resistance by local communities that would be affected by the project.

Electricity generation, transmission, and distribution

Chinese firms have made significant advances, through a combination of acquisitions and successful project bids, in electricity generation, transmission, and distribution in the region,

directly touching Latin American homes and businesses. PRC-based firms have been involved in 15 hydroelectric projects, including 6 in Ecuador, 3 in Bolivia, the Chaglla and San Gaban III facilities in Peru, 2 in Honduras (which does not even recognize the PRC), and 2 in Argentina.

PRC-based firms have partnered with Europeans and others in supplying wind turbines, generators, and other technology and construction support for wind energy projects across the region. They also play a key role in multiple solar projects including Cauchari, the largest in the region, and a recently announced 1.1 gigawatt solar megaproject in Açú, Brazil.

In the nuclear sector, the Chinese are building the Hualong-1 reactor in Argentina's Atucha complex and seek to build a new reactor in the Angra complex in Brazil (Dalton 2020).

With respect to transmission, Chinese firms, including State Grid, China Three Gorges, and State Power Investment Corporation, have invested tens of billions of dollars in Brazil over the last decade. Major projects include State Grid's construction of a 2,539-kilometer long line from the Belo Monte Dam to the south of the country, using high-voltage, long-distance transmission technologies developed in the PRC. Indeed, PRC-based companies now operate an estimated 13 percent of Brazil's long-distance power lines.

In Peru, Yangtze power, through its \$3.6 billion purchase of Luz del Sur from Sempra Energy, now controls half of the electricity in the greater Lima area. Following Chinese acquisitions of Transelec, Atiaia, Pacific Hydro, Chilquinta, and most recently, CGE, PRC-based companies similarly control 57 percent of energy distribution in Chile (*Infobae* 2021).

Telecommunications and surveillance architectures

In telecommunications, Huawei, and to a lesser extent ZTE, increasingly provide components and services to many commercial and government operators across Latin America. Huawei is particularly well positioned to participate in 5G

through its equipment and services, as Latin American countries such as Colombia, Peru, Chile, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and even El Salvador roll out the 5G networks. Beyond wireless networks, Chinese companies have built important parts of the region's fiber-optic transmission infrastructure, including data cables from Brazil to Cameroon, from Venezuela to Cuba and Jamaica, across the Guyanas from offshore, and connecting Chile to its southernmost extremes.

With respect to surveillance architectures, Huawei, together with Chinese equipment suppliers such as Hikvision, play a key role in multiple national projects including ECU-911 in Ecuador, BOL-110 in Bolivia, plus systems in Colon, Panama; Jujuy, Argentina; and for the control of Uruguay's border.

PRC leverage through its telecommunications and other digital activities includes its potential access to the data of Latin American government personnel, as well as companies operating in countries with Chinese equipment in core parts of their networks. PRC-based companies are obliged, under China's 2017 national security law, to turn over their client's data when the government so asks (Reuters 2017). The PRC has a recognized record of using the state's capabilities to acquire technology and data from Western entities to support its commercial advance (Wray 2021).

E-commerce and finance

The Chinese company Alibaba is actively working to expand in the region, as is the Chinese rideshare company Didi Chuxing, whose app collects data on the movements of its clients and their credit cards. Didi's expanding presence in the region includes operations in Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, and the Dominican Republic.

The PRC rollout of its digital currency later in 2021 could further bolster its reach in e-commerce, as well as giving the Chinese state data access in the financial transactions of those who use it.

Implications

While Chinese companies do not work together harmoniously all of the time, they often use the position of their co-nationals in complementary sectors to support their advance against non-Chinese ones. Chinese state-owned enterprises often give preferential access to Chinese suppliers, financial partners, and other partners in projects because of preexisting relationships, convenience in project execution, or other motives.

The principal adverse effect for Latin America from China's growing position in the region's connectivity as the latter integrates itself into BRI, is not that the PRC will overtly threaten to shut down economies of governments that do not comply with its wishes. Rather, it is the likelihood that China and its companies will have increasing options to leverage their positions to win contracts, gain market position, and capture value added in other sectors.

China's influence is already increasingly at the heart of Latin America's economic connectivity. Its growing influence, often with a friendly face, will make it increasingly difficult for scholars and businesspeople with interests tied to China to speak out. It will become increasingly complicated for regulators and government leaders to block Chinese investments and proposals on antitrust grounds. Such paralysis before China's advance will reinforce the strengthening cycle of PRC influence, market position and benefit, at the expense of the realization of value added by the country's own businesses and people.

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Can Escazú Turn Mining Green in the Lithium Triangle? Lofty Promises Meet a Thirsty Industry in the Desert

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As it emerges from its COVID-19 recession, China has already seen an early resurgence in key industrial sectors. This is particularly true for industries linked to renewable energy generation, driven by President Xi's quest for carbon neutrality. Chinese demand for lithium from Latin America is picking up, built on a foundation of Chinese investment in the sector in Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile.

Chinese investment in South American mining—and related socio-environmental concerns—are nothing new. China now has decades of experience in the sector, most notably in Peru. However, lithium mining is particularly difficult to oversee environmentally, as the extraction process involves drastic groundwater depletion, laying the literal groundwork for environmental conflicts with local stakeholders over this vital resource in one of the world's most water-scarce areas.

Moreover, Latin American countries as well as China have made ambitious new commitments to environmental performance, commitments that require greater transparency and deeper involvement by affected communities. Living up to these new commitments in a sector fraught with environmental conflicts will be crucial to determining whether this promised boom will benefit Latin American nations and communities as well as Chinese investors. It is vital for all of these parties to learn and apply the lessons from past Chinese mining booms in the region—particularly China's history of copper mining in Peru—to ensure socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable development in this crucial sector.

China's Entrance into the Lithium Triangle

Chinese demand drove the LAC commodity boom of the 2000s (Ray et al. 2015; Jenkins, Dussel Peters and Mesquita Moreira 2008). Now, China is at the forefront of driving new raw materials development, this time for renewable energy transitions (Wells 2020). Renewable energy goals have driven booming Chinese demand for lithium, crucial for energy storage for intermittent energy generation like solar and wind power. In South America, that demand has brought new Chinese investors to the “lithium triangle”—the largest lithium deposit in the world, overlapping the boundaries of Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile. While COVID-19 slowed output in lithium triangle countries (LTCs), the sector is expected to rebound in 2021 as China's growing demand returns to its pre-pandemic pace (Tang, Ong, and Tan 2021).

Tempering growth expectations are environmental concerns, particularly regarding water use. The evaporative process of extracting lithium from the brine waters under the LTCs' *salares* requires pumping and evaporating groundwater: as much as two million liters per ton of lithium produced. This water-intensive process—labeled “water mining” due to the much greater amount of water than lithium extracted—creates a serious threat for local livelihoods and conservation in one of the world's most water-scarce areas (Gajardo and Redón 2019). So it is no surprise that concerns about water use have followed Chinese investors in all three LTCs (Vásquez 2020).

Chinese investors entered the Chilean market in 2018, when Tianqi Lithium Corp purchased a 24 percent stake in the Chilean mining firm Sociedad Química y Minera (SQM) (De La Jara 2018). In buying into SQM, Tianqi has inherited significant environmental challenges. Since 2016, SQM has been in dispute with the Superintendence of the Environment and local communities over water use (Guzmán 2020; Jerez, Garcés, and Torres 2021).

In 2019, Bolivia secured a deal with Chinese investor Xinjiang TBEA Group Co Ltd to develop Bolivia's lithium and meet two important conditions for Bolivia's long-term economic goals: forming a joint venture with majority Bolivian ownership through state-owned Yacimientos de Litio Boliviano (YLB) and committing to develop a local lithium processing plant (Jemio 2020). These conditions allowed this deal to survive when a similar German investment deal was canceled amid concerns over benefits for the local economy.¹ However, civil society groups, including peasant and worker organizations, are less optimistic, demanding publication of the project's environmental impact, which may affect local livelihoods through competition for clean water (Jemio 2020).

The Argentine Cauchari-Olaroz project—operated by Minera Exar, which is jointly owned by Canadian Lithium Americas, Chinese Ganfeng Lithium, and Argentine SOE Jujuy Energía y Minería Sociedad del Estado (JEMSE)—is still under construction, delayed in mid-2020 due to COVID-19 but already restarted and expected to open in 2022.² As required, Minera Exar conducted community assemblies to communicate expected environmental and social aspects of the projects, but interviews with community members has shown that this process failed to address expected water use, a primary concern of local stakeholders (Marchegiani, Morgera, and Parks 2020)

New Framework for a New Boom

The new wave of Chinese investments confronts a changing governance landscape, with local and international stakeholders demanding higher levels of transparency and accountability, particularly due to overlapping concerns about environmental protections and the rights of indigenous peoples. Two recent policy achievements have responded to these issues and promote more inclusive environmental policymaking: China's acceptance in 2019 of human rights recommendations after its third Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and the entry into force of the Escazú Agreement on April 22, 2021. These agreements will expand stakeholders' expectations of inclusion in future project decisions, and raise expectations for social and environmental performance.

