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Economics Serving Politics: China's Belt and Road Initiative in Latin America and the Caribbean

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Abstract:

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is an ambitious program for development across the world. The BRI was rolled out in 2013 and includes bilateral trade agreements, infrastructure projects, and loan programs among other forms of investment and aid. While the examination of the economic success of the BRI is crucial, critically analyzing the larger implications of this initiative is pressing as well. Foreign policy is intricately tied to foreign investment and economic goals. China's involvement in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) over the past two decades has been noteworthy for the rapid development of economic and diplomatic relations. The expansion of the BRI to LAC in 2017 is a clear indication of interests not only in resources and markets, but also in alliances and regional influence. In particular, Chinese investment can be attributed to shifting countries' stances on Taiwan and votes in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Empirically testing for this relationship, as well as examining the development of these positions is crucial in assessing the full impact of the BRI in LAC. Additionally, it is important to simultaneously assess the growth of Chinese investment and influence as an alternative to U.S. hegemony in the region. With the examination of current foreign policy consequences, future reforms and possibilities of the BRI can be envisioned. The BRI is an expression of economic policy serving larger foreign policy goals. It is an approach that challenges conventional methods of foreign aid and investment, proposing potential opportunities for development as well as conflict.

Keywords: bilateral trade, data analysis, development, foreign policy, investment, power competition, regional influence

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Purpose

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is an ambitious program for development across the world. The BRI was rolled out in 2013 and includes bilateral trade agreements, infrastructure projects, and loan programs among other forms of investment and aid. While the examination of the economic success of the BRI is crucial, critically analyzing the larger implications of this initiative is pressing as well. It would be a remiss and incomplete evaluation to assess the BRI solely on social and economic indicators. Multiple studies have highlighted the BRI as failing for the debt burden, faulty infrastructure and local unemployment that is propagated in recipient countries across different regions.[1] These assessments are necessary for evaluating the BRI, but do not fully explain why China continues to expand the program. As I will argue, the BRI is intended for more than just economic development. The "success" of the BRI can be seen in the development of new allies for China across the world and access to their markets and resources. These allies have advanced Chinese foreign policy goals, such as global disengagement with Taiwan and China having greater influence in multilateral institutions. These gains and political goals may supersede the economic concerns and viability of the BRI for recipient countries. Foreign policy is crucially tied to investment, with the multiple intentions behind an economic initiative needing to be examined as such. Assessing the political implications of the BRI will also give greater insight into why nations continue to want to join the BRI after seeing the risks and downsides of it in other countries.

In the context of Latin America and the Caribbean, the United States has historically been the major investor and influential power in the region. However, as will be discussed, American engagement with the region has been stagnant and waning since the 2000s. Over the past two decades, China's involvement in LAC has rapidly developed with dynamic economic and diplomatic relations. The expansion of the BRI to Latin American and the Caribbean in 2017 is a clear indication of this growing relationship between China and the region. The growth of Chinese investment and influence in LAC can be seen as the building of an alternative space to U.S. hegemony and aid in the region. Countries are finding innovative opportunities with China as their partner, with this potential outweighing the economic risks and political concessions that may be made. The examination of foreign policy consequences will better inform future reforms and possibilities of the BRI for all recipients of the program and actors in LAC.

Methodology

This paper will include both qualitative and quantitative modes of analysis and commentary. Starting with an overview of terms and core concepts in international relations, necessary background will then be laid out. This includes an explanation of China's key foreign policy goals and how they were developed, as well as the trade relationship between China and Latin America and the Caribbean that emerged in the past two decades. With this context in mind, the structuring of China's International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) and BRI will be

[1] For instance, see Oosterveld et al, (2018).

discussed. As will be seen, the formation of this development assistance agency and initiative embodies China's individual interests and foreign policy goals and is skewed towards these ambitions. The prioritizing of these interests often hinders the formulation of effective and adaptive development projects. The impact of these programs in Latin America and the Caribbean will then be examined, as well as the specific goals China has for the region. LAC has historically been the region with the largest number of allies for Taiwan, however this number has declined in the past two decades. Establishing trade and more substantial economic relations with China has led some countries to switch their recognitions from Taiwan to China as they see more opportunities with this relationship. The BRI has directly led to countries switching their relations as well. Another area impacted by these relations has been voting in the United Nations General Assembly. In recent years there has been a convergence of votes with China and distancing from the United States. I run regressions on trade salience and ideal point distances to test this relationship following the model of Gustavo A. Flores-Macías and Sarah E. Kreps (2013), though with some differences.

Flores-Macías and Kreps (2013) test the effects of increased trade volume and trade salience between China and Latin American and African countries on human rights votes in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) between 1992 and 2006. They define trade volume as the sum of exports and imports between two states, and trade salience as this sum of exports and imports relative to GDP (Flores-Macías & Kreps, 2013, p. 362). They chose to examine countries in LAC and Africa as their relations with China have not been "fraught with historical legacies" or extensive conflicts and interaction (Flores-Macías & Kreps, 2013, p. 360). It is then easier to isolate foreign policy developments. Additionally, they focus solely on a relation with voting on human rights issues since this is a topic important to China in which they consistently view human rights concerns as a domestic affair, and that international intervention would be a violation of state sovereignty. Flores-Macías and Kreps construct a dependent policy convergence variable based on these votes. They also include multiple control variables that test for shared regime type, human rights practices, military capability, U.S. influence and a post-2003 dummy to measure a rise in anti-American sentiment due to intervention in the Middle East. They use both ordinary least squares (OLS) and two stage least squares (2SLS) estimation techniques. A lagged test is also done. I discuss their results in the "Data Analysis: Trade and Voting Convergence in the UN" section of this paper.

For my regressions, I test the effect of trade salience on the ideal point distances of UN votes between 2001 and 2019. I choose 2001 as my staring point, since this is the year China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the point from which they rapidly expanded diplomatic and economic relations with countries. My end year is 2019, as this is the latest year with both trade data and UNGA voting records available. The sample period includes the start of the BRI in 2013 as well as the participation of LAC countries in it beginning from 2017. My dependent variable of ideal point distance is derived from the ideal point estimates developed by Michael A. Bailey, Anton Strezhnev and Erik Voeten (2021). These estimates are based on all votes in the UNGA and reflect a state's position towards the Western led liberal order (Bailey, Strezhnev & Voeten, 2017, p. 431). I take the ideal point distance, meaning the difference between a country's estimate and a global actor (China and the U.S.) as my dependent variable. A small ideal point distance indicates that a country's votes align more with the actor, and a larger ideal point distance indicates that a country's votes often do not align with the actor. In other words, ideal point distance denotes ideological similarity and dissimilarity between countries. The major difference between my dependent variable and Flores-Macías and Kreps's is that theirs is derived solely from human rights votes while the ideal point distances I use are representative of all UNGA votes on various issues.[2] Bailey, Strezhnev and Voeten's ideal point estimates are a valid measure of foreign policy convergence as these estimates reflect evidence of strategic voting, even as UNGA votes are non-binding.[3] My independent variable of trade salience is determined by the same method of Flores-Macías and Kreps, and I decide to focus on trade salience over trade volume since trade salience indicates the importance of trade with a country to one's GDP, while trade volume is a nominal term that refers to the amount of trade and not the significance of this value. I use a post-2013 dummy to measure the impact of the BRI. I test the relationship between LAC and China and also LAC and the United States. I agree with Flores-Macías and Kreps that the relationship between LAC and China is relatively new and still developing. However, instead of treating the relationship between LAC and the United States as a control, I run these regressions separately to see if there is a change in U.S.-LAC relations during this period.

The concluding portions of this paper entail a discussion on past and current U.S. influence in the region and the future of the BRI in LAC. While the U.S. has relied on historical relations with LAC, it has slowly begun to acknowledge the rising influence of China in the region and the need for more innovative American and Western led initiatives. The Build Back Better World (B3W) partnership by the U.S. and the other G7 countries may be a starting point. The BRI may then face competition from the B3W, and the growing criticism of its projects may induce reform. With a possible investment competition between the U.S. and China, LAC countries will advocate for their goals and may succeed in compelling each actor to make concessions to their own development ambitions. The BRI should take advantage of green partnerships and make more concessions to recipient LAC countries. Lasting impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic must also be accounted for in the development of all new programs and initiatives.

Literature Review

The Development of Chinese Foreign Policy Goals

Political independence and a multipolar world order are core Chinese foreign policy goals. Experience as a colonized state and fallout with the Soviet Union during the Cold War led China to strategically value the categorization of "third world nation" or "developing country". In the face of isolation from the emerging Western led world order, China highlighted a common historical experience of colonialism and imperialism in order to gain allies across the world. The "Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence", developed as early as 1955 during the Bandung Conference for Asia-African States, highlight the need for diplomatic relations that are founded in reciprocity and mutuality (Choo, 2009, p.77 & 82). This idea especially emphasizes relations with developing countries, as seen by the current use of terms such as "south-south cooperation". This notion of a cooperative partnership also reflects the preference of China for establishing

[2] See Kreps & Flores-Macías (2013), p. 360-361, where they argue not to use all UNGA votes in a study because they deem the majority of votes to be procedural in nature, and that it would be more appropriate to focus on the votes that China cared most about.

[3] See Bailey et al, (2017), p. 438-447, for more on the examination of the validity of ideal point estimates.

bilateral agreements and relations with countries. As will be discussed in the next section, a bilateral approach allows China to prioritize its own interests while still establishing a close relationship with a country. Foreign aid programs also reflected these same interests, with Premier Zhou Enlai's Eight Principles, highlighting mutual benefit and the sovereignty of states. "From 1950 to 1985, China provided aid to 87 countries, including 20 in Asia, 46 in Africa, 16 in Latin America, and 5 in Europe" (Glosny, 2006, p. 11). From its earliest history as a nation, China's foreign aid, turn-key projects and low-interest loans have always been a tool to maintain relations and deter countries from recognizing Taiwan.

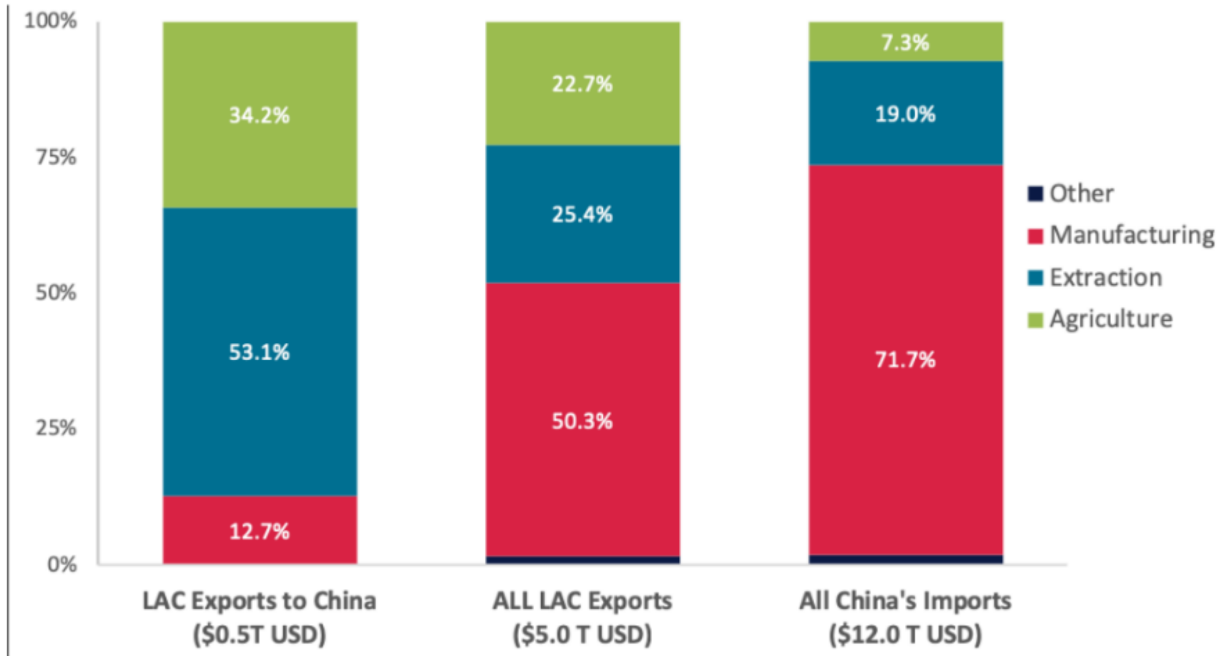
As tensions between the United States and Russia subsided, the Third World became a less important buffer and "United Front" in power competition. China shifted to an internal focus, with emphasis no longer on revolution but on its own economic and political development. Deng Xioping's market reforms opened the Chinese economy to the United States and other larger economies, leading to a rapid process of urbanization and modernization. However, a need for resources and access to more markets, as well as isolation from the West due to the Tiananmen Square protests, caused China to reengage with the Third World. Jiang Zemin's "Going-out strategy" (zouchuqu) led to the prioritization of securing resources and markets necessary for China's continued growth, and the development and solidification of allies in the 2000s. Current president Xi Jinping's foreign policy continues and revitalizes these goals.

The Trade Relationship Between China and LAC

Domestic industrial production is a key component of China's economy. This is promulgated to such an extent that overproduction occurs, in which state-subsidized firms are overleveraged and unprofitable. In adherence to a development model based on urban and infrastructure development, steel and aluminum are considered "strategically important commodities" and are overproduced for this reason (Dreher, Fuchs, Parks, Strange & Tierney, 2021, p. 143). China also pours almost half the world's concrete each year, which amounts to more than two billion tons a year (Hawkins, 2019). However, there is not enough domestic demand to use these materials. Consequently, the most crucial component of the economy is always at risk. In order to address this challenge, China has "attempted to stimulate global demand by subsidizing overseas infrastructure projects and making these grants, loans, and export credits conditional upon the purchase of Chinese industrial inputs, such as steel, iron, cement, and aluminum" (Dreher et al, 2021, p.143). Building "resorts in the Bahamas, Jamaica and St. Maarten; hospitals in Trinidad, Dominica and St. Kitts; sports stadiums in Antigua and Grenada; roads in Guyana and Suriname and government buildings in Jamaica and Trinidad" are evidence of this focus on infrastructure using Chinese based firms, workers, and materials (Oosterveld et al, 2018, p.16). China's access to LAC economies is already being evidenced as more crucial for China than the region's access to China.

The formation of bilateral trade agreements between China and the region have been largely asymmetric. In 2008, primary products and resource-based manufactures accounted for over 70% of Latin American exports to China (Jenkins, 2012, p.1344). More than a decade later, the situation remains largely the same. As seen below in Figure 1, in 2018 extractive and agricultural goods made up 87.3% of all LAC exports to China, while 71.7% of China's exports to LAC were manufactured goods. China has increasingly become an important export market for LAC, but largely only for raw materials. In comparison, the majority of LAC's total exports are manufactured goods, while China is much more interested in agricultural and extractive goods.

