

ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN CHINA AND LATIN AMERICA – A CONSTRUCTIVIST VIEW IN SEARCHING FOR THE BANDUNG SPIRIT¹

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ABSTRACT: The increasing economic presence of China in Latin America is generating a strong response from mainstream academics and politicians, which basic claim is of imperialistic features. An anachronical comparison with the great European powers is made to justify the claim of a wave of Chinese imperialism and neo-extractivism in the region. This study relies on the Constructivist Theory of International Relations and Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAIL) to challenge this claim by founding empirical evidence of the presence of the Spirit of Bandung in the economic relationship between China and Latin America. The hypothesis in this article is that ideational factors as solidarity and shared experiences are essential to form a new narrative that goes beyond seeking material capabilities and survival in a Hobbesian international system structure, as well as to construct the new basis for a more equitable relationship between countries. We use the Brazilian case to test the argument, and the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CADQAS) called *ATLAS.ti* as the research technique. The objective is finding minimal evidence in the primary documents that point into the confirmation of the hypothesis.

KEYWORDS: Economic Relations; China; Brazil; Bandung Spirit; Imperialism

I. Introduction

According to the report *Chinese Finance to LAC in 2016*, “[...] Brazil, Ecuador, and Venezuela accounted for 92% of total lending to the region, with approximately 72%—or \$15.2 billion—issued to Brazil alone, having priority investments in energy, mining, and infrastructure.”² The same report informs that “Chinese policy banks are pursuing projects in Latin America and other regions that are supportive of both Latin American development objectives and China’s national interests, including Beijing’s complex domestic reform agenda.” This piece of evidence alone shows an unprecedented economic expansion of Chinese business throughout Latin America, which “[...] have

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² In <https://www.thedialogue.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Chinese-Finance-to-LAC-in-2016-Web-and-email-res.pdf> (visited 20 November 2018).

the capacity to align economic trends with government priorities in projecting soft power in the region (Chinese FDI in Latin America: new trends with global implications).”³

Projections for the coming years tend to keep this tendency provided that the conditions are kept. According to the *Chinese Finance to LAC in 2016*, China Development Bank and Exim Bank lend to Latin America countries over \$20 billion in 2016, and “[...] will lend more to the region as policy banks, regional funds, and commercial banks issue credit for an increasingly wide variety of projects and in support of certain Chinese policy objectives.”

Considering the *Chinese Finance to LAC in 2016* alone, China’s behavior towards Latin America is sufficient evidence that supports the claims that the country is projecting resources to employ soft power thru institutions and policies, thus, generating strong connections and interdependence (JR, 2005; VADELL, 2019). However, the presence of other dimensions points into a more equitable relationship, which includes ideational factors and shared experiences in the relationship among Global South countries that produce implications for both theoretical and empirical stances.⁴

The mainstream theories in International Law and Relations, considering mostly the power projection dimension, perceives the positioning and investments of China in Latin America as an imperialistic project to increase economic capabilities, thus, becoming a hegemon in this sector of world affairs. As clearly stated by *The Economist*:

It is not just China that is taking a much bigger interest in Latin America. So too, in different ways, are India, Russia, and Iran. These developments are prompting some to declare the end of the Monroe Doctrine—America's traditional insistence, voiced by President James Monroe in 1823, that any meddling by outsiders in its hemisphere is “dangerous to our peace and safety.”⁵

The perception of a Chinese positioning as the imperial power or a neo-colonial venture actor in Latin America is growing among pundits and academics.⁶ As the consequence of this biased debate, an important question emerges in the Latin America context: is there an intentional Chinese positioning movement to project cultural, economic, legal, and institutional apparatus to secure the access of resources and gain

³ In <http://publications.atlanticcouncil.org/china-fdi-latin-america/> (visited 20 November 2018).

⁴ For instance, the fact that Chinese banks refrain from imposing conditions to the recipient of the loan other than sometimes retaining Chinese construction firms and equipment.

⁵ In <https://www.economist.com/briefing/2009/08/13/the-dragon-in-the-backyard>. (visited 20 November 2018).

⁶ Jenkins; Barbosa (2012) use the maquiladoras example in Mexico to sustain the argument of the danger for the Latin America in terms of the Chinese expansion in the Global arena. Additional samples of the narratives claiming China as an imperial or neocolonial power: Peter Navarro, *The Coming China Wars: Where They Will be Fought and How They Can be Won* (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Financial Times Press, 2007), 87–107; ‘The Dragon in the Backyard,’ *The Economist*, Aug. 13, 2009; Minqi Li, *The Rise of China and the Demise of the Capitalist World Order* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2008); Mauricio Mesquita Moreira, ‘Fear of China: Is There a Future for Manufacturing in Latin America?’ *World Development* 35 (2007): 355–76; Roldan Muradian, ‘Is China a Threat to Mesoamerica’s Development?’ *Seattle Journal for Social Justice* 5 (2007): 797–819; Sanjaya Lall & John Weiss, ‘China’s Competitive Threat to Latin America: An Analysis for 1990–2002.’ *Oxford Development Studies* 33(2005): 163–94. As for the other end of the spectrum pointing out as a modelo f development see for example: Randall Peerenboom, *China Modernizes: Threat to the West or Model for the Rest?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 26–81 (2007); James Angresano, ‘China’s Development Strategy: A Game of Chess That Countered Orthodox Development Advice.’ *Journal of Socio-Economics* 34(2005): 471–98.

power in a global scale? Is it correct to portray China's economic involvement with Latin America as an imperial or neocolonial venture?⁷

The central argument in this paper is that there is a constructivist approach among Third World countries in dealing economically among themselves and with developed countries and international institutions due to their shared experiences. This approach incorporates ideational factors that might supersede the pursuit of increasing material capabilities and power projection, which is compatible with the so-called Bandung Spirit. By no means, we are arguing that Third World countries will forsake their national interests⁸ and security concerns⁹ in favor of other countries but that they possess the tendency towards incorporating normative elements in dealing with common challenges and threats, such as solidarity.

With that in mind, we expect to challenge the simplistic argument made by the mainstream academic and political circles, especially those headquartered in developed countries, that the economic relation between China and Latin American countries fall into the imperialistic framework, thus, the constitutive part of China's identity as a hegemonic power.

This paper relies on multidisciplinary and mix-method approaches to build the theoretical framework using the constructivist theory of International Relations and the Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAAIL) for the deductive part, and on Grounded Theory for the inductive part.

The constructivist theory helps to frame the relations among countries based on (1) structures of human association that are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and (2) identities and interests of purposive actors that are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature. Alexander Wendt in the *Social Theory of International Politics* should provide a more moderate version of constructivism for this study by drawing upon a structurationist, and symbolic interactionist sociology that goes

⁷ For the purposes of our study, considering that our theoretical framework includes TWAAIL, we use the concept of imperialism as developed by ANGHIE, A. **Imperialismo y Derecho internacional**. 1st edition ed. Siglo del Hombre, 2016. However, for the sake of keeping a rigid operationalization of the concept we reproduce Lenin's concept of imperialism: *If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism, we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism. Such a definition would include what is most important, for, on the one hand, finance capital is the bank capital of a few very big monopolist banks, merged with the capital of the monopolist associations of industrialists; and, on the other hand, the division of the world is the transition from a colonial policy which has extended without hindrance to territories unseized by any capitalist power, to a colonial policy of monopolist possession of the territory of the world, which has been completely divided up.* Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism. In https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/32317611/Imperialism_The_Highest_State_of_Capitalism.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&Expires=1549915725&Signature=PYdGjYmg8rqwiAv7xVIVol4U8To%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DVladimir_Lenin_Imperialism_The_Highest_S.pdf. (visited 20 November 2018).

⁸ The concept to national interest is problematic, especially considering that some elements point out to a monolithic state of affairs and/or goals in dealing with other countries. However, for the sake of the argument and purposes of this study, I use the definition built by Coicaud; Wheeler (2008, p. 2): *It refers to the self-interest of nations, how states envision their defence and projection of power beyond their borders. In this regard, traditionally, national interest has been divided into those interests that states consider core or vital, such as security, and those that relate to the promotion of more secondary interests. Moreover, the notion of national interest has historically been associated with a geopolitical understanding of international relations.*

⁹ In BUZAN, B.; WÆVER, O.; WILDE, J. DE. **Security: A New Framework for Analysis**. [s.l.] Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998, the Authors present a broader concept of security that includes the economic and environmental factors. In this sense, after the Cold War the security concerns of the states surpassed the military dimension to incorporate the global economy and environment as potential sources of conflict among countries.

beyond the mere material dimension and the pursuit of power for itself. The constructivism should create the bridge to connect the critical perspective embedded in the TWAIL by showing the sociological elements existing in the relationship between Global South countries. Despite the anarchical structure of the international system, marked by states seeking self-preservation (in this sense, material capabilities are essential), there are conditions to the existence of the building blocks of a more equitable relationship among them.¹⁰

By bringing the critical perspective provided by TWAIL to this paper, we expect to present the necessary dialectic framework to analyze and compare international institutions built on the pan-European normative stance vis-à-vis the Chinese approach to Latin America. In this sense, TWAIL is an approach that points out to a historical phenomenon in which “[...] the Third World has generally viewed international law as a regime and discourse of domination and subordination, not resistance and liberation” (MUTUA, 2000, p. 31).