During China's third UPR, Latin American countries and civil society organizations voiced concern regarding China's treatment of indigenous peoples' rights and environmental protections (UNGA HRC 2018c). The UPR summary cited specific violations of legal obligations and human rights standards for protection of indigenous peoples by Chinese mining companies in Ecuador and Bolivia (paragraphs 15-16). The UN Human Rights Council's final recommendations for China included: ensuring development projects meet international standards, establishing a legal framework to protect human rights abroad, completing due diligence for "companies operating in high-risk or conflict areas," and developing an assessment framework for human rights and environmental impacts of Chinese companies operating abroad (UNGA HRC 2018b). In March 2019, China accepted each of these recommendations and reported that the first and last of these were already being implemented (Koop and Soutar 2019; UNGA HRC 2018a).

In April 2021, the Escazú Agreement entered into force with ratifications from 12 states, including Argentina and Bolivia. Peru remains

¹ "Bolivia Scraps Joint Lithium Project with German Company," Deutsche Welle, November 4, 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/bolivia-scraps-joint-lithium-project-with-german-company/a-51100873>.

² "Cauchari-Olaroz," Lithium Americas, <https://www.lithiumamericas.com/cauchari-olaroz/>.

a signatory, and Chile has yet to sign.³ This innovative agreement establishes access rights to environmental information and environmental justice and requires broad and inclusive public participation in decision-making processes. The ratifying states have committed to heightened transparency and accountability standards, and earlier, more robust public consultation with specific provisions for vulnerable populations, including indigenous peoples. This new agreement will compel Chinese firms to greatly expand their decision-making process beyond prior consultation, incorporating public input from much earlier stages.

These new commitments pose challenges for young institutions tasked with their implementation. Argentina's Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible was created in 2015, Bolivia's Ministerio de Ambiente y Agua in 2009, and Chile's Ministerio del Medio Ambiente in 2010. In addition, effective management will require collaborating with ministries of energy, mining, social development, and culture, as well as local governments. This implies a steep learning curve for managing complex projects with Chinese investors unfamiliar with the local context and an increasing number of diverse stakeholders. As relative newcomers to LTCs, Chinese investors would be wise to incorporate lessons from the much longer history of Chinese mining in neighboring Peru.

Past Lessons from Chinese Mining in Peru

Peru has the longest history in the region hosting Chinese mining investors. In 1992, Chinese state-owned conglomerate Shougang purchased Hierro Peru, the nation's largest iron producer, paving the way for a second wave of Chinese investment after 2007. Chinese investments in the Peruvian copper sector expanded simultaneously with the country's development of social and environmental safeguards and conflict management institutions.

Three years before Shougang arrived, Peru signed the 1989 Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization, asserting the rights of local indigenous communities to "prior consultation" in new projects affecting the ecosystems they rely on. The next year, Peru mandated environmental impact assessments (EIA) (De Echave et al. 2009). But these measures alone were not enough to prevent mining-related conflicts.

In the early 2000s, as a response to the social movements against the Yanacocha gold mine, the Ministry of Energy and Mining (MINEM) mandated that information workshops be held in the areas of extraction during the EIA process (Arce 2014). Since then, it has become the norm that "social license" should be acquired before the operation (Bebbington et al. 2018). In 2011, Peru passed its prior consultation law (Law 29785; Supreme Decree 001-2012-MC, article 23) and consolidated the norm of popular consultation and participation (Paredes 2015).

In this context, the second wave of Chinese mining investors entered the country, starting with Zijin's purchase of Rio Blanco and Chinalco's purchase of Toromocho in 2007, and climaxing with a USD 7005 million purchase by a Chinese consortium led by MMG of the Las Bambas project in 2014. However, the Rio Blanco project was fiercely rejected by the local agricultural communities (Sanborn and Torres 2013) and stays undeveloped until this day; the Toromocho project has relatively peaceful relations with the locals, but also encountered problems due to community displacement of the town of Morococha; and the Las Bambas mine, among the nation's top producers, faces constant confrontation with local communities because of social and environmental issues (Leyva 2018).

These conflicts are irreducibly complex, but among their causes are two aspects of the still-evolving national regulatory framework. First, prior consultation did not include veto power for local communities but served to explain away criticisms (Jaskoski 2014; Li 2015). Second, EIA evaluation

³ Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Convention), adopted March 4, 2018, entered into force April 22, 2021 (C.N.195.2018 and C.N.196.2018), https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVII-18&chapter=27&clang=_en.

authority was traditionally under the authority of MINEM (which faces considerable conflicts of interest as the body tasked with expanding the country's mining frontier) until it was transferred to the newly formed Ministry of Environment, and even so, loopholes remain in EIA procedures to avoid public transparency and consultation (Leyva 2018).

Recognizing the persistence of these social and environmental conflicts, the Peruvian state has developed rigorous institutions with direct mandates for conflict prevention and mitigation. In 2012, the Prime Minister's Office formed the National Office of Dialogue and Sustainability (which later became the Secretariat for Social Management and Dialogue) under the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (PCM), which provides cross-ministry coordination regarding social conflicts (Dargent et al. 2017). Since 2014, the Ombudsman's Office has monitored and published monthly reports on civil conflicts, and has also established an Office for the Prevention of Civil Unrest and Governance and the Office of Environment, Public Service, and Indigenous People. Facing a new surge of mining conflicts in 2020, the PCM formed a high commission for dialogue and development in the southern mining corridor.⁴ These steps are promising, but much work remains to establish a long-term and institutionalized conflict management mechanism.

Applying Peru's Lessons to China's LTC Lithium Investments

If managed well, Chinese investment may bring a much-needed boost to the LTCs' lithium sector, providing local capital inflows and facilitating sustainable energy transitions worldwide. However, in light of new environmental commitments by both China (through its acceptance of UPR recommendations) and LTC governments (through the Escazú Agreement), environmental performance will be more important now than ever in ensuring benefits for investors, communities,

and LTC nations. A fair and sustainable utilization of this rich natural resource needs participation from all stakeholders: international norm building, civil society participation, central government capacity, and investor cooperation.

LTC governments will need to learn from Peru's example of building institutional capacity in reaction to conflicts, in order to more proactively build mechanisms that will institutionalize transparent, inclusive planning for sustainable investment. For example, the Bolivian case, in which the EIA has not yet been published for the Xinjiang TBEA-YLB collaboration, demonstrates the need to dramatically strengthen transparency efforts by government as well as investors, and to do so much earlier in the project planning process. This case also demonstrates the crucial role for civil society in holding local governments and Chinese investors accountable to their commitments.

For the new boom to yield net benefits, China will also need to implement the promises it made during the UPR process. For example, the Chilean buy-in demonstrates that there is room for improvement on Chinese due diligence regarding Tianqi Lithium Corp's buy-in of SQM despite the latter's ongoing water dispute, as well as Chilean enforcement of its own water use limits.

These improvements are not simply matters of law enforcement but of genuine, inclusive planning and oversight. The Argentine case, in which required community consultations appear to have circumvented one of the most important local issues—water—shows the value of ensuring that the region's heightened commitments have tangible impacts for investors and stakeholders alike.

⁴ "PCM diseña un modelo de gobernanza para el Corredor Vial Sur enfocado en el territorio y de la mano con las comunidades," Gobierno de Perú, Presidencia del Consejo de Ministros, <https://www.gob.pe/institucion/pcm/noticias/76410-pcm-disena-un-modelo-de-gobernanza-para-el-corredor-vial-sur-enfocado-en-el-territorio-y-de-la-mano-con-las-comunidades>.

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Anti-Chinese Legacies in Latin America: The Past, Present, and Future of Transpacific Developments

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On May 17, 2021, Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador issued a public apology for the 1911 massacre of Mexico's Chinese community in Torreón, Coahuila. The massacre was the culmination of growing xenophobic and racist mobilization that resulted in the death of 303 Chinese residents. In commemorating the tragedy, López Obrador pledged, "The Mexican state will not allow, ever again, racism, discrimination, and xenophobia." His apology was received by Chinese ambassador Zhu Qingqiao, who used the occasion to affirm China's shipment of COVID-19 vaccines and medical equipment to Mexico to support pandemic relief. The event brings together both the history of anti-Chinese violence in the Americas and the region's increasing reliance on China for development today.

