



Colombia Internacional

ISSN: 0121-5612

ISSN: 1900-6004

Departamento de Ciencia Política y Centro de Estudios Internacionales. Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de los Andes

Urrego-Sandoval, Carolina; Pacheco Pardo, Ramón
Asia and Latin America Relations in the Twenty-First Century: A Review
Colombia Internacional, no. 113, 2023, January-March, pp. 3-21
Departamento de Ciencia Política y Centro de Estudios Internacionales.
Facultad de Ciencias Sociales, Universidad de los Andes

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7440/colombiaint113.2023.01>

Available in: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=81274511002>

- ▶ [How to cite](#)
- ▶ [Complete issue](#)
- ▶ [More information about this article](#)
- ▶ [Journal's webpage in redalyc.org](#)



Scientific Information System Redalyc

Network of Scientific Journals from Latin America and the Caribbean, Spain and Portugal

Project academic non-profit, developed under the open access initiative

Asia and Latin America Relations in the Twenty-First Century: A Review

Carolina Urrego-Sandoval, PhD
Universidad de los Andes (Colombia)

Ramón Pacheco Pardo, PhD
King's College London (United Kingdom)

HOW TO CITE:

Urrego-Sandoval, Carolina y Ramón Pacheco Pardo. 2023. "Asia and Latin America Relations in the Twenty-First Century: A Review". *Colombia Internacional* 113: 3-21. <https://doi.org/10.7440/colombiaint113.2023.01>

RECEIVED: December 5, 2022

ACCEPTED: December 13, 2022

MODIFIED: December 27, 2022

<https://doi.org/10.7440/colombiaint113.2023.01>

ABSTRACT. Objective/Context: During the 20th century, Asia and Latin America had limited exchanges. However, this situation has changed significantly since the beginning of the 21st century. In this introductory contribution to the special issue of *Colombia Internacional* on Asian and Latin American relations, we reflect and critically assess the central debates concerning contemporary networks and meeting points between the two regions. **Methodology:** We employ a Global Political Economy (GPE) framework to provide an overview of the field. It focuses on the dynamics of production, trade, and finance power structures that have shaped interregional relations. **Conclusions:** We identified four areas that have dominated research on these regions. 1) China's ever-increasing influence. 2) Trade and investment as drivers of interconnection. 3) Interregional cooperation approaches. 4) Different development paths. As a result of this analysis, we suggest that significant asymmetries between the two regions have influenced the relationship, leading to new centre-periphery relations. **Originality:** The article provides an original perspective to understand better the Asia-Latin America interregional relationship in the 21st century, identifies less studied phenomena, and proposes four avenues for a future research agenda.

KEYWORDS: Asia; Latin America; China; trade; investment; integration; dependency.

Relaciones de Asia y América Latina en el siglo XXI: una revisión

RESUMEN. Objetivo/contexto: durante el siglo XX, Asia y América Latina sostuvieron limitadas relaciones. Sin embargo, esta situación ha cambiado significativamente, desde comienzos del siglo XXI. En esta introducción a la Edición Especial de Colombia Internacional sobre las relaciones entre Asia y América Latina, reflexionamos y evaluamos críticamente los debates centrales sobre las redes contemporáneas y los puntos de encuentro entre ambas regiones. **Metodología:** empleamos un marco de Economía Política Global (EPG) para ofrecer una visión general del campo. Este marco se centra en la dinámica de las estructuras de poder: producción, comercio y finanzas que han configurado las relaciones interregionales. **Conclusiones:** identificamos cuatro áreas que han dominado la investigación sobre estas regiones. 1) La creciente influencia de China. 2) El comercio y la inversión como motores de la interconexión. 3) Enfoques de cooperación interregional. 4) Diferentes vías de desarrollo. Como resultado de este análisis, sugerimos que importantes asimetrías entre ambas regiones han influido en la relación, dando lugar a nuevas relaciones centro-periferia. **Originalidad:** el artículo aporta una perspectiva original para comprender mejor la relación interregional Asia-América Latina en el siglo XXI, identifica fenómenos menos estudiados y propone cuatro vías para una futura agenda de investigación.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Asia; Latinoamérica; China, comercio; inversión; integración; dependencia.

Relações entre Ásia e América Latina no século XXI: uma revisão

RESUMO. Objetivo/contexto: durante o século XX, a Ásia e a América Latina mantiveram limitadas relações. Contudo, essa situação vem mudando significativamente, desde o início do século XXI. Nesta introdução à edição especial da Colombia Internacional sobre as relações entre a Ásia e a América Latina, refletimos e analisamos criticamente os debates centrais sobre as redes contemporâneas e os pontos de encontro entre ambas as regiões. **Metodologia:** utilizamos um referencial da economia política global para oferecer uma visão geral do campo. Esse referencial se foca na dinâmica das estruturas de poder: produção, comércio e finanças, que vêm configurando as relações inter-regionais. **Conclusões:** identificamos quatro áreas que dominam a pesquisa sobre essas regiões: 1) a crescente influência da China; 2) o comércio e o investimento como motores da interconexão; 3) abordagens de cooperação inter-regional; 4) diferentes vias de desenvolvimento. Como resultado desta análise, sugerimos que importantes assimetrias entre ambas as regiões venham influenciando a relação, dando lugar a novas relações centro-periferia. **Originalidade:** este artigo contribui para uma perspectiva original a fim de compreender melhor a relação inter-regional Ásia-América Latina no século XXI, identifica fenômenos menos estudados e propõe quatro vias para uma futura agenda de pesquisa.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ásia; América Latina; China, comércio; investimento; integração; dependência.

