Chinese Civil Warfare in the Americas: the Roots of Central America's Prolonged Opposition to Recognition of the People's Republic of China in the late Cold War

MA Thesis

Jurriaan Hoenderdos BA
dr.mr. V.K. Chang, supervisor
Asian Studies 2020–21

29th of June, 2021

1 Introduction

In 2007, Costa Rica became the first state in Central America to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC) and to formally recognize the PRC.[1] Following the 'one China' policy adopted by the PRC, which stipulates that there is only one China and thus a state can recognize only one China, the Costa Rican government simultaneously severed its ties with the Republic of China (ROC), or Taiwan. The decision of the Costa Ricans was lauded by PRC President Hu Jintao, who noted the contribution of the decision to "not only Central America's development, but even the development of the world."[2]

The formal recognition of the Central American state meant a victory for the PRC in a battle with its nemesis, the ROC, which had been going on for over sixty years and continues to this day. The battle is about a fundamental aspect of statehood: international recognition. Both PRC and ROC claim to be the 'one China', and to give legitimacy to their claim, both want other states to recognize that they indeed are China—and the other, thus, is not.

Today, most states in the world recognize the PRC, and support for the ROC has been gradually declining.[3] In the past few decades, the number of remaining pro-ROC states has decreased to such a degree that now, every remaining state counts; and thus, every state that makes the switch away from the ROC matters greatly.[4]

Interestingly, the states that maintain their support for the ROC are not spread evenly around the world, but are roughly located in just three regions: Oceania, the Caribbean, and Central America. Moreover, of these three regions, Central America is the only region where non-microstates support the ROC, with four states to this day recognizing the ROC. This begs the question: why? Why were Central American states opposed to recognition of the PRC that long, and did they continue to recognize the ROC—where the rest of the world abandoned the ROC and established relations with the PRC? To contribute to answering this key question, this thesis researches the following question, considering two specific Central American states: Why did Panama and Guatemala refrain from recognizing the PRC, despite international developments favouring different recognition behaviour?

This thesis will shed new light on the question of why Central America is such a remarkable bulwark of ROC support. To do so, research on the roots of Central America's opposition to the PRC and support for the ROC is necessary. First, in section 2 I will provide an overview of existing scholarship to indicate the current state of the literature on the recognition rivalry between PRC and ROC, as well as on factors in recognition decision making of foreign governments. In section 3, I will outline the methodology of this research. Then, the historical analysis in section 4 sets out my argument that the roots of Central America's position lie in the 1970s and 1980s. In sections 5 and 6, two case studies will examine what factors explain these roots; section 7 discusses the findings of the case studies, theorizes a framework based on these findings, and challenges it with two other, deviating cases. In doing so, this thesis argues that the roots of Central America's prolonged opposition to recognition of the PRC lie in the 1970s and early 1980s, and that these roots can be

[1] Nicaragua had recognized the PRC for five years in 1985–1990, but switched back to the ROC afterwards.

[2] Luo Hui and Lin Liping, "*Hu Jintao yu laifang de Gesidalijia zongtong Aliyasi juxing huitan* [Hu Jintao holds talks with visiting Costa Rican president Arias]," *Xinhua*, 24 October 2007.

[3] At the time of writing this thesis, fifteen states recognize the ROC, while 178 states recognize the PRC.

[4] Chris Horton, "Taiwan's Status Is a Geopolitical Absurdity," *The Atlantic*, 8 July 2019, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2019/07/taiwans-status-geopolitical-absurdity/593371/; Michael Yahuda, "The International Standing of the Republic of China on Taiwan," *The China Quarterly*, no. 148 (1996): 1319–1320.

conceptualised as mainly four factors: (1) diplomatic aptitude, (2) political regime and individual leadership, (3) Cuba, and (4) state size.

2 Literature review

2.1 *Recognition and statehood*

In academic literature, there are different approaches towards questions of international recognition and statehood. Legal scholars research what can be considered the legality of statehood and the legal impact of international recognition, while international relations (IR) scholars perceive recognition as a unilateral or bilateral act within the dynamics of the international system of states.

Legal scholarship mostly agrees on the conditions for legal statehood. They argue that the state must be politically organised; the state must have an effective and obeyed internal legal order; and the state must not be under legal control of another state.[5] Scholars disagree, however, on the question whether recognizing a state is a constitutive or declaratory act: respectively, whether recognition is a requirement for a state to have an "international personality",[6] or whether recognition is merely a declaration of a situation that already exists. In other words, legal scholars have debated the degree of impact of international recognition on statehood.[7] This is a relevant discussion: the legal act of recognition makes a state become the subject of international law, as it makes a state have "in its relations with other states the rights and obligations stipulated by general international law."[8]

Thus, legal scholars study the legal act of recognition, in which a state becomes the subject of international law. IR scholars, on the other hand, study the political act of recognition. These acts are not the same: the political act of recognition has no legal consequences, but reflects the wish of a certain state to recognize another state's statehood and establish political and other relations. There exist many debates in IR scholarship on international recognition. This includes discussions on the measurability of recognition, on the impact of recognition on the international system, and on how to define recognition, but most especially this includes discussions on the question of how recognition develops: why states decide to recognize other states, or not.[9] Considering this question, IR scholars, following a "constructivist turn in IR", only more recently have increased their research on the diverse dynamics behind recognition.[10]

---

[5] Hans Kelsen, "Recognition in International Law: Theoretical Observations," *The American Journal of International Law* 35, no. 4 (1941): 607–608.
[6] Martin Dixon, Robert MacCorquodale, Sarah Williams, and Robert McCorquodale, *Cases & Materials on International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 136–137.
[7] Jure Vidmar, "Explaining the Legal Effects of Recognition," *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2012): 361–362.
[8] Kelsen, "Recognition in International Law," 607.
[9] Anna Geis *et al.*, "Rethinking Recognition in International Relations," in *Recognition in International Relations: Rethinking a Political Concept in a Global Context* (Palgrave Macmillan: London, 2015), 3.
[10] *Ibid.*, 5; Jens Bartelson, "Three Concepts of Recognition," *International Theory* 5, no. 1 (2013): 111–114.