The Torreón massacre was far from an isolated incident; it represents just one instance of the widespread anti-Chinese violence that was formative of the Americas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹ While private firms and individuals across the region actively recruited Chinese labor to build essential infrastructure or perform agricultural work, local politicians and citizens decried these same Chinese actors as threats to local economies and national identity. Their allegations echoed nineteenth-century "yellow threat" discourses from the United States, which positioned Chinese immigrants as contaminating foreigners who would undermine the region's health and progress, measured not just in economic growth but also racial whitening. The historian Erika Lee (2005,

238) describes these "racialized understandings of the Chinese as economic, social, and cultural threats" as a "hemispheric Orientalism" that has circulated throughout the Americas. Following the United States' 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which imposed a wholesale ban on Chinese immigration, many Latin American nations imposed their own exclusionary, anti-Asian immigration laws that restricted entry, required registration processes, or outright expelled existing communities. López Obrador's apology thus makes visible a history that is often obscured when focusing on nationalist narratives of mestizaje or US imperialism. It draws attention to a fundamental dimension of contemporary politics in the region, and one with hemispheric implications.

López Obrador's gesture is emblematic of a moment of racial reckoning that has forced states and citizens across the Americas to reevaluate historic inequities and violence toward Indigenous, Black, and Asian communities; however, that reckoning is happening amid a new wave of anti-Chinese sentiment. The combination of looming US-China trade wars and pandemic politics has resurrected narratives of Chinese threat that make the anti-Chinese violence enacted in Torreón feel chillingly familiar. As the COVID-19 virus crossed borders, halted mobility, and wreaked havoc on public health systems, local economies, and individual lives, leaders and citizens alike blamed the Chinese government for the pandemic's emergence and marked Asian bodies as carriers of the disease. Racist monikers like the "Chinese flu" directly linked the Chinese state to the virus,

¹ For more on the history of anti-Chinese mobilization in Mexico, see Chang 2017, González 2017, Romero 2011, and Schiavone Camacho 2012. For the history of anti-Chinese sentiment in the Americas and its impact on national identity and immigration policies more generally, see Hu-DeHart 1989, 2010 and Young 2014.

subjecting Asians of all types—often referred to collectively in Latin America as *chinos*—to threat of bodily harm. The current wave of anti-Asian violence unfolding across the Americas reiterates, rather than rejects, the historical racism and xenophobia that López Obrador decried.

Orientalist representations of *los chinos* as foreign threats to the economic, political, and racial integrity of the nation sit in tension with Beijing's growing role as development sponsor and partner in Latin America. In this uneasy balance, how do nineteenth-century racist formulations of China and Chineseness influence this new era of China-Latin American relations? To answer these questions, we need to look beyond Beijing and toward a longer history of transpacific exchanges that have produced multiple Chinas in the region (DeHart 2021). This transpacific framework places before us Cantonese-speaking laborers from the southeast China as well as Mandarin-speaking factory owners from Taiwan; the descendants of nineteenth-century migrants as well as recent arrivals; pro-democracy supporters and Communist Party members, private sector entrepreneurs, state-owned company managers, and unskilled workers. These actors' diverse histories and connections helped to forge national identities and regional development in the past, and they continue to shape local expectations of what Chinese development might mean for the future. Their condensation into a single, essential idea of *los chinos* relies on and reproduces the negative stereotypes of China and Chineseness that have motivated past and present violence across the Americas.

Proliferating Chinas

To illustrate my point, let me turn to the case of Central America where the presence and stakes of multiple Chinas is especially clear. Central America's development experience exemplifies many patterns of nineteenth- and twentieth-century nation-building across the region. There, state officials collaborated with entrepreneurs to recruit migrants from China, the Caribbean, and Europe to construct regional railroads and other vital infrastructure that would serve as foundations for the nation. The Chinese railroad

workers, largely Cantonese-speaking immigrants from Guangdong and Fujian Provinces, were valued for their perceived industriousness but increasingly maligned for their supposed lack of hygiene and association with vices like gambling and opium. As infrastructure projects were completed, many Chinese immigrants set up small-scale commercial enterprises in local settler communities and then larger cities, both reflecting and fueling local economic growth. Nonetheless, their alleged physical and moral degeneracy, coupled with the economic threat posed by their commercial success, marked them as threats to the aspiring white or mestizo modern nations under construction.

The Cold War multiplied forms of Chineseness in the region as Central American governments demonstrated their anticommunist commitments by establishing diplomatic relations with Taiwan. They built on that ideological affiliation to cultivate a strong development partnership inspired by Taiwan's success in agricultural innovation, manufacturing, and export-led growth. Even today, four out of seven Central American nations continue to recognize Taiwan, rather than the People's Republic of China, as their official diplomatic partner. These political relations were augmented in the 1980s by the arrival of private Taiwanese factory owners and entrepreneurs who triangulated production of their US-bound commodities between Taiwan, Mainland China, and Central America, thus instituting new forms of transpacific flows.

More recently, migrants, visitors, and temporary laborers from Mainland China, especially Beijing, have further diversified the Chinese community in Central America. These subjects include representatives of Chinese embassies, state banks, and enterprises, the migrant workers brought over to build Chinese-sponsored infrastructure projects, private tourists, and entrepreneurs. The growing pervasiveness of Chinese state initiatives in the region have, nonetheless, often led these multiply positioned actors to be collectively perceived as synonymous with Chinese state interests. After all, China's state banks have become the largest lenders to Latin America, outspending traditional international financial institutions.

China has become the region's second largest trade partner, designating ten Latin American countries as "strategic partners" and signing free trade agreements with three of them.² Chinese state firms have become a primary source of energy and transport infrastructure initiatives in the region, a situation likely to increase as Latin American nations continue to sign on to Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative. The pandemic context has also made the Chinese state an important supplier of health equipment and vaccines.³ The Chinese state's growing presence as a development partner thus contributes to regional conceptions of Chinese people, commodities, and culture, conflating them with the Chinese state regardless of their origins, citizenship, or ideology.

Grounding Chineseness in Contemporary Development Politics

Take, for example, the case of Costa Rica, which in 2007 became the first Central American nation to change its diplomatic affiliation from Taiwan to Beijing. Following the switch, a flurry of bilateral activity promised the beginning of a fruitful relationship, consummated by the construction of a new stadium, the proposed renovation of an oil refinery, and the signing of a free trade agreement. Building on this momentum, in 2011 San José's mayor launched an initiative to transform a historic section of the downtown into a Chinatown honoring earlier Chinese immigrants' contributions to the Costa Rican nation. In doing so, he was refurbishing that past as the foundation for the city's future, hoping the Chinatown would link San José more directly to China's global status and bring with it new cosmopolitan opportunities (DeHart 2015).

Non-Chinese Costa Ricans that I engaged in my research generally expressed admiration for the local Chinese community and its "hardworking" citizens; furthermore, many appreciated the "efficient" labor provided by the imported Chinese laborers who constructed the national stadium. Nonetheless, they often offered this praise through

narratives that repeated well-worn racist tropes that described Chinese migrant labor as "ants moving back and forth across the structure night and day" or characterized the conditions of Chinese labor camps at construction sites as *muy raros* (very odd). These narratives complemented ongoing jokes about local Chinese restaurants using rats or dogs in their dishes. Upon news of the Chinatown project, protests soon broke out by local students who argued Chinatown doesn't exist but was a "Chinese myth," because the Chinese establishments in the area did not constitute the kind of condensed, iconic ethnic zone found in other global cities. To drive home the point, a group of historical preservationists and neighborhood residents marched to the Legislative Assembly building carrying banners reading, "History yes, Chinatown no!" For them, Chinatown would displace Costa Rican history rather than honor it.

Members of San José's Chinese ethnic community were, themselves, mixed about the project, with some more recent immigrants hopeful about the economic opportunities it might offer their businesses, while more settled Chinese worried about how it might reinscribe them within a "ghetto" that reaffirmed essentialist stereotypes. One Chinese immigrant from the latest wave of arrivals in the 1980s argued that the mayor's proposed "traditional" Chinatown was a patronizing reflection of the past rather than an accurate representation of the growing, global power of China today. Apparently agreeing with this sentiment, when Xi Jinping visited Costa Rica in 2013, he did not make any appearances in the Chinatown district.

The Costa Rican case captures the ambiguities and tensions of engaging multiple Chinas and forms of Chineseness. The Chinatown's referents included Taiwan, Beijing, and a historic Chinese diaspora made up of multiple generations, ethnicities, ideological persuasions, and class positions. The initiative sought to project exotic, millenary Chinese culture, Costa Rican multiculturalism, ethnic consumption possibilities for tourists, and claims

² The Chinese state has designated Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela as "strategic partners." It has established free trade agreements with Chile, Costa Rica, and Peru.

³ For an overview of the scope these contemporary China-Latin America relations, see Dussel Peters 2019; Gallagher and Myers 2021; and Wise 2020. For an analysis of medical diplomacy to the region, see Sanborn 2020.

on a powerful global China. Non-Chinese residents worried that instead, the space would erase local history and lay the groundwork for further “invasion” of Chinese culture and commodities. Whereas for Chinatown promoters, past and future came together to promise opportunity, for detractors this same conflation embodied threats to the local economy and national identity that smacked of Orientalism.