Introduction

This special issue of *Colombia Internacional* is the first number fully dedicated to exploring Asia–Latin America relations. Here we aim to reflect and critically assess the central debates and questions regarding contemporary networks and meeting points between the two regions. This issue contributes to a better understanding of the interregional relationships and identifies less studied phenomena and avenues for a future research agenda. Using a Global Political Economy (GPE) approach, it focuses on the production, trade, and finance power structures (Strange 1994) that shape Asia–Latin America relations and shed light on their future.¹

During the twentieth century, Asia and Latin America were disconnected and had limited exchanges beyond some migration movements and the presence of Japanese and Chinese diasporas in Latin America (Hu-DeHart and López 2008; Lai and Tan 2010). Various elements explain these limited economic and political interactions; some include geographical distance, cultural barriers, the effects of the Cold War, and both regions' foreign policies oriented towards the United States (US) and Europe. These limitations and mutual historical neglect have caused a lack of expertise in both regions, leading to misunderstandings and, in many cases, misperceptions that have limited further interactions (Kang 2003). It is no coincidence that the study of Asia–Latin America interactions is a relatively recent phenomenon. Historically, the principal American and Eurocentric theoretical traditions dominated the study of international relations. Kenneth Waltz (1979, 72) provides a clear example of the limited relevance of Asian and Latin American countries in the aftermath of the Second World War (WWII). As he suggested,

The theory of international politics is written in terms of the great powers of an era. It would be . . . ridiculous to construct a theory of international politics based on Malaysia and Costa Rica. . . A general theory of international politics is necessarily based on the great powers.

However, the international scenario has changed significantly, and so have theoretical and conceptual approaches to understanding and investigating a broader spectrum of actors, issues, and interconnections as new powers have emerged, challenging previous dominating conceptions of the global arena. The rise of China and the economic development and burgeoning political and

1 We recognise that the concepts of “Asia” and “Latin America” can lead to generalisations. While using them, we acknowledge both regions' diversity in their geography, political institutions, cultural, linguistic, and many other dimensions (Fawn 2009; Nolte 2010).

strategic importance of Japan, the Asian Tigers (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan), India, Indonesia, and Vietnam, constitute an example of such dynamics. In fact, there is a widespread view that just as the twentieth century was dominated by the US, the twenty-first century will be Asian (El Aynaoui and Woertz 2016; Wie 2012).

1. Why Is It Relevant to Study Asia–Latin America Relations Now?

The beginning of the twenty-first century has witnessed rapprochements between Asia and Latin America as mutual interests have increased in trade, investment, and cultural interactions. Consequently, analysing these particular interregional relations has gained significant momentum. They have been seen as the product of transformation in global markets and the proliferation of bilateral, multilateral, and interregional trade and investment agreements. This has led to growing mutual interest in commerce and investment. For Asian countries, Latin America has a strategic position as a commodities producer (North and Grinspun 2016; Williamson 2015). It also has a flourishing middle-income population and increased demand for technological products, which makes it an important market for Asian companies. For Latin American countries, the Asia region is one of the most powerful and dynamic regions in the world regarding innovation and economic and industrial development. It is home to the most populated, high-income, and economically dynamic countries, making them appealing to the market and partners. As a result, in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI), flows from Asian countries to Latin American ones have increased significantly. Remarkably, following the 2008 financial crisis and the subsequent sovereign debt crisis in the Eurozone, Asia-Pacific economies identified the need to expand their investment portfolios to the Global South, containing the economic shocks that hit their economies every time the Global North entered a crisis (Das 2021; Overholt 2010).

In recent decades, countries like Japan and Korea have increased their efforts to gain a more prominent position in Latin America (Iwabuchi 2015). A principal way to do so has been through transcultural connections, cultural diplomacy (Pérez Jiménez and Urrego-Sandoval 2022), and soft power initiatives (Leonard 2005). Some examples of this dimension include contemporary Japanese and Korean art expressions, which are becoming increasingly popular in Latin America, particularly among young people. In the case of Korea, there has been a rising interest in “Hallyu” or the Korean Wave, which includes K-pop music, movies, and TV shows, among others (Han 2017). In this regard, Japan has a long history of cultural exchange with Latin America, with a significant

population sector interested in anime, manga, and traditional Japanese arts such as origami and kabuki theatre (Min 2021; Wheeler 2014). On the other hand, China has established several Confucius institutes to promote its language and culture (Park 2013; Suyai 2020).

The above explanations and examples shed light on new interregional dynamics. However, they fail to provide a comprehensive picture of these events within a broader global context. We argue that expanding Asian-Latin American ties during the first decades of the twenty-first century is the result of major economic and political power shifts at the global scale and new security and planetary threats. Such changes affect both regions alike but to different degrees. As a result, countries in Asia and Latin America have sought to expand and diversify their foreign policy beyond traditional partners such as the US, China, and the European Union, looking for new markets and allies and thus creating new cooperation and competition dynamics.

