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China in Latin America

By Juan Pablo Cardenal

Understanding the Inventory of Influence

INTRODUCTION In late 2016, during a visit to Peru by Chinese President Xi Jinping, China released a new policy paper on Latin America and the Caribbean. It was a timely moment to do so, given the political changes across the continent: political instability and economic recession in Brazil, turmoil in Venezuela, prospects of change regarding the region's relationship with Cuba, and political alternation in both Peru and Argentina, among other events. However, new motivations had surfaced, too. While China is becoming increasingly active in the region, the operating environment for the Chinese government seems to be more challenging than in the past.

Despite regional elites' calls for further economic engagement with China, a few critical voices in Latin America have begun to raise concerns about asymmetric trade relationships, the terms of Chinese loans, and the labor conditions and environmental impact of Chinese projects. Although these voices remain in the minority and often do not receive much visibility, it is perhaps for this reason that the policy paper emphasizes the series of initiatives that Beijing has put forward since 2013 to strengthen China's relations and cooperation with the region. More plainly, it lays out a comprehensive strategy of cooperation across multiple sectors and themes, including high-level exchanges in the political arena, media, academia, and other fields.¹

According to the policy document, China aims to "promote the construction of a new type of international relations with win-win cooperation at the core." To achieve this goal, money and economic enticement are no longer China's only tools. Beijing has now officially established its own version of soft power,² which emanates from its undemocratic system and rests on its ability to shape the viewpoints of others through co-optation and persuasion. In the minds of China's top political leadership, this subtle approach not only aims to correct the negative

perceptions that stem from the country's meteoric, global rise. It is also designed to counteract what the Chinese leaders would argue is a Western hegemonic discourse of values intended to promote the West's interests and project a negative image of China.³

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One of China's most powerful soft power tools in Latin America is people-to-people exchange, a kind of public diplomacy that plays a central role in China's regional objectives. This approach is essentially based on two actions: cooperation between institutions and personal exchanges. Such engagement reaches almost anyone deemed influential in local societies: from journalists, scholars, diplomats, and students to entrepreneurs, politicians, and future leaders in all fields. Xi reinforced this strategy in late 2016 when he declared, after being awarded the Grand-Cross Medal of Honor of the Peruvian Congress, that China would expand the number of training opportunities of various kinds to 10,000 Latin Americans in the coming three years.⁴

Together with Beijing's attempts to project an image of itself as an accommodating power that shares similar development and modernization goals with the developing world, this soft power approach has enabled China to earn the sympathies of political elites across Latin America.⁵ The perception among these enthusiastic political elites that China would make an attractive partner rests primarily on its economic development over the past four decades, its ability to weather the global financial crisis virtually untouched, and its ever-growing influence in the international arena. The prospect that China can provide economic opportunities that other international partners cannot offer, along with the United States' diminishing presence in the region, is also a decisive factor behind Beijing's new, fresh, and friendly image in Latin America.

With this favorable context, Beijing's people-to-people diplomacy is proving effective at building strong, personal relationships with mostly young, influential individuals across Latin America, including in Peru and Argentina. Beijing's success stems largely from repeatedly inviting these people on free-of-charge trips to China for a variety of purposes: to take part in trainings, to participate in events and academic or exchange programs, and to meet counterparts. If the motivation behind this approach is to draw such prominent people to Beijing's cause, it appears to be working.

The Chinese-style warm welcome, the carefully selected tours that include visits to sites with symbolic historical and cultural significance, and ad hoc friendly discourse delivered by the Chinese hosts can have hypnotic effects on their foreign guests. The aim of such efforts is for these visitors to return home with a fundamentally benign idea of the nature of the Chinese regime. For those with limited prior knowledge of China, this flattery and over-the-top hospitality can cloud their perception of the complexity of China's political system. One attendee on several of these trips interviewed by the author described being given extra pocket money for personal spending on the otherwise all-expenses-paid trip.⁶ Enticing participants to promote a positive message about China at home underlies Beijing's extensive investments.