As for the inductive part, the investigation strategy counts on the grounded theory as the epistemological stance considering that the analysis and explanation of the relations between Brazil and China possess intentional and ideational elements. They have grounded in pieces of evidence found in the exploratory analysis made, which float among ideas, words, and actions that build society and its institutions (GLASER; STRAUSS, 1999; SEARLE, 1999; 2010; FOUCAULT, 1994; BHASKAR, 2010). According to Charmaz (2014, p.3) explains the aspects of the grounded theory:

As grounded theorists, we study our early data and begin to separate, sort, and synthesize these data through qualitative coding. Coding means that we attach labels to segments of data that depict what each segment is about. Coding distills data, sorts them, and gives us a handle for making comparisons with other segments of data. Grounded theorists emphasize what is happening in the scene when they code data.¹¹

We test the hypothesis in the Brazilian case due to the size of the Brazilian economy, and the high degree of diversity in sectors in which the investments and loans are directed, thus, proving that the Brazilian case is representative for other Latin America countries regarding the presence of the Bandung Spirit. The paper promotes analyses of the Joint Action Plan 2015-2021 as the legal framework, along with other official and non-official documents with the help of the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CADQAS) called *ATLAS.ti*.

¹⁰ As the mainstream International Relations theories fail to predict the raise of new powers, constructivist theory seems the more appropriate framework. See Geopolitical Economy: The Discipline of Multipolarity, Radhika Desai, 2015. In <http://valdaiclub.com/files/10943/> (visited 20 November 2018).

¹¹ As indicated by Bardin (2011), the process consists in a continuous flowing between hypothesis and indicators in which inferences are made. As researchers in our field of knowledge, our academic life presupposes standings that it is impossible to isolate while reading the data, therefore, it is hard to proceed any investigation based solely on grounded theory. As such this continuum flowing in which inferences are made has in one pole the vagueness of the text to the other pole in which the lexicon analysis is made to unfold the context of the text or document. Also, according to Aldiabat; Navenec (2011, p.1067): *Grounded Theory is a systematic qualitative research approach emphasizing the generation of middle range theory from data at a substantive or formal level.*

II. The Relationship between Brazil and China – theoretical and empirical dimensions and findings

A. Introduction

The relations between Brazil and China are not recent. The first bilateral agreement signed between them was on October 3rd, 1881, which subject is trade and navigation.¹² The relationship suffered a holt in 1949 with the beginning of the Popular Revolution and has been resumed in after 1974. According to the Brazilian Foreign Relation Ministry, Brazil and China have signed 121 bilateral agreements in many areas of common interest.¹³

Regarding initiating our analysis, we create a *corpus* with five documents. We choose the Joint Action Plan 2015-2021 (from now on JAC) as the main source among a large number of bilateral agreements for two reasons. First, the JAC presents the general areas of common interest of both countries in engaging in the cooperative behavior. Second, the 2015-2021 is the most updated perception of the states regarding sectors and scope of the cooperation, especially considering that renews and update their visions outlined in the 2010 JAC. The floating reading of the JAC revealed *prima facie* an extensive use of ideational factors orienting the relationship between the countries.

Considering that the JAC is a document issued by governments, one might say that the wording has been chosen carefully by the countries. Therefore, any analysis is biased. Although part of that argument might be real, in this matter I join Mearsheimer (2013, p.15) in the following terms:

Although lying is widely viewed as reprehensible behavior in ordinary life, it is acceptable conduct in international politics because there are sometimes good strategic reasons for leaders to lie to other countries and even to their own people. Nevertheless, there is actually not much lying between states. When I began this study, I expected to find abundant evidence of statesmen and diplomats lying to each other. But that initial assumption turned out to be wrong.

We confront the language in the JAC with three additional documents to increase the analytical strength of the study, which are: (1) China's Foreign Aid Report (provides the basis for China's participation and basis in helping Third World countries under the Chinese government perception); (2) Chinese Investment in Brazil Report (produced by the China-Brazil Business Council, a non-profit organization formed by private enterprises¹⁴); and (3) China-Latin America report by the Council On Hemispheric Affair (provides an academic stance in the debate).

Upon surpassing the analytical phase of the floating reading of the documents, the Bandung's Conference Final Communiqué (1955)¹⁵ will furnish the indicators to

¹² In <http://www.cebc.org.br/sites/500/521/00001316.pdf>. (visited 20 November 2018).

¹³ In <http://www.itamaraty.gov.br/pt-BR/ficha-pais/4926-republica-popular-da-china>. (visited 20 November 2018).

¹⁴ The China-Brazil Business Council (CBBC) is a non-profit organization aiming to develop economic, financial, commercial, and industrial relations between Brazil and China. Founded in 2004, it has two sections, one in China and another in Brazil, gathering more than 70 companies and institutions investing and doing business in both countries. In <https://www.bnamericas.com/company-profile/en/china-brazil-business-council-cbbc>. (visited 20 November 2018).

¹⁵ Refers to the Bandung Conference held in 1955 in which Global South countries meet to debate their condition and set the basis for the relationship with developed countries. For a deeper understanding of the conference proceedings

substantiate the final interpretation of the data. Bandung will give the guiding principles and norms in the relationship among Third World countries in search of a more equitable distribution of development and freedom, which takes into consideration the various stages and standings in the global order.

B. Theoretical framework grounded in the documents

In this part of the paper, the construction of the theoretical framework is grounded in the documents by the coding activity using the *ATLAS.ti*. According to Susanne Friese, codes are “[...] labels that usually are linked to selected pieces of data. You may also want to think of them as tags. How you name them and on which level of abstraction you apply them is up to you”.¹⁶

The methodological strategy is a two-fold strategy. First, a floating reading in which many codes are free and literal words/phrases extracted from them. Second, initiate an inferential coding process, which consists of assigning codes to words/phrases in the documents that represent the background conditions and potential theories that might explain and/or expand the further knowledge and understanding of the nature of the relationship between China and Brazil beyond the claim of imperialism (BARDIN, 2011). According to the same author, the creation of codes is an activity carried out in search of

[...]a correspondence between the semantic or linguistic structures and the psychological or sociological structures (for example behaviors, ideologies, and attitudes) of the statements. In a very metaphorical way, we will speak of a synchronic plane or horizontal plane to designate the text and its descriptive analysis, and of the diachronic plane or vertical plane, which refers to the inferred variables (BARDIN, 2011, p.47 – translated freely by the author).

As such, we create three groups of codes. The first group reflects the intentional language being used in the documents, meaning that each code possesses a degree of groundedness in the documents (37 codes). The second group is formed by “in vivo” codes, meaning that the code is a specific phrase extracted from the documents, which might be connected, directly or indirectly, to the inferred codes and objectives of this paper (45 codes). Finally, the third group is created specifically to converge in vitro codes extracted from the Bandung’s Conference Final Communique, which contains the so-called “Spirit of Bandung” the basis for the inferences made in this study, including the choice of working with Constructivist theory and TWAIL. The overall strategy is to make the codes to gain in generalization (or in Sartori’s words, scaling up in the *ladder of generality*)¹⁷ to increase analytical power and empirical coverage.

and documents see: <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/collection/16/bandung-conference-1955>. (visited 20 November 2018).

¹⁶ In <https://atlasti.com/2017/03/16/make-best-codes-atlas-ti/>. (visited 20 November 2018).

¹⁷ SARTORI, G. Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics. *The American Political Science Review*, v. 64, n. 4, p. 1033–1053, 1970.

C. Codification construction and empirical evidence – theoretical framework and social reality

The overview of our analysis of the *corpus* is presented below in the network called *Theory Overview and Empirical Stance*, which is a synthesis of the codification of the documents. We build the network in four levels starting with the most abstract level (Bandung code), inferred codes (yellow boxes), and inferred codes extracted *in verbis* from the documents (brown boxes).¹⁸ The white boxes contain the quotations extracted from the documents, or in other words, the empirical stance in which the inferred codes are grounded.