2. Global Context

A popularised way to describe current global power shifts has been the crisis of the international liberal order (ILO), which challenges the core political, economic, and institutional liberal principles and practices that have defined the ideational and material power structures of the international system for the last 80 years (Babic 2020; Ikenberry 2015; Lake, Martin, and Risse 2021). One of the features of the crisis is the rise of China and its effects on the global balance of power, specifically *vis-à-vis* confrontations with the US in different spheres. For example, the trade war between the two countries has had far-reaching implications. In this context, the conflict has been characterised by tit-for-tat tariffs and accusations of unfair trade practices involving important Chinese technology companies such as Huawei or the social network TikTok (Schmieg 2019). Furthermore, during the ILO crisis, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has been unable to enforce its rules and regulations, as China and the US have operated outside the organisation, thus weakening its authority and credibility (Adekola 2019; De Graaff, ten Brink, and Parmar 2020). Similarly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, political tensions between the two countries increased power struggles and propelled new foreign policy strategies for China. Notably, in its Vaccine Diplomacy, China used its privileged position as a producer of the Sinovac vaccine to gain influence over other countries by offering to donate or supply vaccines to countries in need while the US and Europe stocked vaccines (Chen 2022; Suzuki and Yang 2022).

Another example of the ILO crisis is the erosion of the US presence in Asia and Latin America. Two reasons explain this phenomenon. Firstly, the

significant economic development of Asian countries and the autonomy that comes with it. For example, Southeast Asia is more independent from the US today than at any other point over the last 60 years (Qingli and Ramasamy 2020). Secondly, China's increasing economic and political influence in both regions provides these countries with an alternative to traditional cooperation partners. In return, they gain more tools to exercise their agency and room to manoeuvre and advance their interests. These shifts in power dynamics questioned the historical hegemonic role of the US and whether it is still a strong geopolitical force in Asia and Latin America or is losing its footing. In this regard, Daniel Lemus (in this issue) explores the concept of hegemony, relating it to the New Silk Road initiative to discuss whether China will become a new hegemon or establish a post-hegemonic scenario. He also considers the case of China's investments in Colombia in sectors such as infrastructure and mining.

We see new conflicts and the resurgence of old ones regarding security issues. On the one hand, the current war between Russia and Ukraine represents a significant moment in contemporary geopolitics. It challenges the basic principle of state sovereignty, the nature of international law, and its ability to regulate state behaviour and prevent conflicts. On the other, the war has several economic and political implications at regional and global levels. For example, it questions the role of security organisations, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), affecting global value chains and generating energy shortages in Europe, leading to reconsiderations regarding energy security and the feasibility of transitioning towards clean energy worldwide. There are also growing concerns regarding the possibility of deeper cooperation between China and Russia. In addition, we see tensions heightening between North and South Korea. The North has increased military activities, including multiple missile tests, while the South has increased its military presence and issued warnings about potential provocations. The year 2022 has seen more military action than any other one since the 1953 Armistice signed in Panmunjom. An escalation of the situation could potentially destabilise the region and the world. Any analysis of the Korean peninsula and its division has to address their origins and the Korean War. Gina León (in this issue) examines the international context in which the war emerged and Colombia's decision to send military troops to support the United Nations forces as it was the only Latin American country to do so. She explains in her article how violence and war in both territories created a shared identity that allowed close diplomatic relations and fostered military cooperation.

3. Structure and Approaches

Recent years have seen an escalating body of literature on Asia–Latin America relations. We identified four major research areas that provide an overall view of recently explored central debates and issues. These works address the evolution and nature of the interactions between the two regions employing diverse theoretical and methodological approaches. Notably, most of this research falls into four broad, interrelated categories.

First is the growing influence of China in regional and global politics. Second, the role of trade and investment as drivers of interconnection. Third, interregional cooperation approaches and comparison between Asian and Latin American development paths. As a result of this analysis, we suggest that significant asymmetries between the two regions have influenced the relationship, leading to new centre-periphery relations, with Asia being a powerful economic actor while its Latin American counterparts remain subordinated. This dynamic is observed in virtually every aspect of the relationship, from trade and investment to loans, diplomacy, and so forth. Finally, we conclude by suggesting possible avenues for future research.

For this special issue, we asked the contributors to reflect on the broad field of Asia–Latin America relations in the twenty-first century. Thus, it should not be surprising that their responses to this framing are varied. Indeed, the selected articles present a rich collection of views on the past and present and possible future scenarios of the interregional relationship. Clear patterns emerged from this selection, with the most significant being the relevance and interest of China's presence and influence in both regions. The other—also very telling regarding the current state of the field—is the participation of the authors, notably in terms of gender and regional approaches. In this respect, most of the authors submitting articles were men, also reflected in this publication, which only includes the work of two women. Second, the study of the interregional relationship here is marked by the approaches of scholars studying Latin America or located in the region. In this context, each of the following five articles stands solidly on its own merits. However, we have tried to impose a rough thematic structure and logical flow in their ordering.

a. China's Ever-Increasing Influence

A principal driver of Asia–Latin America relations has been the rise of China as a global power and its augmenting influence in terms of trade, investment, loans, and diplomacy. Nowadays, it is impossible to imagine any discussion of these regions' economic and political dimensions without considering China. Indeed, many

publications have focused on understanding the heightened interest of the country in Latin America (Li 2007; Maggiorelli 2017; Pu and Wang 2018) and the effects of its presence from several theoretical perspectives and across different dimensions (Rosales 2020; Wise and Chonn Ching 2018).

As for trade and production, China has become the major source of imports for most countries in the region. It has generated criticism regarding increasing trade deficits and competition dynamics emerging from the low prices of manufactured products that hurt local producers. Regarding the country's trade and regional investment, there appear to be patterns of neocolonial behaviour (Rivera Cusicanqui and Freeland 2015; Stallings 2020), due mainly to the fact that Latin America constitutes a source for securing agricultural and other natural resources as China's demand for such products has increased. In this regard, Latin America's relevance in the Chinese foreign policy agenda has increased, as have Chinese loans to the region, particularly in the form of "loans-for-oil" deals with countries like Venezuela. In 2010, for example, Chinese loans exceeded those of the Inter-American Development Bank.