This tension between multiple Chinas is not limited to local urban initiatives but also framed major infrastructure projects and public politics. My ethnographic work in Guatemala and Nicaragua illuminates how decades of collaboration with Taiwan had cultivated a local appreciation not only for Taiwan’s democratic identity but also for its strategy of tailoring development assistance to local conditions, including local communities, and promoting skills transfer. Among Chinese diasporic communities across Central America, it also created the expectation that Chinese embassies play an active role in the local community and advocate on the Chinese community’s behalf (see also Siu 2005). These norms established by Taiwan shaped locals’ perceptions of development initiatives from Beijing, for example, a new stadium or major highway renovation. While these projects were seen as valuable feats of modern engineering and “First World technology,” they were also seen as an ambivalent foundation for local development futures. Indeed, the same kinds of Orientalist stereotypes mobilized by anti-Chinese protestors in the nineteenth century—which defined the Chinese as wily, monopolizing, and essentially untrustworthy—led many Central Americans to imagine these current Chinese development gifts from Beijing as Trojan horses that might come back to haunt them.

Conclusions

The twenty-first-century context has heightened our awareness of the permeability of our borders and the vulnerability of our communities, institutions, and economies to forces beyond our control. It has also forced a reckoning with

the racist foundations of many of those same borders, communities, institutions, and economies. Therefore, while the correlation between China and the COVID-19 virus has been a global phenomenon, in the Americas that association has translated into familiar forms. Brazilian education minister Abraham Weintraub’s tweets ridicule Chinese accents and accuse the Chinese state of plans for world domination. The Mexican politician Carmen Salinas claims that the virus is what happens to “los chinitos por andarse comiendo a los perritos y a los gatitos.” Average citizens carry out violent public assaults on Chinatown residents and Asian Americans across the United States, often invoking insults such as “You are the virus.”⁴ All of these incidents speak to the ongoing legacy of hemispheric Orientalisms and their entanglement with a global China that is perceived to be a unique source of threat and possibility.

Analyzing the multiple forms of China and Chineseness in Central America gives us a unique purchase on contemporary relations in the region. Instead of perceiving them as a new relationship between distant and essentially different actors, we begin to see how a history of transpacific encounters and exchanges have contributed to regional development and national identity. Nineteenth-century Chinese immigrants helped build essential infrastructure and provided the foil against which a white, modern citizenry could be defined. Taiwanese development partnerships reaffirmed the region’s democratic identity and established central ideas about the values and practices that should guide Chinese development collaborations. This history reveals Chineseness to be constitutive of regional development and national identity, rather than foreign to it. It also demonstrates why residents assess the nature and stakes of contemporary Chinese state development partnerships in relationship to long-standing assumptions about who China is and what Chineseness means for Latin American sovereignty, national identity, and development. Therefore, as we confront this newest wave of anti-Chinese sentiment in the Americas, we must appreciate the legacy of anti-Chinese violence that accompanies

⁴ See Biller 2020; *El Universal* 2020; Patrick 2020; and Cai, Burch, and Patel 2021 for more on these instances. See Chan and Montt Strabucchi 2021 for an analysis of dynamics in Chile and their relationship to Orientalist representations.

the promise of new development opportunities through Beijing, as both continue to shape the future prospects and limits of transpacific developments.

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Building Sustainable Food Systems in the Asian Century: A Matter of Tradition

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I couldn't tell if Julio was angry or excited as he boomed from behind the principal's closed door. This was the last school visit in an exhausting series of meetings that 2016 summer day in our quest across Rio de Janeiro to build support for the municipal government's Hortas Cariocas urban farming initiative. When he invited me the day before to visit some of his projects, I had imagined a casual trek through a few of the program's fruit and vegetable gardens. Reality dawned at 8:15 a.m., when we left the municipal secretary of environment to assemble a delegation of school policy advisors at the Ministry of Education. There was nothing casual about the ensuing negotiations, explanations, and attempts to find common ground among environmental protection officers, education officials, and school administrators.

Where would Julio's proposed garden fit within the school grounds? Who would arrange the required teacher training in horticulture? And what incentives would the school be offered for participating in the Hortas Cariocas program? Such contentions generated fiery discussions at each of the seven schools and communities we visited across the city that day. A journalist researching the program told me that, except for my presence, this was a normal day. I had been invited, she revealed, because bringing along a foreign professor would strengthen Julio's argument that organic fruit and vegetable production in and around the world's cities is critical for generating incomes, reviving lost connections to land, and educating publics about food traditions.

Julio's approach aligns with the advice of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization that governments should fund urban/peri-urban agriculture as "a key component of robust and resilient urban food systems" (FAO 2014, i, 84). As

he put it, "Community gardens won't solve global hunger, but they can provide jobs and a real response to a global problem" (interview, November 21, 2015).

The point is salient in Brazil and other countries where industrial soybean plantations, expanding to meet growing demand from China, are encroaching on fresh food farms and forcing an exodus of young people into cities. According to the World Wildlife Fund, "the soybean industry is causing widespread deforestation and displacement of small farmers and indigenous peoples around the globe" (WWF 2021). Between 2000 and 2014, Brazilian land dedicated to intensive cropping doubled to 46 million hectares, and in 2020 soybeans were again the nation's top export, worth \$26 billion (Zalles et al. 2019; UN-Comtrade 2021).

China is the world's largest importer of soybeans, making Brazil the leading exporter of the protein-rich grain and biggest importer of chemical pesticides and fertilizers (Hiratuka 2019). Trade with China may have advanced Brazil's strategy of economic diversification, but as Borges and Talavera (2013, 314) argue, this has incurred "negative social and environmental impacts."

Citing points like these to argue for more diverse and balanced food systems, by 2021 Julio had secured municipal funding for urban farms and associated salaries in 24 communities and 25 schools, producing 80 tons of fruits and vegetables each year. COVID-19 has revealed the importance of this work as food shortages intensify in Rio's most disadvantaged suburbs, generating mainstream press coverage of the largest Hortas Cariocas garden in the suburb of Manguinhos (Barbon and Cheibub 2021).

Two hours into the school meeting the negotiations showed no sign of winding up, so I escaped “to the bathroom.” Exposed light bulbs outside the principal’s office, irresistible to circling moths and other nightlife, dimly lit a noticeboard featuring students’ designs of sustainable cities. Meticulous plans for environmentally friendly apartments and schools decked with solar panels and vegetable gardens offered answers to the question glued above in green cut-out letters: “Quais são as grandes questões para o nosso futuro?” (What are the big questions for our future?) Casting my mind back across the day’s visits to inquisitive classrooms and cautious staff rooms, I recalled the question posed by a teenage student: “Why does Brazil need to produce so many soybeans?” The beginning of Julio’s answer, “It’s a little complicated . . . ,” provoked memories of the year I had spent living with families in Beijing.

Dinnertime in Beijing

As a de facto member of the Wang family in the South Beijing suburb of Pu Huang Yu, I was required to follow a daily routine: walk the dog with the family at 8 a.m., jam into the subway station by 9 a.m., and most importantly be home for dinner by 6:30 p.m. For Mr. Wang dinner time was a ceremonial occasion. Placing the large glass bowl in the center of the living room table, he would announce the dish he had prepared that day for his wife, daughter, and me. We enjoyed lamb, beef, and chicken almost every evening, but pork was his specialty, evident in the flare he added when exclaiming “京都排骨!” (Kyoto pork ribs!) I had first met Mr. Wang while living nearby in 2007, shortly after he moved his family from a corn farm in Hebei Province into the cramped high-rise apartment. Even without the rent I was paying, his job as a clerk in the administration office of his residential complex (*hua qiu*) sustained a diet that a decade before would have been unthinkable.

It is difficult to fully appreciate the deepening socioeconomic importance of pork in China. The OECD (2021) calculates that Chinese pork consumption per capita increased from 23.9 kg in 2000 to 30.3 kg in 2018, stimulated by “higher incomes and a shift—due to urbanisation.” To diversify consumption, the government has

promoted mutton and other sources of protein since 2018, but pork remains the clear favorite. As the New-Type Urbanization Plan increases China’s urban population from 850 million in 2014 to one billion people by 2025, demand for pork is set to grow. To sustain the expanding herds requires soybeans processed into animal feed, forming a global chain that stretches from Mr. Wang’s dinner table to South America’s soybean plantations and Julio’s fruit and vegetable gardens in Rio’s schools and communities.

