

## 8. LEARNING FROM LATIN AMERICA

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This chapter examines Chinese engagement in Latin America and draws insights from patterns as well as possible connections with European companies and institutions—insights and connections that may be useful in understanding the strategic impact of Chinese engagement in Latin America on Europe.

In Latin America, as elsewhere, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) is pursuing a principally economically oriented strategy, although the PRC also pursues goals in the political, institutional, and security spheres to support those economic objectives. Chinese companies, with the support of the Chinese government, are engaging in Latin America to secure sources of commodities and foodstuffs as well as access to markets for Chinese goods and services, particularly in value-added, strategic sectors.<sup>1</sup> These efforts are consistent with Chinese initiatives such as Made in China 2025.<sup>2</sup>

In pursuing its goals in Latin America, the PRC implicitly, and often self-consciously, employs the lure of its enormous markets as well as its power as a lender and investor. China leverages its government in multiple ways, both facilitating multisector deals and leveraging its control of access to the PRC

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1. R. Evan Ellis, *Chinese Engagement in Latin America in the Context of Strategic Competition with the United States* (Washington, DC: US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, June 24, 2020).

2. “‘Made in China 2025’ Plan Issued,” State Council of the People’s Republic of China (website), May 19, 2015, [http://english.www.gov.cn/policies/latest\\_releases/2015/05/19/content\\_281475110703534.htm](http://english.www.gov.cn/policies/latest_releases/2015/05/19/content_281475110703534.htm).

domestic market as an implicit or explicit tool to help its companies secure contracts and other objectives.

Many of China's investments and other activities in the region focus on dominating the connectivity fundamental to Latin America's economies as a complement to achieving secure sources of supply and access to markets. This strategy includes building and operating physical infrastructure, such as roads, railroads, ports, and riverways, and engaging in power generation and transmission, telecommunications, e-commerce, and banking.

### **Profile of Chinese Engagement in Latin America**

China's economic presence in Latin America and the Caribbean began to take off after the country's acceptance into the World Trade Organization in 2001, with PRC bilateral trade with the region reaching \$314 billion by 2019.<sup>3</sup> China's physical presence in Latin America expanded rapidly following the 2008 financial crisis, reflecting increased PRC need for markets and factor inputs, increased contacts in the region, and sophistication in international operations.<sup>4</sup>

### **Structure of China's Advance**

China's advance in Latin America includes the following three mutually reinforcing areas of focus.

1. Purchases, and other activities that provide the PRC reliable access to sources of supply

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3. International Monetary Fund (IMF), "Exports, FOB to Partner Countries," IMF Data, n.d., <https://data.imf.org/regular.aspx?key=61013712>.

4. R. Evan Ellis, *China on the Ground in Latin America* (New York: Palgrave, 2014).

of factor inputs for manufacturing, capital formation, and urbanization.

2. Reliable access to markets for Chinese goods and services in strategically valued, high-value sectors.
3. Connectivity, including physical infrastructure, telecommunications, electricity, banking, and e-commerce.

### *Reliable Access to Resources*

To guarantee resources in Latin America, the PRC has been increasing its presence in the petroleum mining, agricultural, and forestry sectors. As in Europe, China continues to use minority shares to maintain a seat at the table, acquire technology, and learn. Principal examples include its minority positions in the oil and gas company Perenco, the energy multinational Galp Energia, metals company Companhia Brasileira de Metalurgia e Mineração, and chemical company Sociedad Química y Minera de Chile S.A.<sup>5</sup>

In mining, the PRC has a significant presence in strategic minerals across Latin America, including lithium and rare earths, impacting European countries and companies that use these items in defense goods and advanced batteries and other items for electric vehicles and power generation. China-based companies have a significant presence in lithium, including a minority stake by Tianqi Lithium Corp.