2.1.1 *Recognition and statehood of the two Chinas*

Both legal and IR scholars have considered the international recognition and statehood of the PRC and ROC. Importantly, scholars have pointed out that legal and IR theories on recognition of the two Chinas differ. Hsieh poses that although legal recognition might be a binary, black-or-white reality, IR sees recognition "as a gradual process of state practice", in which different "modes of recognition encompass legal consequences but do not amount to recognition of statehood in international law." This, Hsieh argues, further complicates the question of the status of the two Chinas.[11] In other words, IR scholars have urged for a political understanding of forms of recognition of the two Chinas, that go beyond mere binary (legal) choices of recognition of either one.[12]

In line with general IR scholarship on international recognition, scholars have also researched recognition behaviour in the case of the PRC–ROC rivalry, which has its roots in the Chinese civil war of the early twentieth century.[13] What states recognize either PRC or ROC, and how do both states foster their relationships with these states? Moreover, scholars have examined how both states attempt to *broaden* their diplomatic alliances, as each state tries to pick off states that are in the rival's column. George T. Yu and David Longenecker provided an analysis of this struggle in 1994,[14] and since then several other scholars have explained diplomatic recognition of either China as part of a tense rivalry with stakes higher than one perhaps would anticipate at first sight. Rich and Shattuck, in their general works on the subject, both have demonstrated the practical consequences when changing diplomatic recognition to either PRC or ROC, including the reduction of bilateral trade and, especially in the case of less-developed states, the shutdown of financial aid.[15]

2.2 *Factors in recognition behaviour towards PRC and ROC*

An important question addressed in the literature is *why* states choose to recognize either PRC or ROC. Generally, scholars have focused on two periods and two general factors: the early Cold War period (roughly the 1950s and 1960s) and the post-Cold War period (roughly from the 1990s onwards), and, respectively, factors of ideological and pragmatic nature.

Early Cold War and the ideology factor

Scholarship on recognition of the PRC and ROC in the early Cold War, which roughly corresponds to the first two decades of the PRC's existence, attributes importance to factors of ideology in the decision making of third states. Scholars address the recognition of the PRC

[11] Pasha L. Hsieh, "Rethinking Non-recognition: Taiwan's New Pivot to ASEAN and the One-China Policy," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 33, no. 2 (2020): 205.
[12] See for example Stefan Talmon, "The constitutive versus the declaratory theory of recognition: *tertium non datur*?," *British Yearbook of International Law* 75, no. 1 (2005): 101–181.
[13] These origins of the rivalry have been addressed by Elizabeth Freund Larus, "Taiwan's Quest for International Recognition," *Issues and Studies* 42, no. 2 (2006): 23–52; and James C. Hsiung, "China's Recognition Practice and Its Implications in International Law," in *China's Practice of International Law: Some Case Studies* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2014, 14–57).
[14] George T. Yu and David Longenecker, "The Beijing-Taipei Struggle for International Recognition: from the Niger Affair to the U.N.," *Asian Survey* 34, no. 5 (1994): 475–488.
[15] Timothy Rich, "Status for Sale: Taiwan and the Competition for Diplomatic Recognition," *Issues & Studies* 45, no. 4 (2009): 159–88; Thomas J. Shattuck, "The race to zero?: China's poaching of Taiwan's diplomatic allies," *Orbis* 64 (2020): 334–352.

by countries with similar state ideologies, including the Soviet Union, East Germany, and Albania.[16] Similarly, they address those states who in this period aligned themselves ideologically with the U.S., and consequently point out their non-recognition of the PRC.[17] Some exceptions in the literature can be found: this is the case when the recognition behaviour of states did not conform to their ideological alignment. For instance, Martin and others have examined the 1964 recognition of the PRC by France, which they suggest was an effect of President De Gaulle's attempt to make France an independent global power.[18] Thus, scholarship on recognition in the early Cold War focuses on ideology as an explaining factor, seeing pro- and anti-Communist beliefs as crucial.

In this, scholarship on recognition during the early Cold War often focuses on great power politics, placing the greater players of geopolitics front and center. This is understandable, as for many scholars within Cold War studies motives and actions of the United States (U.S.), the Soviet Union, and the PRC are of most importance in their research. Thus, recognition behaviour in the early Cold War era is often explained by considering the dynamics of American, Soviet, and Chinese geopolitics.[19]

Post-Cold War and the pragmatism factor

In scholarship on the post-Cold War era, a central focus has been the concept of 'dollar diplomacy': the strict economic incentives to pursue certain diplomatic decisions, and in the Chinese struggle, essentially the buying off of smaller states' loyalty and diplomatic recognition. Timothy Rich has argued that nowadays, dollar diplomacy is a crucial aspect of diplomatic relations of both PRC and ROC with small states that might change their recognition from one to the other.[20] Elizabeth Larus has concurred, stating that the practice of buying diplomatic allies is rather explicit, leading to the smaller states' practice "to hold out for the highest bidder".[21] Several case studies on recognition behaviour in Oceania, Africa, and Asia place emphasis on dollar diplomacy as an explaining factor.[22]

Dollar diplomacy thus has been a central focus of scholarship on the post-Cold War period. To a lesser degree, scholars have indicated other relevant factors that have shaped