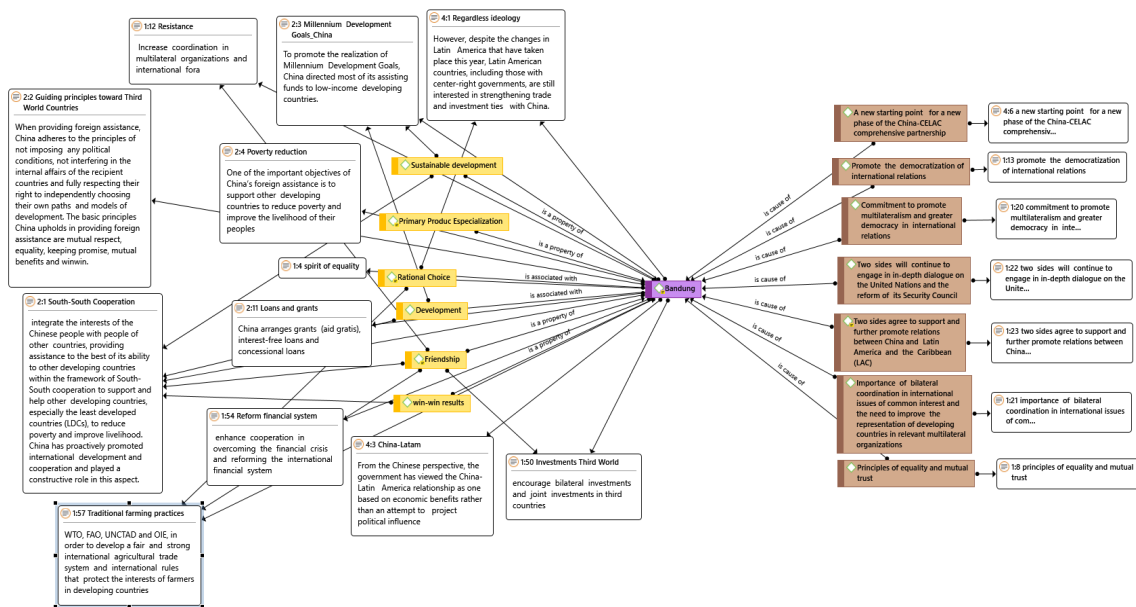


Figure 1: Theory Overview and Empirical Stance Network – made by the Author using ATLAS.ti

The observation of the relations between levels, codes, and quotations indicates a strong presence of ideational factors grounded in empirical evidence. For that reason, in the next part, the Bandung code and empirical evidence are shown.

a) The Bandung Code – indicators of analysis

By grounding our analysis in the proposed theoretical framework (Constructivist Theory and TWAIL), the Bandung code assumes the protagonist role in our analysis. The “spirit of Bandung” is embedded in the Final Communiqué of the conference held in 1955¹⁹, which:

¹⁸ Please note that the codes in the brown boxes are in direct causal relationship with the Bandung code. They possess a high degree of generalization as well, however, are not linked directly to areas in the relationship between Brazil and China. They reinforce the Spirit of Bandung code, which is subject of analysis.

¹⁹ The countries that attended the conference were: Afghanistan, Burma (now Myanmar), Cambodia, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), People’s Republic of China (PRC), India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Laos, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Thailand, Turkey, North and South Vietnam (now unified), and Yemen. From Africa: Egypt, Ethiopia, the Gold Coast (now Ghana), Liberia, Libya, and Sudan. The conference was also attended by several others who were in solidarity with the anti-imperialist project, for instance the Black American scholar Richard Wright and the Kenyan freedom fighter Joseph Murumbi. For a deeper understanding of the Bandung Conference see: ESLAVA, L.; FAKHRI, M.; NESIAH, V. (EDS.). **Bandung, Global History, and International Law: Critical Pasts and Pending Futures**. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

[...]was built on a premise of cooperation among multiple civilizations and religions – what we would today call a “trans-civilizational” perspective. From that, the text developed some ideas of postcolonial solidarity, based on decentering Europe as the organizing geopolitical and cultural fulcrum of the world. Yet, like all documents that are the result of negotiation and compromise, and indeed of diverse ontologies, it was, without doubt, aspirational, ambiguous, and limited. While it did not have any formal legal status, the Communiqué used and expanded the scope of legal concepts such as sovereignty, self-determination, and human rights. To an important degree, it repositioned postcolonial nations as the “newer” and “truer” subjects of the international legal order, challenging with this the foundations of the legal and political status quo. This new postcolonial model of international legal personhood was to be invoked by these nations in their negotiations and discussions with both Western states and the Soviet Union (ESLAVA; FAKHRI; NESIAH, 2017, p.6).

The ontology of the spirit of Bandung is based in two axes of solidarity among the Third World Countries: the illegitimate nature of imperialism, and the fear of nuclear war. As stated by Rose Sydney Parfiff in Eslava; Fakhri; Nesiah (2017), the emancipatory spirit of Bandung emerges in time (Cold War), space (Asia countries under Soviet colonization and Western imperialism), and International Law (international institutions as the United Nations, GATT, IMF, World Bank, etc.), bringing to the international system “new international subjects as true international subjects”.

As such, these new subjects or actors would have a better understanding and commitment to fulfill the rules of International Law in bearing one-another the responsibilities that sovereignty brought to them, along with the capability of appreciating the scope of their rights in the international system. With that, there was no more room for large impersonal spaces such as the traditional places in which International Law is produced but the need to pay close attention to the locus where most the “real” people live to conciliate the local particularities with the global solidarity.²⁰ The content analysis of the Final Communiqué presents the indicators of the spirit of Bandung as shown in Figure 3, as well as the observable implications in the *corpus*.

²⁰ This consistent with the Five Principle of Pacific Co-existence. See FIFIELD, R. H. The Five Principles of Peaceful Co-Existence. *American Journal of International Law*, v. 52, n. 3, p. 504–510, jul. 1958.

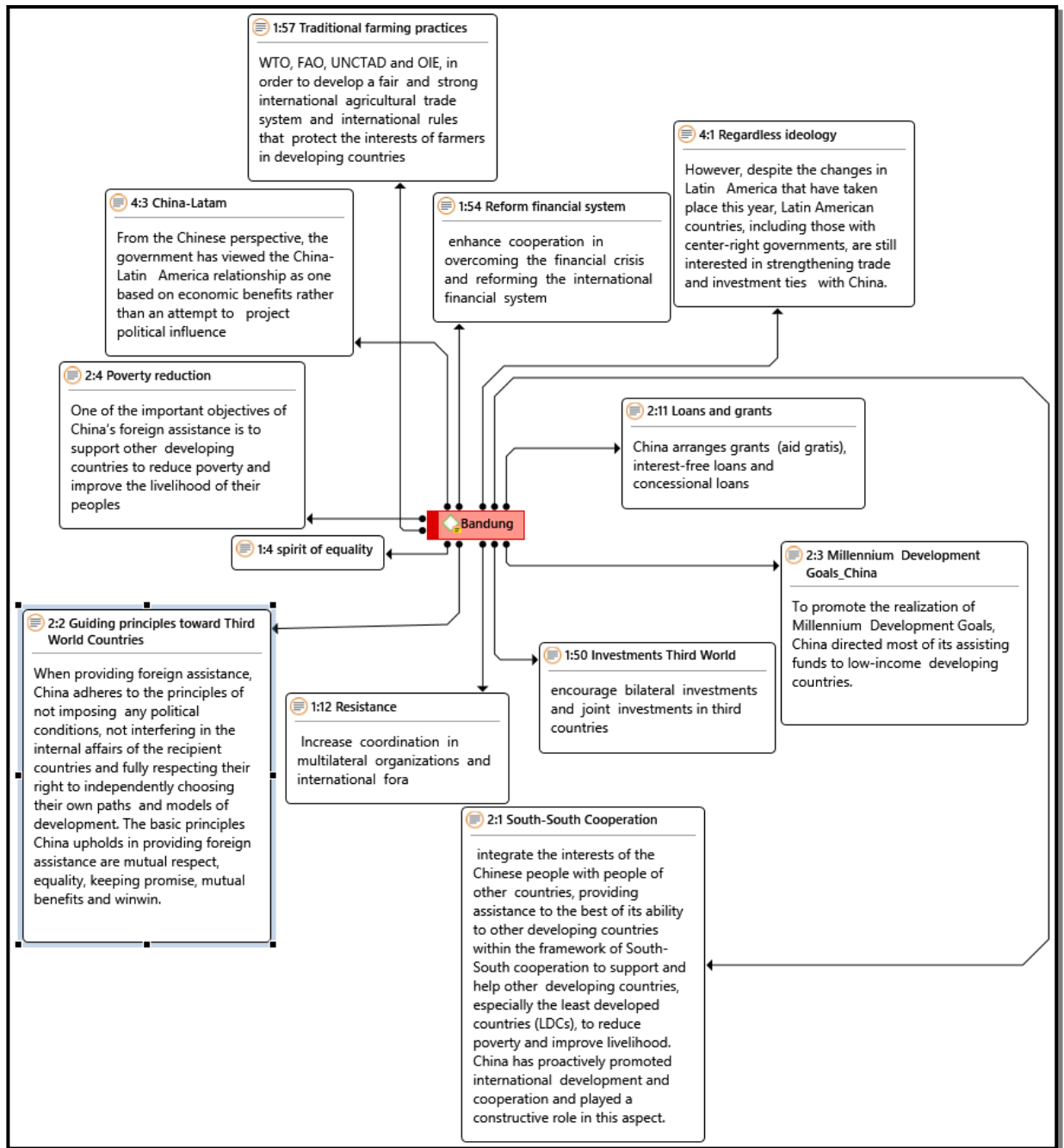


Figure 2 – The Spirit of Bandung Code -- made by the Author using ATLAS.ti.