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5. Judy Hua, Wan Xu, and Ken Wills, "Sinopec Signs \$3.5 Billion Deal for Galp's Brazil Oil Asset," Reuters (website), November 11, 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-galp-brazil-sale/sinopec-signs-3-5-billion-deal-for-galps-brazil-oil-asset-idUSTRE7AA0ZF20111111>.

in the Sociedad Química y Minera de Chile S.A. operation in Chile, a majority stake by Ganfeng Lithium Co. Ltd. in the Cauchari-Olaroz project in Argentina, and a partnership between Bolivia and the Xinjiang TBEA Co., Ltd. in the Uyuni Salt Flat.<sup>6</sup> As of August 2021, TBEA and Ganfeng were positioned to compete for Bolivia's lithium in a new bidding process being conducted by its new government. In addition, Ganfeng is developing a lithium operation in the Sonoran Desert in Mexico that could become the largest in the region.<sup>7</sup>

In the rare-earths sector, China Molybdenum Company Limited owns a niobium mine in Brazil, where 85 percent of the world's commercial niobium is produced.<sup>8</sup> The Chinese firm Baosteel Group has a 15 percent stake in Companhia Brasileira de Metalurgia e Mineração, also in Brazil.

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6. Dalilia Ouerghi, "China's Ganfeng Completes Majority Stake Acquisition in Argentina Lithium Project," *Metals Bulletin*, August 28, 2020, <https://www.metalbulletin.com/Article/3948479/Chinas-Ganfeng-completes-majority-stake-acquisition-in-Argentina-lithium-project.html>; and Miriam Telma Jemio, "Bolivia Rethinks How to Industrialize Its Lithium amid Political Transition," *Diálogo Chino*, May 19, 2020, <https://dialogochino.net/en/extractive-industries/35423-bolivia-rethinks-how-to-industrialize-its-lithium-amid-political-transition/>.

7. Reuters Staff, "Ganfeng Lithium Increases Stake in Bacanora's Sonora Project to 50%," Reuters (website), November 13, 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/bacanora-lithium-ganfeng/ganfeng-lithium-increases-stake-in-bacanoras-sonora-project-to-50-idUSL8N2HZ54S>.

8. Jake Spring, "Hands off Brazil's Niobium: Bolsonaro Sees China as Threat to Utopian Vision," Reuters (website), October 25, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-election-china-niobium/hands-off-brazils-niobium-bolsonaro-sees-china-as-threat-to-utopian-vision-idUSKCN1MZ1JN>.

## *Pursuit of Strategic Markets and Infrastructure*

Although the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) focused on connecting the PRC to its near abroad and markets in Europe, the Chinese government extended the initiative to Latin America with the inclusion of Panama in 2018. Today, 19 Latin American countries have committed to participating, with Argentina expected to become the twentieth. The extension of the BRI to Latin America highlights China's attempts to dominate global logistics and other forms of connectivity as a complement to expanding Chinese positions in strategic markets, commodities, and the agricultural sector.

A major example of Chinese physical infrastructure operations in Latin America is Hutchison Port Holdings Limited port operations: The company has four ports in Mexico, two in Panama, one in Buenos Aires, and one in Freeport, Bahamas. In addition, China Harbour Engineering Company Ltd. is constructing the port of Posorja, Ecuador.<sup>9</sup> Other Chinese ports include the \$3-billion, 15-dock Chancay minerals port in Peru; four ports in Brazil, including the São Luis megaport project; and China Merchants Port Holdings Company Limited's (CMP's) operation

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9. Michele Labrut, "DP World Launches Construction of Deepwater Port in Posorja, Ecuador," *Seatrade Maritime News*, September 28, 2017, <https://www.seatrade-maritime.com/americas/dp-world-launches-construction-deepwater-ports-posorja-ecuador>.

of the port of Kingston, Jamaica.<sup>10</sup> In addition, PRC-based firms have explored major port operations in La Unión, El Salvador; Puerto de Manzanillo, Dominican Republic; and Berbice, Guyana, where a Chinese firm may construct a commercial port.

China-based companies have become increasingly successful in moving beyond the loan-based construction of highways, bridges, and railroads in small states and countries with friendly, populist regimes to employing public-private partnerships (PPPs) to win projects from governments with relatively strong and transparent institutions, including Colombia and Chile. Chinese companies may be able to make inroads in European infrastructure projects through similar strategies.