Not all such initiatives involve bringing foreigners to China. The Chinese government's strategy is to actively push its influence in Latin America, exporting programs and activities that broadly target culture and education, on the one hand, and focus on individuals in institutions, academia, and the media on the other. Some of China's most relevant soft power initiatives take place at

the regional level, which may be a matter of simple efficiency. This trend has become increasingly evident since 2013, just after Xi assumed office, but it really gained speed in early 2015 with the first ministerial meeting of the China–CELAC Forum,⁷ held in Beijing. Through this annual gathering of high-level Chinese and Latin American officials, Beijing can leverage more agenda-setting power with regard to the region than it has been able to achieve within the more traditional inter-American institutions, where China’s participation is more marginal.

With China playing a lead organizing role, the Forum adopted a cooperation plan for 2015–19 that outlines China’s anticipated public diplomacy activities in Latin America. In addition to initiatives in up to 13 other fields, it conceives of action in three areas linked to the shaping of public perceptions. In media, it calls for broad coverage agreements in radio, television, and cinema, as well as active cooperation to promote exchanges, trainings, and joint journalistic work. In academia and education, China has pledged to intensify cooperation, trainings and exchanges, investigative projects, and the development of human resources with national educational institutions and think tanks, as well as to increase the number of scholarships available for Latin American students to study in China. As a result of this plan, bilateral cultural cooperation and exchange have gone from being sporadic to institutionalized.

Culture

Under the framework of the China–CELAC Forum, 2016 was designated the “China–Latin America Year of Cultural Exchange.” Chinese official rhetoric labeled this initiative as “the biggest event ever to be organized between China and Latin America since the foundation of the People’s Republic.” More than one hundred activities were planned between March and November across the region and in China: These included an opening ceremony with more than one hundred artists in Beijing, a Latin American music festival in China, the publication in Latin America of 32 novels and poetry books by contemporary Chinese authors, a closing ceremony in Lima, Peru, and a number of smaller art, cinema, and music exhibitions in several countries. Chinese pianist Lang Lang, who was named the initiative’s ambassador, toured Argentina and Chile—perhaps the most high-profile activity in the whole program.

Despite what looks like a two-way cultural exchange, a closer examination of the extensive agenda and its implementation suggest that it was primarily organized and carried out by the Chinese Ministry of Culture. Many of the programmed events took place in China, and their coverage in the Latin American media was for the most part scarce. Activities that were announced with great fanfare in fact sometimes lacked substance or failed to attract a significant audience. As a result, the Year of Cultural Exchange had less impact than expected in Latin America—if that was ever the intention of the Chinese organizers. On the contrary, the event appears to have served the Chinese regime’s purposes by reframing the bilateral relationship with a benign, cultural façade that goes beyond trade and the economy.

From this author’s analysis of Chinese media narratives about the initiative and its calendar of events, the Year of Cultural Exchange and its agenda seem designed to emphasize and promote China’s overall regional agenda. Media reports were full of allusions to the importance of friendship and continuously referred to the role of culture for “mutual understanding” as a means to “reduce the distance between the two [regions]” and “consolidate a base for development.” In this sense, the China–Latin America Year of Cultural Exchange was highlighted as an example of brotherhood between millennia-old civilizations, as well as “an example of harmonious coexistence between cultures.”

What the nature of this program suggests is that the year-long event was primarily designed to reach Latin American political elites, rather than the general public. The initiative represented a significant effort by Beijing to go beyond offering the region's leadership more than just access to investment and economic resources, but reflected an effort to deepen friendship between the region and China.

Education

With regard to education, Confucius Institutes play an increasing role in China's soft power efforts in Latin America. There are currently 39 institutes and 19 Confucius classrooms in 20 countries across the region. Globally, there are a total of 512 institutes and 1,074 classrooms located around the world. Demand in the Latin American centers appears to be growing steadily: According to administrators who oversee China's Confucius programs around the region, there are currently more than 100,000 students enrolled in the different language programs across Latin America, while more than one million people participate in the institutes' cultural activities and workshops each year.⁸