LEGEND: up in the box, numbers before the codes refer to # of the document, and # of the code. The text in the box below the code refers to the portion extracted from the document.

As such, indicators linked to quotations in the documents point out to a solidarity language based on ideational factors. Of course that material conditions are important variables for determining State behavior in International Politics, however, let's not forget that "[...] history always has the man as the object, says in substance, however, there are two ways to consider him: first, in the mirror of a social history, and then pushed to the internal construction of the first dimension, the structure of the social laces." (BRAUDEL, 2014, p.174). For that reason, the shared experiences in the Global South lead the countries to rely on heavily, for instance in codes "poverty reduction", "traditional farming practices", "reform financial system", and "South-South

cooperation” as a form of bringing more equality to the international system. This what Shaheli Das, from the Centre for East Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University meant to say that “[...] both China and Brazil have boosted their strategic collaboration on important international issues and in dealing with global challenges such as climate change, the international Financial crisis, and to uphold the interest of developing nations.”²¹

As stated by Kishan Khoday and Leisa Perch, South-South cooperation is a movement intended to go

[...] beyond the Washington Consensus trinity of liberalisation, privatisation and deregulation, today’s agenda for change is characterised by the new G20 Development Consensus call for “policies that can counter the negative distributional impacts of market-oriented reforms and globalization” towards the “reconstruction of the world economy in a form conducive to sustainable, inclusive and resilient growth”. We live in a time of transformational change, with global society, economy, and ecology in a state of flux, and a larger role expected from emerging economies as increasingly influential global citizens.²²

The state of nature as posed by the Liberalism and Realism theories is the normal structure of the international system, in which the primary concern of the states is survival. Thus, cooperation is possible if it meets material interests and capabilities.²³ The dominance of Realism and Liberalism in International Relations theory might be one of the variables to explain the mainstream’s assertion on the imperialistic venture for both Brazil and China in their relationship with other countries in the Global South. In this scenario, constructivism has gained traction as an alternative explanation that incorporates the social dimension to international politics.²⁴ As stated by Wendt (1999, p. 3):

Despite the intuitive plausibility and dominance of materialist and individualist approaches to international politics, there is a long and varied tradition of what, from the standpoint of social theory, might be considered constructivist thinking on the subject. A constructivist worldview underlies the classical international theories of Grotius, Kant, and Hegel, and was briefly dominant in IR between the world wars, in the form of what IR scholars now, often disparagingly, call Idealism.

The constructivist approach builds upon the state and structure dimensions by introducing ideational variables to the social construction of the relationship between states. This signifies that the “[...] states are real actors to which we can legitimately

²¹ In <http://thebricspost.com/china-brazil-strategic-partnership-demystifying-the-relationship/#.Wz14j9VKjIU> (visited 20 November 2018).

²² In https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283354948_China_and_the_World_South_South_Cooperation_for_Inclusive_Green_Growth, p.2 (visited 20 November 2018).

²³ The end of the Cold War has posed a hard test to the mainstream theories of International Relations, mostly to Realism and Liberalism, both epistemologically dependent on the centrality of states as agents and their material capabilities to survive in the anarchical structure of the world affairs. For an overview of the Realism and Liberalism theories, along with their neo version we suggest: BALDWIN, D. (OR.G.). **Neorealism and Neoliberalism**. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

²⁴ As any grand theory, Liberalism and Realism are not able to explain diversity and immaterial variables observed in the real world, which [...] presupposes a common, universal nature of human beings beneath their particular cultural identities, thus enables International Relations theory to make statements of general validity despite the cultural diversity of its subject matter (JAHN, 2000, p.xiii).

attribute anthropomorphic qualities like desires, beliefs, and intentionality” (WENDT, 1999, p. 197), thus, ontologically prior to the international system and “[...] constituted by self-organizing internal structures, the one social, the other biological” (WENDT, 1999, p. 198), which provides the internal and external sovereignty.

As for the international system, a holistic approach sustains strategies of the states such as “[...] division (Czechoslovakia's ``Velvet Divorce”), growth (conquest), merger (German reunification), interlocking (international regimes), and specialization (delegating responsibility for security to another state, as in spheres of influence) (WENDT, 1999, p. 223) that impose a certain degree of interaction among them.

Therefore, the construction of the state’s identity relies on the dimensions of self-understanding, and the projected image of the other, thus, shaping the identity is a subjective and inter-subjective/systemic process, meaning depending on internal and external structures.²⁵ For Wendt (1999) the structure of the international system is representational and intersubjective, not materialistic and individualistic as theorized by Kenneth Waltz.²⁶ The structure depends on how the “other” states are conceptualized and internalized within the States as enemies, rivals or friends.²⁷ Thus, the interpretation of the South-South reality, which in this case is the economic relations between Brazil and China, is also bounded to subjective aspects linked to the Bandung Code. Now we turn our attention to TWAIL to understand the ontology of the Bandung code and the indicators extracted from documents.

The Bandung code is at the center of the theoretical ground for TWAIL, which is summarized by Wright, Singh, and Myrdal in the book *The Color Curtain* as:

The despised, the insulted, the hurt, the dispossessed -- in short, the underdogs of the human race were meeting. Here were class and racial and religious consciousness on a global scale. Who has thought of organizing such a meeting? And what had these nations in common? Nothing, it seemed to me, but what their past relationship to the Western world had made them feel. This meeting of the rejected was in itself a kind of judgment upon the Western world! (WRIGHT; SINGH; MYRDAL, 1995, p.4).

As such, the Spirit of Bandung is a form of resistance against the domination by the developed countries at the expenses of the Global South, initiated in the era of the naval expansion of the great European empires, which continues nowadays under a subtler form. In this vein, Escobar (2004, p. 208) states the necessity of “[...] resisting a now global market-determined economy that commands, in more irrefutable tone than in the past, the world to be organized for exploitation and that nothing else will do.”

²⁵ This is what Wendt refer to in the article *Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics*. **International Organization**, v. 46, n. 2, p. 391–425. In <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706858>, 1992 (visited 20 November 2018).

²⁶ See WALTZ, K. N. **Theory of International Politics**. 1 edition ed. Long Grove, Ill: Waveland Press, 2010.

²⁷ In this sense, the structures of culture are developed in different levels: in the Hobbesian culture, states are coerced to comply with the norms by external factors; in the Lockean culture, states comply with norms according to their interests (costs), thus, dealing with the other is instrumental; and in the Kantian culture, states comply with the norms because they are perceived by states as legitimate. As such, the international system tends to change historically from the Hobbesian culture to the Kantian one due to the variables of interdependence, common fate, homogeneity, and self-control, therefore, generating a process of transformation of the (1) state’s identity, and (2) structure.

The application of the Spirit of Bandung means that the modernity project as “sold” by the developed countries should be challenged. This happens because of three factors: (1) modernity’s ability to provide solutions to modern problems has been increasingly compromised, especially in the social, economic and environmental dimensions; (2) there is no deterministic or solely solution to what is at stake in the world (there is no such end of history as presented by Francis Fukuyama in his controversial article and book *The End of History and the Last Man*); and (3) the analysis suggests the need to include the political aspects of the emergent social movements as part of the construction of a world more equitable.²⁸

Regarding providing the basis for the rationale and legitimation for domination nowadays, the intentional language of the International Law is instrumental (KOSKENNIEMI, 2006).²⁹ This is what Mutua and Anghie (2000, p.31) pose:

The regime of international law is illegitimate. It is a predatory system that legitimizes, reproduces and sustains the plunder and subordination of the Third World by the West. Neither universality nor its promise of global order and stability makes international law a just, equitable, and legitimate code of global governance for the Third World. The construction and universalization of international law were essential to the imperial expansion that subordinated non-European peoples and societies to European conquest and domination. Historically, the Third World has generally viewed international law as a regime and discourse of domination and subordination, not resistance and liberation.

As such, TWAIL seeks to deconstruct the tenets of International Law, not to destroy it but to unfold its essence to discover real intentions in the construction of the world legal order and present an alternative based on values and social aspects of non-European countries (OKAFOR, 2008; GRUBER, 2000). To Mattei (2013, p. 268) in his book *Plunder-When the Rule of Law is Illegal*, the process of construction of this logic happens as follows:

The rhetorical artifice used in the process of curbing deviant behavior and claiming, as universal and inevitable, the Western modalities of social organization and economic development centered on individualism and social fragmentation, is usually an explicitly juridical concept: "international human rights." In the interests of these rights, a doctrine of "limited sovereignty" has threatened the traditional nature of international law as a decentralized system based on territoriality and has advocated the need for decentralization to make it more like any other West national legal system. (Translated freely by the Author).

²⁸ “De manera similar a lo que ocurrió en tiempos coloniales bajo el 'mito de la modernidad', en la actualidad, bajo discursos incorporados en las instituciones políticas y jurídicas del Estado moderno, se ha legitimado una idea de progreso que se presenta como hegemónica y que deja de lado formas diversas de comprensión del 'desarrollo'. Esta mirada hegemónica del desarrollo envuelve una división entre sociedades superiores (desarrolladas) y sociedades inferiores (subdesarrolladas) donde estas últimas deben alcanzar los estándares de las primeras y lograr así su inclusión en el orden económico global.” La importancia de decolonizar el derecho internacional de los derechos humanos: el caso de la consulta previa en Colombia, Jimena Sierra-Camargo in <https://revistas.uexternado.edu.co/index.php/derest/article/view/5042/6307>. (visited 20 November 2018).