China's FDI in Latin America has also increased, particularly after the global financial crisis in 2008 and the subsequent sovereign debt crisis in the Eurozone. These flows have also diversified in the last 20 years. FDIs have moved from primarily extractive sectors (Yao, Sutherland, and Chen 2010) to manufacturers and, more recently, information and telecommunication technologies such as 5G. However, this trend decreased as Venezuela and Argentina defaulted their payments. New avenues for economic cooperation have also emerged, one of these being public-private partnerships (PPP) between Chinese companies and national governments to build major infrastructure projects (Urrego-Sandoval 2021b).

These economic dimensions signal China's growing interest in Latin America and its strategy for consolidating its influence and improving its diplomatic relations. In terms of the diplomatic effects of the country's presence, the case of Central America is very telling. In December 2021, Nicaragua made a historic decision, recognising China's sovereignty over Taiwan and breaking diplomatic links with the island. El Salvador and the Dominican Republic shifted in the same direction in 2018, and Panama in 2017. These decisions have caused unrest among the international community (Pacheco Pardo 2018). In South America, Paraguay exemplifies how recognising Taiwan affected its relations with China, as it was one of the last countries to have access to Sinovac vaccines amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Long and Urdinez 2021). At the institutional level, various regional initiatives have been established between China and Latin America. The Forum for China-Latin America Cooperation (FCLAC) and the

Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) are the most prominent (Chiliatto-Leite 2021; Vadell 2019).

In this issue, Benjamin Creutzfeldt looks into diplomatic dynamics. In particular, the evolution, outreach, and influence of Chinese ambassadors and diplomats in Latin America and how they have improved their cross-cultural communication to influence regional discourses. Similarly, Lorenzo Maggiorelli discusses Latin American citizens' perceptions of China and how these vary in commercial, political, and economic dimensions. The article also proposes that we should consider the literature on political psychology when studying China–Latin America relations. These analyses highlight the significance of China's economic and political power in the twenty-first century.

b. Trade and Investment as Drivers of Interconnection

Trade and investment have traditionally been a significant focus of research, particularly regarding the establishment and effects of free trade agreements (FTAs) and bilateral investment treaties (BITs) between countries in both regions (Bouët *et al.* 2012; Wei 2012). The presence of a few large Asian companies with strategic interests in Latin America characterises these dynamics. Some examples include Japan, South Korea, and, more recently, India (Rojas Tole and Hurtado Briceño 2022). Regarding investment, Latin American countries have positioned themselves on the recipient side, while their FDI flows to Asia remain marginal.

Despite the historically high cost of trade stemming from tariffs, non-tariff barriers, and transportation costs, there was a turning point in the Asia-Latin America relationship during the 1990s. It started with the Chile-Korea FTA, the first agreement established by Korea and Chile's first FTA with an Asian country (Kim 2003; Urrego-Sandoval and Pacheco Pardo 2021). Notably, Chile has been the most active Latin American country to advance negotiations with Asian countries. It has FTA agreements with China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam. Subsequently, Brazil (Uehara and Casarões 2013), Mexico (Reyes and León-Manríquez 2010), Colombia (Cepeda-Ladino 2017), Peru, and Argentina (Rubiolo 2017; Urrego-Sandoval 2021a) have all followed suit.

In terms of trade, South Korea, Japan, and, more recently, India have increased commercial and financial links with Latin America. In addition, India is another principal actor, as it constitutes a big market for Latin America and Caribbean exports (Santos-Paulino and Wan 2010). Nonetheless, there are significant trade asymmetries between the parties. On the one hand, Asian countries export highly value-added sophisticated and technological products to Latin America. On the other hand, Latin America has tried to expand into Asian markets primarily due to their high demand for raw materials and commodities.

In this regard, trade with Asia can be classified into multi-commodity exporting (Brazil), mono-commodity exporter (Chile), and multi-product supply chain location (Mexico) (Feinberg 2013). However, exports of products with higher added value remain scarce.

c. Interregional Cooperation Approaches

On the Latin American side, there has been a heightened interest in Asian regional integration initiatives, as the region stands out as an exemplary case of multilateralism (De Lombaerde and Van Langenhove 2006; Krapohl 2017). In this regard, varying approaches to regionalism influence state relations and the resulting regional architectures in trade, politics, diplomacy, security, and migration, among others. The significant differences between Asian and Latin American experiences are evidence of this. East Asia, for example, has historically been more integrated than Latin America due to the economic collaboration that had occurred before any trade agreement was created. Latin America, on the other hand, has used formal treaties as the leading integration mechanism (Dubé 2019; Feng and Genna 2003). Comparing integration schemes is an intricate task, as each initiative is an *ad hoc* creation result of specific national and regional realities and the international contexts present at a given time. Therefore, we do not explore individual Asian or Latin American integration initiatives but the points of connection and interaction between the two. In this regard, we identify two major trends. First, initial steps were propelled by establishing bilateral trade and investment agreements, as described in the previous section. Second, joining interregional forums to institutionalise further and strengthen economic ties. Some examples include the following.