Major PRC advances in Colombia through PPP programs include a highway from Medellín to the Gulf of Urabá and the construction of the Bogotá Metro in Colombia.<sup>11</sup> In Chile, in April 2021, the

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10. BNAmericas, "Cosco Sees 2020 Construction Start for US \$3 Bn Chancay Port," BNAmericas (website), June 26, 2019, <https://www.bnamericas.com/en/news/cosco-sees-2020-construction-start-for-us3bn-chancay-port>; Marcela Ayres, "China to Announce Billion-Dollar Investment in Brazilian Port of Sao Luis: Sources," Reuters (website), November 13, 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-brics-china-investment/china-to-announce-billion-dollar-investment-in-brazilian-port-of-sao-luis-sources-idUSKBN1XN2NM>; and "Chinese Firm Takes Over Kingston Freeport Management Company," *Stabroek News* (website), April 25, 2020, <https://www.stabroeknews.com/2020/04/25/news/regional/jamaica/chinese-firm-takes-over-kingston-freeport-management-company/>.

11. Jorge Valencia, "By Building Bogotá Metro, China Makes a New Breakthrough in Latin America," *World* (website), November 5, 2020, <https://theworld.org/stories/2020-11-05/building-bogot-metro-china-makes-new-breakthrough-latin-america>.

government awarded the Talca-Chillán segment of Route 5 to China Railway Construction Corporation Limited.<sup>12</sup> The acquisition of a 30 percent stake by China Communications Construction Company, Ltd. in the Portuguese firm Mota-Engil, with a strong presence in Latin America and experience with PPP projects, will likely advance Chinese capability to win more such PPP projects.<sup>13</sup> Examples of PRC firms' riverine projects include CCCC Shanghai Dredging Co., Ltd. being poised to displace Belgian firm Jan De Nul Group in the dredging and operation of a riverine toll route along the Paraguay-Paraná Waterway, which connects Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Argentina, and Uruguay.<sup>14</sup>

In Latin America, with parallels to Europe, China has also focused on synergies between related economic activities, as seen in the São Luis megaport project, which combines the financing, construction, and operation of ports, railroads, and other infrastructure. In Costa Rica, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Trinidad and Tobago, the PRC has also sought to establish free-trade zones, which give privileged access

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12. David Arminas, "Chile Awards CRCC Major Talca-Chillán Upgrade," *World Highways* (website), April 14, 2021, <https://www.worldhighways.com/wh12/news/chile-awards-crcc-major-talca-chillan-upgrade>.

13. Mat Youkee, "Chinese Expansion with a Portuguese Face," *Diálogo Chino*, November 20, 2020, <https://dialogochino.net/en/infrastructure/38445-cccc-mota-engil-chinese-expansion-with-a-portuguese-face/>.

14. "China Competes in the Dredging of Paraguay/Parana Waterway Which Handles 90 Million Tons of Grains," *MercoPress* (website), November 25, 2020, <https://en.mercopress.com/2020/11/25/china-competes-in-the-dredging-of-paraguay-parana-waterway-which-handles-90-million-tons-of-grains>.

to Chinese companies for the warehousing and distribution of items.<sup>15</sup> Free-trade zones help Beijing advance its position by allowing it to sell its products in the region and dominate the associated value chain.

In the electricity sector, China has made important advances in building and operating generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure, with a concentration on South America. European companies such as AES Global Power Holdings BV; Endesa, S.A.; and Naturgy Energy Group S.A. have been among the principal sellers – and competitors – as PRC-based companies have advanced in these sectors.

Examples of Chinese electricity generation construction projects in Latin America include six hydroelectric facilities in Ecuador, three in Bolivia, and two in Honduras. In addition, PRC firms are advancing to construct two hydroelectric projects

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15. Tico Times, “Costa Rica, China to Explore Creation of ‘Special Economic Zones,’” *Tico Times* (website), January 6, 2015, <https://ticotimes.net/2015/01/06/costa-rica-china-to-explore-creation-of-special-economic-zones>; Benjamin Russel, “What a Controversial Deal in El Salvador Says about China’s Bigger Plans,” *Americas Quarterly* (website), April 12, 2019, <https://www.americasquarterly.org/article/what-a-controversial-deal-in-el-salvador-says-about-chinas-bigger-plans/>; and Multimedia Desk, “China to Fund Phoenix Park Industrial Estate,” *Daily Express* (website), June 20, 2018, [https://trinidadexpress.com/business/local/china-to-fund-phoenix-park-industrial-estate/article\\_31be9880-7498-11e8-aa35-134f694d9978.html](https://trinidadexpress.com/business/local/china-to-fund-phoenix-park-industrial-estate/article_31be9880-7498-11e8-aa35-134f694d9978.html).