²⁹ This study sets the limitation to International Institutions and Law as devices for domination, however, the techniques might include technology as well. See HEADRICK, D. R. **The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century**. 1 edition ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1981.

For starters, the prevalent discourse within International Institutions and regimes is that International Law possesses the attribute of being universal, meaning that has no temporal or physical constraints. However, this mega discourse or metanarrative covers the premises of the formation of International Law: (1) Europe is the center; (2) Christianity is the basis for civilization; (3) Capitalism is innate to humans, and the only form of dealing with the economy; and (4) Imperialism is a necessity to save the “savages” from themselves (BEDJAOU, 1979). The metanarrative of the universality of International Law based on such grounds is violence to alternative views of the world that are valid on their right (LYOTARD, 2004).

As stated in the introduction of this study, for Anghie (2016) imperialism possess two dimensions, which in both dimensions the concept of sovereignty is essential. In the historical dimension, the lack of legal personality of the non-sovereign states reassures the legal position of the European countries, which is reinforced by Positivist stance:

The colonial confrontation was not a confrontation between two sovereign states, but between a sovereign European state and a non-European state that, according to the positivist jurisprudence of the time, was lacking in sovereignty. Such a confrontation poses no conceptual difficulties for the positivist jurist who basically resolves the issue by arguing that the sovereign state can do as it wishes with regard to the non-sovereign entity, which lacks the legal personality to assert any legal opposition (ANGHIE, 1999, p.3).

Regarding the imperial dimension related to the domination thru subtle devices, the principle of sovereignty kept playing an important role in the construction of the world legal order after the II World War. For the Great Powers that emerged winners from the World War, the need to build a new international order to restore peace, security and cooperation was premised in (1) the recognition that non-European powers possess the right to self-determination, which was a direct repudiation to colonization; and (2) states were to be governed by human rights.

The formation of the United Nations after World War II brought fresh enthusiasm regarding international institutions. However, the crude reality showed a transference of the hegemonic position in world affairs held by Europe to the emerging powers that allotted permanent seats in the UN Security Council, thus, providing a new form of securing the legitimacy of domination and self-preservation (MEARSHEIMER, 2014). In the economic arena, the Third World countries were targeted by the Bretton Woods institutions: The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the rapid expansion of transnational corporations, thus, substituting the old forms of advancing towards unchartered territories and natural resources thru international institutions and law.³⁰

³⁰ The role of the elites during the decolonization process in different historical periods and regions were instrumental to undermine the resistance and accommodate the need for a development project based on values and principles exogenous to local communities, so they might reach the modernity era by abandoning traditional and outdated practices and values. There was no place for such competing world views in modernity, so elite was incumbered to lead the way. In this sense: *Thus we see that the primary Manicheism which governed colonial society is preserved intact during the period of decolonization; that is to say that the settler never ceases to be the enemy, the opponent, the foe that must be overthrown. The oppressor, in his own sphere, starts the process, a process of domination, of exploitation and of pillage, and in the other sphere the coiled, plundered creature which is the native provides fodder for the process as best he can, the process which moves uninterruptedly from the banks of the colonial territory to the palaces and the*

Therefore, a closer look to Figure 2 (codes and quotations grounded in the *corpus*) vis-à-vis the tenets of Constructivism and TWAIL as presented before indicates that the relation Brazil-China possess a subjective dimension, which escapes the analysis made of the mainstream academics, politician and pundits. To that end, Oliveira (2017, p.2) in examining the land grabbing phenome by Chinese corporations in Brazil, poses intriguing questions to the mainstream advocates:

So we must ask, why have Chinese agribusinesses been singled out for concern over land grabbing in Brazil since the size and amount of their investments – particularly when compared with US, EU, Argentinian, and Japanese investments – are in fact relatively small? Who are the actors in Brazil who have contributed to this apparent sinophobia, and who are the actors who have challenged it? Who benefits?

In the next section, our paper will provide more grounded evidence of the presence of ideational factors that might help to respond to these and other questions.

b) The relationship between the Bandung Code and second level of analysis codification

According to the China-Brazil Business Council in its 2016 report (CBBC-2016), the economic relations between the countries

[...] was already one of importance and demonstrated a clear growth trend, but overall Chinese investment in the country was not highly relevant. This situation changed starting in 2010, a year that marked a transformation for important Chinese companies in relation to Brazil, as they announced large-scale investments that would start to be regular (but with different profiles) in the years that followed (p.7).³¹

China has initiated a movement towards Brazil in a four-phase plan: (1) Investment in commodities; (2) Investments in industrial area; (3) Banking sector thru M&A; and (4) Electricity production and transmission (additional characteristic for this phase is the large investments in infrastructure).³² Considering that this section of the paper will focus on the *Primary Product Especialization* and *Sustainable Development* codes of analysis, a deeper look into phase 1 - Investment in commodities – is necessary. In this sense, HAIBIN (2010, p. 185):

docks of the mother country. In this becalmed zone the sea has a smooth surface, the palm tree stirs gently in the breeze, the waves lap against the pebbles, and raw materials are ceaselessly transported, justifying the presence of the settler: and all the while the native, bent double, more dead than alive, exists interminably in an unchanging dream (FANON; SARTRE; BHABHA, 2005, p.50).

³¹ In https://www.cebc.org.br/sites/default/files/investmentoschinesesnobrasil2016_en.pdf (visited 20 November 2018).

³² This proposition is consistent with the new Silk Road initiative (Belt and Road Action Plan) announced in 2013 by the Chinese Government. *You've probably heard of the Silk Road, the ancient trade route that once ran between China and the West during the days of the Roman Empire. It's how oriental silk first made it to Europe. It's also the reason China is no stranger to carrots. And now it's being resurrected. Announced in 2013 by President Xi Jinping, a brand new double trade corridor is set to reopen channels between China and its neighbours in the west: most notably Central Asia, the Middle East and Europe* (in <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/06/china-new-silk-road-explainer/> (visited 20 November 2018).

Both countries share the identity of major developing states, leading regional players, and big potential roles in world affairs. Based on these common identities and forward-looking thinking, both countries developed a comprehensive cooperative path covering trade, energy and mining, finance, agriculture, quality supervision, inspection and quarantine, industry and information technology, space cooperation, science, technology and innovation, and education, among other areas. Brazil offered China the market economy status. China has been Brazil's largest trade partner, surpassing the US and the EU in 2009. Cooperation between Brazil and China has been the model of South-South cooperation.

The growing internal demand for food in China is one of the variables that propelled the expansion of the country towards areas of the globe susceptible to fulfill it. The quotation 5 in document 4 (4:5) exemplifies this trend: "Chinese economy generates a huge demand for commodities from abroad, and Latin America fulfills China's demand through the exportation of petroleum, copper, soybeans, gold, and other primary products." Kishan Khoday and Leisa Persch in *China and the World: South-South Cooperation for Inclusive Green Growth* confirms the evidence presented that China

[...] is now the world's fastest-growing source of demand for natural resources, the top consumer of various types of commodities, and has become the primary driver of new South-South natural resource flows. Natural assets from energy and minerals to timber and agricultural products are essential to sustaining current levels of urban expansion and industrial growth within China. And as its share of global markets continues to rise and as domestic consumption becomes a larger part of its growth story, demand for these natural assets will continue to grow in the foreseeable future.³³

Some view the need to sustain China's growth and demand as a typical imperial/colonial strategy of resource plundering, unfair trade, environmental damage, and free or cheaper of territorial occupation (ALAM et al., 2016). By resourcing to anachronisms, academics and pundits echo China's raid for natural resources just "[...] like a 19th-century colonial power, China has raged the world over to secure the resources needed to meet its ambitions" (MOYO, 2013, p.108).