Figure 1 – Sector Distribution of Trade Baskets (2014-2018)



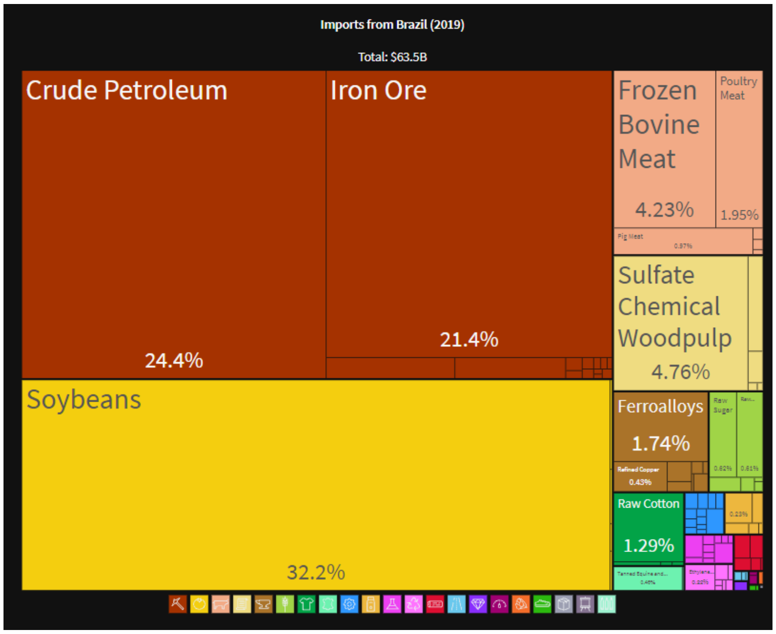
Source: Ray & Wang (2019), p. 5. Sourced from UN Comtrade data.

However, the U.S. remains the largest trading partner in the region, with China accounting for only about 11% of total LAC exports (Ray & Wang, 2019, p.4). Still, as China rapidly becomes a major source of exports there is a concern that Chinese development and investment in LAC is advancing a "backwards" move towards a pseudo-colonial relationship that focuses on exporting raw materials and importing highly refined goods and electronics. "Despite China's long-time opposition to colonialism, obtaining natural resources and raw materials from a country in exchange for manufactured goods is in many ways a classic colonial relationship".[4] For instance, examining the largest LAC exporter to China, Brazil, which accounted for 4.03% of China's imports in 2019, we see a dramatic difference and disparity in goods traded in Figure 2. However, as will be discussed later, even though Brazil is China's leading LAC trading partner, it has remained resistant to joining the BRI. China's second largest LAC trading partner is Chile, and it is a participant in the BRI. Still, the same disparate scenario is reflected here in Figure 3.

[4] See Glosny (2006), p. 27, for more on the perception of Chinese aid programs.

Figure 2 – Composition of Brazil's Trade with China (2019)

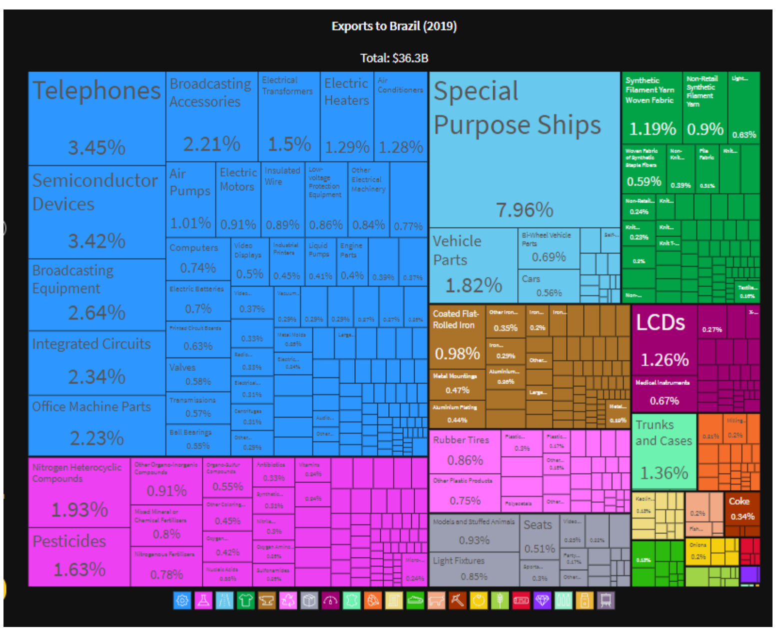
Brazil's Exports to China in 2019:



Totaling 4.03% of China's Imports

Totaling 27.6% of Brazil's Exports

Brazil's Imports from China in 2019:



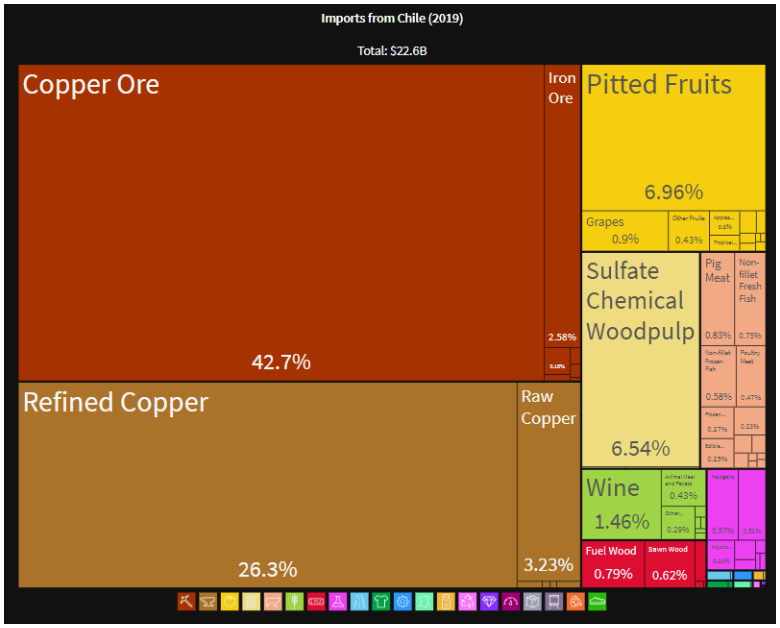
Totaling 20.5% of Brazil's Imports

Totaling 1.41% of China's Exports

Source: [OEC Country Profiles]

Figure 3 – Composition of Chile’s Trade with China (2019)

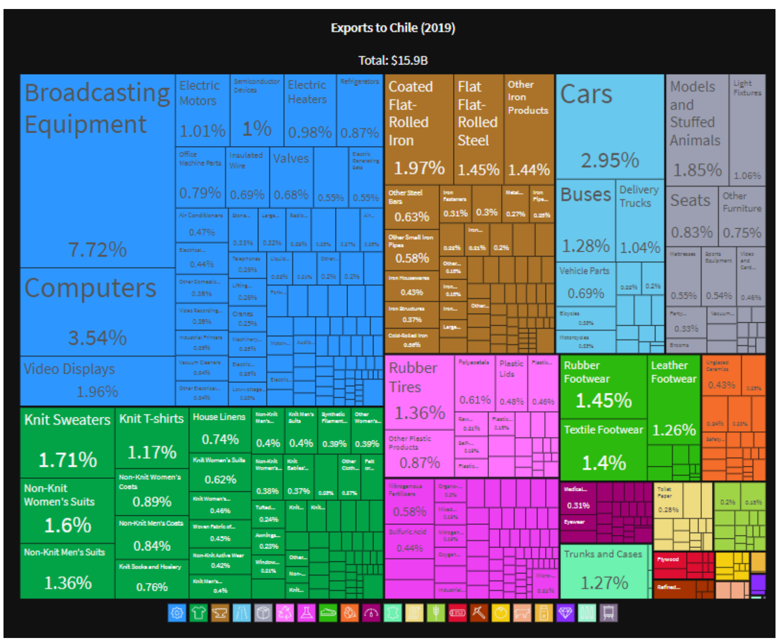
Chile’s Exports to China in 2019:



Totaling 1.44% of China’s Imports

Totaling 31.8% of Chile’s Exports

Chile’s Imports from China in 2019:



Totaling 23.7% of Chile’s Imports

Totaling 0.62% of China’s Exports

Source: [OEC Country Profiles]

Consequently, “despite the rhetoric of South-South cooperation and mutual benefit that surrounds relations between China and Latin America... China is much more important as a trade partner to Latin America than the region is to China” (Jenkins, 2012, p. 1348). Still, this relationship has been highlighted by some as critical for supporting LAC economies during the Covid-19 pandemic. China’s largest news agency, Xinhua, has highlighted the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) views on the importance of China as a trade partner in primary goods. For instance, while Argentina’s exports in manufactured goods, fuel and processed agricultural goods decreased by 34.5%, 24% and 8% respectively in 2020, their exports in primary goods increased by 14% (“ECLAC Highlights China”, 2020). Overall, Argentina’s exports to China increased while exports to the United States, Mercosur and the European Union decreased. ECLAC Executive Secretary Alicia Barcena sees the export-oriented primary goods sector as being the most resilient in the pandemic and recovering the fastest. China’s interest in primary goods and expanding the market for their industrial goods is evidenced in the asymmetric trade relations they have with LAC.

Having a stake and investment in petroleum products has also become an increasingly important area for China. From Figure 2 we see how crude petroleum makes up 24.4% of Brazil’s exports to China. In 2011, China Investment Corporation, a Chinese sovereign wealth fund, invested $850 million to acquire 10% interest in Atlantic Liquified Natural Gas (LNG), which is owned by the Natural Gas Company of Trinidad and Tobago (Ellis, 2019). It is one of the world’s largest natural gas producers. Discovered in the mid-2010s, Chinese state-owned company CNOOC also has a 25% stake in the Stabroek block, an offshore drilling site in Guyana (Ward, 2020). It is a 6.6-million-acre area, estimated to have 10 billion barrels of oil. Hess and Exxonmobil have 30% and 45% stakes respectively (“China’s CNOOC to load”, 2020). Most recently, Great Wall Drilling, an affiliate of the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), began a joint venture with Cuba’s state-owned petroleum company (CUPET) in 2019 (Daiss, 2019). China’s interest in petroleum is reflective of its national security goals.

Case Studies

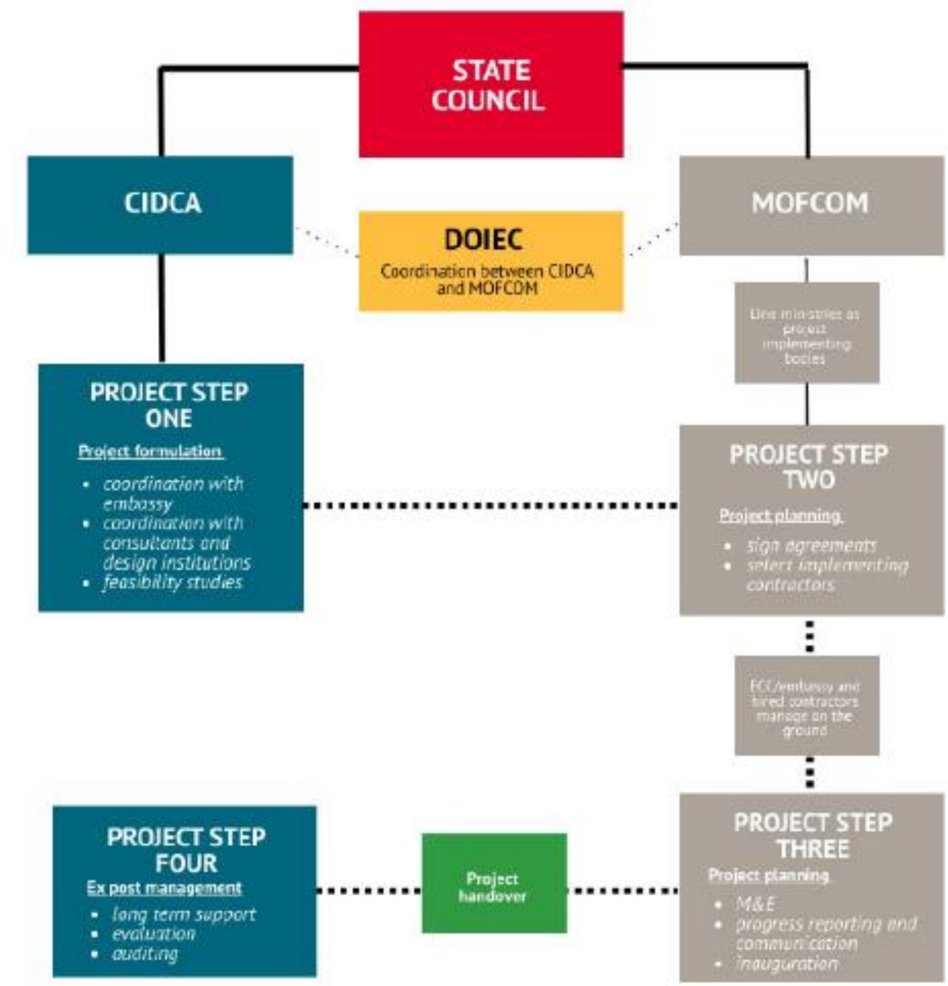
The Strategic Formation of the CIDCA and BRI

The extensive economic reforms and development over the past few decades in China have led to it being the second largest economy today. Global demand and markets for Chinese goods have not only increased but become a necessary component to sustain its growth. China has declared itself the leader of the Global South, and actively engages with developing economies to spur further social and economic development in various regions. While these partnerships are crucial for nations across the world, their formation is arguably skewed to benefiting Chinese firms and diplomatic goals over the interests of a receiving nation.

China has been engaged in varying levels of foreign aid, investment, and trade since the 1950s, but these financial flows have remained obscure and complex. Transparency issues and lack of data from the Chinese government is a well-known issue that impacts every policy and social space. While trade data is made public by multilateral organizations, aid data is often withheld by Chinese institutions. However, while transparency is an issue, the complexity and overlapping of financial flows is a major factor itself. For instance, "systematic information on other financial flows from China to Latin America is even more difficult to come by than data on FDI. This in part reflects the difficulty in classifying between FDI, commercial loans and aid, when these are often packaged together" (Jenkins, 2012, p. 1343). The composition of Chinese financial assistance and agreements often differ from international standards, which make them hard to examine and compare.

The formation of the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013 and the creation of China's International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA) in 2018 can be seen as efforts to streamline and simplify the structure of Chinese financial flows. Chinse development assistance is mainly financed through grants, interest-free or concessional loans, and each project can use more than one of these types of finances. Prior to the CIDCA, all of these flows were overseen by the Chinese State Council, the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Commerce's Department of Foreign Aid and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was a complex web of steps and procedures to developing, approving, and implementing a project; yet even with the CIDCA this matrix remains as seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4 – The Management Process of China's Bilateral Aid Projects



Source: Lynch, Andersen & Zhu, (2020), p. 4.

The CIDCA is mainly involved with developing a project proposal and strategy for bilateral aid projects, though at the end of the process it is also responsible for evaluating the results of the project. While this introduces oversight that was previously absent, the CIDCA has a limited budget, which in 2019 was US$18 million, in comparison to the US$2.63 billion that is allocated to the Ministry of Commerce (Lynch et al, 2020, p. 9). CIDCA's small budget primarily goes towards administration purposes of its own office. Additionally, its on-the-ground oversight relies on limited and overtasked staff at the Overseas Economic and Commercial Counsellors Offices, where these one or two staff members are tasked with overseeing the entire Chinese aid program in that country (Lynch, et al, 2020, p. 6). The Chinese contractor that is carrying out the project itself may often take the lead in providing feedback and implications as well. There is rarely adequate evaluation or consultation in the implementation of projects.