[16] For example, see Ylber Marku, "China and Albania: the Cultural Revolution and Cold War relations," *Cold War History* 17, no. 4 (2017): 367–383; Bernd Schäfer, "Weathering the Sino-Soviet Conflict: The GDR and North Korea, 1949–1989," *Cold War International History* 14, no. 15 (2003).
[17] See for example Lian Shu, "The Search for Full Recognition: a Review of China's UK policy in the 1950s," *Journal of Law, Politics, and Sociology* 90, no. 4 (2017): 159–182.
[18] Garret Martin, "Playing the China Card? Revisiting France's Recognition of Communist China, 1963–1964," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 10, no. 1 (2008): 52–80.
[19] Virginia Garrard-Burnett, Julio E. Moreno, and Mark Atwood Lawrence, "Introduction," in *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow: New Histories of Latin America's Cold War* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013), 5; Hu Shaohua, "Small State Foreign Policy: The Diplomatic Recognition of Taiwan," *China* 13, no. 2 (2015): 1–23.
[20] Rich, "Status for Sale," 159–88.
[21] Elizabeth Freund Larus, "Soft Power versus Hard Cash: Retaining Democratic Allies," in Steve Tsang (ed.), *Taiwan and the International Community* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008), 187.
[22] For example, see Anthony van Fossen, "The Struggle for Recognition: Diplomatic Competition Between China and Taiwan in Oceania," *Chinese Journal of Political Science* 12, no. 2 (2007): 125–146, Richard J. Payne and Cassandra R. Veney, "Taiwan and Africa: Taipei's Continuing Search for International Recognition," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 36, no. 4 (2001): 437–450; Tamara R. Shie, "Rising Chinese Influence in the South Pacific: Beijing's "Island Fever"," *Asian Survey* 47, no. 2 (2007): 307–326.

recognition behaviour as well, most notably the PRC's growing economic and political global power, increasing international trade opportunities, and non-economic diplomatic activity of both PRC and ROC.[23]

2.3 *Recognition behaviour in Latin America*

Several scholars in contemporary research have identified parts of Latin America—Central America, most notably—as key areas in the recognition rivalry between the two Chinas.[24] As all non-microstates that today still recognize the ROC, except for Eswatini and South American Paraguay, are located in Central America, focus has naturally zeroed in on this region when examining questions of diplomatic recognition of PRC and ROC.[25]

In line with the general trend as established above, scholarship that examines recognition behaviour of Latin American states in the PRC–ROC rivalry has so far focused on roughly two periods: the early Cold War period and the post-Cold War period. Works on the early Cold War period examine Sino-Latin American relations mostly generally, without sole focus on recognition practices; nonetheless, through these examinations they are able to explain the decisions to either recognize (Cuba) or not to recognize (other states). Exemplary is the work of Cecil Johnson, published in 1970, which discusses Sino-Latin American relations in the 1960s. Johnson notes the paramount role ideology played in PRC relations with the region in the 1960s, including Chinese attempts to bring their concept of 'people's war' to the peoples of Latin America—which explicitly worried local governments.[26] Harris, Mora, Xiang, and others have also indicated the important role Cold War dynamics played in these decision making processes.[27]

The aforementioned focus on great power politics is visible in scholarship concerning Latin America, too. For example, Jeremy Friedman has argued that Cold War history should contain the concept of a 'Shadow Cold War', placing emphasis on Sino-Soviet rivalry in the Third World, including Latin America, and arguing that this rivalry is far more important than

---

[23] Eric Neumayer, "Distance, Power and Ideology: Diplomatic Representation in a Spatial, Unequal and Divided World," *Area* 40, no. 2 (2008): 228–236; Hu Shaohua, "Small State Foreign Policy", 1–23; Gary D. Rawnsley, "Selling Taiwan: Diplomacy and Propaganda," *Issues & Studies* 36, no. 3 (2000): 1–25.

[24] For example, Daniel P. Erickson and Janice Chen, "China, Taiwan, and the Battle for Latin America," *Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 31, no. 2 (2007): 69–90; Robert Portada *et al*., "The Final Frontier: China, Taiwan, and the United States in Strategic Competition for Central America," *Chinese Journal of Political Science* 25 (2020): 551–73; Gabriel Aguilera Peralta, "De espaldas al dragón. Las relaciones de Centroamérica con Taiwán," *Nueva Sociedad*, no. 203 (2006): 171–179; Cynthia Watson, "Adios Taipei, Hola Beijing: Taiwan's Relations with Latin America," *China Brief* 4, no. 11 (2004).

[25] When writing this thesis (Spring 2021), six non-microstates recognized the ROC: Eswatini (Africa), Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Paraguay. Nine microstates recognized the ROC: the Holy See (Europe), Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, and Tuvalu (Oceania), and Belize, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

[26] Cecil Johnson, *Communist China and Latin America, 1959–1967* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970).

[27] Lillian Harris, *China's Foreign Policy toward the Third World* (New York: Praeger, 1984); Frank O. Mora, "The People's Republic of China and Latin America: From Indifference to Engagement," *Asian Affairs* 24, no. 1 (1997): 35–58; Xiang Lanxin, "Otra mirada desde China," in Riordan Roett and Guadalupe Paz (eds.), *La presencia de China en el hemisferio occidental* (Buenos Aires: Libros del Zorzal, 2009), 61–62.

previously assumed.[28] This is also the case for Sino-U.S. relations: as Latin America is located in the Western hemisphere, the Americans have considered this region as their sphere of influence.[29] This is reflected accordingly in scholarship on Sino-Latin American relations, as this relationship sometimes is merged with Sino-U.S. relations, with less agency for Latin American states themselves. For example, Gregg Brazinsky has written about the Sino-Latin American relationship in the Cold War era through the perspective of Sino-U.S. rivalry, examining how both great powers fought over the Third World states in Latin America.[30]

Besides scholarship on the early Cold War era, scholarship on Latin American recognition behaviour in the post-Cold War era is also available. In these works, discussion centers around pragmatic incentives, often grouped together as 'dollar diplomacy'. Scholars identify increasing foreign aid, foreign direct investment, and trade agreements as important factors. They see a parallel between the gradual increase of Sino-Latin American trade and foreign direct investment of the PRC in individual Central American states since the late 1980s, and the gradually growing number of states in the region switching their recognition from ROC to PRC. Mora has argued that trade ultimately was utilised "as a tool for attaining political objectives".[31] Some scholars have argued that two other factors in this period were also relevant: the relative disinterest of the U.S. in the region and the growing economic and political power of the PRC.[32]

2.4 *Conclusion*

In short, existing scholarship has identified the recognition rivalry between PRC and ROC as crucially important in both entities' foreign relations with other states. IR scholars have researched the recognition behaviour of third states, focusing on two eras: the early Cold War and post-Cold War periods. Literature on these periods focuses on factors of ideology and factors of pragmatism, respectively. Scholars have identified parts of Latin America as key agents within the rivalry; their work, in line with general literature, considers the ideological factor as dominant in recognition behaviour in the early Cold War, while the pragmatic factor is considered dominant in the post-Cold War era.