1) Chile, Mexico, and Peru's participation in the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Within this forum of eleven members (Australia, Brunei, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, and Vietnam), they are the only Latin American countries. It was previously called Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and was launched during the Obama administration to create an economic counterweight to China's influence in Asia (Dosch 2021). However, the Agreement was not enacted due to the US withdrawal during Donald Trump's presidency. Later, negotiations continued under the CPTPP. 2) Mexico, Chile, and Peru's participation in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), where 21 Pacific Rim members advance discussions on economic and technical cooperation, trade, and investment liberalisation, among others (Mols 2013). 3) Singapore and South Korea's interest in joining the Pacific Alliance as associate members (Kim 2018). The Pacific Alliance (PA), integrated by Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru, was

established in 2011 to work as a block to promote the free movement of people, products, and capital among its members and reach Asian markets (Desker 2015). In 2022, Singapore became the first associate member of the PA, while South Korea awaits the conclusion of PA negotiations with Canada, Australia, and New Zealand to advance its ascension. This is a clear example of mutual interest. Something similar occurs with 4) Singapore and the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), formed by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, which have held various negotiation rounds to establish an FTA (Carls and Amal 2022). 5) Dialogues between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), an economic and political union of ten member states in Southeast Asia, and the PA. Negotiations began in 2014, and since then, various ministerial and technical meetings have been held between the governments of both groups.

d. Different Development Paths

The comparative analysis between Asia's and Latin America's development processes has captivated researchers' attention for decades. Development studies have highlighted the history of the Asian Tigers as economic miracles resulting from structural changes and industrialisation strategies that allowed them to overcome the middle-income trap through innovation and internationalisation (Aminian, Fung, and Ng 2009; Feng and Genna 2003; Kay 2002; Paus 2019). It has been common to contrast the Latin American import substitution industrialisation strategy (ISI) with the rapid industrialisation and export-led growth strategies in the Asian context. Most works have focused on the different economic results of such strategies and how these led to significant economic asymmetries between the two regions (Aymes and Kwak 2021; Kohli 2009; Singh and Wolfson 1995). Notably, their experiences result from different orientations and the specificities of historical and political scenarios and opportunities linked to local and international factors. Locally, these include the government's policy strategies to establish industrial policies and the differences between export-oriented and inward approaches. Internationally, the geopolitical context led to the prioritisation, in the case of South Korea and Taiwan, of investments, technology transfer, and market access from the US during the Cold War and the battle between communism and capitalism. In this issue, we find two articles exploring these divergent development trajectories. Pedro Vieira *et al.* employ the concepts of world-economy, world region, and *long durée* to identify how the forms of integration into the capitalist world-economy affected them in three essential dimensions for economic development: state, capital accumulation, and technological capability.

Although this discussion fell out of fashion for decades as ISI and industrial policy became unpopular (Cherif and Hasanov 2019), there are renewed

discussions regarding the possibilities of emulating some of those strategies under the present circumstances and limitations of the twenty-first century. These approaches aim to explore an alternative to reverse the re-primarisation and de-industrialisation of Latin American countries in the last decade (Aiginger and Rodrik 2020; Ferrannini *et al.* 2021).

Conclusions

The reflections presented in this introduction and the articles of this special issue seek to shift away from the widespread narrative of opportunities and challenges. Instead, they offer a glimpse of the characteristics of Asia–Latin America relationships regarding production, trade, investment, and interregional cooperation during significant global transformations and uncertainty and a review of this area of study within the GPE.

As a result of a critical assessment of the past, present, and considerations for the future, we find that despite a historical Asia–Latin America disconnection, the relationship is becoming increasingly important as both regions are subject to the influence of major powers in the international system and developments at different levels of analysis. At the global level, the two regions are coming to terms with the complicated nature of a multipolar world, the competition dynamics between China and the US, and emerging security threats. At the regional level, multilateral scenarios came up against significant difficulties when emerging from the crisis of the international liberal order (ILO), giving rise to a challenging time for such approaches. As such, states should individually rethink their foreign policy and establish more comprehensive strategies to fit their political, economic, and security interests and preferences to rapidly changing regional and global contexts. Even though the future of the interregional relationship remains uncertain, it is clear that significant knowledge gaps remain, and deeper analyses are required. What follows proposes possible avenues for further studies of the Asia–Latin America inter-regional relations. Of course, we do not suggest that these issues constitute a comprehensive list or that they were not addressed or tackled in the past. Instead, we consider that they are paths that should necessarily be explored further.

First, more interdisciplinary research is required. Better understanding the diversity, complexity, and multiplicity of relationships and actors on both sides of the Pacific constitutes a major quest for academics and practitioners. This task requires approaches from different disciplines, such as global studies, global political economy (IPE), cultural studies, and sociology. Second, the twenty-first century brings emerging challenges that require new approaches to research;

particularly on global shifts in power dynamics, major planetary transformations such as security threats, climate change, and the rapid advance of technologies within the fourth industrial revolution. Third, more detailed knowledge of Asian and Latin American politics and dynamics at the country level is required. Currently, most academics covering these regions have focused on elements of their interactions, but many lack an in-depth understanding of individual country politics and their influence on foreign policy. For example, several works have examined the role of China's rising presence in Latin America. However, research on Chinese politics and its internal dynamics is scarce, particularly if compared to the dozens of experts on US national politics. Fourth, in terms of actors, it would be valuable to move beyond predominant analyses of nation-states and explore the role of non-governmental entities such as civil society groups and multinational corporations.

Finally, the relevance of Asia–Latin America relations is evident in policy, business, and academic circles. However, the craft of studying such areas depends on specific commitments to advance teaching and research; for example, offering university courses and establishing educational programs. Therefore, we highlight the need to provide public- and privately-funded scholarships for academic exchanges and language training and fund research centres and exchange programmes. Such measures would enable the establishment of shared interregional collaboration networks and contribute to developing new knowledge.

Acknowledgements

The authors gratefully acknowledge all the researchers whose work appears in this issue for their contributions and Natalia Mendivil and Hugo Beltran for their research assistance. We also thank *Colombia Internacional* Editor Juan Pablo Ossa for his support and patience.