At the same time the CIDCA is a new agency and can continue to develop, expand and meet more of its goals through time. Forming a "foreign aid international cooperation system" with "country-by-country aid policies" and credit rating and project evaluation systems are all core policies in their mandate (Lynch et al, 2020, p. 9-10). As of March 2020, 29 countries have signed Development Cooperation Agreements (DCAs) with the CIDCA, including Colombia and Bolivia in Latin America (Lynch et al, 2020, p. 10). The contents of DCAs are not made public, but it is generally understood that they signify intentions for strategically cooperating with a country and may often be linked with memorandums of understanding (MOUs) signed through the Belt and Road Initiative.

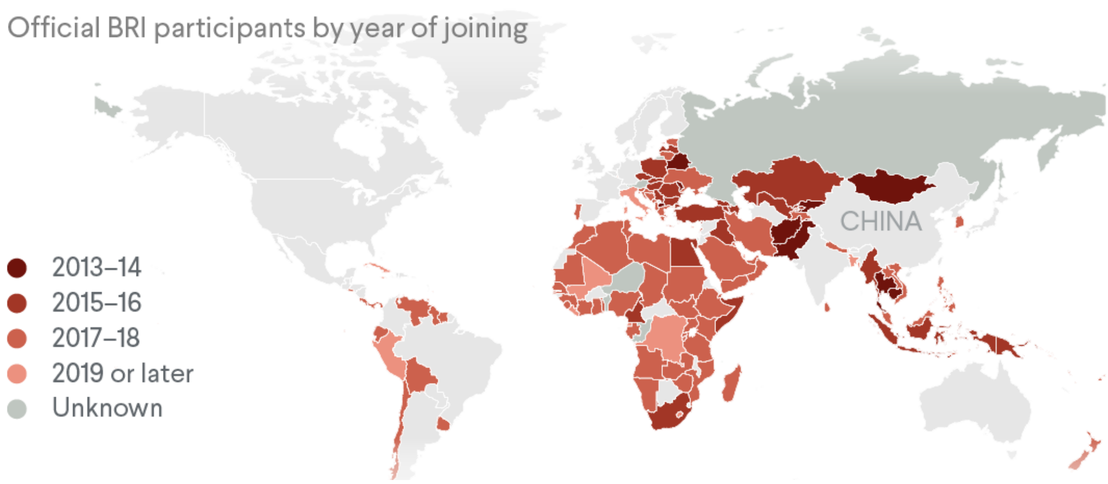
In 2018, the same year the CIDCA was created, 13 Latin American and Caribbean nations signed MOUs with China on the BRI (See Figure 5 and Table 1 below). Panama was the first country from the region to sign the year before in 2017, and five other nations joined after 2018. Still, if the BRI was created in 2013, why did it take four to five years for the program to be extended to the other side of the world? Even though LAC as a whole has had a substantial trade relationship with China over the past few decades, their economic and diplomatic relations have broadly been "the most dynamic".[5] China has taken a slow and tentative pace in extending the BRI to LAC in recognition of these realities. In doing so, China has preferred to engage directly with each country on a bilateral basis, both in trade and economic development, rather than with international organizations such as CARICOM (Caribbean Community), the Caribbean Development Bank, the Pacific Alliance and Mercosur. This can seem counterintuitive, for China to build new engagements with each country rather than entering the systems of trade and cooperation that already exist. However, it is this bilateral strategy that allows China to have greater access, flexibility and control in each relationship. China recognizes the variety of historical and economic circumstances in each nation, as well as the various stances on international concerns.

One major advantage of bilateral agreements for China is that it creates competition between nations seeking assistance from China. Nations can act on multiple spheres to create a favorable space for Chinese assistance. Even more, China's specific conditions and terms can even leave "local experts in the dark about the precise terms of government contracts agreed with Chinese counterparts" (Osterveld et al, 2018, p. 24). The contents of DCAs and MOUs are almost never made public, and these intentions for further engagement can be very open and broad. As will be

[5] See Ferchen (2021), p. 100-101, for more detail on the development of these relations.

examined in the next section, it is however the connection of financing to diplomacy and international relations that is most crucial and strategic.

Figure 5 – Participants in the Belt and Road: 140 Countries Globally



Source: Sacks (2021, March 4). See interactive map here

Table 1 – Latin American and Caribbean Countries in the BRI by Region and year Joined

Year	Central America	South America	Caribbean
2017	Panama		
2018	Costa Rica	Bolivia	Antigua and Barbuda
	El Salvador	Chile	Dominica
		Ecuador	Dominican Republic
		Uruguay	Grenada
		Venezuela	Guyana
			Suriname
			Trinidad and Tobago
2019		Peru	Barbados
			Cuba
			Jamaica

Sources: Sacks (2021); Nedopil Wang (2021), p. 21; Yeping (2019).

Recurring Grievances: Debt, Unemployment and White Elephant Projects

While Chinese investment has been welcomed by LAC countries as a viable opportunity for growth, there is pushback and concern from recurrent issues. For instance, Chinese loans can provide much needed funding for LAC countries, however there is still the significant risk of indebtedness. Even though these loans are largely low-interest, being at a better rate than most of those offered by the World Bank, International Development Bank (IDB) and the Caribbean Development Bank, countries such as Jamaica that have suffered from crippling debt burdens for decades can still fall into debt with low-interest loans (Osterveld et al, 2018, p.23). The most severe case and outcome that occurred has been with Venezuela. China loaned $60 billion in total to Venezuela throughout the 2000s into the 2010s, which is the most it has lent to any country in the world (Navone, 2021). This began as a mutually beneficial relationship based on Venezuela’s booming oil industry and China’s large demand for oil, but corruption and mismanagement in the industry as well as the oil market crash in 2014 led to a decline for Venezuela’s economy. China cut off lending to Venezuela entirely in 2016. Venezuela still owes the majority of its loans from China and is using shipments of oil and iron ore to pay it back.

Along with risks of debt, there are recurrent concerns about the implementation of investment projects. For instance, the sole use of Chinese contractors in BRI projects is a major point of controversy. The majority of grants and interest-free loans are fully managed in China, resulting in only Chinese enterprises and contractors being selected for procuring, planning, constructing, consulting and even evaluating a project (Lynch et al, 2020, p. 6). Even though it is a competitive procurement process, only Chinese firms are selected. This goes so far to the point that often Chinese workers are brought to the receiving country to build the project, with this being a necessary clause in most agreements. On this point, there is a growing perception that the use of Chinese labor overseas is an effort to correct China’s own unemployment problem of a surplus of labor (Oosterveld et al, 2018, p. 26). A local labor rights defender in Trinidad described the situation of a hospital built by the China Railway Construction Corporation as, “it is disturbing that large sums of money are to be paid to foreigners and yet not a single child from our universities will have the opportunity to design a ward or a driveway or a building of that hospital” (Oosterveld et al, 2018, p. 26). As more Chinese infrastructure projects are developed and implemented, local workers and contractors still find difficulty in contributing to and garnering employment by them.

Local unemployment is not the only concern associated with infrastructure projects, with the long term viability of them being a recurrent issue. Policymakers across the world welcome Chinese development projects since they are mainly short-term engagements that result in quickly implemented programs. However, there is growing concern “that in its zeal to help partner countries install the ‘hardware’ of economic development in an efficient manner, China has prioritized speed over quality” (Dreher et al, 2021, p. 161). This results in poor oversight and “white elephant projects” that do not support industry growth in the long-term, and facilities that fall into disrepair and disuse. While it is too early to assess BRI projects in LAC by this criteria, in Africa and Asia these concerns have been prominent. For instance, the Kampala-Entebbe Expressway in Uganda was completed in 2019 after multiple delays and with a total cost of $476 million (Odyek, 2019). Exim Bank of China lent $350 million for the project with a 40-year repayment plan, while the Government of Uganda fleshed out $126 million to pay for legal disputes in which families demanded compensation from lost land. Tolls are expected to pay for the maintenance of the road, but crashes and cases of vandalism have already made a need for repair. The travel time between Kampala and Entebbe has been cut in half, but the financial and legal costs make some question the worth of this project. Additionally, even though the Bahamas is not part of the BRI, the complications of the construction of the Baha Mar resort there is a revealing case. It was also a severely delayed project with missed deadlines and “numerous allegations of shoddy workmanship and poor construction quality” (Osterveld et al, 2018, p. 26). The same subsidiary of the Chinese State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC) that built this resort continues to undertake projects, some under the BRI, raising questions of whether the same problems will occur. Investment in LAC has been strategically important and beneficial for China, but LAC countries have not shared in the same level of benefit.

Chinese Diplomatic Goals in LAC

Relations with developing countries have been highlighted by China in various decades as strategically important. As discussed in the literature review, China claims itself as the largest "developing" and "third world" nation, and seeks to pioneer growth in other nations categorized as such. From this perspective, Chinese development goals within Latin America and the Caribbean can be seen as "enhancing solidarity and cooperation" between third world countries that share the same policy ambitions and outlook (Choo, 2009, p. 75). However, these new and increasingly complex and integrated economic relations also serve China's vision of multipolarity or an alternative world order. Latin America and the Caribbean are geographically beyond China's sphere of natural political influence, and the foreign policy consequences of trade and financing are more blatant and isolated here (Flores-Macías & Kreps, 2013, p. 360). In this sense, for China to take the effort to engage LAC implies multifaceted goals beyond economic development.

In the establishment of trading relations or aid allocations, the Ministry of Commerce has openly admitted that "aid and subsidies are used to coordinate diplomatic work, and that building 'some public institutions [...] produced great political influences' in supporting high level diplomatic events" (Maggiorelli, 2017, p. 44). Even so, China's efforts to build relations with countries across many regions has resulted in generally "little regard for partner nations' ideological or political leanings... [maintaining] the fewest conditional strings attached to their loan programs" in comparison with other large donors and investors such as the United States (Farah & Yates, 2020, p. 47). Examining the ascension of China in multilateral organizations and contentions with Taiwan reveals a complex picture of foreign policy interests embodied and greatly prioritized in economic projects.

Shifting Taiwan's Relations with LAC and Multilateral Organizations

China is one of the charter members of the United Nations and is also a permanent member of the Security Council. Even though China has always been a member of the UN, its representing body has seen significant changes. From 1945 to 1971 the Republic of China (ROC) was internationally recognized as the legitimate governing body of China, even after its relocation to Taiwan in 1949 when it was ousted by the communist regime in the mainland. However in 1971, with the strategic support of many African nations, the People's Republic of China (PRC) took that seat and became recognized by the UN as the sole representative of China (Maggiorelli, 2017, p. 45). In accordance with the "One China Policy", nations have either chosen to stay with the ROC or switch their recognitions to the PRC over the years. The well-established trade and investment relations between China and Africa are reflective of the region being a stable ally and key supporter of China. This is further evidenced by the fact that African countries were among the first participating nations in the BRI in 2013 and 2014, with a current total of 56 countries today.[6]

[6] See Sacks (2021, March 4), in which 39 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and 17 countries in the Middle East and North Africa are participants in the BRI.

In contrast, the majority of nations that recognize Taiwan are in Latin America and the Caribbean. Today, fifteen nations recognize Taiwan with nine of them being in LAC. However, this number used to be much larger and ROC relations with the region have seen many recent developments and changes (see Table 2 below). Two major developments are the source of these changes. First, the ascension of the PRC to the UN, and second, China's market reforms in 1979. Many LAC countries took advantage of establishing commercial relations with China, the majority being South American countries. Before the turn of the century, fifteen nations recognized Taipei and eighteen recognized Beijing. The 2000s however would mark a taking off point in Chinese foreign policy and economic development goals. China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 and held its first forum for China-Caribbean trade and economic cooperation in 2005 (Maggiorelli, 2017, p. 33). Three LAC nations switched recognition during this time, as economic opportunities with China greatly expanded. The past two decades have seen an exponential increase in relations, trade and aid assistance between China and LAC.

Taiwan recognizes the importance of maintaining relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, and spends heavily to keep this arrangement. However, Taiwan cannot outspend China, "which uses the aid to ... [reward] countries that do not recognize Taiwan as a separate country. That has been evident in LAC, where China invested in costly projects, sometimes in exchange for ending diplomatic relations with Taiwan" (Maggiorelli, 2017, p. 45). The introduction of the Belt and Road Initiative to LAC has directly resulted in Taiwan's loss of three supporters: Panama, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic. The switch of Panama was especially striking, as it recognized the ROC for more than a century and was the first LAC nation to join the BRI. It switched its recognition in June 2017 and signed a MOU on the BRI with China the following November (Ferchen, 2021, p. 104). In that same year, "China Landbridge Group broke ground on a new $1 billion deepwater port and logistics complex on Panama's Margarita Island, where the Panama Colón Container Port will take over land once occupied by a U.S. military base" (Nugent & Campell, 2021). The U.S. was blindsided by this action, which intensified the strategic importance and scramble over Panama between the U.S. and China.

Even as trade through Chinese markets remains one-sided, Taiwan's bilateral free trade agreements and aid programs are increasingly not enough to keep its long-time trade and diplomatic partners. In the past four years, China's BRI has directly resulted in the diplomatic switch of three countries. This has prompted Taiwan to take up more action and financing with its current partners. The same month that the Dominican Republic switched relations, Taiwan agreed to loan US $150 million to Haiti to build an extensive electric grid that would provide 24-hour electricity to much of the nation (Everington, 2018). Taiwan is now looking to meet the sustainable development demands of its partners in order to keep their recognition. Meanwhile, China is building new alliances with Latin America and the Caribbean that offers "invaluable votes at the UN and backing for Chinese appointees to multinational institutions" (Nugent & Campell, 2021). Nicaragua is the most recent country to switch relations, doing so in early December and receiving one million doses of China's Covid-19 vaccine shortly after ("Nicaragua receives China vaccines", 2021). The country seeks further bilateral cooperation in multiple industries with China, and it is highly probable that it will join the BRI in the near future ("Resumption of China-Nicaragua ties", 2021). As Taiwan's ability to economically compete with China decreases, its political capacity decreases as well. More of its allies will increasingly turn to China to fulfil financial demands in the future.

Table 2 – LAC's Recognition of the ROC and PRC Over the Years:

Region	Country	Year Est. Relations with ROC	Year Est. Relations with PRC
North America	Mexico	1928	1972
Central America	Costa Rica	1944	2007
	El Salvador	1942	2018
	Guatemala	1933	
	Honduras	1941	
	Mexico	1928	1972
	Nicaragua	1962-1985, 1990	2021
	Panama	1912	2017
South America	Argentina	1945	1972
	Bolivia	Unknown	1985
	Brazil	1928	1974
	Chile	1931	1970
	Colombia	1941	1980
	Ecuador	1947	1980
	Paraguay	1957	
	Peru	1931	1971
	Uruguay	1958	1988
	Venezuela	1944	1974
Caribbean	Antigua and Barbuda		1983
	Bahamas	1989	1997
	Barbados		1977
	Belize	1989	
	Cuba	1929	1960
	Dominica	1983	2004
	Dominican Republic	1941	2018
	Grenada	1989	2005
	Guyana		1972
	Haiti	1956	
	Jamaica	Unknown	1972
	St. Kitts and Nevis	1983	
	St. Lucia	1984-1997, 2007	
	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	1981	
	Suriname		1976
	Trinidad and Tobago		1974

Note: Countries in orange are participants in the BRI. Countries in red switched recognitions the same year they joined the BRI.

Source: Maggiorelli (2017), p. 45; Sevastopulo & Hille (2021); Multiple other sources used. They can be found consolidated on this Wikipedia page.