The University of Buenos Aires' Confucius Institute in Argentina illustrates this trend. It was created in 2008, but it was not until 2013 that the number of students picked up significantly. The number of Chinese-language students has doubled to 2,000, not including another 600 who attend courses on Chinese culture. The Argentine institute, which teaches 5,500 hours of Chinese language every year, claims to be one of the more successful Confucius Institutes in the world in terms of the number of students. In the institute's view, this achievement is related to three factors: growing interest in China, the strengthening of diplomatic relations between the two countries, and a high-flying local communications campaign on social networks.⁹

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The Confucius Institutes' growing relevance in Latin America is also connected to the founding of a regional headquarters in Santiago, Chile in 2014—one of only three regional centers that China has established overseas. Whereas the regional center in Washington, D.C. is said to focus on public relations and lobbying and the London center coordinates the publication of materials, the Confucius Institute Regional Center for Latin America (CRICAL, in Spanish) is assigned the task of organizing and implementing joint cultural activities in cooperation with the national institutes.¹⁰ Run by only three people, it also organizes trainings for teachers and, more generally, “plays a strategic role in the process of deepening the relationship between China and Latin America.”

During the two-and-a-half years since CRICAL's establishment, it has been active on two fronts. It coordinates methodology trainings for teachers throughout the year, in which some 30 regional attendees typically take part. With the approval of the Confucius Institute headquarters in Beijing, known as Hanban, CRICAL also arranges and finances visits to the region by well-known Chinese economists, writers, filmmakers, and other artists

including dance, opera, theatre, and martial arts groups. Thanks to this initiative, Chinese writers of all genres whose work has been translated into Spanish are able to tour Latin America periodically. With CRICAL support, they introduce their work in the region, participate in roundtables with local writers, and give lectures to students and the public. The writers have gone from having a minor audience in the region to becoming visible in the local media.



China has also significantly increased public funding for international scholarships, particularly for students of developing nations. Chinese official figures estimate that 377,000 foreigners studied in China in 2014, up from 84,000 a decade earlier. Furthermore, the Chinese government plans to raise that figure to 500,000 by 2020.¹¹ In addition, under the China–CELAC 2015–19 cooperation plan, Beijing is investing heavily in people-to-people educational exchanges. Through this framework, China has officially offered to Latin American youth 6,000 government scholarships, 6,000 internships, and 400 on-the-job opportunities in China for that period.¹² Scholarships are generally offered by the Chinese government, Confucius Institutes, or a large number of Chinese universities, typically in five academic categories: Chinese-language studies, research projects, and graduate, master’s, or postgraduate studies.

Concurrently with China’s growing presence in Latin America, interest in Spanish language and Hispanic culture in China has also skyrocketed during recent years. Spanish language departments in Chinese universities have jumped from 12 in 2000 to more than 80 in 2015, while the number of Hispanic-studies students has increased from 500 to 15,000 in that same time span.¹³

Media

In 2016, China reinforced the importance of media cooperation in the China–Latin America relationship. During the China–Latin America Media Leaders’ Summit, which was held at the Santiago, Chile headquarters of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Xi confirmed China’s intention to bring regional media exchanges and cooperation to a new level. The declared aim was to “show the world a more authentic and vibrant China” where Latin American counterparts “jointly voice opinions on world peace and development and other major issues.”

The Chinese president was unambiguous during his speech about Beijing’s interest in cultivating closer ties with Latin American media. Since the number of Latin American journalists based in China is still minimal, he encouraged regional media to open bureaus in the country, offering “better conditions for their work” as an incentive. More importantly, to influence perceptions about China among regional reporters and opinion leaders, Xi also announced China’s commitment to train 500 Latin American journalists in the next five years.

“Training” is a word that can be easily misinterpreted. In the Western world, it would typically mean bringing someone to a certain standard of proficiency, and would probably be academic in nature. However, in China, media trainings are in actuality free public-relations trips to China that follow a conveniently pro-government agenda. As mentioned above, Beijing is clearly active with people-to-people diplomacy, and such efforts in the media sector are central to the Chinese soft power strategy. Therefore, China’s intent to “train” hundreds of Latin American journalists in the years to come is probably best understood as a way of exposing influential opinion makers to Beijing’s propaganda.