To Beijing’s Northeast, an hour’s bus ride beyond the last subway station at Fengbo, a progressive community was forging an alternative peri-urban future. Founded in 2012 as an independent community-supported agriculture (CSA) cooperative, Shared Harvest grew over the subsequent five years to support over 40 farmers on 36 hectares of government-awarded land. Leaving behind stagnating villages, its members had avoided the precarity of the city’s construction, factory, and informal sectors. Instead, when I first visited in 2015, they were using their knowledge to produce organic pears, pumpkins, maize, sweet potatoes, okra, mushrooms, poultry, and pork for delivery to over eight hundred Beijing families each week. Shared Harvest’s director, agricultural scientist Dr. Shi Yan, viewed her work as cultural conservation: “By providing these jobs we offer a dignified occupation that leverages the community’s skills and ancient connections to land” (interview, July 31, 2017).

Harnessing a displaced community’s capacities, Shi’s response to urbanization and industrial agriculture is, like Julio’s, embedded in a sense of tradition. This human capital has strengthened her position with the Beijing government, which has provided a methane bio-gasification energy plant to produce power and fertilizer, and an extension of her lease until 2027. Shared Harvest’s success has since inspired the creation of over a thousand community farms across China (Lyu, Yang, and Wang 2020). Many of these are founded by Shi’s former students, and all of them are actively building public and private sector alliances to advance small-scale, nonindustrial approaches to agriculture.

A Comparative View from Australia's Grain Fields

The ripples of Chinese urbanization and the demand for natural resources it is generating extend around the world, interacting with old traditions of land and livelihood. The effects are acute in Australia, which relies on China—its leading trade partner—to purchase around 40 percent of all exports. As in Brazil, a prior colonial regime all but extinguished First Nation or Indigenous connections with land and food to lay the foundations of industrial agriculture and mining. Of these extractive pursuits, the former's social and geographic consequences are more visible, publicly exposing the human and ecological impacts of twenty-first-century globalization.

Writing in Melbourne, where I now live, it is striking that, as in Brazil, peri-urban farms are disappearing as the city expands. Focused on agribusiness export, the state and federal governments appear unconcerned that the wheat, barley, and canola plantations expanding toward the city's north cannot fulfill local demand for fresh food. Rising land taxes leave little hope for vegetable and fruit farmers, whose capacity to supply the city is projected to fall from 41 percent of demand in 2021 to 18 percent by 2050 owing to declining availability of affordable land and the Agriculture Victoria Strategy's focus on exporting to Asia (Carey, Sheridan, and Larsen 2018, 67).

The industrial export model of agriculture that predominates in Australia aligns with Chinese commodity trade and investment, provoking concerns among socially and ecologically conscientious observers. But contentions about the socio-ecological impacts of agribusiness have little traction in mainstream politics and media. By contrast, more alarmist assertions—often resembling those articulated in Brazil—are widely circulated. Reports of an “alarming level of Chinese ownership of Australia” resemble accusations that China is “attempting to buy Brazil” (*Estadão* 2010; Parsons and Stevens 2020). Chinese investment is regularly portrayed in both countries as an attempt to grab land, enable an influx of Chinese workers, and underpin strategic threats to national interests. These concerns are evident in the the annual

Lowy Institute Poll, whose findings between 2014 and 2020 show that, on average, 64 percent of respondents believe the Australian government is “allowing too much investment from China” (LIIP 2020).

Hostility toward China has been deepened by trade tariffs imposed by the latter on Australian barley, beef, and wine in 2020. Emboldened by the anger of farmers, in 2021 the federal government voided the state of Victoria's Belt and Road Initiative agreement with the Chinese government on the basis that it was “not consistent with Australia's foreign policy” (Callanan 2021). While farmers have temporarily offset China's tariffs by diverting 2021 harvests to Saudi Arabia, their long-term strategy remains dependent on Chinese demand. With or without the Belt and Road, the production of grains is therefore the nation's fastest growing export, earning US\$3.5 billion in 2020 and demonstrating that political obstacles rarely impede international trade (UN-Comtrade 2021).

It falls to progressive small businesses and nonprofit organizations to defend the viability of Australia's small farms. Among these organizations, Sustain, CERES, Cultivating Community, the Collingwood Children's Farm, the Open Food Network, 3000Acres, and Plan-It Rural have become pillars of support for Melbourne's food system diversity. A branch of CERES called Fair Food now supplies more than a thousand Melbourne families each week with fresh fruits and vegetables sourced from around one hundred local growers, creating jobs and protecting land from real estate development. These results helped to inspire the suburb of Moreland's US\$25,000 Food System Strategy, the first funded framework in Australia to incentivize productive use of urban arable land. Fair Food's director, Chris Ennis, describes the initiative as “a tool for public education about the social and environmental history of Australia's food system” (interview, September 17, 2018). As Ennis (2012, 6) writes in a CERES newsletter, “Over the past 12,000 years, the age of agriculture, most of us were farmers. In Australia in 1900 one in seven of us were farmers, today only one in 33 grows the food we eat.”

Data from the Australian National Pandemic Food Survey, conducted by the nonprofit organization Sustain, show that personal and community food growing have helped to alleviate the social isolation and financial stress brought by COVID-19. Of 9,140 respondents, more than 80 percent indicated that urban farming made the pandemic less distressing because it “increased food security, heightened wellbeing, and improved social connections” (Phillips et al. 2021, 2). In a nation where one quarter of the population was born overseas, culturally diverse approaches to crop selection and cultivation are contributing to a boom in urban farming (Dun et al. 2018). As in Rio and Beijing, in Melbourne gardeners and small farmers are harnessing food growing skills and traditions to inspire policy innovation and cultural change.

Conclusion: Tradition Matters

The scenarios described above from Brazil, China, and Australia show bottom-up community agency interacting with top-down political structures. Examining them from the ground up reveals that local initiatives can be as transformational as global agribusiness. As Don Nonini (2014, 411) writes, “food provisioning is at the heart of human sociality, and takes specific cultural forms; it is always morally inflected and politically significant; and it is organized at multiple scales.” Such recognition of local agency is easily lost in debates about international agriculture, especially when framed by politically heated accusations that China’s growth is undermining other countries’ national interests.

Rejecting simplistic portrayals of China’s global expansion, Gustavo Oliveira (2021) writes that “the issue is not whether Brazil is economic prey to China, but rather whether Brazilian and Chinese peasants and workers are prey to domestic and transnational corporate elites and the state actors who enable and advance their power and profits.” From this perspective, the actions of the Chinese (or any other) state are not the underlying problem; rather, it is the unjust transformations of land and labor arising from global capitalism.

Adding to Oliveira’s observation, I suggest that the daily endeavors of people like Julio, Shi, and Chris are also transformational. Julio procured municipal subsidies for urban farmers to create 49 Hortas Cariocas fruit and vegetable gardens in some of Rio’s most underserved communities. Shi employed rural migrants from Beijing’s outskirts and negotiated government grants of land and infrastructure for Shared Harvest, inspiring the creation of more than a thousand community farms across China. Chris built CERES Fair Food into a leading Melbourne delivery service by creating retail opportunities for urban and peri-urban farmers, providing proof of concept for Moreland’s Council’s Food System Strategy. In all cases, community agency, premised on traditions of land and livelihood, stimulated structural change.

Traditions of food growing, like all traditions, are inevitably revived, reformulated, and deployed to support the agendas of the day (Ortner 1991). Community farming is therefore susceptible to manipulation, for instance by developers of exclusive eco-apartment blocks and shopping malls featuring gated vegetable gardens and fruit trees. Such ventures appear to be progressive, but they do nothing to educate publics or to diminish reliance on industrial agriculture; on the contrary, they divert attention from unfolding histories of colonial and neocolonial extractivism (Hearn et al. 2020). Julio, Shi, and Chris deployed notions of customary knowledge in a different way: to promote public education and health in partnership with rural migrants and farmers.

As the world’s cities expand, the outward encroachment of new suburbs onto peri-urban farms, compounded by the inward growth of commodity plantations, implies looming challenges for sustainable food production. The cases described above expose these challenges but also demonstrate that communities can push back more effectively when their projects and proposals engage with history and local knowledge. Building sustainable food systems in the Asian century, perhaps more than ever before, is a matter of tradition.

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Walda Barrios-Klee (1951–2021)

por **Marisa G. Ruiz Trejo** y **Ana Lucía Ramazzini**

El día 28 de abril de 2021, los movimientos de mujeres y feministas, investigadoras, docentes y estudiantes de Chiapas, Centroamérica y América Latina, recibimos con mucha tristeza la noticia del lamentable fallecimiento de Walda Barrios-Klee, distinguida profesora de FLACSO-Sede Académica Guatemala e integrante de LASA. Walda fue una de las pioneras en estudios de género y feministas en Chiapas y Centroamérica, así como en el estudio de la situación de mujeres refugiadas, indígenas, campesinas, comunidad LGBT+, entre otras colectividades.