In the Brazilian case, "[...] the entry of Chinese investors into Brazilian agribusiness, which is another major specificity of this new phase, continued in 2016. Hunan Dakang Pasture Farming, a business of the Chinese holding group Shanghai Pengxin Group, invested about US\$ 200 million in the acquisition of a 57% share of the Brazilian trading company and grain processor Fiagril" (CBBC-2016, p.14). As the entry point was the agribusiness, the Chinese investments in a few years have shifted to other areas, for instance in 2016 the investments in amounted US\$ 6.6 billion while investments in agriculture reached US\$ 200 million (CBBC-2016). This is very consistent with the Moody's Investor Bulletin *Chinese investment increasingly benefits the region while heightening certain risks*, which states that China's investment in Latin America in

[...] manufacturing and services will also continue to grow as the region's expanding middle-class boost it's automotive, information technology, telecom, and consumer goods sectors. We believe the

³³ In https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283354948_China_and_the_World_South_South_Cooperation_for_Inclusive_Green_Growth, p.4 (visited 20 November 2018).

automotive and IT sectors will particularly attract Chinese investment because of Latin America's potential consumer market for electric vehicles and digital data, two leading segments for China.³⁴

There is no indication whatsoever that Chinese investments in agribusiness might be considered as a form of the plantation venture. The predominance of North companies in this sector is indisputable. Considering only the sub-sectors of seeds and agrochemicals, up until 2016 the companies Monsanto, Syngenta, and DuPont/Pioneer controlled over 49.1% of the USD 11.5 billion agrochemical market in Brazil, along with the oligopoly of the trading companies from the US and EU, such as ADM, Bunge, Cargill, and Louis Dreyfus that dominates the soybean production to processing and trade in the country.³⁵

The code "China has taken proactive efforts to help other developing countries raise their agricultural productivity to effectively cope with food crises" (2:5) is consistent with other codes and quotations in the documents, such as: "China passed on advanced and applicable production technologies to local farmers" (2:7); "WTO, FAO, UNCTAD and OIE, in order to develop a fair and strong international agricultural trade system and international rules that protect the interests of farmers in developing countries" (1:57); and "trained over 1,000 local agricultural researchers and farmers" (2.8). The connection among these pieces of evidence presents sufficient indicators for the presence of the Spirit of Bandung thru the solidarity element. Actions towards strengthening local farming are the best manner of providing food security and sovereignty, as well as biodiversity conservation for developing countries.³⁶ This proposition is not incompatible with Brazil's and China's national interest³⁷, however, by incorporating such language, the countries recognize the existence of common values and ethics that surpass material and power considerations (see below the Spirit of Bandung Matrix). Coicaud; Wheeler (2008, p. 3) by drawing on human rights and humanitarian intervention presents a justification for the existence of international solidarity that "[...] points to the international community's responsibility and obligation toward victims of conflict regardless of their personal circumstances and geographical location."

³⁴ In https://www.moody's.com/research/Moodys-Chinese-investment-benefits-Latin-American-but-also-comes-with-PR_385711, p.13 (visited 20 November 2018).

³⁵ See https://www.econexus.info/sites/econexus/files/Agropoly_Econexus_BerneDeclaration.pdf (visited 20 November 2018).

³⁶ In http://mackpesquisa.mackenzie.br/fileadmin/ARQUIVOS/PUBLIC/SITES/MACKPESQUISA/Reflexoes_academicas_para_superar_a_miseria_e_a_fome.pdf (visited 20 November 2018).

³⁷ *The use and understanding of the term 'national interest' is relatively straightforward. It refers to the self-interest of nations, how states envision their defense and projection of power beyond their borders. In this regard, traditionally, national interest has been divided into those interests that states consider core or vital, such as security, and those that relate to the promotion of more secondary interests* (COICAUD; WHEELER, 2008, p. 2).

CODE AND PRIMARY DOCUMENT	QUOTATION
1:4 spirit of equality (1:2086 [1:2103]) - D 1: Joint Action Plan BRAZIL and CHINA 2015-2021	spirit of equality
1:12 Resistance (2:1790 [2:1871]) - D 1: Joint Action Plan BRAZIL and CHINA 2015-2021	Increase coordination in multilateral organizations and international fora
1:50 Investments Third World (7:2022 [7:2098]) - D 1: Joint Action Plan BRAZIL and CHINA 2015-2021	encourage bilateral investments and joint investments in third countries
1:54 Reform financial system (8:634 [8:749]) - D 1: Joint Action Plan BRAZIL and CHINA 2015-2021	enhance cooperation in overcoming the financial crisis and reforming the international financial system
1:57 Traditional farming practices (8:4188 [8:4387]) - D 1: Joint Action Plan BRAZIL and CHINA 2015-2021	WTO, FAO, UNCTAD, and OIE, in order to develop a fair and strong international agricultural trade system and international rules that protect the interests of farmers in developing countries
2:1 South-South Cooperation (1:857 [1:1324]) - D 2: China's Foreign Aid (2014)	integrate the interests of the Chinese people with people of other countries, providing assistance to the best of its ability to other developing countries within the framework of South-South cooperation to support and help other developing countries, especially the least developed countries (LDCs), to reduce poverty and improve livelihood. China has proactively promoted international development and cooperation and played a constructive role in this aspect.
2:2 Guiding principles toward Third World Countries (1:1327 [1:1751]) - D 2: China's Foreign Aid (2014)	When providing foreign assistance, China adheres to the principles of not imposing any political conditions , not interfering in the internal affairs of the recipient countries and fully respecting their right to independently choosing their own paths and models of development. The basic principles China upholds in providing foreign assistance are mutual respect, equality, keeping the promise, mutual benefits and win-win.
2:3 Millennium Development Goals_China (1:2308 [1:2449]) - D 2: China's Foreign Aid (2014)	To promote the realization of Millennium Development Goals , China directed most of its assisting funds to low-income developing countries.

<p>2:4 Poverty reduction (3:566 [3:730]) - D 2: China's Foreign Aid (2014)</p>	<p>One of the important objectives of China's foreign assistance is to support other developing countries to reduce poverty and improve the livelihood of their peoples</p>
<p>2:11 Loans and grants (6:3080 [6:3158]) - D 2: China's Foreign Aid (2014)</p>	<p>China arranges grants (aid gratis), interest-free loans and concessional loans</p>
<p>4:1 Regardless ideology (1:1427 [1:1659]) - D 4: China_Latam 2016_COHA</p>	<p>However, despite the changes in Latin America that have taken place this year, Latin American countries, including those with center-right governments, are still interested in strengthening trade and investment ties with China.</p>
<p>4:3 China-Latam (1:1886 [1:2069]) - D 4: China_Latam 2016_COHA</p>	<p>From the Chinese perspective, the government has viewed the China-Latin America relationship as one based on economic benefits rather than an attempt to project political influence</p>

Figure 3 – The Spirit of Bandung matrix (the bold words in the column “quotations” are the empirical indicators)

The first phase of China's investments in Brazil took into consideration not only the internal demand for commodities but met Brazil's expectations regarding international trade. The empirical evidence points out to the recognition by China in Brazil in the JAC that the commodities are the largest proportion of the Brazilian exportation (1:36). China recognizes the same condition in dealing with Africa, which is also heavily dependent on commodities exportation (see Figure 4 below, in which countries recognize this situation expressly - quotation 5:2 (Bandung Final Communiqué)).³⁸

The code “Primary Product Specialization” has become important to our analysis as it is related to how Latin America coped with the international economy in the post-colonial era, which began way before than Africa. As for Eduardo Gudynas, “[...] neo-extractivism is a new ingredient in the contemporary South American version of development.”³⁹ Understanding this tendency is important:

In order to evaluate the developmental impact of China's growing influence in Latin America, it is important to place this relationship in the context of Latin American economic history. Latin

³⁸ But there is another side to this story, one that belies the moral certainties of this simple fable of exploitation. For in addition to new public buildings serving the needs of politicians and bureaucrats in African capitals, these same Chinese construction firms were building dozens of hospitals and schools and, most of all, hundreds of miles of tarmac and railway tracks. In less than a year, in countries such as Sudan, Angola and Ethiopia, which had been accustomed to crumbling transport infrastructure for decades, the Chinese built highways that connected the major urban centres with rural communities. Springing up alongside these physical connections were Chinese mobile telephone networks spreading connectivity throughout the continent, while Chinese communication satellites beamed information to a waiting population. In the markets of cities, fanning out into the most remote corners of the countryside, the rise of Chinese retail traders and low-cost imported goods meant that many Africans could afford new clothes, shoes, radios and watches for the first time in their lives. Seen from this angle, Chinese involvement, far from being a curse, had actually been the catalyst for development and, with that, a new level of improved livelihoods such as Africa had not known for decades (ALDEN, 2007, p.4).

³⁹ In https://www.academia.edu/4242379/The_new_extractivism_of_the_21st_century_ten_urgent_theses_about_extractivism_in_relation_to_current_South_American_Progressivism, p.11 (visited 20 November 2018).

America's post-independence development strategies can be divided into three distinct but overlapping phases: primary product specialization (prior to the Great Depression), import substitution industrialization (beginning in the late nineteenth century but peaking between 1930 and 1970), and free-market economic reforms (dominant after the debt crisis of the 1980s) (BLANCO; RAZZAQUE, 2012, p.40).

The economic context in what China encounters with Latin America in this century, although we might not consider a primary product specialization phase as described above, does put the

[...] emphasis on export-led growth and specialization based on comparative advantage, the Washington Consensus reinforced Latin America's historic reliance on the export of primary commodities rather than promoting investment in new, dynamic economic sectors.⁴⁵ Latin American countries were encouraged to export traditional primary commodities (such as soy and copper), new "nontraditional" agricultural products (such as strawberries and flowers), and low-tech manufactured goods (such as shoes and textiles) produced in low-wage assembly plants known as *maquiladoras* (BLANCO; RAZZAQUE, 2012, p.43).