The event in Santiago represented the public, official unveiling of such efforts. The Chinese government paid for the travel expenses of more than 80 Latin American media representatives, including high-ranking news editors. Among them were journalists from *El Comercio*, Peru’s most influential newspaper; the Peruvian news agency Andina; and Peru’s official state newspaper, *Diario Oficial El Peruano*. At least two top executives from Argentine public television also attended the event. Representing two dozen Chinese media counterparts, Cai Mingzhao, head of the Xinhua news agency, announced that Xinhua was “ready to invite a number of journalists and media publishers every year to cooperate with us and to conduct interviews and exchanges in China.”¹⁴

China’s proposal was well-received all around. Speeches made by Latin American media executives and other high-level participants during the event were generally accommodating to the Chinese regime, despite the fact that China ranked 176th out of 180 countries in the 2016 World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders. According to the account of a journalist who attended the event, “behind the applause was the certainty that some media want to be financed by China.” In effect, the event turned out to be a marketplace for Chinese-produced media content: “The Chinese offered everything. It was like a bazaar because, at the end of the day, what they want is to become partners so that they can place their [reporting] materials [in the Latin American media market]. Content is the key for them.”¹⁵

Academia and Think Tanks

Under the China–CELAC Forum’s cooperation plan, Beijing committed to train 1,000 young Latin American leaders by 2024. The core idea behind this ten-year Bridge to the Future exchange program is to engage with the region’s future leaders, inviting them to take part in two-week trainings and workshops in China at a rate of approximately 100 individuals per year. The program is designed to engage with young emerging leaders who will belong to the elites of the fields in which they are involved—primarily academia, politics, business, media, and the cultural and social fields. The program’s foremost objective is to build a network of young leaders who might eventually emerge as “friendship envoys” between China and Latin America.¹⁶

According to interviews with Bridge to the Future participants, the training is organized by the All-China Youth Federation, which represents 52 youth organizations that are headed by the Communist Youth League of China. The program in China is typically divided into three parts. A theoretical section consists of lectures and discussions about China’s politics, economy, culture, history, foreign relations, as well as the Chinese Communist Party’s history and organization. The practical part includes visits to historical sites, government headquarters, and Chinese companies and entities that do business in or cooperate with Latin America. Such visits involve meetings with high-ranking officials as far up as China’s vice president—which demonstrates Beijing’s commitment to these exchange programs. And third, after the trainings,

attendees are encouraged to maintain their network by joining a virtual community, as well as through unscheduled offline activities.

Bridge to the Future has held four trainings since 2015 with the attendance of roughly 200 young Latin Americans, including a number from Central American countries that do not enjoy formal diplomatic relations with Beijing (and therefore recognize Taiwan). Simultaneously, a less formal platform for dialogue made up of young scholars, researchers, and students of both regions has also been active since 2015 through academic exchange initiatives such as the Academic Dialogue between China and Latin America. The Community of Chinese and Latin American Studies (CECLA, in Spanish), which sponsors this project, claims that over 500 Chinese and Latin American members have joined CECLA since its foundation, many of them through WeChat, a popular Chinese social networking platform.¹⁷

In 2017, Bridge to the Future merged with the Academic Dialogue initiative. Chinese and Latin American professionals under forty working in international relations research, media, social development, or economic exchanges, among other fields, were invited to apply. Twenty-five candidates each from Latin America and China were chosen after submitting papers on Chinese–Latin American cooperation and integration. The Latin American participants were first invited to participate in the Academic Dialogue, and later to join the two-week Bridge to the Future training—where all expenses were covered. According to the initiative, the papers will be published in the *Latin American Studies* journal, *China Today*, and *Global Finance* magazine.

China also aims to strengthen the exchange of experiences and knowledge between research institutes through the China–Latin America Think Tanks Forum, which was created in 2010 and was later integrated into the China–CELAC Forum in 2015. Three forums have been held so far, with attendance between 100–160 participants, including senior academics, former Latin American political leaders, ambassadors and senior diplomats, journalists, and businessmen. The Forum was organized by the Chinese People’s Institute of Foreign Affairs and the China Institute of International Studies.¹⁸

Since 2012, China has also organized a regional China–Latin America High-Level Academic Forum. With the sponsorship of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences’ Institute of Latin American Studies, and the participation of several other institutions including Confucius Institutes, there have been five forums held to date, the most recent being in Argentina in November 2016. The Forum is typically a three-day meeting between scholars of Chinese studies or international relations from regional universities and institutions. The Chinese ambassador to Argentina was invited to speak during the fifth forum.

