



## China & Latin America Forum

As President Trump withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership creating a degree of uncertainty in global trade, Chinese President Xi Jinping praised open trade and globalization during his speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos; as the current administration plans to build a wall on the border with Mexico, China is building a bridge to Latin America through investments, trade, and cultural exchanges; as Ford canceled its factory in Mexico, Huawei is selling more smartphones and building more telecom towers in the Dominican Republic. At this critical juncture in history, the University of Chicago plans to host a panel dedicated to fostering conversations about opportunities and challenges affecting the future development of the relationship between China and Latin America. We are inviting renowned academia in this arena to discuss this important topic.

### Panel A: The Interwoven Future of the Chinese and Latin American Economies

#### Objective

To understand the type of economic ties between Latin America and China during the last few decades, the benefits and costs to Latin America and China in this bilateral cooperation, the future of this bilateral economic relations as China is transforming itself from a manufacturing-based economy to a service-based economy

#### Description

Since the 1990s, trade between China and Latin America has increased drastically. In 2013, China's trade with Latin America was 24 times larger than it was in 2000, reaching US\$236.5 billion in 2015. In the past, the economic relationship between Latin America and China has focused on the trade of a few primary resources such as oil, iron ore, and copper. However, with the transition of China's economy from an investment-heavy one to one based on internal consumption, the economic relationship between Latin America and China is deemed to change. China is shifting its role from a commodity importer to an investor and financier of Latin America infrastructure and manufacturing, specifically in the transportation and energy industries.

In January 2015, at the first ministerial meeting of the Forum of China and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, China's President Xi Jinping set an ambitious goal for exchange with the Latin American region of \$500 billion in trade and \$250 billion in direct investments for the period between 2015 and 2019. In Ecuador, Chinese money, technology, and expertise have constructed a hydroelectric plant that provides 35% of the country's energy. Other Chinese investments, including two nuclear power plants in Argentina, a 152-mile-long motorway in Colombia, and a container port in northern Brazil, in addition to a 23% stake in Brazil's third largest energy firm, have demonstrated the growth of China's stake in Latin America.



## Key Questions

How did Latin America suffer from being an exporter of primary products to China while China builds its manufacturing base to outcompete Latin American manufacturing? How will Latin American nations respond to the transformation of these economic ties due to the changing structure of the Chinese economy? What opportunities does Latin America hold for China apart from being a hub for natural resources? How are Chinese investment in Latin America different from investments from other nations? What impacts do these changing economic ties have on Latin America-US relations?

## Panelists

Dr. Carol Wise (PhD, Columbia University)

Dr. Carol Wise joined the School of International Relations at the University of Southern California in 2002 after spending eight years on the Faculty at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC. She specializes in international political economy and development, with an emphasis on Latin America. She has written widely on trade integration, exchange rate crises, institutional reform, and the political economy of market restructuring in the region. Wise just completed a book-length project, *Dragonomics: The Rise of China in Latin America*, which analyzes the rapid and remarkable ties that have developed between China and Latin America since the 1990s. Wise's most recent publications include *The Political Economy of China-Latin America Relations in the New Millennium* and *Playing both Sides of the Pacific: Latin America's Free Trade Agreements with China*.

Dr. Lourdes Casanova (PhD, University of Barcelona)

Dr. Lourdes Casanova is a Senior Lecturer of Management and the Academic Director of the Emerging Markets Institute at the Johnson School of Business at Cornell University, focusing on international business and emerging markets multinationals. She is a member of Latin America Global Agenda Council, World Investment Network at UNCTAD, the B20 Task Force on ICT and Innovation in Los Cabos. In addition, at INSEAD, she leads Goldman Sachs 10,000 women initiative and co-leads Innovalatino on innovation in Latin America. She is the co-author of the Emerging Multinationals Report (EMR) 2016, "The China Surge," "Outward FDI in China and Latin America: A Comparative Study" and *The Political Economy of an Emerging Global Power: In Search of the Brazil Dream*.

## Panel A Moderator

Dr. Dain Borges (PhD, Stanford University)

Professor Dain Borges is the Faculty Director for Master of Arts Programs at the University of Chicago's Division of Social Sciences. He is a historian of modern Latin America, especially Brazil and the Caribbean. His fields of research are nineteenth- and twentieth- century Latin American culture and ideas. He has taught courses and seminars in a wide range of topics, including society, national identity and general history of Latin America.



## Panel B: The Politics of China in the Latin American Region – Xi’s “New Era”

### Objective

To understand the political implications behind China’s increasing economic investment in Latin America and explore the changing geopolitics between the U.S. and China as champions of free-trade in the region

### Description

Given China’s own authoritarian governance and state capitalism colluding with the idea of liberal democracy in Latin America, China’s own influence would be neutralizing to the dominant liberal ideals in the region. People suspect that China is making friends in the US sphere of influence to match America’s allies in East and Southeast Asia. In fact, already, China’s economic influence came at Washington’s expense. In 2000, China’s share of Latin America trade was 2% compared to the US share of 53%. By 2010, China’s share grew to 11%, while US’s share dropped to 39%.

The Chinese challenge to US influence was best embodied by the construction of the 270km Nicaraguan canal that aim to rival the Panama route one day. There was even military cooperation between the two regions. For example, Chinese military has sold about \$100 million per year of sophisticated equipment such as aircraft, radar, and air-to-air missiles to Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina. In February 2015, Argentina and China announced a series of military agreements that included the co-production of advanced end-products, strategic space cooperation, and inclusion of Chinese-made fighter jets in the Argentinian air force.