En 1951, Walda nació en la ciudad de Guatemala el 8 de septiembre, fecha que coincide con el Día Internacional de la Ciudadanía de las Mujeres. Fue heredera de una tradición de lucha revolucionaria socialista pero también de los derechos de las mujeres, ya que su madre y su padre estuvieron implicados en distintas luchas políticas.

Su madre, Elena Ruiz Aragón, fue la primera licenciada en Pedagogía y Ciencias de la Educación, graduada en 1950 de la Facultad de Humanidades de la Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala. En 1945, dicha Facultad fue creada en el marco de la Revolución de Octubre, movimiento cívico-militar que derrocó a Jorge Ubico, de influencia fascista. Su madre fue directora del Instituto Normal Central de Señoritas Belén de Guatemala y fundó el Claustro de Docentes y el Consejo de Alumnas bajo la noción de “Comunidad Educativa”, lo que influyó en su amor por la educación y en el reconocimiento de la pluralidad de voces (Herrera Ruiz 2019).

Su padre, Waldemar Barrios Klee, formó parte del gobierno de Jacobo Árbenz, quien fue destituido como presidente por ser considerado una amenaza comunista para Estados Unidos. Walda solía señalar que utilizaba los apellidos Barrios-Klee, reivindicando la memoria de su padre, funcionario

de la Reforma Agraria, y de su tío, Hugo Barrios Klee, asesinado en la década de los setenta, ambos luchadores sociales (“Pronunciamento” 2020).

Por motivos relacionados con el contexto político,

Walda se desplazó a México en dos ocasiones. La primera vez el 9 de septiembre de 1954 como asilada, cuando era apenas una niña. Viajó con un salvoconducto en el mismo avión donde iba expulsado el presidente Árbenz, junto con otros funcionarios del gobierno revolucionario, entre ellos su padre (Galicia 2019; Mosquera 2021).

A finales de la década de los cincuenta regresó a Guatemala. Se formó en colegios privados y laicos. Estudió magisterio y se graduó de maestra de primaria. Ingresó a la Licenciatura en Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales y se tituló de abogada y notaria en 1976. No obstante, ella misma se consideraba más antropóloga que abogada porque como decía, “es lo que he hecho en mi vida”, por lo que se articuló con las redes de antropólogas feministas latinoamericanas. Estudió la maestría en Sociología Rural en la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador. Se graduó en el año 1978 y regresó como docente a la Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, época de represión contra el movimiento estudiantil, popular y campesino.

Su segundo desplazamiento a México fue en los años ochenta, cuando salió exiliada de Guatemala junto a su pareja, Antonio Mosquera, y obtuvo la condición de refugiada debido a la persecución política de aquel momento. En Chiapas, ambos se instalaron en San Cristóbal de las Casas en donde



Walda fue profesora de las carreras de antropología y sociología de la Universidad Autónoma de Chiapas y en donde fue conocida por su papel como mentora, académica e iniciadora de los estudios de género y feministas en Chiapas y Centroamérica (Ruiz-Trejo 2020).

Su trabajo *Sexualidad y religión en los Altos de Chiapas* (1995), en coautoría con Leticia Pons Bonals, es una referencia para la etnografía feminista de la región sobre la situación de las mujeres tzotziles y tzeltales, en la que ambas autoras nos mostraron la importancia de ubicar el sujeto de la etnografía no sólo en las voces de los varones históricamente privilegiadas en los trabajos, sino también en las experiencias e historias de las mujeres.

En la década de los ochenta, Walda se dedicó a investigar en Chiapas. Fue un periodo terrible para Centroamérica debido a las políticas de contrainsurgencia del Estado guatemalteco que produjeron secuestros, desapariciones, asesinatos, masacres y hasta un genocidio en Guatemala, por lo que miles de refugiadas y refugiados, entre ellos estudiantes y profesores como Walda y su esposo, huyeron y se establecieron en Chiapas. Walda estuvo muy pendiente de los campamentos de refugiados y mostró siempre su solidaridad, particularmente con las mujeres indígenas refugiadas.

En Chiapas, Walda es recordada por su labor en la creación del taller “Antzetik” (mujer en tsotsil) que, en 1984, reunió en San Cristóbal de las Casas a mujeres universitarias, urbanas, campesinas y guatemaltecas refugiadas en México (Ruiz-Trejo 2020). Dicho taller surgió como un espacio contra la violencia sexual hacia las mujeres y fue un lugar de encuentro de investigadoras y activistas que discutían y luchaban en los movimientos sociales en contra de la penalización del aborto y hacían trabajo sobre VIH. Walda también fue editora en San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, de una revista feminista llamada con el mismo nombre del taller “Antzetik”.

En el año 2000, volvió a Guatemala. Terminó estudios de doctorado en sociología de la Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca, en su

programa de Guatemala. Entre sus temáticas de investigación de esos años, se encontraban: violencias y juventudes, liderazgos de mujeres indígenas, luchas y situación de las mujeres después de los Acuerdos de Paz, posconflicto e impunidad como causas del feminicidio.

Desde sus investigaciones y luchas diversas, conoció cómo la violencia sexual y la violación fueron utilizadas como arma de guerra contra mujeres ixiles y q’eqchi’ durante el conflicto interno armado. Walda acompañó todo el proceso de denuncia judicial pero también de sanación de las víctimas y sobrevivientes del conflicto armado interno en Guatemala.

Desde el 2009 fue Coordinadora del Programa de Estudios de Género y Feminismos de FLACSO. En el año 2019 fue reconocida como Profesora Emérita de la Institución. Además, fue docente de la Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala y de la Universidad Del Valle. Pionera en los estudios de género y feministas en la educación superior.

En años recientes sostuvo una línea de investigación en el Programa de Estudios de Género y Feminismos de FLACSO acerca de sexualidades y derechos sexuales y reproductivos. Coordinó tres investigaciones en las que la situación de las niñas y adolescentes es central: *¡Me cambió la vida! Uniones, embarazos y vulneración de derechos en adolescentes* (2015); *¿Cuál es el problema? Masculinidades hegemónicas y su influencia en uniones y embarazos en mujeres, adolescentes y jóvenes* (2017); *Vidas silenciadas: Una tragedia de la que no se habla. Vinculación entre suicidio y embarazo en mujeres adolescentes* (2019); así como dos investigaciones sobre violencia contra personas LGBTQ+: *Violencia ejercida contra las personas LGBTI. El caso de ciudad de Guatemala* (2018); *Violencia en espacios laborales hacia lesbianas, gais y personas trans en la ciudad de Guatemala* (2019). Además, otra publicación en prensa titulada *Entramado de poderes: El modus operandi de los grupos antiderechos sexuales y reproductivos en Guatemala* (2020).

Walda Barrios-Klee creía profundamente que las investigaciones debían incidir en las políticas públicas mostrando evidencia científica para la toma de decisiones vinculadas al deber del Estado de garantizar vidas libres de violencias para las mujeres y población LGBTQ+.

Formó parte de varias colectivas de investigación e incidencia: el grupo de trabajo “Cuerpos, territorios y feminismos”, el seminario de investigación “Género y desigualdades” de CLACSO y el Grupo Intersectorial por la defensa de los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos. La Federación Democrática Internacional de Mujeres (FDIM) le otorgó la Medalla Vilma Espín por la defensa de los derechos de las mujeres. Presidió la Unión Nacional de Mujeres de Guatemala (UNAMG). Fue representante académica en el Grupo Asesor de la Sociedad Civil de OnuMujeres e impulsó la creación de la Asociación de Mujeres para Estudios Feministas (AMEF) “Las Caracolas”, desde donde cofundó el programa radial “Caracoleando desde la Academia”, del cual fue productora y locutora.

Walda fue una mujer que contempló la reforma del estado a través de programas y de su propia candidatura. En el 2003, hizo una campaña de credencialización de mujeres para que votaran por otras mujeres en cargos públicos. En 2007, fue la primera candidata mujer a la vicepresidencia de Guatemala y, en 2016, candidata a diputada. En ambos casos con programas y proyectos desde la perspectiva de género y feminista.

Según nos narró, la vida de Aleksandra Kollontaï, pensadora marxista rusa, en su libro *La autobiografía de una mujer sexualmente emancipada* ([1926] 2015), la animó a incluir en sus investigaciones la situación, la geografía, las perspectivas y las violencias contra las mujeres. Walda conoció este libro en un Congreso de Sociología de ALAS en Panamá en 1979, fue emblemático y leerlo le hizo pensar en el feminismo como una opción de vida.

Walda fue una eterna aprendiente, siempre con agenda y cuaderno de notas a la mano, donde escribía las ideas centrales de cualquier reunión,

pero también anotaciones al margen, sobre lo que iba pensando y sintiendo, como práctica antropológica feminista y construcción de saberes.