on the Santa Cruz River in Argentina and own the Chaglla facility in Peru.<sup>16</sup>

Chinese firms are also active in building a range of wind and solar facilities, including the Cauchari facility in Jujuy, Argentina, the region's largest photovoltaic facility, often either working with Europe-based companies or using technology the PRC firms originally pioneered.<sup>17</sup>

In the nuclear sector, China is supplying its Hualong One experimental reactor to the Atucha Nuclear Complex in Argentina and is pursuing construction of a new reactor for the Angra Nuclear Power Plant in Brazil.<sup>18</sup>

Examples of PRC companies investing in electricity transmission and distribution in Latin America include the State Grid Corporation of China, China Three Gorges Corporation (CTG), and China Southern

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16. R. Evan Ellis, "New Directions in the Deepening of China-Argentine Engagement," *Global Americans* (blog), February 11, 2021, <https://theglobalamericans.org/2021/02/new-directions-in-the-deepening-chinese-argentine-engagement/>; and "China's SGCC Offers to Construct HidroAysen Power Line," *Global Transmission Report*, January 4, 2012, <https://www.globaltransmission.info/archive.php?id=10056>.

17. Luis Colqui, "Jujuy. Cauchari: El parque solar más grande de América Latina comenzó a vender energía al país," *La Nación* (website), September 26, 2020, <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/economia/jujuy-cauchari-parque-solar-mas-grande-america-nid2461924/>.

18. Sofia Diamante, "La energía nuclear, una herencia a resolver con China," *La Nación* (website), January 22, 2020, <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/economia/la-energia-nuclear-una-herencia-a-resolver-con-china-nid2326138/>; and David Dalton, "Angra-3 / Brazil Plans to Choose Partner by End of Year, Says Minister," *NucNet* (website), August 24, 2020, <https://www.nucnet.org/news/brazil-plans-to-choose-partner-by-end-of-year-says-minister-8-1-2020>.

Power Grid Company Limited, which have expanded their presence in the region since 2010, investing tens of billions of dollars there and acquiring 13 percent of the country's long-distance power transmission lines.<sup>19</sup> Chinese companies have exploited experience with specialized technologies for high-voltage, long-distance transmission to win projects such as State Grid's construction of a 2,539-kilometer line from the Belo Monte hydroelectric facility to Brazil's population centers in the southeast.<sup>20</sup>

Chinese companies have further expanded their positions in energy transmission and distribution in Peru with China Yangtze Power Co., Ltd.'s September 2019 acquisition of Luz del Sur, valued at approximately \$3.6 billion.<sup>21</sup> In Chile, through the acquisition of European firms such as Transelec S.A., Atiaia Energia S/A, Chilquinta Energia, and Compañía General de Electricidad, PRC-based companies have acquired control of 57 percent of Chilean energy distribution.<sup>22</sup>

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19. R. Evan Ellis, "China's Bid to Dominate Electrical Connectivity in the Americas," *China Brief* 21, issue 10 (May 2021).

20. May Zhou, "State Grid Helps Brazil Harness Power," *China Daily* (website), November 24, 2019, <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201911/14/WS5dccc8604a310cf3e35577345.html>.

21. BNAmericas, "China Yangtze Power Completed Its Acquisition of Peruvian Power Company, Luz Del Sur," BNAmericas (website), April 24, 2020, <https://www.bnamericas.com/en/news/china-yangtze-power-completed-its-acquisition-of-peruvian-power-company-luz-del-sur>.

22. Reuters, "Regulador chileno aprueba sin condiciones compra de eléctrica CGE por china State Grid," Infobae, March 31, 2021, <https://www.infobae.com/america/agencias/2021/03/31/regulador-chileno-aprueba-sin-condiciones-compra-de-electrica-cge-por-china-state-grid-2/>; and Ellis, "China's Bid to Dominate."