However, while scholarship notes the crucial position of Central America within the recognition rivalry, a clear assessment of recognition behaviour by Central American states is limited. Scholarship on the Cold War era generally only discusses the whole of Latin America, neglecting the specific character of the subregion, and only discusses the early Cold War—roughly the 1950s and 1960s, neglecting the following two decades. Indeed, the 1970s and 1980s are left out of scholarly discussion. Moreover, scholarship often tends to focus on great power politics, overshadowing the agency of those states that the great powers 'fight'

[28] Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: The New Cold War History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015).
[29] John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), 238–252.
[30] Gregg Brazinsky, *Winning the Third World: Sino-American Rivalry during the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).
[31] Mora, "Sino-Latin American Relations", 96.
[32] Colin Alexander, *China and Taiwan in Central America: Engaging foreign publics in diplomacy* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 42; Adrian Hearn and José León-Manríquez, *China Engages in Latin America* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2011).

over.[33] Thus, the recognition behaviour of Central American states has not yet been fully explained. As a consequence, the literature does not provide a compelling answer to the question why Central America has remained a bulwark for ROC support in the global diplomatic recognition rivalry between PRC and ROC.

3 Design

With this thesis, I intend to contribute to answering this key question. To do so, I will consider case studies of separate Central American states, and research their recognition behaviour and possible considerations behind that behaviour in the relevant time frame. Though the use of case studies might not present a conclusive answer, as it does not consider all states in the region to the same degree, it does provide the opportunity to conceptualize the roots of these selected states' recognition behaviour, and thus indicate the possibility of considering other states in that light as well.

Following a historical background chapter, which assesses the broader context in which to consider the recognition behaviour of the Central American states, the thesis will continue with studies of individual states. Figure 1 shows all Central American states, as well as the Spanish-speaking states of North America and the Caribbean.

Recognized PRC early	**Recognized PRC late**	**Recognizes ROC**
Cuba (1960)	Costa Rica (2007)	Belize (1989)
Mexico (1972)	Dominican Rep. (2018)	Guatemala (1933)
Nicaragua (1985–1990)	El Salvador (2018)	Honduras (1941)
	Panama (2017)	Nicaragua (1962–1985; 1990)

Figure 1. Here, 'early' is used to indicate the Cold War period, and 'late' is used to indicate the post-Cold War period. Between brackets is the year of recognition.

Appendix 1 provides more detailed information on the Central American states. This thesis will research two of the states that recognized the PRC late or still recognize the ROC, and that following the data in the appendix and considering the objective of this thesis are representative for the subregion to a justifiable degree: Panama and Guatemala. First, Panama provides a relevant case study, because it is one of the states that recognized the PRC only very recently: in 2017, the Panamanian government switched their recognition from ROC to PRC. Its historic dependency on the U.S. and the Third Worldist ideology of Panamanian leadership in the Cold War merit further research on why the Panamanians did not recognize the PRC. Second, Guatemala is an appropriate case study, because it is one of the states that has never recognized the PRC and still recognizes the ROC; moreover, Guatemalan revolutionary history would also suggest a potential for proper relations with the PRC from the 1970s onwards.

The table in figure 1 shows three states that did recognize the PRC early: Cuba, Mexico, and (temporarily) Nicaragua. To challenge the findings of the first two case studies, in my Discussion section I will consider the deviating cases of both Mexico and Nicaragua.

[33] Tony Smith, "New Wine for New Bottles: A Pericentric Framework for the Study of the Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 4 (2000): 567–595.

All cases will be studied within the time frame of the 1970s and 1980s. The previous section has indicated that existing scholarship has concentrated on the early Cold War, thus the 1950s and 1960s, and the post-Cold War era, thus the 1990s and onwards. The period in the middle represents a transitional period, with shifting power dynamics, a gradual reduction of the heat of the Cold War, as well as transitions in PRC/ROC foreign policies. Considering this period being absent in scholarly discussions on the subject of recognition in the region, it will function as the time frame of this thesis' research.

The previous section has established that existing literature on the (early) Cold War has already indicated several factors that explain recognition behaviour of Latin American states in the case of the PRC–ROC rivalry. This thesis will consider these factors within the chosen time frame and the selected cases, along with two factors which, I argue, should be considered as well.

1. **Ideology**: The ideology factor has been well-established in literature on the early Cold War period, and thus is taken into consideration. Most notably, this refers to ideology in the context of Cold War bipolarity.
2. **Chinese agency**: Scholarship on both the early Cold War and post-Cold War periods has assessed PRC/ROC agency in shaping recognition behaviour, with emphasis on ideological support and financial aid, respectively. This agency is also taken into consideration for the chosen time frame.
3. **Domestic politics**: As has been established in the previous section, the domestic political context has often been neglected by scholars. More general scholarship, however, including the works of Hagan, Siverson and Starr, has demonstrated that this context actually can be highly relevant.[34]
4. **Regional politics**: This thesis researches the subregion of Central America in particular. Consequently, the regional political context should be considered as well.