There is some hope for future relationships to be established without the need to choose between China and Taiwan, but it is slim. Even though China explicitly uses trade and aid to foster diplomatic ties, they still trade with nations that recognize Taiwan. However, no nation that recognizes Taiwan is a part of the BRI, as seen with a map of West Indian members below in Figure 6. Also, Taipei has increasingly begun to recognize the land area of Taiwan as a nation entirely distinct from China (Maizland, 2021). In this sense, Taiwanese are increasingly viewing their history and national identity as completely separate from China, with 64% of the people viewing themselves as solely Taiwanese.[7] However, China continues to declare Taiwan a nonaligned province, with tensions between the nations especially escalating this year. China's military capability continues to grow and threaten conflict with invasions of Taiwan's air space.[8]

Figure 6 – Independent Caribbean Nations: Recognition of Taiwan and signatories on the BRI

Source: Runde, Sandin & Doring (2021) p. 8.

Data Analysis: Trade and Voting Convergence in the UN

With the support of Latin American states during the 2000s, China worked to "transform its national image, successfully replacing its threatening image with that of a responsible state, and more importantly, of a developing state" (Choo, 2009, p.85). The ascension of China in multilateral institutions has been central to this process. Brazil was a major supporter of China's bid to WTO membership, and to gaining observer status in regional organizations such as the

[7] See "Taiwanese/ Chinese Identity" (2021), for the full results of this survey conducted by the Election Study Center at National Chengchi University. This survey tracks identity in Taiwan from 1992-2021.

[8] See Westfall (2021), for information on recent Chinese military activity in the South China Sea and specifically around Taiwan.

Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) and Mercado Comun del Sur (MERCOSUR) (Choo, 2009, p. 83-86). China has also remained an active participant of the Forum for East Asia-Latin America Cooperation (FEALAC) and summits of the G-20 and G-77. Even though China is not a member of the G-77, it is an active participant and deemed a leader and supporter of developing countries. This relationship is prominent to the point that all official G-77 statements are issued under the name "G-77 and China".[9] However, China did not attend the G-20 summit in 2021. Additionally, its ongoing territorial disputes, military activities and tensions with the United States in the South China Sea counter the image of a "responsible" and "non-threatening" state.[10] Still, even with these points of disagreement and dispute, China has become an influential actor and leader in global organizations.

China's influence has been especially evidenced in UN voting, with the alignment of various nations conceivably related to economic support and investment from China. Gustavo A. Flores-Macías and Sarah E. Kreps (2013) examination of bilateral trade between China and African and Latin American states investigates this question of foreign policy convergence from increasing trade relations between 1992 and 2006. Specifically, they examine China's opposition to country-specific human rights resolutions and the convergence of other nations on this stance. Human rights issues have been consistently regarded by China as a domestic concern, such that they are a factor of political conflict within a sovereign nation. In this fourteen-year period, China supported only one resolution that expressed concerns on human rights in a specific country, and this was in regard to Israeli military operations in Lebanon (Flores-Macías & Kreps, 2013, p. 361).

The findings of Flores-Macías and Kreps support a relationship between increased trade and foreign policy convergence. Figure 7 below illustrates a general trend that emerges: "the more salient the trade relationship with China ... the more frequently these countries have voted with China on country-specific human rights votes in the UN General Assembly" (Flores-Macías & Kreps, 2013, p. 363-364). Additionally, increased trade with China was found to have a larger effect than increased U.S. foreign aid (Flores-Macías & Kreps, 2013, p. 365). However, the study also found Africa's vote convergence with China to be much greater than Latin America's. The authors suggest the proximity of Africa to China and the greater influence of the U.S. in Latin America as possible reasons for this difference. Still, the overall direction of trends and convergences remain the same. As will be discussed further in the next section, it appears that "China could be increasing its power and influence but without dislocating the influence and interests of the United States" (Flores-Macías & Kreps, 2013, p. 368).

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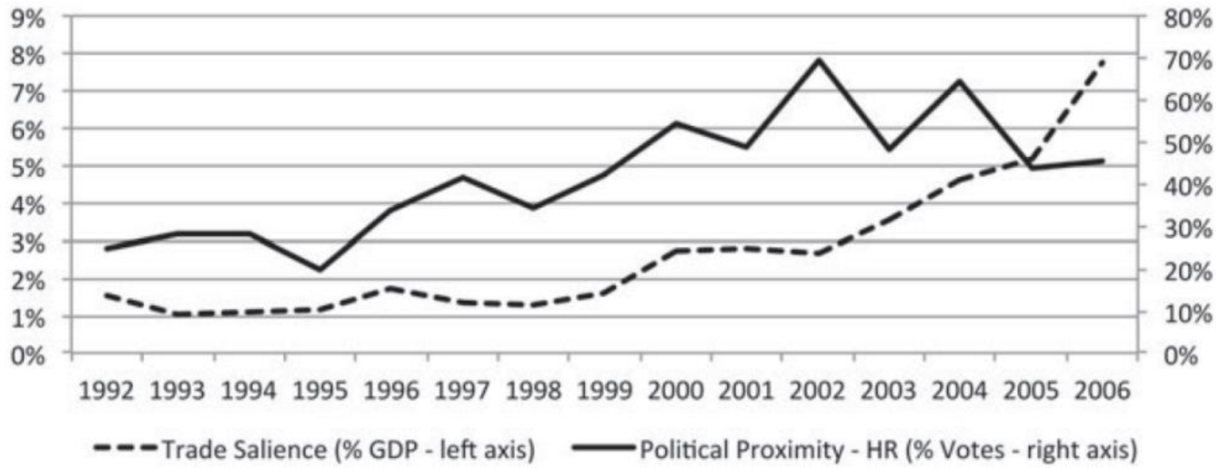
[9] See Statement by the Chair of the Group of 77 (2021, June 23) as an example. Ambassador Aly Diane, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guinea to the UN, discusses the need to end the United States' embargo on Cuba.

[10] See "China's Maritime Disputes" (2020); "The Recent History" (2021), for a timeline of major events in this conflict; See Mastro (2020) for a discussion of U.S. interests in the region.

Figure 7 – Africa and Latin America's Average Trade Salience and Convergence on Country-Specific Human Rights votes with China (1992-2006)



Source: Flores-Macías & Kreps (2013) p. 364.

Updated studies on trade and policy convergence with China on UN resolutions are warranted. They would contribute to further understanding the implications of the BRI in various spheres and issue areas. Following a model inspired by Flores-Macías and Kreps's study, as explained in the methodology section, I test the effect of trade salience on UNGA voting from 2001 – 2019 for a sample of LAC countries with China and with the United States. I start from 2001 since this is the year China joined the World Trade Organization (WTO), and end at the most recent available data which is 2019. This period also includes the start of the BRI in 2013 and the expansion of it to LAC in 2017. The countries I chose are the Bahamas, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, El Salvador, Brazil, Chile, and Panama. I chose this sample of countries as they are representative of varying relations with China and Taiwan and participation in the BRI. Haiti and Guatemala recognize Taiwan, Brazil and the Bahamas recognize China but none of the four are part of the BRI. Chile, Panama, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic recognize China and are part of the BRI. The latter three countries are also the ones that recently changed their relations in 2017 or 2018 and joined the BRI that same year. The eight countries in this sample are from across different regions of LAC and have varying sized economies, from some of the largest to some of the smallest.

Trade salience as the sum of exports and imports relative to GDP for each LAC country with China and the U.S. is expressed below in Figures 8 – 10. The exact values of the trade saliences can also be found in Appendix A. However, Panama was omitted from my regressions at this stage as it was an outlier with rapid shifts of large increases and decreases in salience for both China and the U.S.[11] There is no clear trend in Panama's trade salience, or clear reason for why these rapid changes occurred.[12] With a small sample of eight countries, it significantly skewed

[11] The trade saliences of Panama are available from the author upon request.

[12] See Mashayekhi, Ito, Antunes, Turolla & Sheffer (2016), especially p. 17-31, for details regarding patterns of Panamanian trade. These factors can possibly give insight into the abrupt shifts that have occurred.

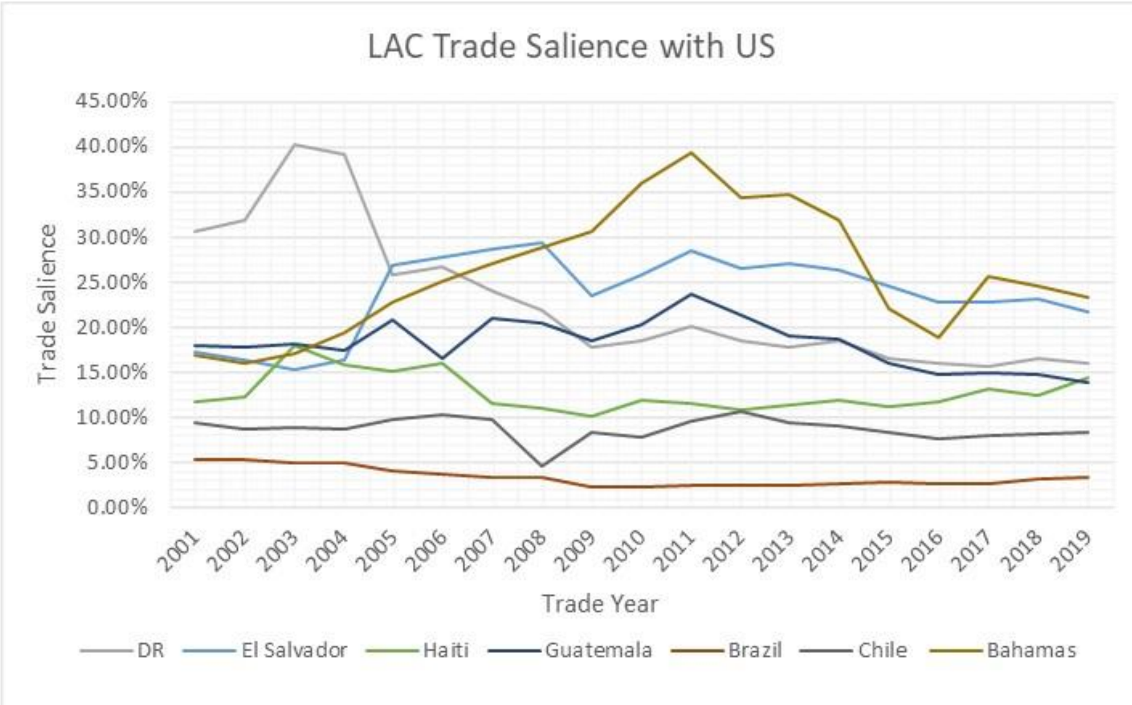
later regressions with ideal point distance, and it was therefore best to omit Panama from this study.

Of the trade saliences with the United States, we see that there are varying levels of salience, with peaks at 40% for some countries (such as the Bahamas and DR), and consistent levels around 20% for others (such as Guatemala and Haiti). However, even though there is a large range and varying values of salience, there is not much deviation for a country, in that there seems to be neither a significant decrease nor increase in trade salience over this period. As seen by the average salience between LAC and the U.S. in Figure 8, trade salience in 2001 and 2019 are both approximately 15%. We see periods of increase, but they are not sustained or exponential, as seen by the period of 2003-2008, just before the Great Recession. Relatively stable levels of trade salience between LAC and the U.S. support the argument that American interaction and engagement with LAC has been stagnant.

Trade salience between LAC and China, however, tells a much different story as seen in Figure 9. For all seven countries there has been an increase across this eighteen-year period. The most substantial increase has been for Guatemala, which is interesting as it recognizes Taiwan.[13] Guatemala continues to be a firm ally of Taiwan, and reaffirmed its stance after Nicaragua recently switched relations (Stott, 2021). However, the growth for El Salvador and the Dominican Republic, of approximately 6% and 3% respectively, was enough to switch relations in 2018 and engage in further opportunities with China through the BRI. Overall, looking at the average LAC salience with China in Figure 10, we see a steady increase from 2001 to 2015, and after a small decrease through 2016, see an increase again. Additionally, the steeper growth from 2013 through 2015 for LAC-China salience and a decline for LAC-U.S. salience in this period may be significant, as this period marks the rollout of the BRI. While LAC countries first joined a few years later, this early period may have seen an increase in engagement and trade with China for the purpose of entering the BRI. Increasing levels of trade salience between LAC and China from 2001-2019, evidences the growing importance of China for the region.

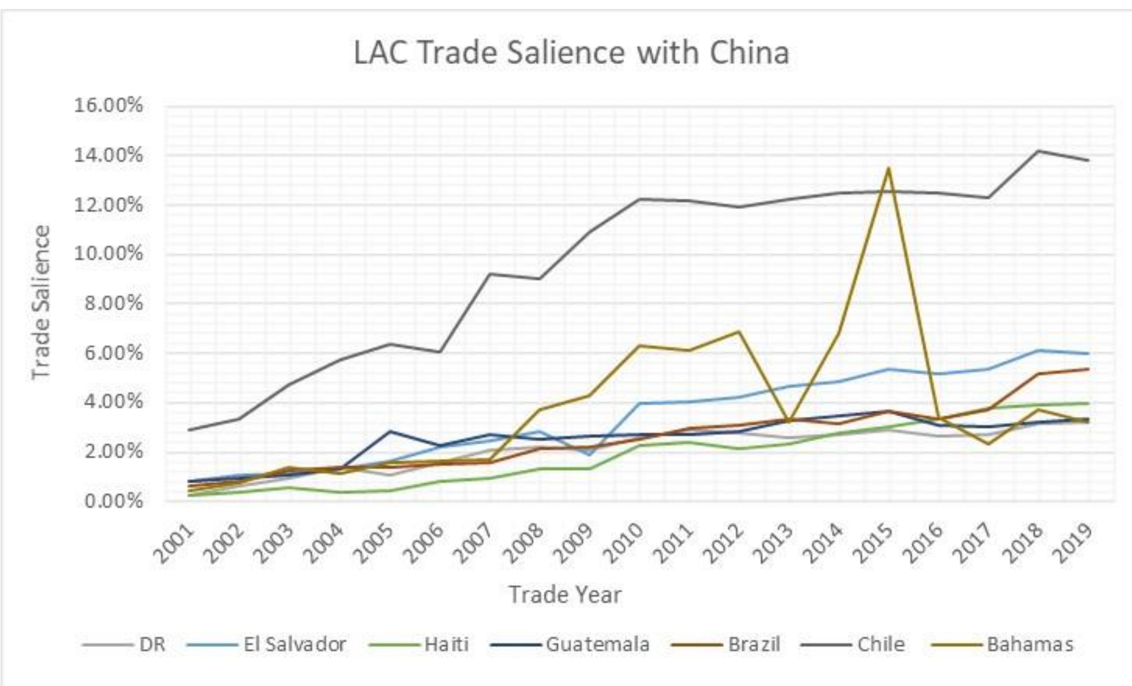
[13] It is unclear why the Bahamas had a spike in trade with China in 2015. Bahamas's Prime Minister Perry Christie did meet with President Xi in January of 2015, at the first meeting of China-CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) Forum. Both leaders pledged to increase cooperation between both countries, as well as China's cooperation with CARICOM and CELAC. See "CARICOM Chair Meets Chinese President" (2015) for more information on this meeting.

