

# **‘China’s deepening ties with Latin America is unnerving the U.S.’, says authors of new book**

Submitted by: BlueSky Education

Tuesday, 17 January 2023

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‘China’s deepening ties with Latin America are unnerving the U.S.’ – authors of new book

China’s growing influence in Latin America is unnerving the United States, according to Professor Chris Alden and Dr Alvaro Mendez from LSE IDEAS, authors of the new book, *China and Latin America: Development, Agency and Geopolitics*.

According to Alden and Mendez, via their new book, China's role as an economic powerhouse in Latin America is reshaping a region on the cusp of development and change.

Beijing’s engagement with the region is amplified by cutting-edge technologies and a growing assertiveness in regional diplomatic and military affairs.

This, they note within their book, concerns the U.S. which, historically complacent in its dominant position over its proverbial 'backyard', has become increasingly alarmed by the spectacle of deepening Chinese involvement in this part of the Western hemisphere.

Within their new book, Alden and Mendez, both of LSE IDEAS – LSE’s foreign policy think tank – explore the relationship between China and Latin America by looking at the interests, strategies and practices of China's incoming power.

From unpacking the historical links between Imperial China and Colonial Latin America through the 19th century, and examining the revolutionary role played by Mao's China during the Cold War, to assessing global China's contemporary expansion into Latin America by focusing on the development dimensions of engagement in individual countries, and simultaneously, on the exercise of agency by Latin American governments and societies intent on managing Chinese interests to their advantage, the authors undertake a detailed and up-to-the-minute investigation of Sino-Latin American relations.

The book also addresses these relationships in the context of heightened global competition between China and the United States, within which Latin America manifests as a point of issue in everything from investment in lithium mining to the promotion of Covid vaccines.

Chris Alden, LSE IDEAS Director and co-author of the book, notes:

“This book publishes at a deeply fascinating time: China’s involvement in Latin America continues to grow exponentially. Since the turn of the century, bilateral trade between China and Latin America has increased massively, going from \$12.17 billion in 2000 to \$307.94 billion in 2019. China is financing roads, railways, dams and ports that are transforming regional economies and societies within the region. And this is all happening to the dismay of other major actors, not least the U.S.”

Dr Alvaro Mendez, Co-Director of the Global South Unit at LSE IDEAS and co-author of the book, adds:

“China’s interest and influence in Latin America may appear to be a modern phenomenon. But their ties run deep. That said, one cannot – and shouldn’t – ignore Beijing’s clear and unwavering interest in the region. The U.S. certainly isn’t.”

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