The analysis in the following sections is based on both secondary literature and primary sources. For archival documents on PRC and ROC relations with Central America in the 1950s and 1960s, I have used the Wilson Center's digitalised archive. To gain a better understanding of both the situation in Central America and the relations of the region with the PRC and ROC in the 1970s and 1980s, I have made use of the FBIS database, which documents news articles, speeches, communiques, reports, and more, both of Central American and PRC/ROC origin. The FBIS is especially useful considering the very low accessibility of national archives in Central American states, notably including the states in this thesis' case studies, as has been noted by scholars and journalists.[35] The PRC, similarly, is still sensitive about archival documents from the Mao era, although it recently does pursue a process of gradual declassification.[36]

---

[34] Joe Hagan, "Domestic political regime changes and Third World voting realignments in the United Nations, 1946-84," *International Organization* 43, no. 2 (1989): 505–541; Randolph Siverson and Harvey Starr, "Regime change and the restructuring of alliances," *American Journal of Political Science* 38, no. 1 (1994): 145–161.

[35] Holger M. Meding, "Historical Archives of the Republic of Panama," *Latin American Research Review* 34, no. 3 (1999): 129–142; Colum Lynch, "Guatemala Declares War on History," *Foreign Policy*, 30 July 2019.

[36] Xia Yafeng, "New Scholarship and Directions in the Study of the Diplomatic History of the People's Republic of China," *The Chinese Historical Review* 14, no. 1 (2007): 118–119.

Following this design, the thesis considers the following research question: Why did Panama and Guatemala refrain from recognizing the PRC during the 1970s and 1980s, despite international developments in that period favouring different recognition behaviour? Researching this question, it is hoped, contributes to a better understanding of the roots of Central American opposition to recognizing the PRC.

4 Tracing the roots of Central America's recognition behaviour

4.1 *Foreign policy of the PRC in the early Cold War*

Sino-Latin American relations go back as far as the early sixteenth century. In its earliest period, this relationship was characterised by transpacific commerce, and not much more.[37] This commerce included transoceanic migration from China to the Pacific coasts of Latin American states, where over the centuries communities of overseas Chinese expanded, with notable communities emerging in Argentina, Brazil, and Panama. It were those states that established relations with the Qing dynasty in its final decades. Some became treaty powers, benefiting from the Unequal Treaties during the late Qing and Republican period (1912–1949) and consequently establishing a diplomatic presence in China during the early twentieth century.[38] Yet by the time of the proclamation of the PRC in 1949, relations still were shallow, and interest from one side in the other remained superficial at best.[39]

In its first two decades as a sovereign state, the PRC under Mao Zedong was distinctly revolutionary. Its foreign policy in this period has been characterised as revolutionary as well. Solomon notes that the "revolutionary, transformative rhetoric of Maoist ideology" was actively promoted abroad and appealed in fact "to many radical intellectuals in the Third World and elsewhere".[40] In the late 1950s and early 1960s, exportation of the revolutionary 'people's war' was seen as a crucial pillar of PRC's foreign policy, as supporting national liberations abroad—branded as Communist revolutions of the peasantry—would secure the victory of world Communism over the threat of capitalism.[41] In other words, PRC's foreign policy during the early Cold War was heavily grounded in ideology, with Mao's political theory of Third Worldism and anti-hegemonism based on Marxism-Leninism and Maoist revolutionary thought.[42]

Foreign policy towards Latin America followed this pattern. Mora sees the 1950s and 1960s as a period of 'cultural diplomacy' and the exportation of the 'people's war' to Latin America.[43] According to Sun, "supporting the national democratic revolution in the Asia-

---

[37] Jiang Shixue, "La perspectiva de la política exterior china," in Riordan Roett and Guadalupe Paz (eds.), *La presencia de China en el hemisferio occidental: Consecuencias para América Latina y Estados Unidos* (Buenos Aires: Libros del Zorzal, 2009), 39–40.
[38] Vincent K.L. Chang and Zhou Yong, *Toward Equality: Chongqing's Wartime International Circles and the Dawn of Modern Diplomacy in China (1938-1946)* (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2017), 277–278.
[39] Hearn and León-Manríquez, *China Engages in Latin America*, 14.
[40] Richard Solomon (ed.), *The China Factor: Sino-American Relations and the Global Scene* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 41.
[41] Leonard Gordon, "Communist China's Foreign Policy in Historical Perspective," *The History Teacher* 2, no. 4 (1969): 46.
[42] Sun Junjian, Yuan Xinhua, and Zhang Mian, *Mao Tse-Tung's International Politics Theory and Practice* (Reading, UK: Paths International Ltd., 2018), 25–26.
[43] Mora, "The People's Republic of China and Latin America," 37.

Africa-Latin region" and the opposition to foreign oppression was the "foothold of China's foreign policy".[44]

4.2 *Recognition of the PRC by Central American states in the early Cold War*

In September 1960, Cuban leader Fidel Castro formally severed ties with the ROC and recognized the PRC, becoming the first in the region to do so.[45] He did so months after his Marxist revolution succeeded in overthrowing the militarist government, consequently establishing a Communist republic.[46] Ten years later, in South America, a second Latin American state followed suit: in December 1970 the Marxist Salvador Allende, several months in office as the President of Chile, began the process of establishing diplomatic relations with the PRC.[47]

This analysis of the early Cold War era leads to several preliminary conclusions. First, only two Latin American states withdrew their recognition of the ROC in favour of the PRC in this period. Two, these two states only recognized the PRC following distinctive domestic political developments, which caused them to be more aligned with the PRC's ideological foreign policy. Moreover, they did so without delay: both Castro's and Allende's rises to power were swifly followed by recognition of the PRC. Following these conclusions, one can also state that the Cuban and Chilean cases are the exceptions that confirm the rule: all other states that lacked the establishment of a leftist regime failed to recognize the PRC in the early Cold War. Not only the nature of the PRC's foreign policy, but also the geopolitical reality of the 1950s and 1960s, as well as the bipolarity of the Cold War and the influence it had on Latin American foreign policy decision making explain this.

4.3 *Lack of support for the PRC in the early Cold War*

In the late 1940s, the Cold War broke out: a global ideological and geopolitical battle between the two aspiring hegemons of the post-war period—the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Proxy wars were critical in the 'cold' nature of the war, and these proxy wars were often fought in the Third World.[48] Similarly, both the U.S. and the Soviet Union tried to expand their influence in different parts of the world.