Figure 8 – Trade Salience between LAC Countries and the U.S. (2001-2019)



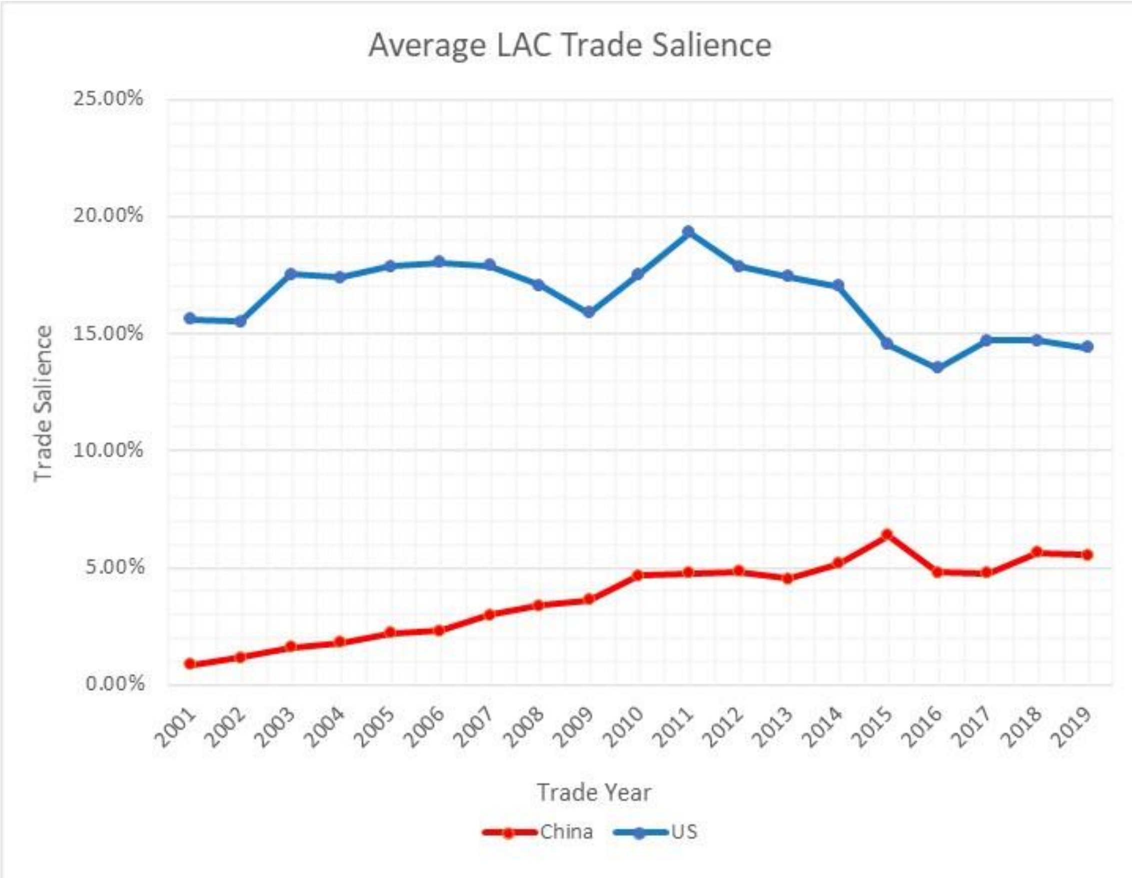
Source: Author's calculations using [OEC Country Profiles]; [World Bank GDP Indicators.]

Figure 9 – Trade Salience between LAC Countries and China (2001-2019)



Source: Author's calculations using [OEC Country Profiles]; [World Bank GDP Indicators.]

Figure 10 – Average LAC Trade Salience with the U.S. and China (2001-2019)

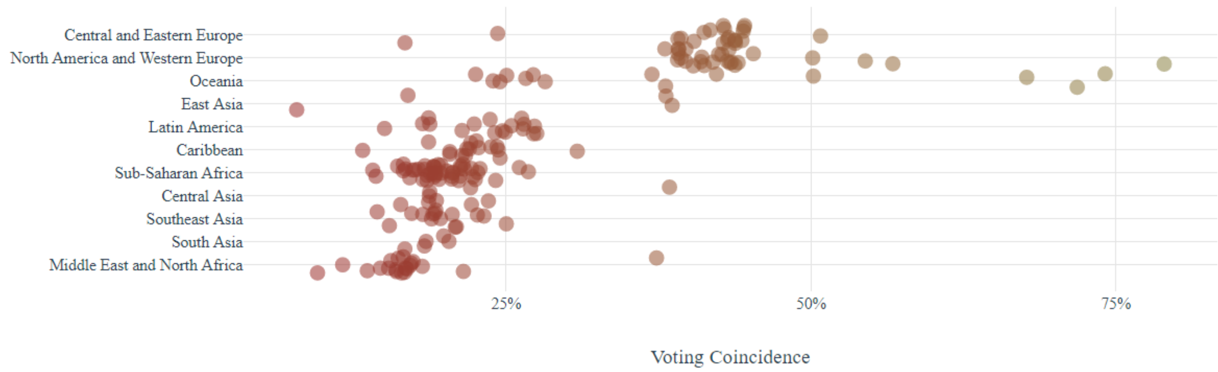


Source: Author's calculations using [OEC Country Profiles]; [World Bank GDP Indicators.]

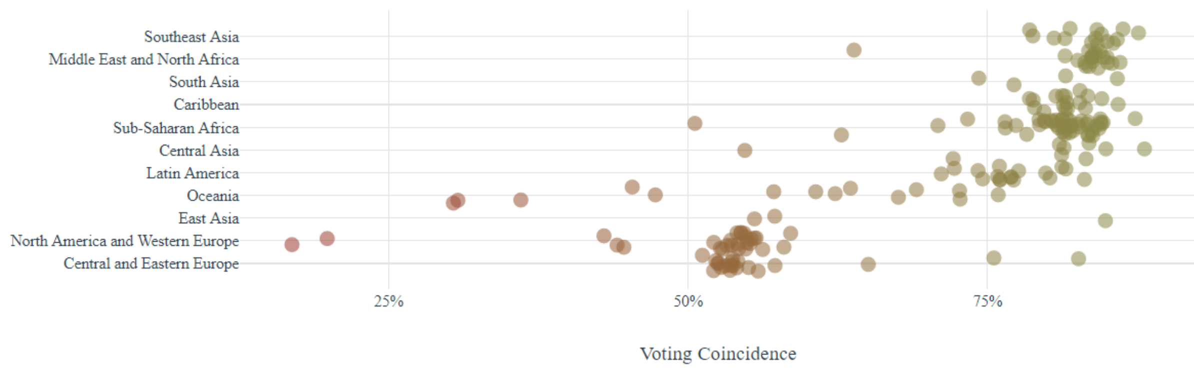
Voting in the United Nations General Assembly is mainly a symbolic act, with these resolutions being non-binding; however, they still record ideological leanings and points of agreement. The voting coincidence for 2001 – 2019 between China and all members of the UN, and the United States and all members of the UN, respectively can be seen in Figure 11. These plots show virtually a mirrored trend, with the United States rarely voting in agreement with other states, except for Israel and some Western nations, and China mostly voting in agreement with countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. The stark disparity of coincidences for the United States and China denotes a significant difference across all votes. Still, approximately 18% to 20% of votes concern Israeli-Palestinian issues, in which all nations vote against Israel, except for the United States and Israel (Fu, 2018). This may potentially skew data. However, Voeten, Bailey and Strezhnev describe methods that account for identical resolutions in the construction of their ideal point estimates which, as mentioned earlier, I use to construct my ideal point distance variable (Bailey et al, 2017, p. 437). The calculated ideal point distances can be found in Appendices B and C.

Figure 11 – Voting Coincidence of the U.S. and China in the UNGA (2001-2019)

Voting Coincidence of the United States with Members of the UNGA (2001-2019)



Voting Coincidence of China with Members of the UNGA (2001-2019)



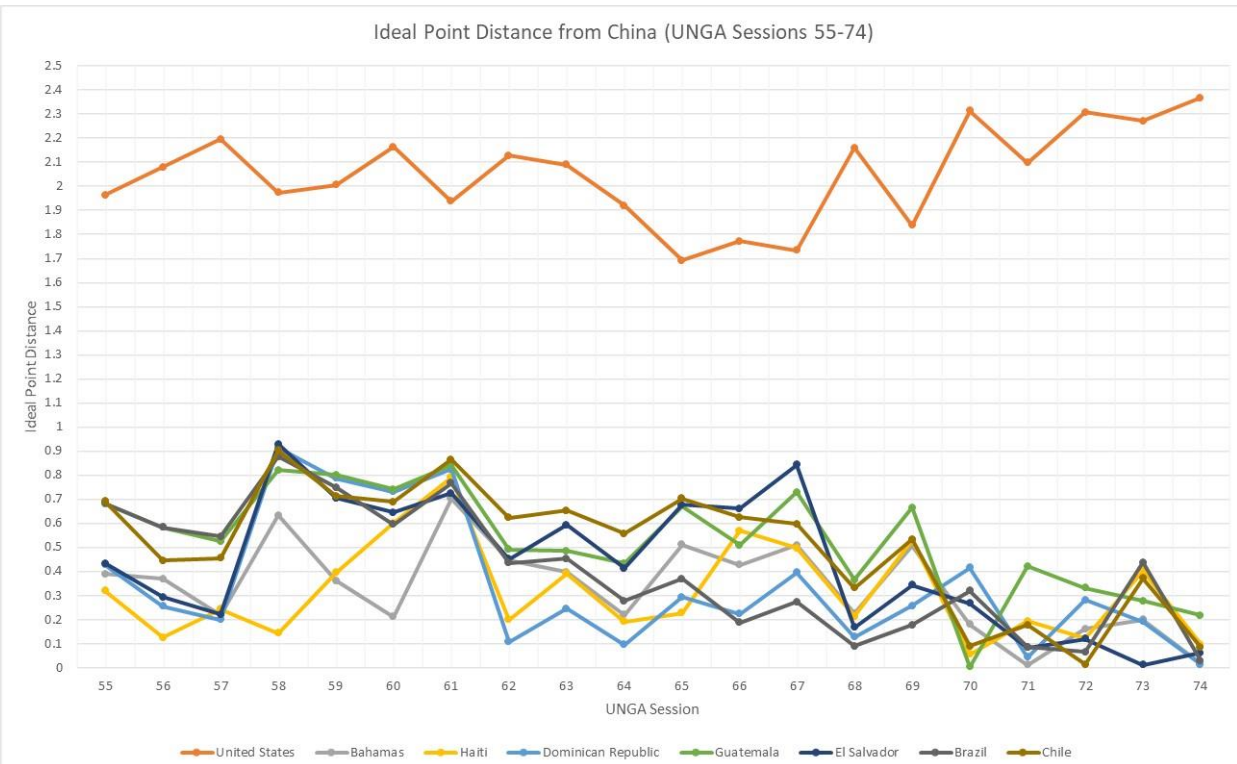
Source: Fu & pnlng (2019). See interactive graphic here.

Ideal point distances of LAC countries over UNGA sessions 55-74 (2000 – 2020) with China and the United States reflect the above trends of voting coincidences.[14] In Figure 12 we see the ideal point distances of the United States and the sample of LAC countries with respect to China. The United States maintains a substantially high distance from China over this period, while the LAC countries have a much smaller distance. Most importantly, there is a departure at session 67. This session partially takes place in 2013, with this year once again marking the start of the BRI. From this point, the distance of the United States to China increases even more and the distance of LAC countries to China becomes even smaller. The average of LAC point distances in Figure 13 in comparison to the United States more clearly demonstrates this shift. It is significant how the shifts for the U.S. and LAC countries occur during the same period, and are practically mirrored in movement.

[14] UNGA Sessions 55-74 roughly correspond to the years 2000 – 2020. A single UNGA session takes place over two years, starting from about October in the first year and concluding in September of the next year. For instance, session 55 took place from 2000 – 2001, session 56 from 2001 – 20002 and so on.

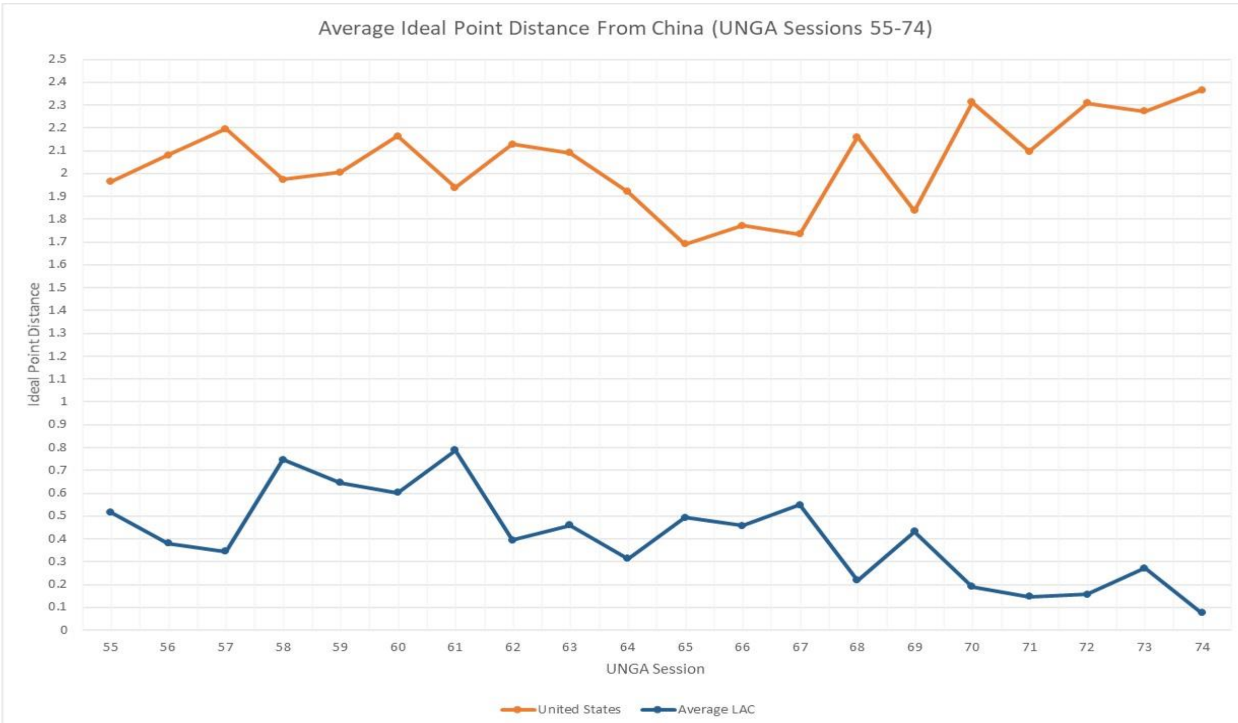
The ideal point distances of China and LAC from the U.S. correspondingly demonstrate an increasing distance as seen in Figure 14. Session 67 again marks a shift here, with the average ideal point distances increasing, but also becoming more similar as Figure 15 demonstrates. The similarity is especially prominent for sessions 71 – 74 (2017 – 2020). The previous rises in distance during the early 2000s can perhaps be attributed to dissatisfaction with the U.S.'s actions in the Middle East, specifically the Iraq War, as Kreps and Flores-Macías suggest and test for in their study (Flores-Macías & Kreps, 2013, p.362-363, 366). Similarly, some of the smallest point distances to the U.S. occur at session 65, which took place partly in 2011 when the Iraq War ended.