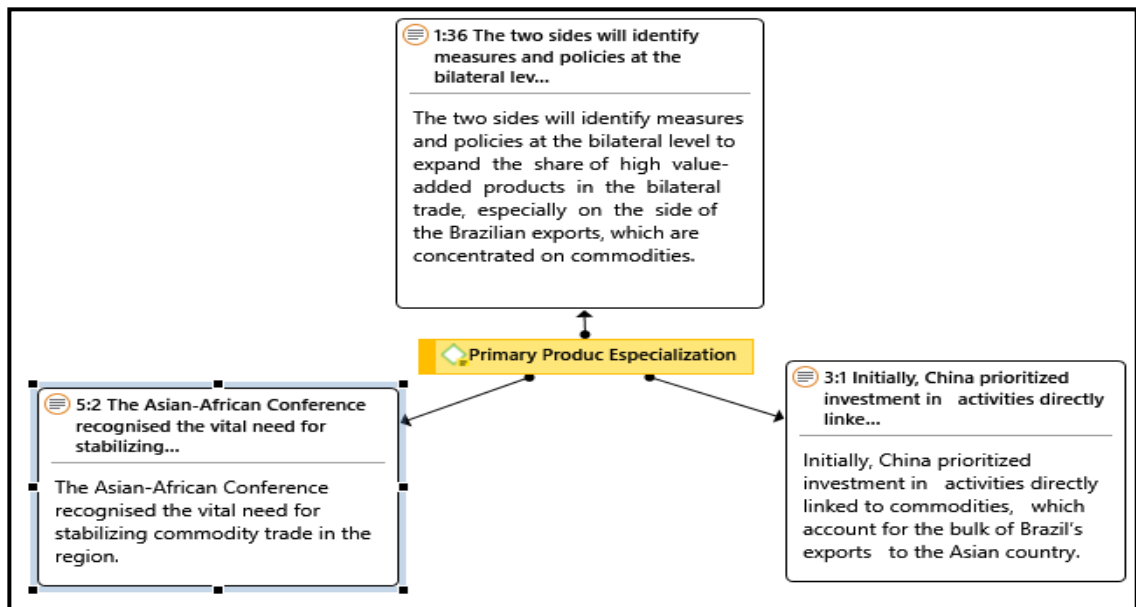


Figure 4 – The code Primary Product Specialization and empirical coverage

Therefore, the relationship between Brazil and China is consistent with the Spirit of Bandung and followed the Brazilian economic vocation in concentrating the exports in commodities.⁴⁰ Although the countries expectations were aligned as the economic relations increased, especially from 2010, China's investments and projects in the region are receiving heavy critics in terms of the negative environment and social impacts as "[...] the asymmetrical economic relationship between China and Brazil has reinforced the unsustainable nature of Brazil's natural resources boom" (RAFTOPOULOS; RIETHOF, 2016, p.153). As stated by Barzola; Baroni (2018, p. 121):

⁴⁰ For a better understanding of the Brazil's economic and social context see: FAORO, R. **Os Donos do Poder. Formação do Patronato Político Brasileiro.** Cincias Humanas e Sociais edition ed. São Paulo: Biblioteca Azul, 2012 and HOLANDA, S. B. D. **Raízes do Brasil.** São Paulo, Brazil: Companhia das Letras, 2016.

Las motivaciones del acercamiento a China por parte de los Estados latinoamericanos varían según los intereses nacionales de cada uno de ellos, no obstante, se pueden identificar tres grandes causas: primero, lograr un proceso de crecimiento económico a través de las exportaciones (*export-led growth*) que permita una política de desarrollo; segundo, la búsqueda de inversión extranjera directa (IED) que ayude a dicho proceso de desarrollo, y tercero, una alternativa de inserción internacional ante los Estados Unidos y Europa, que se han ido replegando de la región

As the extractivist model⁴¹ of development was is already a part of the public policies in many countries of the region, a load of Chinese investments in the region might be considered a contributory cause for the exacerbation of the social and environmental conflicts but not the primary source, even under left-wing ruling as stated by Raftopoulos; Riethof (2016, p.156):

This change in discourse has been reflected in Brazil, where under the Partido dos Trabalhadores government, the country has also radically reoriented its agricultural production towards monoculture exports and is rapidly becoming a mining powerhouse, opening up new sites and processors. However, the recent slowdown in the global economy has underlined the problematic nature of neo-extractivist development strategies given changes in global prices and demand, sharpening the social, environmental and political problems associated with the model as the structure of Brazil's exports illustrates.

Incorporating the environmental and social dimensions in the economic relationship becomes inevitable for both countries as local and international pressures grow at the same rate the investments and projects flourish in Latin America. As stated by Leisa Perch in the essay *China and the World: South-South Cooperation for Inclusive Green Growth*:

While China's resource-based cooperation is welcome by many countries and communities as a new source of growth, capital and technology, many are also concerned with cases where these new layers of investment have caused serious issues of social exclusion, rights abuses and ecological degradation. China is increasingly confronting these issues in its overseas cooperation, with some leaders in China and partner countries now seeking ways to prevent and mitigate these social and environmental risks. Through its growing ecological footprints and resource demands, the rise of China will also drive a shift in the public policy landscape of countries around the world. Chinese resource investments are propelling many developing countries themselves into emerging economy status, but they are also catalyzing an evolution of social and ecological challenges and local policy responses.⁴²

Thus, sustainable development becomes a key issue considering the axis China's internal demand-Brazil's export-led growth model. As might be observed in Figure 5 below, the concept of sustainable development is incorporated in the *corpus* by linking it to the local agriculture practices and correlates to win-win results. At the same time, the

⁴¹ To a further analysis of the imperative extractivist model, see: ARSEL, M.; HOGENBOOM, B.; PELLEGRINI, L. The extractive imperative in Latin America. **The Extractive Industries and Society**, v. 3, n. 4, p. 880–887, 1 nov. 2016.

⁴² In https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283354948_China_and_the_World_South_South_Cooperation_for_Inclusive_Green_Growth, p.2 (visited 20 November 2018).

subjective dimension of friendship denotes not only diplomatic rhetoric but is grounded in empirical stances, along with the higher analytical connection to Bandung as observed before in this study. This approach contradicts the perception that

[...] that there exists an insurmountable gap between the ways in which China and Western countries conduct their international businesses, failing to acknowledge the increased internationalization of the Chinese state and companies. With regards to mining, this is translated in a view that China has a uniquely geostrategic approach to natural resource extraction, that Chinese mining companies operate more comfortably in coalition with authoritarian rulers, and that together they antagonize the purportedly high social and environmental mining standards of Western companies (GONZALEZ-VICENTE, 2012, p. 35-6).

The importance of the argument made in the last paragraph regarding the connections among sustainable development code and other codes and quotations is reaffirmed by Bello (2009), who observed how critical is local agriculture practices for developing countries in these terms: “To cite just one well-known study, a World Bank report on agriculture in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Ecuador showed that *small farms were three to fourteen times more productive per acre than their larger competitors* (p.13 – our emphasis).

Thus, China’s investments in local farming, for instance, are contributing positively to increase environmental and social standards in Brazil, as it increases the Brazilian food sovereignty by producing and distributing food locally, which decreases the costs and externalities with long-distance transportation of foodstuff, decreasing the use of pesticides, and protecting biodiversity by avoiding the nocive effects of large monoculture plantations (DENNY et al., 2017).⁴³

As stated, before in this paper, identifying traces of the Bandung Spirit in the economic relationship between Brazil and China does not exclude the national interest and concerns about security. The intersection of the codes “primary product specialization” and “sustainable development” reflects this claim. Although local farming contributes to increasing environmental and social dimensions in Brazil, this claim is only possible if considered the investments to this end isolated from the aggregate. The aggregated investments show a larger portion to large-scale agriculture, meaning monocultures, which by definition are detrimental to the environment (HAIBIN, 2010).

Therefore, both dimensions as contradictory as it seems *prima facie*, points into the dimension of monoculture, which accommodates China’s needs for food security and the Brazilian economic vocation to produce commodities, and to the dimension of increasing local farming practices as a desirable dimension between the countries.

⁴³ In addition, distributing high water consuming products locally keeps the so-called virtual water in the same watershed/environment (CASTRO, 2016). For a deeper understanding of the concept of virtual water: ALLAN, Tony. Virtual water: tackling the threat to our planet’s most precious resource. London; New York: I. B. Tauris, 2011; and HOEKSTRA, Arjen Y.; HUNG, P. Q. Virtual water trade: a quantification of virtual water flows between nations in relation to international crop trade. Value of Water Research Report Series, n. 11, p. 25-47, Sept. 2002.