People-to-People Diplomacy Initiatives

In China’s strategy of people-to-people diplomacy, there is a very significant factor to bear in mind: the Chinese actors that undertake such initiatives to connect with elites abroad are not independent from the state, even when they appear to be part of civil society. Nor are these activities merely the types of programs that might be typically organized as the sole initiative of any particular government agency or entity within the Chinese bureaucracy. Instead, people-to-people diplomacy reflects a far-reaching strategy in which different state

People-to-people diplomacy reflects a far-reaching strategy in which different state entities and government agencies, together with the Chinese Communist Party, are jointly involved.

entities and government agencies, together with the Chinese Communist Party, are jointly involved. This is a good indication of the variety of efforts that the Chinese regime puts behind this strategy.

This factor is even more relevant when one considers how Latin American elites perceive the Chinese actors that are behind such efforts. Given that in most democratic countries, friendship associations, media outlets, universities, think tanks, and other research institutions have a certain degree of independence, many Latin Americans assume there is no association between Chinese organizations and the state. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Chinese universities, and the overseas Chinese friendship associations are all good examples. Even the official Xinhua news agency, or the national or provincial legislative exchange delegations that actively engage with their Latin American peers, are sometimes thought to operate independently from the state—if they are not equated with their institutional counterparts in democracies.

This is a misconception that needs to be clarified. Most, if not all, of the Chinese entities that engage with their peers abroad unequivocally serve national party goals—either by following official or unofficial guidelines, or by avoiding taking positions that might violate Chinese Communist Party (CCP) guidelines or jeopardize the regime’s goals. In practice, this means that elites in Latin America may mistakenly perceive Chinese friendship associations as merely a part of civil society. They may be also tempted to think that the Chinese official media are fairly independent and simply offer an alternative version of events. Or, they may consider that Chinese academic institutions are comparable to any other from abroad. If that were the case, why are sensitive issues like China’s human rights crackdown, the 1989 Tiananmen massacre, or the persecution of ethnic and religious minorities never debated?

The answer is clear. No matter how independent, persuasive, or flattering a Chinese counterpart may be, how innocuous the Chinese entities may seem (in the forms of friendship associations, universities, think tanks, and overseas exchange associations), or how peripheral these entities are in relation to the party-state structure (ie: Confucius Institutes, students associations): In one way or another, they all row in the same direction. As is the case with Beijing’s *qiaowu* strategy to manage the overseas Chinese, which is further explained in the Peru section of this report, they are all part of the same influence efforts.¹⁹ Given that this aspect of the Chinese regime’s strategy appears to escape the notice of most elites in Latin America, people-to-people diplomacy with Chinese characteristics appears to be working very well in China’s favor.

An example of such ostensibly benign engagement is the China–Latin America People-to-People Friendship Forum, which held biennial meetings since it was established in 2007 before it was integrated into the China–CELAC Forum. Simultaneously, the first China–Latin America local governments cooperation forum, which focuses on local level engagement, was held in November 2016. The main organizer is the Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, a national organization “engaged in people-to-people diplomacy” that aims to “make friends and deepen friendship in the international community on behalf of the Chinese people.”²⁰

If Chinese state and government agencies happen to be very active in people-to-people diplomacy, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is even more so. Evidence of the importance that Beijing gives to the party’s leading role in engaging both on an institution-to-institution and

people-to-people basis with Latin America is the fact that two of eight sub-forums within the China–CELAC Forum framework are devoted to exchange among political parties and young political leaders. Guided by the CCP and the Communist Youth League of China, Latin American regional party cadres and representatives of dozens of regional political parties of all ideologies are regularly invited on free-of-charge training trips and party-to-party exchanges in China.