Figure 12 – Ideal Point Distances of the U.S. and LAC Sample to China (2001-2020)



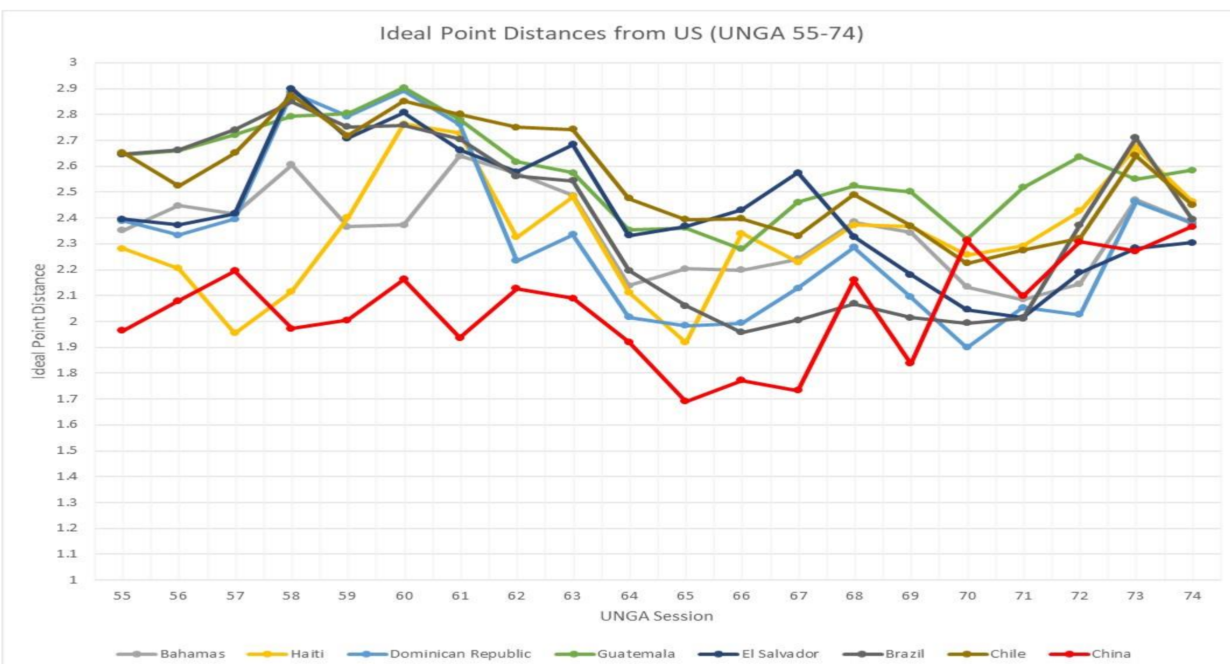
Source: Authors calculations using the ideal point estimates developed by Bailey et all, (2021).

Figure 13 – Ideal Point Distances of the U.S. and Average of LAC Sample to China (2001-2020)



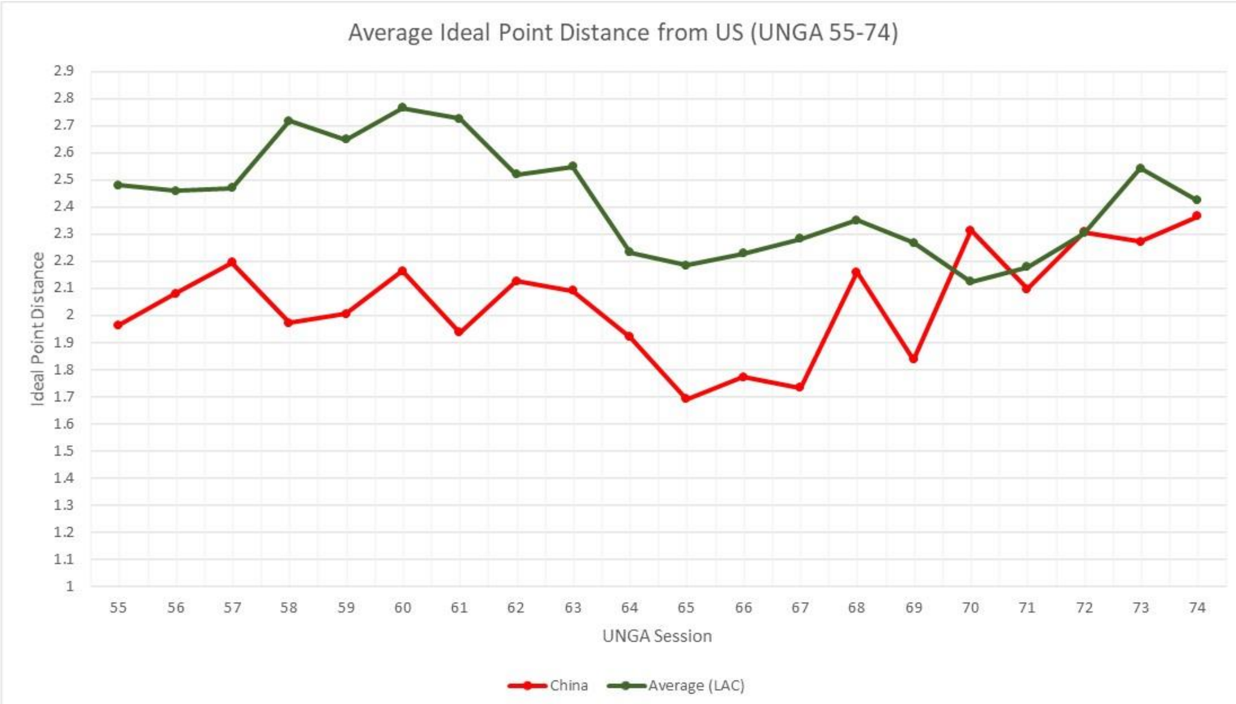
Source: Authors calculations using the ideal point estimates developed by Bailey et al, (2021).

Figure 14 – Ideal Point Distances of China and LAC Sample to the U.S. (2001-2020)



Source: Authors calculations using the ideal point estimates developed by Bailey et al, (2021).

Figure 15 – Ideal Point Distances of China and Average of LAC Sample to the U.S. (2001-2020)



Source: Authors calculations using the ideal point estimates developed by Bailey, Strezhnev & Voeten (2020).

I test two OLS models with both the raw data of the trade saliences and ideal point distances as well as the normalized values of these terms. Even though UNGA sessions take place over a period of two years, I associate them with only one year for the sake of this regression model. Session 55 would correspond to 2001 and so on, with session 73 being the last time period corresponding to 2019. Though ideal point estimates are available for session 74, there is no bilateral trade data available for 2020, which would be its corresponding trade year. The first model has trade salience, and an interactive term of trade salience multiplied by the post-2013 dummy variable as the independent variables, with ideal point distance being the dependent variable. The second model stresses the dummy variable further, with the independent variables being trade salience, the dummy variable by itself, and the dummy multiplied by trade salience, with ideal point distance as the dependent variable. The dummy variable here is represented by values of 0 and 1, in which 0 applies to years before 2013 and 1 applies to 2013 and all the years after. A lagged version of both models was also run, in which this tests if it takes longer for trade salience to have an impact. In this way, trade in year 1 affects ideal point distance in year 2, and so on. I found the second model for the raw data to have the most significant and consistent results, and will discuss these here.[15] Below in Table 3 is the output.[16]

[15] The data and outputs from the first model are available from the author upon request.
[16] The data from the second model is also available from the author upon request.

Table 3 – Ordinary Least Square Estimation of the Effect of Trade Salience on Ideal Point Distance, 2001-2019

Dependent Variable: Ideal Point Distance	United States (t)	United States (t-1)	China	China (t-1)
Coefficients:				
Intercept	2.533* (0.055)	2.475* (0.058)	0.464* (0.034)	0.465* (0.032)
Trade Salience (t)	-0.207 (0.280)		1.667 (0.858)	
Trade Salience (t-1)		0.036 (0.292)		1.719* (0.824)
Post-2013 Dummy	-0.252* (0.093)	-0.165 (0.101)	-0.203* (0.064)	-0.239* (0.065)
Post-2013 Dummy × $TS_{(t)}$	0.276 (0.522)		-1.309 (1.213)	
Post-2013 Dummy × $TS_{(t-1)}$		-0.146 (0.563)		-1.550 (1.213)

Note: All values are rounded to the third decimal. Standard errors are reported in parentheses. All significance tests are two-tailed: * indicates *p-value* < 0.05. Also note that the trade salience alone coefficient in the contemporary model for China was nearly significant with a p-value of 0.054.

Coefficients in a linear regression denote the value the dependent variable is expected to change by when the independent variable increases by one. A positive coefficient indicates a direct relationship, in which an increase in the independent variable results in the increase of the dependent variable. A negative coefficient indicates an inverse relationship, where an increase in the independent variable results in the decrease of the dependent variable. In this test, a positive coefficient means that when a country has more trade with an actor (China or the U.S.) it is ideologically further from the actor, while a negative coefficient means the opposite in which a country that has more trade with an actor it is ideologically closer to that actor. For my regressions, I expected negative post-2013 dummy and interactive dummy coefficients for China. In other words, I expected that the increase in trade salience has contributed to the decrease in ideal point distances of LAC countries to China. For the United States, I did not expect any significant relationship between trade salience and ideal point distance, as trade salience has remained relatively steady, without any significant increase or decrease, during the 2001-2019 period.

My results reflect these predictions, but also some unexpected findings. For instance, for China in both the contemporary and lagged regressions, we see trade salience alone having a positive coefficient, while both the post-2103 dummy and interactive dummy variables have negative coefficients. The pre-2013 positivity of trade salience alone is an interesting result, as it differs from the outcome found by Flores-Macías and Kreps. The positive trade salience alone coefficient suggests that prior to 2013 countries could be more ideologically different from China. However, adding the interactive variable (though non-significant) causes this positive relationship to become smaller and closer to zero, suggesting that countries would be less ideologically different from China post-2013. Additionally, the significant negative post-2013 dummy demonstrates that irrespective of trade salience, the ideological distance between LAC countries and China has decreased post-2013. The year 2013 is indeed found to mark a shift. For the U.S., the results are mostly insignificant, meaning much value and interpretation cannot be attached to its coefficient estimates. However, the fact that the results for the U.S. are insignificant supports the argument that trade salience and ideal point distance have no significant relationship for the United States before or after 2013. A country's trade relationship with the U.S. is less likely to have an effect on ideological leanings. My results for China and the United States therefore lend empirical support to the notion that increased trade relations with China lead to foreign policy convergence in LAC countries.

Discussion and Analysis

Where does the U.S. stand in "their backyard"?:

Overview of U.S. Aid and Trade Policy in LAC

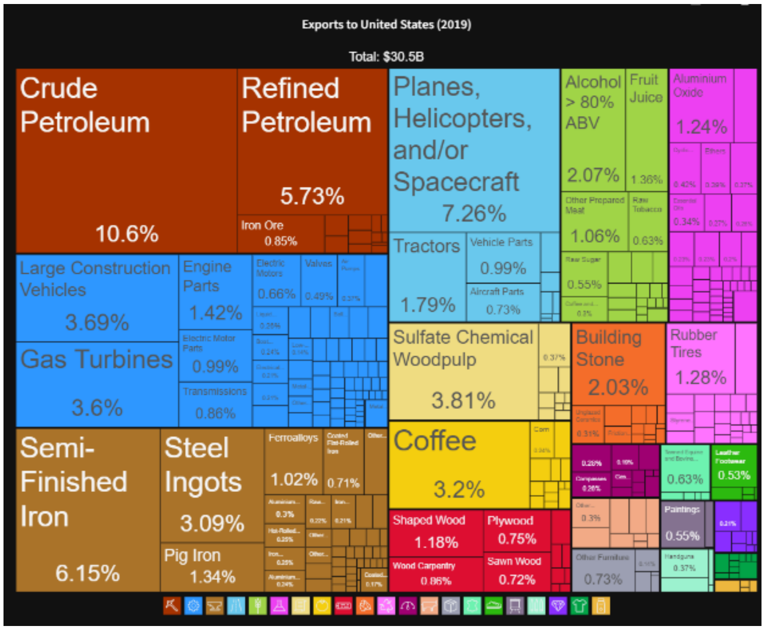
The Monroe Doctrine in 1823 and Roosevelt Corollary in 1903 solidified the preeminence of the United States in the Western Hemisphere over the influence of any other "superpower", especially European states. Throughout the 20th century, the U.S. "maintained a near monopoly on weapons sales, foreign aid, military and police training, and development assistance throughout Latin America", with only the exclusion of Cuba (Farah & Yates, 2020, p. 46). The U.S. led hegemony and subscription to the Washington Consensus for the economic liberalization and expansion of democracy in LAC culminated in 1994 with the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA, which is now the United States – Mexico – Canada Agreement or USMCA). In 2019, the U.S. imported more than $108 billion in Latin American goods and exported $162 billion in goods to the region (Farah & Yates, 2020, p. 49). The Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) also began towards the end of the 20th century in 1983, and continues to be a "cornerstone of U.S. – Caribbean economic engagement", as a major source for foreign assistance, trade and the maintenance of diplomatic relations between the Caribbean and United States (Runde et al, 2021a, p. 1). In the 21st century, the U.S. has been the Caribbean's largest trading partner, and in turn "the Caribbean is the United States's sixth largest trading partner, with $35.3 billion flowing between them each year".[17] The economic

[17] See Runde et al, (2021a), p. 4. The trade volume estimate is based off 2018 values.

presence of the United States in LAC has been unrivaled since the start of the 20th century. The composition of its trade with LAC is also more diverse, unlike the emerging China – LAC relationship that is heavily dependent on the import of refined technological goods from China and the export of ore and petroleum products. Comparing the previous example of Brazil-China and Chile-China trade with the below Brazil-U.S. and Chile-U.S. trade in Figure 17 and Figure 18 demonstrates this difference.