References

1. Adekola, Tolulope Anthony. 2019. "US–China trade war and the WTO dispute settlement mechanism." *Journal of International Trade Law & Policy* 18 (3): 125-135. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JITLP-02-2019-0011>
2. Aiginger, Karl, and Dani Rodrik. 2020. "Rebirth of Industrial Policy and an Agenda for the Twenty-First Century." *Journal of Industry, Competition and Trade* 20 (2): 189-207. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10842-019-00322-3>
3. Aminian, Nathalie, K. C. Fung, and Francis Ng. 2009. "A comparative analysis of trade and economic integration in East Asia and Latin America." *Economic Change and Restructuring* 42 (1): 105-137. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10644-008-9059-z>
4. Aymes, Juan Felipe López, and Jae Sung Kwak. 2021. "Patron or partner? Asymmetry and complementarity in economic relations between South Korea

- and Latin America.” In *External Powers in Latin America*, edited by Gian Luca Gardini, 167-185. London: Routledge.
5. Babić, Milan. 2020. “Let’s talk about the interregnum: Gramsci and the crisis of the liberal world order.” *International Affairs* 96 (3): 767-786. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz254>
 6. Bouët, Antoine, Valdete Berisha-Krasniqi, Carmen Estrades, and David Laborde. 2012. “Trade and investment in Latin America and Asia: Perspectives from further integration.” *Journal of Policy Modeling* 34 (2): 193-210. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpolmod.2011.09.004>
 7. Carls, Suelen, and Mohamed Amal. 2022. “From West to East: Mercosur and Singapore agree on FTA.” *Journal of Intellectual Property Law & Practice* 17 (11): 898-902. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jiplp/jpac092>
 8. Cepeda-Ladino, Julio-César. 2017. “Colombia and Its Trans-Pacific Foreign Policy—International Relations in the Pacific Rim.” *Open Journal of Political Science* 7 (1): 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojps.2017.71001>
 9. Chen, Ian Tsung-yen. 2022. “The Crisis of COVID-19 and the Political Economy of China’s Vaccine Diplomacy.” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 18 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/orac014>
 10. Cherif, Reda, and Fuad Hasanov. 2019. “Principles of True Industrial Policy.” *Journal of Globalization and Development* 10 (1): 20190034. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jgd-2019-0034>
 11. Chiliatto-Leite, Marcos Vinicius. 2021. “Constrained integration in Latin America: analysis based on a twenty-first-century centre-periphery vision.” *CEPAL Review* 133: 31-50.
 12. Das, Arindam. 2021. “Predatory FDI during economic crises: insights from outbound FDI from China and host country responses.” *Critical Perspectives on International Business* 17 (2): 321-341. <https://doi.org/10.1108/cpoib-05-2020-0050>
 13. De Graaff, Nana, Tobias ten Brink, and Inderjeet Parmar. 2020. “China’s rise in a liberal world order in transition – introduction to the FORUM.” *Review of International Political Economy* 27 (2): 191-207. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2019.1709880>
 14. De Lombaerde, Philippe, and Luk Van Langenhove. 2006. “Indicators of regional integration: conceptual and methodological aspects.” In *Assessment and Measurement of Regional Integration*, edited by Philippe de Lombaerde, 27-59. New York, NY: Routledge.
 15. Desker, Barry. 2015. *Towards Closer ASEAN-Latin American Ties*. RSIS Commentary.
 16. Dosch, Jörn. 2021. “Latin America and Asean: More than a marginal relationship?” In *External Powers in Latin America*, edited by Gian Luca Gardini, 219-234. London: Routledge.
 17. Dubé, Sébastien. 2019. “Chile: Asia-oriented globalisation versus Latin America-oriented regionalism.” In *The political economy of new regionalisms in the Pacific Rim*, edited by José Briceño-Ruiz and Philippe de Lombaerde, 37-53. New York, NY: Routledge.
 18. El Aynaoui, Karim, and Eckart Woertz. 2016. “Introducción: África, América Latina y el «siglo de Asia».” *Revista CIDOB d’Afers Internacionals* 114: 7-15. <https://doi.org/10.24241/rcai.2016.114.3.7>