This has contributed to the building up of a “large friendship and cooperation network,” as it is commonly framed by Chinese official rhetoric. In 2015, the International Liaison Department of the CCP Central Committee received 250 participants in 16 different groups. For the period from 2016 to 2020, this department has committed to inviting another 1,200 regional cadres to visit China.²¹ In such a political climate of consensus, a 2016 joint declaration between the Chinese and Latin American political parties noted the need to avoid “interference” and emphasized the “need to respect the autonomous choice of each nation to decide its development path.”²² Such a statement provides a subtle legitimization of the CCP-led Chinese regime.

Conclusion

Latin America is increasingly becoming an important region for Beijing, and not only in economic terms. At the beginning of the 21st century, China’s presence in Latin America was mostly limited to trade, investments, loans, and infrastructure building—but not anymore. Since the 2008 global crisis, the Chinese regime has capitalized on its economic strength to enhance its political influence across the region. One of the most visible outcomes of China’s new prominence in Latin America was the foundation of the China–CELAC Forum, a regional platform of engagement that notably excludes the United States and Canada.

The forum and its cooperation plan for 2015–19 provides China with a convenient policy framework to introduce and promote its soft power agenda. In this sense, Beijing’s strategy clearly targets Latin American elites. Prominent regional leaders from multiple fields—including politicians, academics, journalists, former diplomats, current government officials, and students, among others—are subtly being enticed by the Chinese government through personal interaction, with the ultimate purpose of gaining their support for China. As a result, many of these renowned and influential people have already become *de facto* ambassadors of the Chinese cause.

In China’s people-to-people engagement, money is key. Free-of-charge trainings, exchange programs, and scholarships in China have proven to be effective tools to engage Latin America’s regional elites, an idea supported in late 2016 by Xi Jinping’s announcement that China will train 10,000 Latin Americans by 2020. The media and academia are two areas of priority attention for Beijing’s efforts. Consequently, China is determined to promote cooperation of different kinds between media companies, universities, and think tanks—both at the regional and country level. Education and culture are increasingly important in Beijing’s toolkit as well.

Given that the majority of Latin American countries are predominantly Spanish-speaking and share similar cultural roots, China can more efficiently introduce its range of efforts through regional initiatives. CRICAL, the Confucius Institute’s headquarters in Latin America, assists the regional institutes academically and organizes a top-down cultural agenda in coordination with

Hanban. In addition, Beijing put forward a comprehensive program in Beijing and throughout Latin America to commemorate the “China-Latin America Year of Cultural Exchange.” These soft power-like initiatives merge with and are further illustrated by similar efforts in individual countries, as are described in the chapters that follow on Argentina and Peru.

The views expressed in this paper represent the opinions and analysis of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for Democracy or its staff.