Walda Barrios-Klee será recordada por sus contribuciones al estudio de la situación de las mujeres y aportes a las ciencias sociales y a las humanidades en Chiapas, Centroamérica y en toda América Latina, pero también como una gran maestra y referente de las luchas sociales y feministas. Sus estudiantes de antropología y sociología son un legado vivo, memoria presente y lucha que trascenderá generaciones enteras en toda la región latinoamericana y caribeña.

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Enrique de la Garza Toledo (1947–2021)

por **Cecilia Senén González** y **Antonio Aravena Carrasco** | Grupo de Trabajo de CLACSO “Trabajo, modelos productivos y actores sociales”

El Grupo de Trabajo (GT) del Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO) “Trabajo, Modelos Productivos y Actores Sociales” comunica y lamenta el triste fallecimiento en la ciudad de México de nuestro colega y amigo Enrique de la Garza Toledo (1947–2021). Enrique fue fundador de nuestro grupo, llamado inicialmente “Sujetos y organizaciones laborales”. Desde sus primeros años, junto a diferentes investigadores e investigadoras, promovió, desarrolló y acompañó proyectos y debates que contribuyeron decisivamente a expandir los horizontes de los estudios del trabajo en América Latina. En este período se construyeron vínculos académicos, intelectuales y creció también el respeto y la amistad. Su pérdida impacta fuertemente a nuestro GT y, sin duda, al mundo de las ciencias sociales y del trabajo.

Enrique de la Garza Toledo fue uno de los pensadores más importantes de las ciencias sociales latinoamericanas. Su legado abarca áreas muy diversas: investigación, formación, publicación, gestión, extensión, y otras. Colocó bases teóricas y metodológicas sustanciales para el progreso de los estudios del trabajo, representando actualmente una referencia imprescindible en las discusiones sobre las transformaciones del trabajo, las organizaciones y los sujetos laborales. Cabe destacar también las múltiples visitas que hizo por países de la región y otras partes del mundo, enseñando y aprendiendo de las realidades políticas, sociales y laborales ahí existentes, así como de los procesos de investigación que se efectuaban en cada institución, centro, programa o núcleo que tuvo la oportunidad de conocer.

La vida académica de Enrique de la Garza Toledo estuvo caracterizada por una gran productividad, expresada en sus más de cuarenta libros, más de cien artículos científicos, además de capítulos y ponencias presentadas en eventos académicos y no académicos. El *Tratado latinoamericano de sociología del trabajo* que coordinó (Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000) marcó el campo disciplinar en esta región del mundo. Y, por cierto, gran parte de su obra es referencia frecuente para diferentes generaciones de investigadores e investigadoras.

Desde nuestro grupo de trabajo pudimos observar cómo la figura e influencia de Enrique creció progresivamente. Y cómo valoró también los espacios propiciados por sus colegas en el grupo en sus propias reflexiones. En el sitio web de CLACSO es posible reconocer parte de su trayectoria en libros como: *Los retos teóricos de los estudios del trabajo hacia el siglo XXI* (1999), *Reestructuración productiva, mercado de trabajo y sindicatos en América Latina* (2000), *El futuro del trabajo, El trabajo del futuro* (2001), *Sindicatos y nuevos movimientos sociales en América Latina* (2005), *Trabajo y modelos productivos en América Latina* (2011), *Trabajo y crisis de los modelos productivos en América Latina* (2020), *Crítica de la razón neocolonial* (2021), etc. Estos y otros títulos se pueden consultar en el sitio web de CLACSO.

Enrique de la Garza Toledo siempre procuró democratizar el acceso a la información y producción del conocimiento, tendiendo puentes con el mundo de los estudiantes y trabajadores/as. Por esta razón, desde hace varios años gran parte de sus trabajos son de libre acceso (<http://sgpwe.izt.uam.mx/pages/egt/>). Aquí es posible

* Cecilia Senén González y Antonio Aravena Carrasco, Coordinadores del Grupo de Trabajo, son integrantes de la Labor Studies Section de la Latin American Studies Association.

encontrar estudios tan interesantes como:
Teorías sociales y estudios del trabajo: Nuevos enfoques (2006), *Tratado latinoamericano de sociología* (2006), *Hacia un concepto ampliado de trabajo: Del trabajo clásico al no clásico* (2010), *Trabajo no clásico, organización y acción colectiva* (2011), *Tratado de metodología de las ciencias sociales: Perspectivas actuales* (2012), *Los estudios laborales en América Latina* (2016), *Configuraciones productivas y relaciones laborales en empresas multinacionales en América Latina* (2017), *La metodología configuracionista para la investigación* (2018).

Como Grupo de Trabajo estamos profundamente afectados y amargados por tan lamentable e inesperada pérdida. A la vez, reconocemos su legado y enseñanza, su compromiso intelectual y político. Su recuerdo nos obliga a redoblar esfuerzos para continuar desarrollando la investigación laboral, siempre atentos a la actualización de nuestras discusiones y a la formulación de propuestas que enfrenten el pensamiento único y las lecturas acríticas. Los interesados en los estudios del trabajo en general tienen en la obra de Enrique de la Garza Toledo un faro intelectual que nunca se apagará, una inagotable fuente de inspiración.

Nuestro grupo de trabajo quiere rendir un sincero homenaje a Enrique de la Garza Toledo y abrazar a Marcela Hernández Romo, su compañera de vida, su compañera intelectual, su compañera en múltiples batallas. Extendemos este sentimiento de pesar a sus familiares, amigos y amigas.

Hasta siempre querido Enrique.

Descansa en paz. //

William P. Glade (1929–2021)

by **Paloma Diaz** | LLILAS Benson, University of Texas, Austin

and **Raul Madrid** | Dept. of Government, University of Texas, Austin

William P. Glade, a former president of the Latin American Studies Association (1979–1980), passed away on May 2, 2021. An economist by training, Bill had a long and illustrious career, serving as a professor at various universities and as a consultant, administrator, and scholar at the Ford Foundation, the United States Information Agency, and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Between 1970 and 2007, he taught at the University of Texas at Austin, from which he had received his PhD in 1955. He served as Director of the Institute of Latin American Studies at UT-Austin from 1971 to 1986.

Bill Glade was a perfect gentleman, kind and courteous to all. Professor Henry Dietz, his colleague at UT-Austin, described him as “a prince among men.” Dr. Glade was always willing to help out those who needed it whether they were students, junior faculty, or international colleagues. Ricardo Lagos, the former president of Chile, once recounted how Bill found him a visiting position when he needed to leave Chile during the dictatorship. Others remembered special efforts Bill made to include them when they first arrived at UT-Austin.

Bill’s research focused on Latin America, an interest he developed at a young age. He published more than a dozen books and countless articles and chapters on the region’s economies and the challenges they faced. He was also widely sought after as a lecturer and consultant. His knowledge of Latin America was encyclopedic and he could hold forth on a wide range of topics ranging from privatization to Mexican cuisine. Yet he was always eager to learn more.

Bill loved teaching and his students loved him. He stayed in close contact with many of them and they were a source of great pride to him. He, in turn, inspired many of them. As Dr. Elsie Echeverri-Carroll, a former student who is now a Senior Research Scientist at UT-Austin, put it: “Bill is gone, but he was a role model we will always try to emulate. His legacy will endure forever.” //

Reid R. Reading (1937–2021)

by **Marysa Navarro**, LASA Past President

and **Milagros Pereyra**, LASA Executive Director

It is with deep sorrow that we note the passing of Reid Reading, former Executive Director of the Latin American Studies Association. He was a LASA lifetime member, a strong supporter of LASA's mission, and an advocate for the less privileged around the world and especially in Latin America.

Reid's service as Executive Director of LASA from 1986 to 2003 was the culmination of a career as an academic and renowned academic administrator. After earning a PhD in political science from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, he taught a variety of courses at the University of Pittsburgh, while in charge of LASA.

Reid's vision as Executive Director reflected his unwavering support of the social sciences and humanities as well as his profound admiration, appreciation, and affection for the Latin American region and for LASA. Reid's guidance was instrumental in reshaping the direction of LASA and in obtaining the FORD Foundation endowment, which has helped the association over the years to provide travel grants to scholars and students in Latin America, as well as the FORD grant for women researchers.