19. Fawn, Rick. 2009. "Regions' and their study: wherefrom, what for and whereto?" *Review of International Studies* 35 (S1): 5-34. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210509008419>
20. Feinberg, Richard E. 2013. "Latin American-Asian Trade Flows: No Turning Back." *Reaching across the Pacific: Latin America and Asia in the New Century*. Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, DC. June, 2023.
21. Feng, Yi, and Gaspare Genna. 2003. "Regional integration and domestic institutional homogeneity: a comparative analysis of regional integration in the Americas, Pacific Asia and Western Europe." *Review of International Political Economy* 10 (2): 278-309. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0969229032000063234>
22. Ferrannini, Andrea, Elisa Barbieri, Mario Biggeri, and Marco R Di Tommaso. 2021. "Industrial policy for sustainable human development in the post-Covid19 era." *World Development* 137: 105215. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105215>
23. Han, Benjamin. 2017. "Korean Wave/K-pop in Latin America: transcultural fandom and digital mediation." *International Journal of Communication* 11: 2250-2269.
24. Hu-DeHart, Evelyn, and Kathleen López. 2008. "Asian diasporas in Latin America and the Caribbean: an historical overview." *Afro-Hispanic Review* 27 (1): 9-21. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23055220>
25. Ikenberry, G John. 2015. "The future of multilateralism: Governing the world in a post-hegemonic era." *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 16 (3): 399-413. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1468109915000158>
26. Iwabuchi, Koichi. 2015. "Pop-culture diplomacy in Japan: soft power, nation branding and the question of 'international cultural exchange.'" *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 21 (4): 419-432. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2015.1042469>
27. Kang, David C. 2003. "Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytical Frameworks." *International Security* 27 (4): 57-85. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4137604>
28. Kay, Cristóbal. 2002. "Why East Asia overtook Latin America: Agrarian reform, industrialisation and development." *Third World Quarterly* 23 (6): 1073-1102. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0143659022000036649>
29. Kim, Won-Ho. 2003. "The Significance of the Korea-Chile Free Trade Agreement." *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 17 (2): 384-410. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23257244>
30. Kim, Won-Ho. 2018. "Latin America within Korea's trade and integration strategy." In *Innovation and SME internationalization in Korea and Latin America and the Caribbean: Policy experiences and areas for cooperation*, edited by Sebastián Herreros, Keiji Inoue, and Nanno Mulder, 19-33. Santiago de Chile: ECLAC.
31. Kohli, Atul. 2009. "Nationalist Versus Dependent Capitalist Development: Alternate Pathways of Asia and Latin America in a Globalised World." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 44 (4): 386-410. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-009-9048-x>
32. Krapohl, Sebastian, editor. 2017. *Regional integration in the Global South*. London: Springer.
33. Lai, Walton Look, and Chee Beng Tan. 2010. *The Chinese in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Leiden: Brill.

34. Lake, David A, Lisa L Martin, and Thomas Risse. 2021. "Challenges to the liberal order: Reflections on *International Organisation*." *International Organization* 75 (2): 225-257. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020818320000636>
35. Leonard, Sean. 2005. "Progress against the law: Anime and fandom, with the key to the globalisation of culture." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 8 (3): 281-305. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877905055679>
36. Li, He. 2007. "China's growing interest in Latin America and its implications." *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30 (4-5): 833-862. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390701431972>
37. Long, Tom, and Francisco Urdinez. 2021. "Status at the margins: why Paraguay recognizes Taiwan and shuns China." *Foreign Policy Analysis* 17 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1093/fpa/oraa002>
38. Maggiorelli, Lorenzo. 2017. "Ayuda al desarrollo de China a América Latina y el Caribe: Evolución y perspectivas a futuro." *Revista Internacional de Cooperación y Desarrollo* 4 (2): 28-51.
39. Min, Wonjung. 2021. "Receiving Unfamiliar Culture in Post-Colonial Latin America in the Digital Age: Interpretations of Anime, Manga, and K-pop by Chilean Fans." In *The Routledge Handbook of Digital Media and Globalization*, edited by Dal Yong Jin, 222-229. New York, NY: Routledge.
40. Mols, Manfred. 2013. "APEC and Latin America: Completing the Pacific Rim agenda." In *Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)*, edited by Werner Draguhn, Eva Manske, and Jürgen Rüländ, 86-100. New York, NY: Routledge.
41. Nolte, Detlef. 2010. "How to compare regional powers: analytical concepts and research topics." *Review of international studies* 36 (4): 881-901. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026021051000135X>
42. North, Liisa L., and Ricardo Grinspun. 2016. "Neo-extractivism and the new Latin American developmentalism: the missing piece of rural transformation." *Third World Quarterly* 37 (8): 1483-1504. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2016.1159508>
43. Overholt, William H. 2010. "China in the Global Financial Crisis: Rising Influence, Rising Challenges." *The Washington Quarterly* 33 (1): 21-34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01636600903418652>
44. Pacheco Pardo, Ramon. 2018. "Europe's financial security and Chinese economic statecraft: the case of the Belt and Road Initiative." *Asia Europe Journal* 16 (3): 237-250. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10308-018-0511-z>
45. Park, Jae. 2013. "Cultural artefact, ideology export or soft power? Confucius Institute in Peru." *International Studies in Sociology of Education* 23 (1): 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09620214.2013.770205>
46. Paus, Eva. 2019. "Innovation Strategies Matter: Latin America's Middle-Income Trap Meets China and Globalisation." *The Journal of Development Studies* 56 (4): 657-679. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220388.2019.1595600>
47. Pérez Jiménez, Alexandra, and Carolina Urrego-Sandoval. 2022. "Diplomacia cultural en agencias de cooperación y cámaras de comercio. Los casos de Corea del Sur y Japón en Colombia." *Colombia Internacional* 109: 139-170. <https://doi.org/10.7440/colombiaint109.2022.06>
48. Pu, Xiaoyu, and Chengli Wang. 2018. "Rethinking China's rise: Chinese scholars debate strategic overstretch." *International Affairs* 94 (5): 1019-1035. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iyy140>