NOTES

- ¹ Ted Piccone, *The Geopolitics of China's Rise in Latin America*, Geo-economics and Global Issues, Paper 2, (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, November 2016).
- ² Editor's note: Although the overview essay to this report uses the term “sharp power” to characterize the more malign and manipulative aspects of authoritarian influence, the authors of the individual country reports instead generally use the broader term “soft power.” In the country studies, the authors were asked to inventory and analyze the methods of authoritarian influence applied by China and Russia in democratic settings. The concept of “sharp power” introduced in the overview essay is an outgrowth of their comparative findings.
- ³ Parama Sinha Palit, “China's Cultural Diplomacy: Historical Origin, Modern Methods and Strategic Outcomes,” *China Currents* 12, no. 2 (2013).
- ⁴ “Xi Jinping Pronuncia Discurso ante Congreso de Perú,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 22 November 2016, www.fmprc.gov.cn/esp/zxxx/t1417904.shtml.
- ⁵ Sergio Cesarín and Gonzalo Tordini, “Poder blando en influencia. China en la cooperación Sur-Sur: objetivos y fines de los programas y proyectos de cooperación internacional,” *Revista Asia América Latina* 1, no. 2 (December 2016).
- ⁶ Author's interview with anonymous source. Buenos Aires, 1 December 2016.
- ⁷ The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, or CELAC, is a regional organization of 33 member states founded in 2011 with the aims of strengthening the political, social, and cultural integration of the region and stimulating its economic growth. All countries in the Americas are members except the United States and Canada. The China–CELAC Forum was established in 2014 and held its first meeting in 2015. Four of its eight sub-forums are devoted to fields that might fall within the soft power realm: think-tanks forum; young political leaders' forum; people-to-people friendship forum; and political parties' forum.
- ⁸ Author's interview with CRICAL executives in Santiago, Chile. Statistics as of November 2016.
- ⁹ Author's interview with staff of the Confucius Institute at the University of Buenos Aires.
- ¹⁰ CRICAL was founded in May 2014 after the Hanban's approval of an initiative of the Confucius Institutes of Medellín (Colombia), Yucatán (Mexico), Buenos Aires (Argentina), Viña del Mar (Chile), and Valencia (Spain). In 2015, authorities in Chile granted CRICAL legal recognition as a foundation, which gives it access to tax benefits.
- ¹¹ “China Scholarship Council Organized the First CSC Scholarship Student Conference,” China Scholarship Council, 27 June 2013, <http://en.csc.edu.cn/News/db88603b8da54f89a574f863b6a1863b.shtml>.
- ¹² A breakdown of the total Chinese scholarships available by country is challenging to ascertain because information is fragmented and statistics are not consistently available. The different varieties of scholarships for international students add an additional layer of complexity, since Latin American candidates can also apply for other types of specific scholarships, such as scholarships for developing countries or opportunities that fall within the framework of bilateral education programs.
- ¹³ Cesarín and Tordini, 2016.
- ¹⁴ “Xinhua dispuesta a profundizar intercambios con medios de comunicación de América Latina,” Xinhua, November 2016, http://spanish.xinhuanet.com/2016-11/26/c_135859663.htm.
- ¹⁵ Author's interview with one attendee of the event.
- ¹⁶ “Perfiles del programa ‘Puente al Futuro.’ Formación de mil dirigentes jóvenes China-América Latina,” China Radio International Online, 21 July 2015, <http://espanol.cri.cn/1161/2015/07/21/1s356380.htm>.
- ¹⁷ Beijing-based CECLA aims to promote mutual understanding and provide conditions for academic and cultural exchange. By August 2017 it had about 500 members who contributed their academic work, including three books, three reports, 26 academic articles in *Global Finance* magazine, and 22 commentaries in *www.thepaper.cn*.

CECLA's “Academic Dialogue between China and Latin America” is organized with the All-China Youth Federation. The dialogue's format includes the introduction to two topics proposed by two keynote speakers, combined with an open discussion. Topics of the 2016 edition were the challenges and opportunities for Latin America in China's “new economic normality,” and China's national image in Latin America.

- ¹⁸ According to its website, the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs aims to "engage in studies of the world's situation, international issues, and foreign policies, and to carry out exchanges with statesmen, scholars, noted personages, relevant research institutions and social organizations of various countries, with a view to enhancing mutual understanding and friendship between the Chinese people and the people of all other countries." The China Institute of International Studies is a professional research institute directly administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.
- ¹⁹ *Qiaowu* is a CCP strategy to manage ethnic-Chinese communities abroad. Scholar James Jiann Hua To describes *qiaowu* as "a comprehensive effort that seeks to maintain, protect, and enhance the rights and interests of the overseas Chinese," which in practice works "to legitimize and protect the CCP's hold on power, uphold China's international image, and retain influence over important channels of access to social, economic and political resources." James To, "Beijing's Policies for Managing Han and Ethnic-Minority Chinese Communities Abroad," *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 41, no. 4 (2012): 183–221.
- ²⁰ According to its website, the goal of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries is "to enhance friendship between peoples, further international cooperation, safeguard world peace and promote common development. Since its founding, it has set up "46 China-regional or China-national friendship organizations and established relationships of friendly cooperation with nearly 500 nongovernment organizations and institutions in 157 countries." The regional China–Latin America and the Caribbean Friendship Association was created in 1960, and its main task is "to receive visiting groups from various sectors of Latin America and the Caribbean and send delegations to visit the region in order to promote friendly exchanges and cooperation between both sides."
- ²¹ *The ABC of the China–CELAC Forum* (Beijing: Ministry of Foreign Relations of China, Department of Latin America and the Caribbean, April 2016).
- ²² "PCCh y partidos latinoamericanos aprueban declaración conjunta de cooperación," Agencia EFE, 9 December 2015.