All these recent developments of economic, political, and military cooperation between China and Latin America have alarmed the United States. President Trump’s pick for Secretary of Homeland Security, retired General John Kelly, described growing Chinese, Russian, and Iranian relationships in Latin America to the United States senate as potentially “existential threats”.

### Key Questions

What is the intention of China’s growing military and political ties to Latin American nations? What is China and Latin America’s attitude toward liberal ideals championed by the United States and how have these positions shifted? To what extent do China’s growing economic and political ties to Latin America threaten U.S. traditional leadership in the region? Can China and the United States work together to satisfy their own interests while meeting Latin America’s needs? What role will the new presidency in the United States going to play in China’s role in the world, particularly in Latin America?



## Panelists

Dr. Benjamin Creutzfeldt (PhD, Externado University)

Dr. Benjamin Creutzfeldt is a sinologist, art historian, and foreign policy analyst with over 25 years of experience working on China. He received his Ph.D. in political studies in 2015 for his research on China's foreign policy towards Latin America and is currently a Resident Postdoctoral Fellow on Sino-Latin American-U.S. Affairs with the SAIS Foreign Policy Institute at John Hopkins University. Creutzfeldt is the author of numerous articles and editor of the book *China en América Latina: reflexiones sobre las relaciones transpacificas*. In his research, he concentrates on the political and cultural aspects of China's relationship with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, and its strategic relevance to the United States. As a case study in international relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, his research illustrates the role a rising global power can play through its multidimensional diplomacy and its foreign policy, as well as the impact of non-state actors, especially corporations. Three themes run through his work: (1) the study of Chinese foreign policy towards Latin America, (2) the significance of discourse and meaning in China's transpacific diplomacy, and (3) the study of theoretical currents emerging in China's approach to international relations.

Dr. Stephen B. Kaplan (PhD, Yale University)

Dr. Stephen B. Kaplan is an Assistant Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at George Washington University. Professor Kaplan's research and teaching interests focus on the frontiers of international and comparative political economy, where he specializes in the political economy of global finance and development, the rise of China in the Western Hemisphere, and Latin American politics. Professor Kaplan joined the GWU faculty in the fall of 2010 after completing a postdoctoral research fellowship at the Niehaus Center for Globalization and Governance at Princeton University and his Ph.D. at Yale University. While at Yale, Kaplan also worked as a researcher for former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo at the Yale Center for the Study of Globalization. Prior to his doctoral studies, Professor Kaplan was a senior economic analyst at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, writing extensively on developing country economics, global financial market developments, and emerging market crises from 1998 to 2003.

Dr. Ted Piccone (J.D. Columbia University School of Law)

Dr. Ted Piccone is a senior fellow in the Project on International Order and Strategy and Latin America Initiative in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings Institute. His research focuses on global democracy and human rights policies; U.S.-Latin American relations, including Cuba; emerging powers; and multilateral affairs. Dr. Piccone served for eight years as a senior foreign policy advisor in the Clinton administration, including on the National Security Council staff, at the State Department's Office of Policy Planning, and on the Office of the Secretary of Defense at the Pentagon. Piccone has authored or edited multiple volumes and articles on foreign policy, Latin America and human rights. His book, *Catalysts for Change: How the UN's Independent Experts Promote Human Rights* analyzes the effectiveness of this system at the national level and recommends ways to strengthen it.



## Panel B Moderator

Dr. Xiaoyu Pu (Ph.D., Ohio State University)

Dr. Xiaoyu Pu is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at University of Nevada, Reno, focusing on Chinese foreign relations. Dr. Pu's research focuses on emerging powers (BRICS), international security, international relations theory, and Chinese foreign policy. Before joining the University of Nevada, Dr. Pu was a postdoctoral research fellow in the Princeton-Harvard China and the World Program. His research has appeared in *International Security*, *The China Quarterly*, *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, *Asian Affairs*, and *Mainland China Studies* as well as in edited volumes. Dr. Pu serves on the editorial boards of *Foreign Affairs Review* (Beijing). His commentaries have appeared on BBC, South China Morning Post, Shenzhen Satellite TV-Greater China Live, Nevada News Makers, and elsewhere. He has completed a book entitled "Limited Rebranding: Contested Status Signaling and China's Global Repositioning." Dr. Pu has been invited to deliver speeches in many think-tanks and universities across the globe, including the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV) in Brazil, the National Committee on United States-China Relations, Oxford University, Princeton University, and Tsinghua University. Dr. Pu is the founder and moderator of GCIR, a global scholarly listserv on international relations and China.

## Session Format

Davos-style discussion with the moderator leading the discussion. Each panelist will start with a 10-minute introduction of their work and insights followed by a moderated discussion. There will be 15 minutes for Q&A in the allotted time for the panel.

## Date and Location

The date for the event is Friday, May 19th in the International House Assembly Hall at the University of Chicago. The event is scheduled to start at 9:30 A.M. with Breakfast and Registration at 9:00 A.M.

## Contacts

Exequiel Manbor  
[emanbor@uchicago.edu](mailto:emanbor@uchicago.edu)  
+1 (312)-678-5346

Bruce Chi  
[mingchenc@uchicago.edu](mailto:mingchenc@uchicago.edu)  
+1 (312)-888-6358

Jian Ren  
[renjian@uchicago.edu](mailto:renjian@uchicago.edu)  
+1 (872)-904-6242