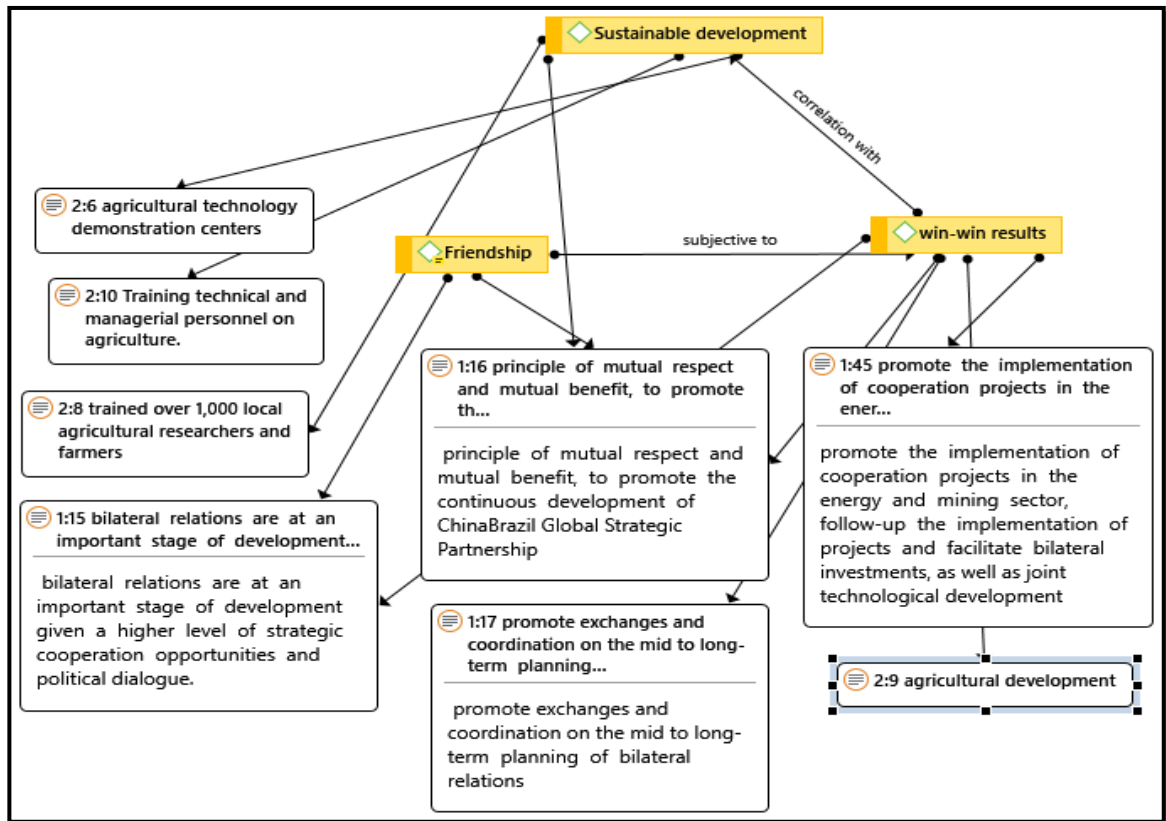


Figure 5 – The code Sustainable Development and its relations with ideational and empirical dimensions

Even international institutions embedded with Western’s ideology and domination features recognize the need for investments to reach sustainable development. The problem is that by sustaining this initiative, international institutions failed to foresee China’s accession to one of the largest investor and donor for Third World countries. Washington Consensus and Bretton Woods institutions had their opportunity to trap developing countries, which in the 1980s charged a very high price for loans based on structural adjustment programs that lead Latin America to the verge of bankruptcy (BLANCO; RAZZAQUE, 2012).⁴⁴ On the other hand, a positive position, considering that the ascension of China as the largest investor in the region

[...] is the opportunity to formulate a Southern agenda on trade and environment under the framework of sustainable development that integrates economic development, environmental protection, and poverty alleviation. Such an agenda would steer the trade and environment debate toward developing country concerns and away from efforts to impose Northern labor and environmental standards on developing countries in a manner reminiscent of the IMF’s imposition of the Washington Consensus on debtor nations... With the Doha Round of WTO negotiations at an impasse, China and Latin America should use bilateral trade and investment agreements as an

⁴⁴ In this sense, the Agenda 21, principle 2.23: *Investment is critical to the ability of developing countries to achieve needed economic growth to improve the welfare of their populations and to meet their basic needs in a sustainable manner, all without deteriorating or depleting the resource base that underpins development. Sustainable development requires increased investment, for which domestic and external financial resources are needed.* In <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/Agenda21.pdf> (visited 20 November 2018).

opportunity to innovate and experiment rather than merely replicating the models developed by the United States and other wealthy nations. (BLANCO; RAZZAQUE, 2012, p. 74-77).

Remitting to the Figure 5 once again, the model of cooperation to achieve sustainable development within the Spirit of Bandung's framework is anchored in the objective dimension of the win-win results and in the subjective dimension of the friendship, both observed in the relation Brazil-China partnership that is moving towards "[...] where goals of inclusive growth and ecological sustainability are no longer peripheral considerations but central ones."⁴⁵ A long, however, necessary quotation to confirm this assertion is provided below, in which Enrique Dussel Peters poses the great responsibility in the Latin America countries to cope with China's eagerness:

Los países latinoamericanos debemos comprender el origen histórico de la propuesta china y su capacidad de implementar efectivamente estos proyectos de infraestructura. Las contrapartes latinoamericanas deberían buscar integrar estos proyectos con su capacidad social y productiva definiendo en forma autocrítica en qué segmentos de los respectivos proyectos podrían integrarse a través de la fuerza de trabajo, los insumos particulares, las empresas proveedoras, y las tecnologías específicas. De este modo habilitarían un efectivo proceso de aprendizaje y desarrollo. Si las élites y los respectivos gobiernos de la región no son capaces de definir estas capacidades, se correrá el riesgo de un «regreso» a niveles de desarrollo de hace siglos. Me parece que la mayor parte de la responsabilidad está en la cancha latinoamericana, aunque tampoco sería de interés para China generar retrocesos de magnitudes mayores. Los países latinoamericanos debemos comprender el origen histórico de la propuesta china y su capacidad de implementar efectivamente estos proyectos de infraestructura. Las contrapartes latinoamericanas deberían buscar integrar estos proyectos con su capacidad social y productiva definiendo en forma autocrítica en qué segmentos de los respectivos proyectos podrían integrarse a través de la fuerza de trabajo, los insumos particulares, las empresas proveedoras, y las tecnologías específicas. De este modo habilitarían un efectivo proceso de aprendizaje y desarrollo. Si las élites y los respectivos gobiernos de la región no son capaces de definir estas capacidades, se correrá el riesgo de un «regreso» a niveles de desarrollo de hace siglos. Me parece que la mayor parte de la responsabilidad está en la cancha latinoamericana, aunque tampoco sería de interés para China generar retrocesos de magnitudes mayores.⁴⁶

III. Final Remarks

The expansion and growing of China led by president Xi Jinping has created a tale of two Chinas: one that is represented by Deng Xiaoping's speech in 1974 during *the Special Session of the U.N. General Assembly*:

China is a socialist country, and a developing country as well. China belongs to the Third World. Consistently following Chairman Mao's teachings, the Chinese Government and people firmly support all oppressed peoples and oppressed nations in their struggle to win or defend national independence, develop the national economy and oppose colonialism, imperialism, and hegemonism. This is our bounden internationalist duty. China is not a superpower, nor will she ever seek to be one... China will never change her colour and will always stand by the oppressed peoples and oppressed nations. If one day China should change her colour and turn into a superpower, if she too should play the tyrant in the world, and everywhere subject others to her bullying, aggression

⁴⁵ In https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283354948_China_and_the_World_South_-_South_Cooperation_for_Inclusive_Green_Growth, p.5 (visited 20 November 2018).

⁴⁶ <http://nuso.org/articulo/una-globalizacion-con-caracteristicas-chinas/> (visited 20 November 2018).

and exploitation, the people of the world should identify her as social-imperialism, expose it, oppose it and work together with the Chinese people to overthrow it.⁴⁷

The other China is an imperial and neocolonial power seeking to become a hegemonic country, positioning itself as an eager scavenging country resembling the European empires.⁴⁸

The analysis conducted in this paper allows us to conclude that the economic relationship between China and Latin America is between the two cities or poles. Upon the sufficient conditions, indicators, inferences and empirical stance presented in this paper are possible to conclude that the economic relation is closer to the pole in which ideational factors and shared experiences are relevant in the formulation and conduction of China's Foreign Policy. Therefore, the study provides the empirical coverage to confirm the presence of the Spirit of Bandung that refuses the simplistic claim, based on superficial and accidental properties, that China is in an imperial and domination venture in the world.

We found that the discourses uttered by actors, and the evidence found points into the incorporation of ideational markers that are consistent with the Spirit of Bandung. As outlined in the last paragraph, the superficial and accidental properties in the economic relations cannot be used, as it seems to be the case, to confirm claims of imperialism. Although unintended consequences might lead to economic domination or the creation of dependence on Chinese investments or financing, the presence of non-materialistic elements is important and should not be disregarded by any serious analysis.

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⁴⁷ In <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/deng-xiaoping/1974/04/10.htm> (visited 20 November 2018).

⁴⁸ See World Chaos and World Order: Conversations With Henry Kissinger *in* <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/11/kissinger-order-and-chaos/506876/#6> (visited 20 November 2018).

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