Figure 17 – Composition of Brazil's Trade with the U.S. (2019)

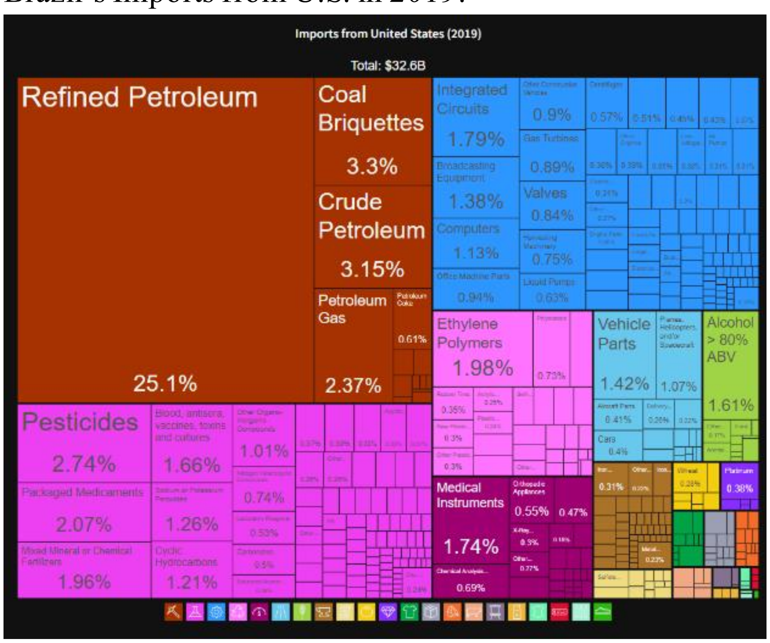
Brazil's Exports to the U.S in 2019:



Totaling 1.28% of U.S.'s Imports

Totaling 13.2% of Brazil's Exports

Brazil's Imports from U.S. in 2019:



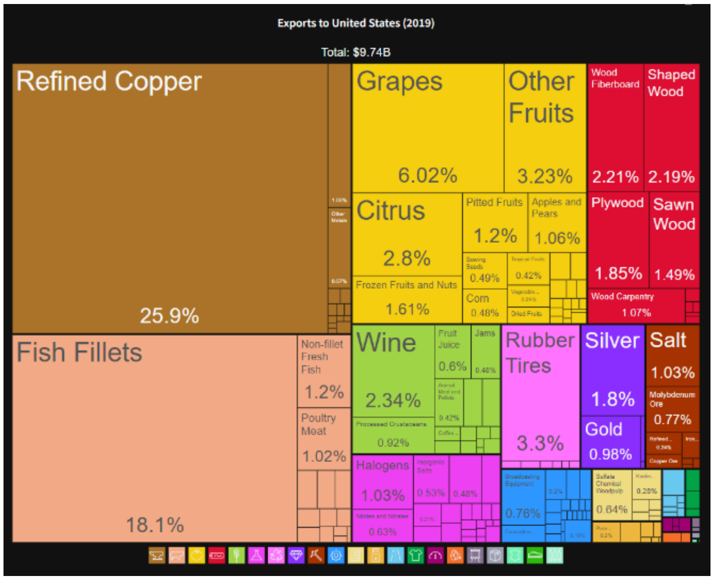
Totaling 18.4% of Brazil's Imports

Totaling 2.15% of U.S.'s Exports

Source: [OEC Country Profiles]

Figure 18 – Composition of Chile's Trade with the U.S. (2019)

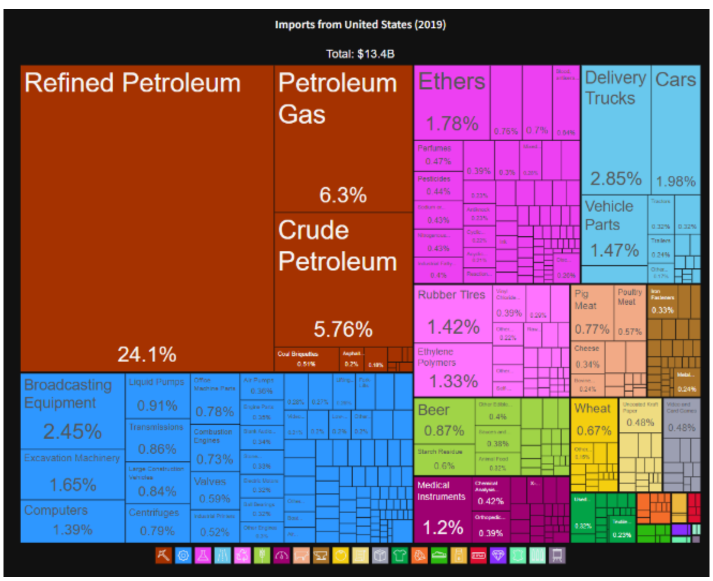
Chile's Exports to the U.S in 2019:



Totaling 0.41% of U.S.'s Imports

Totaling 13.7% of Chile's Exports

Chile's Imports from U.S. in 2019:



Totaling 20.0% of Chile's Imports

Totaling 0.89% of U.S.'s Exports

Source: [OEC Country Profiles]

Coinciding with economic dominance, the United States also consolidated a political hegemony at the turn of the century. "With the possible exception of Brazil and the obligated exception of Cuba, Latin American countries tended to assume that no other power (regional or global) had the economic, political, or military strength to be a real counterweight against the United States" (León-Manríquez, 2016, p. 64). The collapse of the USSR, and caution of the European Union (EU), Japan and China in interfering in LAC affairs allowed the U.S. to emerge in the 1990s as a leading "hegemony by default" (León-Manríquez, 2016, p. 65). However, despite the prominent and deep economic ties between the U.S. and LAC, in the past two decades the U.S. has undervalued its relationship with Latin America and the Caribbean. American foreign policy goals in Latin American have especially become divergent and are contrary to the demands and direction of various countries, while opportunities for further engagement in the Caribbean have been ignored. There is growing difference in perspectives of the political, social and economic space of LAC between states in the region and the United States.

For the Caribbean specifically, the CBI has been the only robust program for U.S. economic engagement with the region, and was originally launched with the main intention of combatting USSR influence and strengthening democracies in the region. It consists of two trade programs: the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA) and the U.S – Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA) which incorporate 17 Caribbean countries in total. The CBTPA is set to expire in 2030, and the only amendments to the CBI occurred with the HOPE and HELP Acts in 2006 and 2008 to provide additional access to trade and benefits for Haiti.[18] While trade between the Caribbean and U.S. has been significant and at a great volume, new investments and development programs are lacking. The relationship between the U.S. and Caribbean nations has been stagnant, leaving opportunities for 21st century development in energy, technology, manufacturing, tourism and services unrealized. The presence of Chinese firms and development funding has increased in order to fulfill this deficit.

A variety of regional as well as seemingly unrelated international developments have caused this rift between Latin American and U.S. relations. The emergence of the "new left" throughout much of South America is one factor that has created this distance.[19] In the 2000s, leftist parties began winning elections, notably in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela. These governments departed from the embrace of neoliberalism and the Washington Consensus that the previous right-wing or centrist governments held. Skepticism of free-trade agreements (FTAs) and orthodox economic policies that led to inflation caused the new left to carry out substantial social reforms. Growth in the past two decades has been attributed to these reforms and engagement with new markets, specifically with China. Brazil has also increased its regional leadership during this period, especially within MERCOSUR and by increasing FDI flows to its neighboring countries. The failure of the United States' Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), which would have eliminated or reduced trade barriers among 34 countries in the Americas and Caribbean, is a reflection of distrust and a departure from U.S. led economic development.

The shifting of U.S. foreign policy interests itself has narrowed and limited its relationship with Latin America. After September 11, 2001, U.S. foreign policy prioritized the Middle East and interventions in that region. Additionally, with the growth of China's economic and political influence in the past two decades, U.S. action in the Asia Pacific has also increased. Latin America has fallen into the background of U.S. foreign policy, with intense focus only on trade, counternarcotics, immigration and migration enforcement and cultural ties. However, these interests of security only reflect U.S. priorities and not states' interests of more robust judicial and electoral reforms, and long-term development. U.S. humanitarian and development funding to Latin America has fallen by nearly a

[18] See Runde et al, (2021a), p. 1. HOPE Acts stands for: Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement Acts, HELP stands for: Haiti Economic Lift Program.

[19] See León-Manríquez (2016), p. 66, for a discussion on the development of the "new left" and its policies.

third in recent years, and the United States' Southern Command remains the smallest of all regional and issue Combatant Commands, further limiting engagement (Farah & Yates, 2020, p. 49).[20] The disinterest and divergence of U.S. policy goals in LAC has allowed space for China to emerge as a prominent actor in the region.

Rebalancing vs. Direct Competition: China as an Alternative Partner

While the U.S. remains the Caribbean's and Latin America's largest trading partner, China has rapidly emerged as a crucial second. Between 2002 and 2019, trade between China and the Caribbean grew eightfold to $8 billion, and already by 2003 China became the number one or number two export partner for Chile, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Venezuela.[21] As discussed, while there are concerns about an imbalance and disparity in goods traded, this economic relationship between China and LAC has driven growth in the region. For instance, Chinese demand for goods during the 2008 and 2009 financial crisis enabled many South American countries to weather the recession relatively well (Ferchen, 2021, p. 101). The high participation of Caribbean and Central American nations in the BRI reflects the hope and potential for similarly benefitting from commercial opportunities with China. As will be seen in the last section, increased Chinese investment in LAC has crucially filled a void for infrastructure and sector development, even if there are concerns regarding sustainability and transparency.

Apart from the economic implications of increased engagement with China, the expansion of the BRI to LAC inevitably raises the question of U.S – China power competition. The absence of innovative U.S. development programs in the region is a practical cause for increased Chinese investment and furthers goals of "south-south" cooperation; however, China's engagement with LAC also directly acts on the valuable opportunity of building political allies in a region that has been dominated by the U.S. for a century. Similarly, as previously discussed, the majority of Taiwan's allies are in LAC and increased trade, aid and investment by China has caused some of those allies to switch their recognitions. While China is overtly and actively challenging Taiwan in this respect, China's action in LAC is not a "lightning rod in the increasingly heated US-China great power competition" as some writers argue (Ferchen, 2021, p. 106). Realistically, the BRI entails the emergence of China as an alternative partner for investment and development, rather than a direct confrontation to existing U.S. relations and programs.

Latin American and Caribbean nations recognize the existence of U.S. – China competition, and their actions increasingly demonstrate that they act to "exploit the advantages" from this competition, resulting in a rebalancing of U.S. – China power in the region, unlike the previous "winner take all" outcome of Cold War competition between the U.S. and Soviet Union (O'Neil, 2021). They are using their growing strategic importance in this competition in order to compel each power to act, such as for China to increase investment and for the U.S. to acknowledge the country's positions on certain topics. Additionally, LAC nations are resisting to choose sides, and rather only side with the U.S. or China for the policies most important to each nation respectively. For instance, while we see a quantitative increase in non-alliance voting with the

[20] Combatant Commands (COCOMS) are an extension of the U.S. Department of Defense. They are regional or issued based centers for commanding U.S. military forces in that area. They also play a large role in the advising and implementation of U.S. foreign policy abroad. See Feickert (2013, January 3) for more on COCOMS.

[21] See Runde et al, (2021), p. 4; See Ferchen (2021), p. 100, for more on these rankings.

U.S. in the UNGA, qualitatively there are still certain issues that nations consistently vote in alliance with the U.S. on rather than China. As explained by Flores-Macías and Kreps:

> China could be increasing its power and influence but without dislocating the influence and interests of the United States ... China's trading partners could be acting strategically, making concessions to China in the area of human rights while simultaneously appealing to the United States on issues that are known to be important to it, such as terrorism, proliferation, and the conflict in the Middle East. (Flores-Macías & Kreps, 2013, p. 368-369)

Latin American and Caribbean countries are not simply "pawns" in U.S. – China competition, and rather are simultaneously acting to balance American and Chinese influence in the region while promoting their own individual interests.

G7's Build Back Better World (B3W)

The United States has slowly begun to acknowledge the economic and political importance of the BRI for Chinese influence in Latin America and the Caribbean. During the June G7 summit of this year, President Biden and the G7 leaders announced the "Build Back Better World" (B3W) initiative, which is a "values-driven, high-standard, and transparent infrastructure partnership" that aims to develop $40+ trillion in infrastructure projects for low and middle-income countries across the world (*FACT SHEET: President Biden*, 2021). This program would be primarily funded by FDI and national development agencies with a focus on addressing climate change, health systems and security, digital technology, and gender equity and equality (*FACT SHEET: President Biden*, 2021). Even though B3W does not officially launch until next year, the groundwork for this initiative has begun, with U.S. Deputy National Security Adviser Daleep Singh visiting Colombia, Ecuador and Panama in September for a "listening session" and visiting Ghana and Senegal in November (Widakuswara, 2021). B3W aims to have an impact by 2035.

B3W is a direct counter to the BRI, yet it does not compete with all aspects of the BRI and has its own challenges as well. B3W is solely focused on infrastructure projects, while the BRI encompasses a wider variety of investment, trade, and people-to-people cooperation programs. In order for B3W to be a form of "strategic competition" with China, it needs to readily organize and expand to catch up to the BRI which has been in place for eight years (*FACT SHEET: President Biden*, 2021). Additionally, heavily relying on FDI can be a challenge considering recent investment trends. The pandemic has seen a flight to safety, in which from "January to March 2020, capital flows to Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico swung from a positive USD $18.6 billion to a *negative* USD $15.6 billion" (Ray, 2021). Additionally, even before the pandemic, Western investors had been selling off infrastructure assets to Chinese investors and state-owned enterprises, as a result of slowing growth in Latin America. B3W can reignite investment in the region, but it must do more to incentivize investors. Focusing on "value-driven" projects that focus on environmental and social sustainability can be one way to rebuild this trust and interest, and be achieved through bilateral investment treaties (BITs) that include protections, clauses and regulations for these issue areas (Ray, 2021). Additionally, B3W would give the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) a much needed opportunity to reevaluate dated strategies and increase capital flows to the region (Runde, Cordell, Bandura & Fernandez, 2021b). China's two primary policy banks, the China Development Bank (CDB) and Export-Import Bank of China (ExlmBank) made no new financing commitments with LAC governments in 2020, increasing the agency of other institutions and the U.S. to develop new programs (Ray & Wang, 2019). B3W was rolled out in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, but is a much needed initiative to innovate U.S. investment and engagement with LAC. The ongoing development and structuring of the B3W must crucially incorporate and message its goals.

Regardless of the differences between B3W and BRI, the existence of both programs can create a favorable arena of investment for LAC. As seen by the unequal rollout of Covid-19 vaccines, having multiple actors diversifies and increases the resources available. LAC has received millions of doses from American (500 million), Western European (400 million), Russian (350 million) and Chinese (350 million) producers (Ray, 2021). Similarly, potential competition between the BRI and B3W can incentivize multiple investment opportunities and terms that reflect a country's development vision. However, a power competition can still prevail, with Wang Wenbin, spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry stating:

> The G7 should contribute more to helping developing countries accelerate their development rather than drive conflicts and divergences to disrupt the process of global economic recovery ... Any attempt to meddle in China's internal affairs, undermine China's sovereignty, or tarnish China's image in disregard of basic norms of international relations is doomed to fail. (Jessop, 2021)

Additionally, former Prime Minister of Jamaica, Bruce Golding, worries that a divisive Cold War-like competition between the U.S. and China is likely, in that the G7 is "almost certain to insist on loan, grant and investment conditions designed to discourage recipient countries from engagement with China's Belt and Road" (Jessop, 2021). LAC countries may them be forced to limit their investors and opportunities. He stresses that LAC's generally stable and nonconflictual relations with both the U.S. and China can be jeopardized. The emergence of the B3W may create healthy as well as destructive competition with the BRI. Latin American and Caribbean nations need to carefully minimize conflict while acquiring beneficial opportunities; however, the stances of the U.S. and China towards eachother will invariably set the terms for all relations.

Nearly a Decade In: Reforms and the Future of the BRI

The Post-Pandemic Future

The response of China to the Covid-19 Pandemic has dramatically altered perceptions of the nation and the BRI. China retreated early on in the pandemic, and no new MOUs or projects for the BRI were established in 2020. Also, negative perceptions from the government's handling of the pandemic caused countries to draw back from China as well. However, China has recently undertaken a strategic "vaccine diplomacy". The provision of medical aid and vaccines to countries has "[achieved] three interests—drawing attention away from the Chinese Communist Party's inadequate early response to the virus, seizing on a moment of perceived U.S. retrenchment from global leadership, and reinforcing existing investments in development spending" (Kurtzer & Gonzalez, 2020). Additionally, while China is reaffirming its relationship with current partners, its actions have also resulted in new ones. As discussed earlier, a few days after Nicaragua ended diplomatic relations with Taiwan it received one million Covid-19 vaccines from China. The recent distribution of vaccines and medical supplies has also revived the concept of the "Health Silk Road". First proposed by China's National Health and Family Planning Commission in 2015, the Health Silk Road would incorporate disease prevention and control into the BRI framework (Ferchen, 2021, p. 106-107). This initiative would be in line with China's standing humanitarian aid policy, as it is restricted solely to medical emergencies and natural disasters (excluding need caused by armed conflict). It could also be connected to the schools and hospitals already being built under the BRI. The Covid-19 Pandemic has revitalized the possibility of the BRI expanding further into services and training.