As an important sphere of influence of the U.S., Latin America was not immune for the bipolarity of the Cold War. The American sense of a Latin America belonging to their sphere of influence, their southern 'backyard', was exarcerbated by the Cold War's bipolarity.[49] As such, many Latin American states by default positioned themselves in the pro-

---

[44] Sun Junjian, "Mao Tse-tung's International Political Strategy," in *Mao Tse-Tung's International Politics Theory and Practice*, 234.
[45] Cheng Yinghong, "Sino-Cuban Relations during the Early Years of the Castro Regime, 1959–1966," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9, no. 3 (2007): 93.
[46] Benjamin Keen and Keith Haynes, *A History of Latin America* (Boston: Houghton Harcourt Publishing Company, 2009), 389–391.
[47] Willem A. Joseph, "China's Relations with Chile under Allende: A Case Study of Chinese Foreign Policy in Transition," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 18, no. 2 (1985): 134–135.
[48] Hal Brands, "Introduction," in *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 1–2.
[49] Thomas Field, Stella Krepp, and Vanni Pettinà, *Latin America and the Global Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020).

U.S. capitalist camp. Tellingly, the PRC acknowledged this: it saw Latin America as the backyard (*houyuan*) of the U.S. as well.[50] This also explains the relative lack of interest of the PRC in the region; an interest that already was not great, given the significant geographical distance between them.

Not only global geopolitical forces, but also local agency accounted for the difficult relationship. The ideological and revolutionary nature of PRC policies simply scared away many governments in the region. In the 1950s and 1960s, the Chinese "proclaimed the need for armed struggle and people's wars against existing governments".[51] Chinese commentaries on events in Latin America celebrated guerrilla struggle and were exuberant everytime a dictator fell from power.[52] Governments were aware of the Maoist revolutionary spirit and, not too surprisingly, worried about it.[53] This converged with the already fervent anti-Communist sentiment spread throughout the region by the dynamics of the Cold War.

So, three reasons explain Latin America's recognition trajectory up to the late 1960s: (1) the bipolar dynamic of the Cold War and the region's natural place in the camp of the U.S., (2) the revolutionary agenda of PRC foreign policy, which antagonized local governments, and (3) the relative lack of mutual interest. It is my contention, however, that these three reasons weakened significantly in the early 1970s.

4.4 *The watershed moments of 1970–72*

The Sino-U.S. détente, formalized in 1972 by Mao and U.S. President Nixon, was a defining moment in the Cold War, and had an impact on Sino-Latin American relations, too. As the U.S. no longer saw the PRC as an enemy of war, but instead now considered it an ally, the allies of the U.S. also were able to reposition themselves towards the Chinese. Even more, the Americans quietly stimulated some states to engage with the PRC.[54] The rapprochement between the U.S. and PRC thus enabled Latin American states to engage more freely with the PRC, without the constraints of Cold War bipolarity.[55]

While the preparations for the Sino-U.S. détente began in late 1969, already before that, a change in PRC foreign policy was occurring. Gradually, Chinese leadership toned down the revolutionary pro-guerrilla rhetoric of the 'people's war' and changed to a more realist gear, which embraced a less radical worldview. Indeed, in the early 1970s, PRC's foreign policy was "much more accomodating toward established governments, less focused on insurrectionary movements, and founded on the assumption that the Third World was a homogenous and progressive international force."[56] As the PRC now expressed its solidarity with all Third World governments, regardless of their political ideologies, it no longer called

[50] Mora, "The People's Republic of China and Latin America," 36.
[51] Ratliff, "Communist China and Latin America, 1949-1972," 848.
[52] Zhao, "Internationalizing Chairman Mao," 161–162.
[53] Cecil Johnson, "China and Latin America: New Ties and Tactics," *Problems of Communism* 21, no. 4 (1972): 53–66; Hal Brands, *Latin America's Cold War*, 131.
[54] Hearn and León-Manríquez, *China Engages in Latin America*, 9.
[55] Peter Van Ness, "Three Lines in Chinese Foreign Relations, 1950-1983: The Development Imperative," in Dorothy Solinger (ed.), *Three Visions of Chinese Socialism* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), 131–132.
[56] Harry Harding, "China and the Third World: From Revolution to Containment," in Richard Solomon (ed.), *The China Factor: Sino-American Relations and the Global Scene* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1981), 266–270.

for the overthrow of these governments, but wanted to work with them instead. This new position of the PRC accomodated further dialogue between Latin American states, which in this period often were military corporatist and neoliberal dictatorships, and the Chinese.[57] The changing attitude in PRC's foreign policy in 1971 culminated in its admission to the United Nations (U.N.), which simultaneously led to the expulsion of the ROC, both from the General Assembly and the Security Council. The new and important position of the PRC within the U.N. gave it more responsibility, which meant it had the position to also deliver for its fellow Third World states;[58] moreover, it gave the PRC more international stature, especially vis-à-vis the ROC.

Finally, in this period of Sino-U.S. rapprochement and the PRC's admission to the U.N., a third important trend emerged: the PRC's interest in Latin America grew, beginning in 1970. Johnson has argued that this increase in interest was tied to PRC foreign policy makers who wanted "to end the isolationist tendencies associated with the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of 1966–1969."[59] This fit in the PRC's greater shift towards a more inclusive united front of Third World states, and the abundant presence of such states in Latin America, who would surely be receptive to the PRC's message of anti-imperialism.[60] Moreover, the PRC increasingly became interested in the region because it noticed the respectability of Marxist-Leninist theory in local intellectual circles, and because it saw it as a battleground after the Sino-Soviet split to win support for its anti-revisionist battle.[61]

4.5 *Conclusion: the parting of Central and South America*

Thus, three factors that explain reluctance of Latin American states to recognize the PRC in the early Cold War fell away in the early 1970s. They are (1) geopolitics: following the Sino-U.S. rapprochement, American pressure subsided, and in some cases the U.S. even quietly stimulated Latin American states to engage with their new ally; (2) Chinese agency: revolutionary rhetoric by the Chinese toned down, and a more realist foreign policy emerged; and (3) PRC interest in Latin American countries, which grew significantly. As such, the path in the early 1970s seemed clear for Latin American states to fully engage with the PRC, establish diplomatic relations and formally recognize it in the ROC's stead. And indeed, from 1971 onward, most South American states gradually did so (see appendix 2). However, the difference between Central America and the rest of Latin America is remarkable. As illustrated in appendix 3, until 1970, one Caribbean state and one South American state had recognized the PRC (Cuba and Chile, respectively); from 1970 until 1990, while nine North and South American states recognized the PRC, no states from Central America did the same. The following sections will examine why this was the case, and thus what accounts for the striking difference between Central America and the rest of the region. It will do so through the two case studies as introduced in the previous section: Panama and Guatemala.