Examples of Chinese telecommunications infrastructure activities in Latin America include the supply of devices and infrastructure by Huawei and, to a lesser extent, ZTE Corporation to the region's major commercial operators, including Spain's Telefónica S.A. Huawei and others have been key builders and contributors of components to the region's 3G and 4G networks and are now positioned to play a major role in 5G in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, and other countries.<sup>23</sup>

Companies from the PRC have also built strategically important fiber-optic lines in Latin America, including one connecting Europe to Brazil across the Atlantic Ocean and through Cameroon, Africa.<sup>24</sup> Chinese companies have similarly constructed the Fiber Optic Austral network in Chile, fiber-optic cables off the coast of the Guyanas, and a network connecting Venezuela to Jamaica and Cuba.<sup>25</sup>

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23. Reuters Staff, "Brazil's Bolsonaro to Allow China's Huawei in 5G Auctions: Newspaper," Reuters (website), January 16, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-huawei-tech-idUSKBN29L0JM>; Loop News (website), "Huawei to Be Included in Dom Rep 5G Network Auction," Loop News, February 15, 2021, <https://www.loopjamaica.com/content/huawei-be-included-dom-rep-5g-network-auction>; and R. Evan Ellis, *Chinese Engagement in El Salvador: An Update* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2021).

24. Jeremy Page, Kate O'Keeffe, and Rob Taylor, "America's Undersea Battle with China for Control of the Global Internet Grid," *Wall Street Journal* (website), November 12, 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-takes-on-chinas-huawei-in-undersea-battle-over-the-global-internet-grid-11552407466>.

25. Reuters Staff, "Venezuela, Cuba Outfox US with Fiber Optic Cable," Reuters (website), January 18, 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/cuba-internet/venezuela-cuba-outfox-u-s-with-fiber-optic-cable-idUSN1814550420110118>.

In addition, PRC companies have been increasingly important suppliers of smart cities, digital surveillance and public security systems, cameras in the Colón Free Trade Zone in Panama, and Uruguay's border surveillance cameras, among others. China also leveraged coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) to donate thermal cameras subsequently installed in Latin American airports, government facilities, and other strategically important and sensitive spaces.

The PRC has also been playing an increased role in Latin America's financial infrastructure. Such activities have included the provision of loans that advance Chinese work in the region and the financing of trade and investment between Latin America and Asia through commercial banks, such as China Construction Bank and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China. These activities have also included the backing of currency swaps, which strengthens the international position of China's currency vis-à-vis the established positions of the dollar and euro.

In the arena of e-commerce, the PRC firm Alibaba Group operates in Latin America, and the ride-sharing company Didi Chuxing Technology Co. has established itself in Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and Panama, among others, although its progress has been hampered by COVID-19.

### **Chinese Soft Power in Latin America**

China's use of soft-power tools in Latin America provides insight into the PRC's potential coopting of business and political elites in Europe. The two most important and most comparable dimensions are the expectation of benefit and people-to-people diplomacy.

In the case of the former, Latin American leaders and businesspeople invest resources and accommodate China by accepting questionable, nontransparent loan terms or even changing diplomatic recognition in hopes of selling their products to the PRC, receiving Chinese loans, or partnering with China-based companies for local Chinese investment.<sup>26</sup> Such expectations sometimes have a personal dimension, including kickbacks or partnerships for the family or partners of the leaders involved. To avoid putting their businesses at risk, these elites sometimes self-censor on issues of sensitivity and importance to the Chinese state, such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, Tibet, and Xinjian. Such currying of favor and self-restraint undermines the articulation of the Chinese threat and the formation of more effective strategies by Latin American governments for obtaining the benefits they hope to secure from China.

Examples of the PRC engaging in people-to-people diplomacy include its establishment of 39 Confucius Institutes and 18 Confucius Classrooms in Latin America. These institutions identify and recruit the small number of future Latin American elites with sufficient aptitude and interest to learn Mandarin Chinese successfully, bringing them to study in China on Hanban scholarships.

Beyond scholarships for Latin American students, the PRC also brings political party leaders and government bureaucrats, journalists, and think-tank professors from Latin America to China on trips sponsored through the International Liaison

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26. R. Evan Ellis, "The Evolution of Chinese Soft Power in Latin America," in Ying Zhu et al., ed., *Soft Power with Chinese Characteristics: China's Campaign for Hearts and Minds* (Abingdon-on-Thames, UK: Routledge, 2020).