All of us at LASA join in sorrow, but with gratitude for all of Reid's efforts on behalf of the organization. Our deepest condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues all over the world. //

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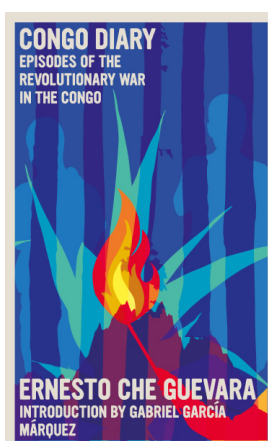
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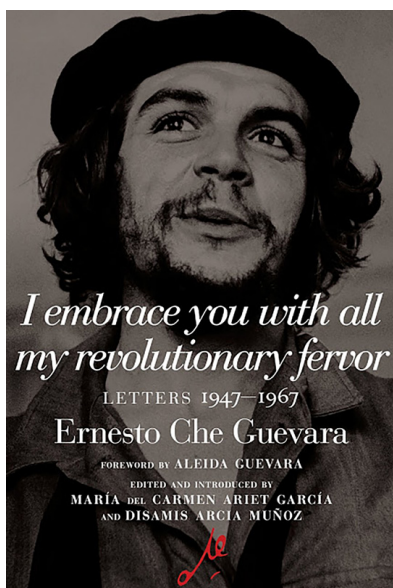
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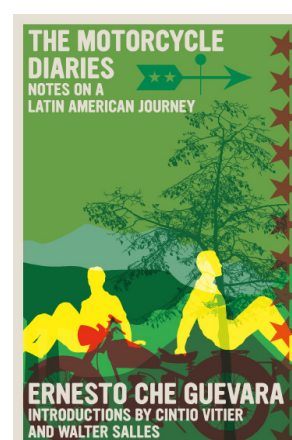
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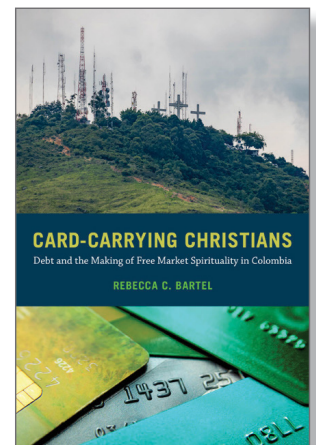
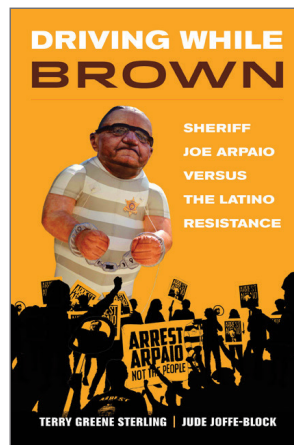
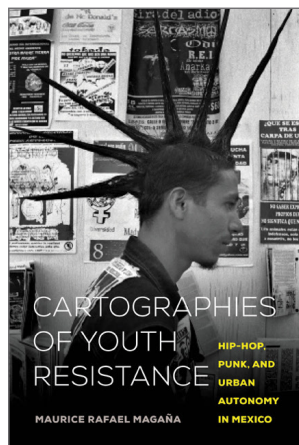
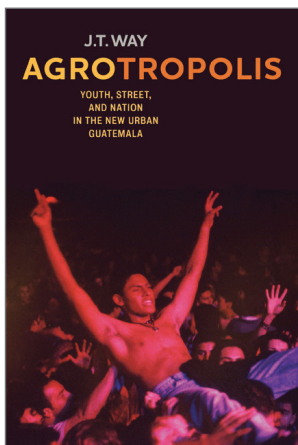
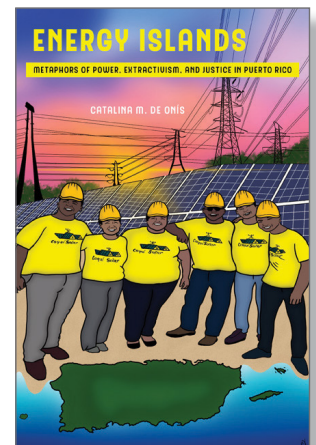
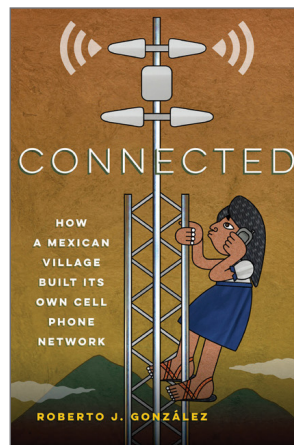
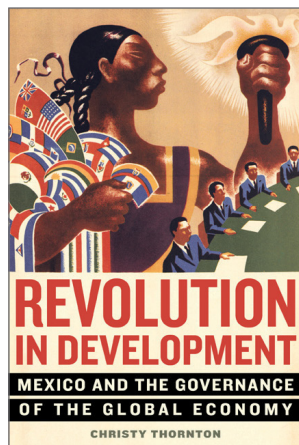
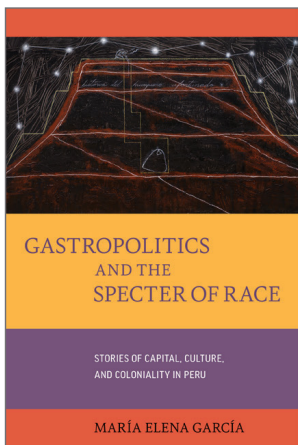
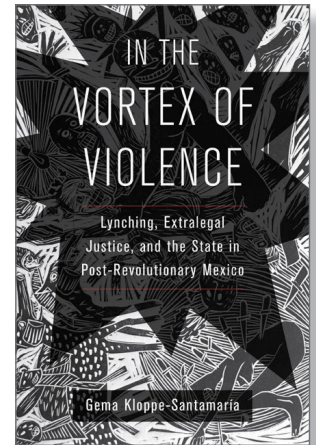
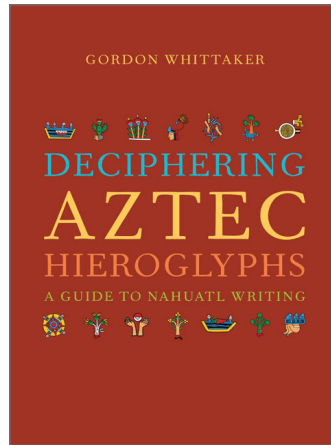
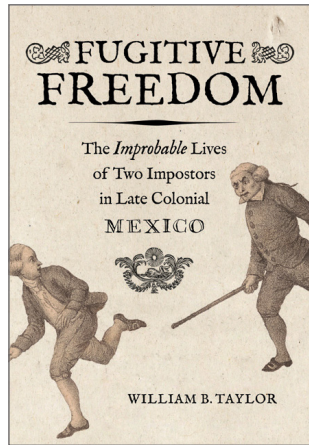
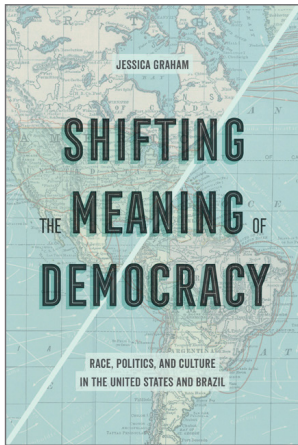
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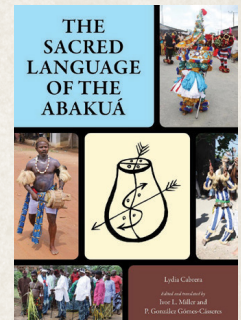
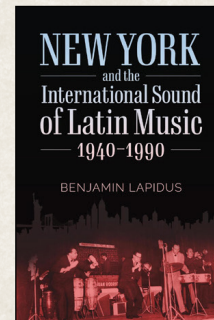
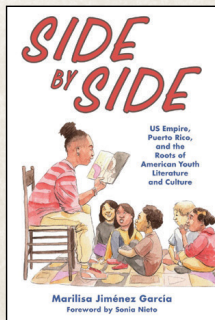
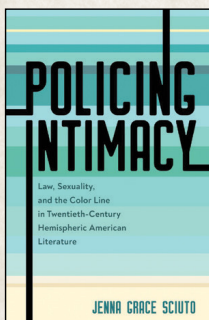
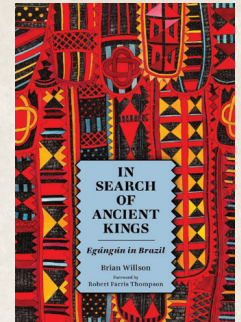
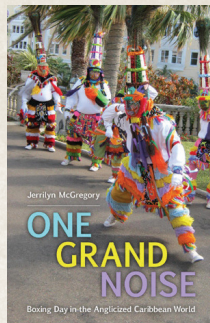
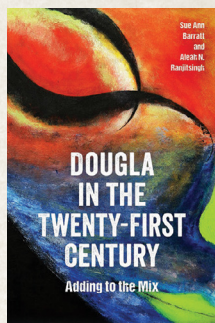
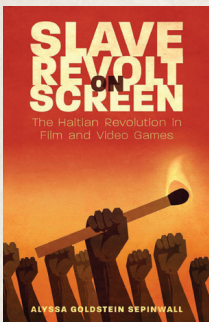
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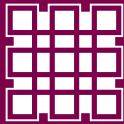


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