---

[57] Mora, "Sino-Latin American Relations," 95–96.
[58] Samuel S. Kim, "The People's Republic of China in the United Nations: A Preliminary Analysis," *World Politics* 26, no. 3 (1974): 312–315; Wei Liu, *China in the United Nations* (Hackensack: World Century, 2014), 104.
[59] Johnson, "China and Latin America," 53.
[60] This would be the prelude to the 1974 introduction of the PRC's 'Three World theory'. See for example Zheng *et al*., "The present situation and prospects of China-Latin American relations," in *China - Latin America Relations*, 3.
[61] Johnson, "China and Latin America," 54.

5 Recognition behaviour of Panama in the late Cold War

5.1 *Background*

In 2017, the PRC and Panama established full diplomatic relations. A year later, PRC President Xi Jinping followed up with a formal state visit to the Panamanian Republic, accompanied with a sizable personal piece in Panama's largest newspaper, *La Estrella de Panamá*, emphasizing the strong historical ties between the two states.[62] But in the 1970s, despite conditions becoming decidedly more favourable, the Panamese did not recognize the PRC. What, then, were those strong historical ties?

In his piece, Xi made explicit reference to the sizable Chinese community that lives in Panama: it has one of the largest Chinese communities in the entire region. Substantial groups of Chinese migrant workers had arrived in Panama in the late nineteenth century to help construct the first transisthmian railway, followed in the late twentieth century by their role in the construction of the Panama Canal.[63] Their offspring, as well as continuous gradual immigration from the Chinese mainland, led to the emergence of a large pocket of overseas Chinese, who inhabited mostly the cities of Panama City and Colón. Yet this did not lead to special interest by the PRC in its first two decades of existence: like the rest of Central America, it gained more substantial interest only from 1970 onwards.[64]

5.2 *Ideology and domestic politics*

Two factors account for a situation in the early 1970s that was seemingly tailor-made for Panama to make the recognition swich to PRC: ideology and domestic politics.

Ideology

Panamanian history is a history of dependency: after centuries of Spanish colonialism and being part of a federalised Colombia, its twentieth century was largely characterised by American semi-colonialism.[65] After the establishment of the Canal, the Americans claimed sovereignty over territory surrounding it—the so-called Canal Zone, which for decades would be occupied by the U.S. In 1964, Panamanian anti-U.S. sentiment grew to such a degree that riots in the Zone broke out, leading to days of fighting between locals and U.S. military forces. This sentiment of anti-imperialism fit neatly in Mao's ideological foreign policy at the time. Consequently, in January 1964, Mao publicly expressed his support for the Panamanian struggle in the Canal Zone, calling for the right of the Panamanian people to reclaim their own territory in the face of American oppression.[66] As such, anti-hegemonist sentiment seemingly

[62] Xi Jinping, "Avanzar juntos hacia un futuro compartido," *La Estrella de Panamá*, 30 November 2018, https://www.laestrella.com.pa/nacional/181130/futuro-avanzar-exclusivo-compartido.
[63] Michael Donoghue, *Borderlands on the Isthmus* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 29–30; Siu Lok, *Memories of a Future Home: Diasporic Citizenship of Chinese in Panama* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 33–54.
[64] Alvaro Mendez and Chris Alden, "China in Panama: From Peripheral Diplomacy to Grand Strategy," *Geopolitics* (September 2019): 1–23.
[65] Keen and Haynes, *A History of Latin America*, 568–569.
[66] "Remarks to a *People's Daily* reporter about the patriottic battle of the Panamese people against American imperialism," dated January 12, 1964, accessed through the Wilson Center.

aligned the Panamanian people with the message the PRC was propagating throughout the region at the same time.

Moreover, as anti-U.S. sentiment in Panamanian society was fierce in the 1970s, a way to express an independent foreign policy untied from U.S. dependency would be to abandon the U.S.-backed ROC and support the PRC. Scholars have demonstrated that this consideration played a role in multiple Latin American states at the time.[67] If the Panamanian government, to the contrary, did not want to antagonise the Americans, that still would not necessarily have been a problem: following the Sino-U.S. rapprochement in 1972, shifting support to the PRC would have merely reflected the shifting alliances of the U.S. government.

Domestic politics

Politics in Panama in this period also seemed favourable to the PRC. To consider the political system and its ideology in Panama in the 1970s, one figure is key: Omar Torrijos, the authoritarian leader of Panama between 1968 and 1981. Torrijos was a profound anti-colonialist and an enthusiastic supporter of Third Worldism (*tercermundismo*).[68] As such, he was in charge of an anti-imperialist, authoritarian government that led a country full of anti-American sentiment—a sentiment Torrijos himself contributed to actively. In 1971, he was active "elevating the Panamanian conflict with the [Canal Z]one to the global anti-imperialist struggle".[69] Importantly, Mao not only rhetorically showed support for the Panamanian anti-imperialist struggle, but also did so through the PRC's position in the U.N., helping pass a Security Council resolution in 1973 to hold a U.S.-Panama meeting on the Canal issue.[70] Moreover, Torrijos, proponent of an outward-looking economy, wanted to decrease Panama's economic dependence on U.S. trade and look for other trade avenues outside of the Western hemisphere.