Another aspect of the BRI that must be reexamined due to the pandemic is the viability of its supply chain. Supply chain disruptions and delays have been seen across the world, due to a lack of workers but also from the stress on dated systems and inefficient routes. The blockage of the Suez Canal earlier in March of this year is the most significant example, and it is estimated that the one week it was closed cost global trade between $6 billion to $10 billion, and a backlog that lasted nearly two weeks ("BRI Supply Chains", 2021). During this period, cross-border freight trains were looked to as an alternative, with reduced travel and processing time. The BRI's investment in new ports, railways, and roads across all continents, as well as the high level of automation and digitization in these constructions are "changing the logistical landscape" of supply chains ("BRI Supply Chains", 2021). The BRI can capitalize on this need and opportunity, if its structure can develop and produce projects that are more reliable and trusted in the future.

Possibilities for Green Investment

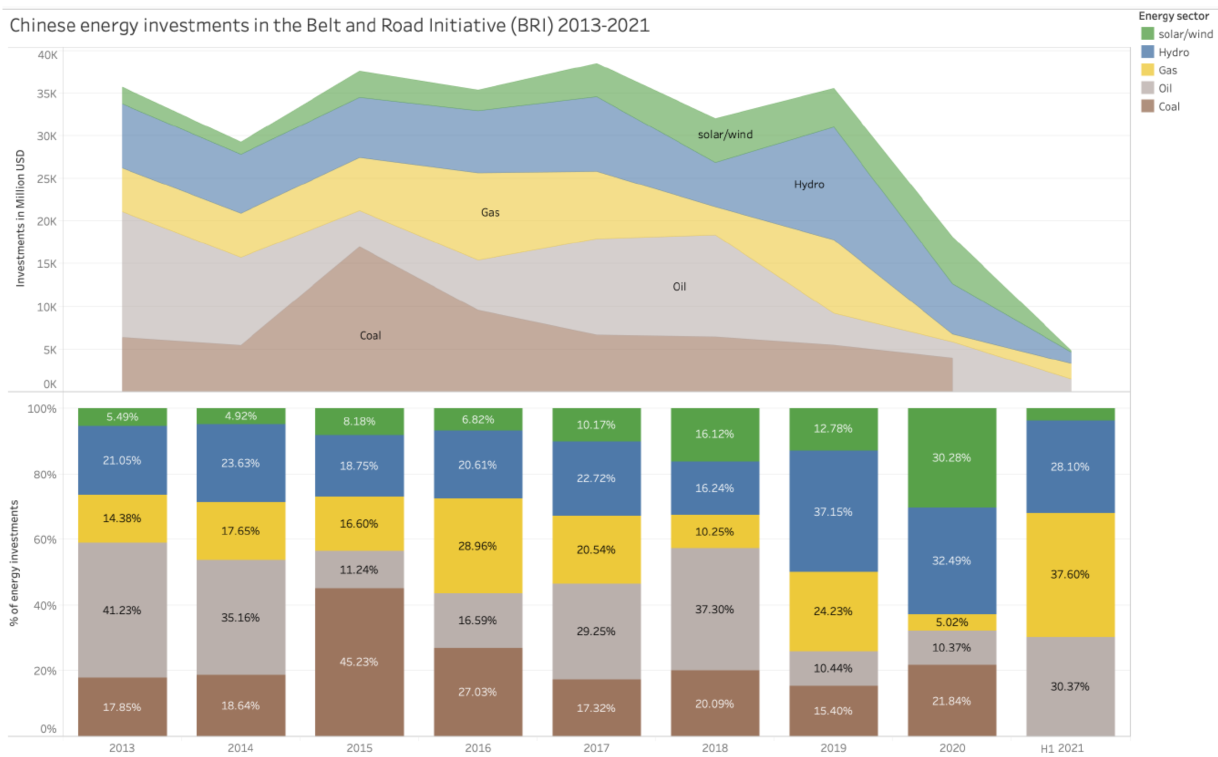
There is an immense opportunity for BRI investment in green technology and energy. The majority of BRI's large investments are in energy, but in a shift from previous years, there were no investments in coal power or coal mining in the first half of 2021 (Nedopil Wang, 2021, p. 9). However, as seen by Figure 16, oil investments were higher this year than in previous years. Also, the BRI is engaged in solar and wind projects, but these investments at the beginning of this year are 90% less than they were last year. It is a conflicting message, with MOFCOM and the Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) calling for stronger environmental standards in BRI projects, while investments in oil are larger than they ever were before (Nedopil Wang, 2021, p. 18). Still, the CIDCA signed an MoU with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), pledging to assist developing countries in the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Salame & Carter, 2021). This is the first MoU the IAEA has signed with a national development agency, and which also signals a willingness for China to cooperate multilaterally on global sustainability goals.

Financing innovative green development projects would attract more countries to the BRI and further China's goal of "south-south cooperation". CARICOM's Environmental Policy Action Plan is a central part of its aim to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, with foreign investments in green energy having the ability to contribute to these goals (Nurse, 2017).[22]

[22] See *Caribbean Community Environmental* (2017), for the full action plan and draft of framework.

Additionally, green initiatives may be the incentive and opportunity that would prompt Brazil, China's largest trading partner in LAC, to join the BRI. Brazil is the largest recipient of Chinese investment in LAC already, receiving $55 billion over the past decade (Studart & Myers, 2020). With substantial relations and investments already, having Brazil as a starting point for new green development projects would reimagine and strengthen this relationship even further. Relations have deteriorated with President Jair Bolsonaro being a critic of China, but China has previously been unable to invest in infrastructure projects regardless (Studart & Myers, 2020). Brazil's upcoming presidential election in 2022 could result in a change in leadership, and China has been investing in other BRI-type investments such as in energy with hydropower. A sustainability focus would benefit Brazil, which has seen rising inequality, unemployment and low productivity in recent years. A sustainability focused project model would address challenges in infrastructure and agriculture, which are Brazil's most important sectors. This kind of sector development in partnership with China could also potentially improve the composition of Brazil's exports to China, with the ability to sustain China's demand for soy while also developing other sectors to diversify exports.

Figure 16 – Energy Investments Through the BRI (2013-2021)



Source: Nedopil Wang (2021), p. 10.

Conclusion

The rollout of China's Belt and Road Initiative to Latin America and the Caribbean has seen the promulgation of old issues, but also new opportunities. China is strategically using the BRI to establish trade relations and investment programs that benefit its own national interests, at the expense of recipient countries. However, despite the risks and drawbacks, these projects provide much need funding for countries across the region. Focusing on the sustainability goals of receiving countries can improve the implementation and increase the long-term benefits of these investments. The growth of Chinese investment and influence in LAC can also be seen as the building of an alternative space to U.S. hegemony and aid in the region. Countries are finding innovative opportunities with China as their partner, with this potential outweighing the economic risks and political concessions that may be made. Additionally, a renewed interest in LAC from the United States and Western multilateral institutions can increase competition and the number of funding opportunities available. This situation may result in conflict, but may also allow nations to advocate and bargain for terms and investments that reflect their aims. Increased investments in green energy and post-pandemic reforms to the BRI may also create a more favorable situation.

The foreign policy repercussions of the BRI may be even greater than its economic impact. The "success" of the BRI can be seen in the development of new allies for China across the world and access to their markets and resources. These allies have advanced Chinese foreign policy goals, such as global disengagement with Taiwan and China having greater influence in multilateral institutions. This conclusion has also been found to be empirically supported by a data analysis of trade salience and ideal point distances of UNGA votes. Foreign policy is crucially tied to investment, with multiple intentions and goals behind an economic initiative. Examining the foreign policy consequences of the BRI will better inform future reforms and possibilities for all recipients and actors in LAC.

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Appendix A – Trade Saliences of LAC Countries with China and the U.S. (2001 – 2019)

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
CHINA																			
DR	0.002	0.006	0.009	0.014	0.011	0.016	0.021	0.022	0.020	0.026	0.029	0.028	0.026	0.027	0.029	0.026	0.027	0.031	0.032
El Salvador	0.008	0.011	0.011	0.013	0.017	0.022	0.025	0.028	0.019	0.039	0.040	0.042	0.046	0.048	0.053	0.051	0.054	0.061	0.060
Haiti	0.002	0.004	0.005	0.004	0.004	0.008	0.009	0.013	0.013	0.022	0.024	0.021	0.023	0.027	0.030	0.034	0.038	0.039	0.039
Guatemala	0.008	0.010	0.010	0.013	0.028	0.022	0.027	0.025	0.026	0.027	0.027	0.028	0.033	0.034	0.037	0.031	0.030	0.032	0.033
Brazil	0.006	0.008	0.012	0.014	0.014	0.015	0.016	0.021	0.022	0.025	0.029	0.031	0.033	0.031	0.036	0.033	0.037	0.051	0.053
Chile	0.029	0.034	0.047	0.057	0.063	0.060	0.092	0.090	0.109	0.122	0.122	0.119	0.122	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.123	0.142	0.138
Bahamas	0.004	0.008	0.014	0.011	0.016	0.016	0.017	0.037	0.043	0.063	0.061	0.069	0.032	0.068	0.135	0.034	0.023	0.037	0.032
US																			
DR	0.306	0.318	0.402	0.391	0.258	0.268	0.241	0.219	0.178	0.185	0.201	0.185	0.178	0.186	0.166	0.161	0.157	0.165	0.160
El Salvador	0.173	0.163	0.153	0.163	0.269	0.278	0.286	0.293	0.235	0.258	0.284	0.266	0.270	0.264	0.245	0.228	0.227	0.231	0.216
Haiti	0.118	0.123	0.180	0.158	0.151	0.159	0.116	0.110	0.100	0.120	0.116	0.109	0.114	0.120	0.113	0.117	0.131	0.124	0.143
Guatemala	0.180	0.179	0.181	0.175	0.208	0.165	0.209	0.204	0.185	0.203	0.236	0.214	0.191	0.186	0.161	0.148	0.150	0.148	0.139
Brazil	0.053	0.054	0.049	0.049	0.041	0.037	0.033	0.034	0.022	0.022	0.024	0.025	0.025	0.026	0.028	0.027	0.027	0.032	0.034
Chile	0.093	0.088	0.089	0.087	0.097	0.103	0.097	0.046	0.083	0.078	0.096	0.107	0.093	0.091	0.083	0.076	0.079	0.082	0.083
Bahamas	0.170	0.160	0.171	0.195	0.227	0.251	0.270	0.288	0.307	0.359	0.393	0.343	0.348	0.319	0.220	0.188	0.257	0.246	0.233
AVERAGE																			
China	0.009	0.011	0.016	0.018	0.022	0.023	0.029	0.034	0.036	0.046	0.047	0.048	0.045	0.052	0.064	0.048	0.047	0.056	0.055
US	0.156	0.155	0.175	0.174	0.179	0.180	0.179	0.170	0.159	0.175	0.193	0.178	0.174	0.170	0.145	0.135	0.147	0.147	0.144

Note: Trade Salience was graphed in Figures 8-10 as a percentage. It is reported here to the third decimal.

Appendix B – Ideal Point Distances from the U.S. (Sessions 55-74)

Session	Bahamas	Haiti	Dominican Republic	Guatemala	El Salvador	Brazil	Chile	China	Average (LAC)
55	2.352	2.281	2.389	2.644	2.395	2.646	2.652	1.963	2.455
56	2.447	2.205	2.334	2.661	2.372	2.662	2.523	2.079	2.456
57	2.414	1.953	2.395	2.721	2.416	2.741	2.650	2.195	2.475
58	2.604	2.116	2.886	2.792	2.899	2.849	2.874	1.972	2.697
59	2.366	2.399	2.792	2.804	2.708	2.752	2.717	2.004	2.638
60	2.372	2.762	2.892	2.903	2.807	2.758	2.851	2.162	2.752
61	2.638	2.727	2.762	2.779	2.661	2.704	2.801	1.937	2.720
62	2.572	2.325	2.234	2.617	2.577	2.560	2.750	2.127	2.538
63	2.485	2.481	2.334	2.574	2.683	2.543	2.742	2.089	2.571
64	2.138	2.111	2.015	2.352	2.332	2.196	2.475	1.919	2.246
65	2.202	1.918	1.983	2.360	2.368	2.060	2.393	1.691	2.197
66	2.197	2.339	1.993	2.280	2.431	1.957	2.396	1.771	2.228
67	2.240	2.229	2.127	2.461	2.575	2.005	2.329	1.732	2.292
68	2.384	2.372	2.287	2.524	2.326	2.068	2.489	2.159	2.367
69	2.343	2.367	2.094	2.502	2.180	2.014	2.369	1.837	2.306
70	2.134	2.257	1.898	2.316	2.045	1.992	2.223	2.312	2.176
71	2.084	2.290	2.054	2.517	2.013	2.011	2.274	2.096	2.217
72	2.145	2.427	2.025	2.636	2.188	2.372	2.320	2.306	2.335
73	2.470	2.673	2.462	2.549	2.283	2.709	2.642	2.271	2.568
74	2.382	2.463	2.379	2.583	2.303	2.395	2.451	2.365	2.447

Note: Values are rounded to the third decimal.

Appendix C – Ideal Point Distances from China (Sessions 55-74)

Session	United States	Bahamas	Haiti	Dominican Republic	Guatemala	El Salvador	Brazil	Chile	Average LAC
55	1.963	0.389	0.318	0.426	0.681	0.432	0.683	0.690	0.492
56	2.079	0.368	0.126	0.255	0.582	0.293	0.583	0.444	0.377
57	2.195	0.219	0.242	0.199	0.525	0.221	0.545	0.455	0.340
58	1.972	0.633	0.144	0.914	0.820	0.928	0.877	0.902	0.725
59	2.004	0.362	0.395	0.787	0.799	0.704	0.748	0.712	0.634
60	2.162	0.210	0.600	0.730	0.741	0.645	0.595	0.689	0.589
61	1.937	0.702	0.791	0.825	0.842	0.725	0.767	0.864	0.784
62	2.127	0.446	0.198	0.108	0.490	0.450	0.434	0.623	0.411
63	2.089	0.396	0.391	0.245	0.485	0.593	0.453	0.653	0.481
64	1.919	0.219	0.192	0.096	0.433	0.413	0.277	0.556	0.327
65	1.691	0.512	0.227	0.292	0.670	0.677	0.369	0.702	0.506
66	1.771	0.426	0.568	0.222	0.509	0.660	0.186	0.625	0.457
67	1.732	0.508	0.496	0.395	0.728	0.842	0.273	0.597	0.560
68	2.159	0.226	0.214	0.128	0.365	0.168	0.090	0.330	0.231
69	1.837	0.507	0.531	0.257	0.665	0.344	0.177	0.532	0.469
70	2.312	0.178	0.055	0.414	0.004	0.267	0.320	0.089	0.195
71	2.096	0.012	0.194	0.043	0.421	0.083	0.085	0.178	0.177
72	2.306	0.161	0.120	0.281	0.330	0.119	0.066	0.014	0.169
73	2.271	0.199	0.402	0.191	0.278	0.012	0.438	0.370	0.297
74	2.365	0.017	0.098	0.013	0.218	0.062	0.029	0.085	0.097

Note: Values are rounded to the third decimal.