49. Qingli, Wendy He, and Haridas Ramasamy. 2020. "Naming and Shaming China." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 42 (3): 317-345. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26996199>
50. Reyes, Melba E Falck, and José Luis León-Manriquez. 2010. "Mexico's East Asia strategy." In *Asia and Latin America: Political, Economic and Multilateral Relations*, edited by Jörn Dosch and Olaf Jacob, 119-160. London: Routledge.
51. Rivera Cusicanqui, Silvia, and Anne Freeland. 2015. "Strategic Ethnicity, Nation, and (Neo)colonialism in Latin America." *Alternautas* 2 (2). <https://doi.org/10.31273/alternautas.v2i2.1018>
52. Rojas Tole, Karol Stefany, and Alberto José Hurtado Briceño. 2022. "Colombia and India: Analysis of the Trade Relationship (2000-2019)." *Asian Journal of Latin American Studies* 35 (2): 83-111.
53. Rosales, Osvaldo. 2020. *El sueño chino: cómo se ve China a sí misma y cómo nos equivocamos los occidentales al interpretarla*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores.
54. Rubiolo, María Florencia. 2017. "Diversificación y autonomía: Ejes en la aproximación argentina al Sudeste de Asia." *Comillas Journal of International Relations* 8: 67-80.
55. Santos-Paulino, Amelia, and Guanghua Wan. 2010. *The rise of China and India: Impacts, prospects and implications, Studies in Development Economics and Policy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
56. Schmiege, Corinn. 2019. "The US-China trade war, the Huawei battle, and its effects on the world." *Diplomacy, Sustainable Development and Global Economics*.
57. Singh, Ajit, and Leandro Wolfson. 1995. "Asia y América Latina comparados: divergencias económicas en los años '80." *Desarrollo Económico* 34 (136): 513-532. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3467282>
58. Stallings, Barbara. 2020. *Dependency in the Twenty-First Century?: The Political Economy of China-Latin America Relations, Elements in Politics and Society in Latin America*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
59. Strange, Susan. 1994. *States and markets*. London: Continuum.
60. Suyai, Valentina. 2020. "The Korean Wave in Latin America as a result of multiculturalism." *Revista Digital Mundo Asia Pacífico* 9 (17): 57-72. <https://doi.org/10.17230/map.v9.i17.04>
61. Suzuki, Mao, and Shiming Yang. 2022. "Political economy of vaccine diplomacy: explaining varying strategies of China, India, and Russia's COVID-19 vaccine diplomacy." *Review of International Political Economy*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2022.2074514>
62. Uehara, Alexandre, and Guilherme Casarões. 2013. "Brazil, East Asia, and the shaping of world politics." *Perceptions: Journal of International Affairs* 18 (1): 75-100.
63. Urrego-Sandoval, Carolina. 2021a. *Exploring Trade Cooperation between the Pacific Alliance and South Korea 대한민국과 태평양 동맹간 무역 협력* Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes.
64. Urrego-Sandoval, Carolina. 2021b. "New Horizons for Chinese Investment in Colombia: Public-Private Partnerships." *China Dialogue*, September 1, 2021.
65. Urrego-Sandoval, Carolina, and Ramón Pacheco Pardo. 2021. "Exploring Trade Cooperation between the Pacific Alliance and South Korea." In *Seoul and Bogota*, edited by Carolina Urrego-Sandoval and Ramón Pacheco Pardo. Korea Foundation. URL: <https://ap-kf.uniandes.edu.co/publicaciones-ap-kf/research-report/> (accessed February 18, 2022).

66. Vadell, Javier A. 2019. "China in Latin America: South-South Cooperation with Chinese Characteristics." *Latin American Perspectives* 46 (2): 107-125. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582x18815511>
67. Waltz, Kenneth Neal. 1979. *Theory of international politics*. Vol. 5. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
68. Wei, Dan. 2012. "Bilateral investment treaties: an empirical analysis of the practices of Brazil and China." *European journal of Law and Economics* 33 (3): 663-690. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10657-010-9157-z>
69. Wheeler, Anita. 2014. "Cultural Diplomacy, Language Planning, and the Case of the University of Nairobi Confucius Institute." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 49 (1): 49-63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909613477834>
70. Wie, Thee Kian. 2012. "ASIA 2050-realizing the Asian century - Edited by Harinder S. Kohli, Ashok Sharma, and Anil Sood." *Asian-Pacific Economic Literature* 26 (1): 100-101. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8411.2012.01339_7.x
71. Williamson, Jeffrey G. 2015. "Latin American Inequality: Colonial Origins, Commodity Booms or a Missed Twentieth-Century Leveling?" *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities* 16 (3): 324-341. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19452829.2015.1044821>
72. Wise, Carol, and Victoria Chonn Ching. 2018. "Conceptualizing China-Latin America relations in the twenty-first century: the boom, the bust, and the aftermath." *The Pacific Review* 31 (5): 553-572. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2017.1408675>
73. Yao, Shujie, Dylan Sutherland, and Jian Chen. 2010. "China's Outward FDI and Resource-Seeking Strategy: A Case Study on Chinalco and Rio Tinto." *Asia-Pacific Journal of Accounting & Economics* 17 (3): 313-325. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16081625.2010.9720868>



Carolina Urrego-Sandoval is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science and Global Studies at Universidad de los Andes. She holds a PhD in International Political Economy from King's College London, an MA in International Studies from Aarhus University in Denmark, and a BA in International Business from the Universidad de Tolima in Colombia. She worked at the Colombian Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva, the Standard Chartered Bank in Mumbai, and as Head of International Relations at the Universidad de Tolima in Colombia. Furthermore, she has taught at King's College London and the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Her research focuses on the global political economy of cooperation between Asia and Latin America. ✉ lc.urrego@uniandes.edu.co

Ramón Pacheco Pardo is head of the Department of European & International Studies and Professor of International Relations at King's College London. He is the KF-VUB Korea Chair at the Brussels School of Governance at Vrije Universiteit Brussel. He is also King's Regional Envoy for East and Southeast Asia. Professor Pacheco Pardo is also Adjunct Fellow (Non-Resident) with the Korea Chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Non-Resident Fellow with Sejong Institute, and Committee Member at the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP EU). His research focuses on East Asia's international relations and political economy, especially the Korean Peninsula. ✉ ramon.pacheco@kcl.ac.uk