Department of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).<sup>27</sup> The PRC further expands its presence through media activities such as the purchasing of regular supplements in Latin American newspapers—for example, *La Tercera* in Chile—as well as the provision of free China Global Television Network feeds to Latin American television and radio.<sup>28</sup> This propaganda is often presented without a qualifier it is produced by the Chinese state.

### **Work with and through Multilateral Institutions**

China has engaged with and sometimes participated in multilateral institutions in Latin America to advance its strategic objectives in ways that resemble its activities in Europe. The PRC has chosen to use the weekly institutionalized Community of Latin American and Caribbean States forum as its preferred vehicle for advancing its multilateral agenda in the region, resembling its decision to use the similarly weekly institutionalized 16+1 format to engage with Central and Eastern Europe.

### **Insights for Europe from China in Latin America**

In the face of such challenges, China's advance in Latin America offers Europe several important lessons for managing its own relationship with the PRC.

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27. Linda Zhang and Ryan Berg, "An Overlooked Source of Chinese Influence in Latin America," *China Brief* 21, no. 3 (February 2021).

28. R. Evan Ellis, "Chinese Advances in Chile," *Global Americans* (blog), March 2, 2021, <https://theglobalamericans.org/2021/03/chinese-advances-in-chile/>.

### *Limits of Institutional Fixes*

In the economic realm, Latin America offers a cautionary tale of what can happen where governments have less-developed tools to limit China's growing role in their connectivity through investment screening. Although the PRC presently has influence in only a limited number of Latin American ports, electrical systems, telecommunications networks, and financial infrastructures, this position gives its leaders knowledge of economic leverage through, and, in extreme circumstances, a "trojan horse" position inside these architectures.

At the same time, China's success in gaining a foothold in countries like Brazil, Chile, and Colombia shows PRC-based companies can still succeed in countries with reasonably strong screening tools in place. These conditions bode poorly for countries that lack truly robust investment screening mechanisms and engaged governmental entities and individuals.

### *Populism with Chinese Characteristics*

Beyond strategic economic issues, Latin America also provides Europe with useful insights into China's threat to the democratic order through Beijing's enabling of populist governance. While the PRC may not actively seek to establish politically subservient client states as the Soviet Union did during the Cold War, Chinese economic support for populist regimes in Argentina, Bolivia, and Venezuela, decreased these countries' dependence on Western economic ties as authoritarian leaders consolidated power against democratic opponents and institutions and moved their countries away from the West.

The resultant propagation of undemocratic regimes working against US interests bears uncomfortable, if imperfect, parallels with the embrace of China by European populist regimes in Hungary and Serbia.

### *Soft Power as a Muzzle*

Examination of Latin America suggests, even in nonpopulist regimes, the most significant risk from the PRC may be the ever-strengthening web of influence it exercises. In part, this influence manifests itself through China having stakes in the businesses of political leaders and other actors.

In some cases, Chinese soft power in Latin America extends into the public discourse when Beijing shows it has the power to truncate discussion about the nature of the PRC challenge. In Europe, as in Latin America, such influence may undercut the ability of the region's governments to diagnose and coordinate an effective resistance to the China challenge.



## 9. LEARNING FROM AFRICA

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As with Chinese engagement in Latin America, China's engagement in Africa holds significance for our understanding of the evolution of the country's economic statecraft, offering potential lessons for Europe in dealing with an increasingly active participant in the global system. Beijing's approach to securing African resources starting in the mid-1990s lays out the key themes that came to characterize its Going Global strategy, including the country's positioning in new markets, its view of risk, and the ideological framing of its engagement.

Moreover, the modalities of Chinese engagement were devised during this period in Africa, including the use of development finance as a point of entry into target economies, the use of Chinese loans tied to Chinese-built infrastructure in exchange for the stable delivery of resources, the appeal of ideas like "no strings attached" to prospective African partners, and the use of high-profile diplomacy.<sup>1</sup> These modalities were revised and adjusted over time and proved to be successful in securing China, in a relatively short period, a significant position in trade, resources, and the infrastructure sector in Africa.

At the same time, Africa's enthusiasm for China as an alternative to Western sources only began to temper as the longer term implications of economic

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1. Xiaojun Li, "China Is Offering 'No Strings Attached Aid' to Africa. Here's What That Means," *Washington Post* (website), September 27, 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2018/09/27/china-is-offering-no-strings-attached-aid-to-africa-heres-what-that-means/>.