5.3 *Domestic politics, regional politics, and Chinese agency*

Taking into consideration these factors that would suggest the possibility of a swift recognition of the PRC by Panama, its reluctance to do so becomes somewhat puzzling. Here, a closer look at the domestic political context, as well as a consideration of the remaining two factors is necessary.

Domestic politics

As has been mentioned, Panama in the 1970s and 1980s was under the authoritarian rule of rightist general Torrijos, and his successor and right-hand man Noriega. Characteristic of this type of corporatist regime, that was ubiquitous throughout the region in the 1970s, were its

[67] Zheng, "The present situation and prospects of China-Latin American relations," 3.
[68] Robert J. Alexander, "Talk by Omar Torrijos to solidarity meeting with Partido Revolucionario Dominicano in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, August 15, 1978," in *Presidents of Central America, Mexico, Cuba, and Hispaniola: Conversations and Correspondence* (Westport: Praeger, 1995), 10–11.
[69] Donoghue, *Borderlands on the Isthmus*, 21. See also Alan McPherson, "Courts of World Opinion: Trying the Panama Flag Riots of 1964," *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 1 (2004): 83–112.
[70] Tom Long, *Latin America Confronts the United States: Asymmetry and Influence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 87–88.

(pseudo-)populist nature and neoliberal inclinations.[71] Torrijos sensed very well the anti-U.S. sentiment among the Panamanian people, and made renegotiating a Canal treaty with the U.S. a large priority. It also fit in his ideology of Third Worldism and anti-imperialism. This was not a natural given for Panamanian leadership: to the contrary, both Panamanian leaders before Torrijos' rule and traditional Panamanian elites during his rule remained loyal to the U.S. Yet Torrijos, who blamed the Americans for a failed coup attempt during his early rule, "felt no loyalty" to the U.S.[72] The independent nature of Torrijos' leadership caused Panama to divert from the larger dynamics of the Cold War: since the late 1960s, it had not been firmly in the U.S. camp, and it was openly looking for opportunities outside the Western hemisphere. That Torrijos did not want to follow the Sino-U.S. rapprochement and subsequent American suggestions to follow suit, then, is not too surprising: not only would it contradict his own convictions, it would also have meant following an alliance shift of a great power that he deeply disliked and fought in the highest levels of the U.N.

Regional politics

But Torrijos, as well as his successor Noriega, was a unique Latin American leader in another way as well: despite his outspoken anti-Communism and neoliberal tendencies, he was closely allied with Cuba's Fidel Castro, with whom he had a personal relationship.[73] This made Torrijos stand out in the region. More than that, in 1974 he decided to formally recognize the Republic of Cuba.[74] The relationship was both pragmatic and ideological: Panama provided Cuba a way to circumvent regional, U.S.-imposed economic isolation, it helped the Cubans in supporting a socialist rebellion in neighbouring Nicaragua, and the two leaders shared a strong belief in Third Worldism and anti-imperialism.[75] Castro repeatedly praised Torrijos and his anti-imperialist efforts.[76] But while relations between Panama and Cuba in the 1970s were remarkably good, relations between Cuba and the PRC, on the other hand, were remarkably bad. Starting in the late 1960s, Castro openly criticized the PRC for its supposed efforts to split the Communist camp in the global fight against capitalism.[77] Sino-Cuban relations significantly worsened after the Sino-U.S. rapprochement, which was both a natural consequence of Cuba's alignment with the Soviet Union and Cuba's criticism of the

---

[71] Orlando J. Pérez, "Panama: Political Culture and the Struggle to Build Democracy," in Harvey Kline and Christine Wade (eds.), *Latin American Politics and Development* (New York: Westview Press, 2017), 436–438.

[72] Long, *Latin America Confronts the United States*, 81.

[73] Fidel Castro, *My Life* (New York: Scribner, 2006), 405–406; Steve C. Ropp, "Cuba and Panama: Signaling one Way, Going Another," in Barry Levine (ed.), *The New Cuban Presence In The Caribbean* (New York: Routledge, 1983), chapter 4.

[74] Long, *Latin America Confronts the United States*, 99–100.

[75] R.M. Koster and Guillermo Sánchez, *In the Time of the Tyrants: Panama, 1968-1990* (New York: Norton, 1990), 145; Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 179–180; "Memorandum of Todor Zhivkov – Fidel Castro Conversation, Havana, 9 April 1979," accessed through the Wilson Center.

[76] For example, Castro expressed this sentiment in a national address in December 1975. "Fidel Castro delivers main report (conclusion)," *Havana Domestic Radio and Television Services*, 17 December 1975, FBIS Archive.

[77] Gilbert M. Joseph, "What We Now Know and Should Know: Bringing Latin America More Meaningfully into Cold War Studies," in Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniela Spenser (eds.), *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 105.

PRC's support for the oppressive regional hegemon.[78] As such, the Sino-Cuban conflict and the Panama-Cuban alliance made for an awkward situation in which the Cubans, in the person of Castro, could emphasize the PRC's lack of support for the Third Worldist governments of Central America—most notably, Torrijos' government—and he indeed consistently did.[79] Thus, the role of Cuba would not have been beneficiary to the PRC's attempts to improve their standing with Panamanian leadership.[80]

Chinese agency

To consider Chinese agency, an analysis of both ROC and PRC foreign policies towards Panama is required.

The ROC was recognized by the Panamanian government as early as 1912, and as a consequence, in the early 1970s, had had over half a century to strengthen its diplomatic ties with Panama. In the 1970s, it did so mainly through targeting Panama's specific needs, mostly by providing technical and educational assistance, but also through establishing personal contacts in the Panamanian government.[81] In this period, delegation and mission exchanges were frequent. Furthermore, as the ROC actively focused on government circles and the local elites, personal contact building was important. Among other ways, this was done by arranging visits of high officials. For example, in August 1971, the mayor of Taipei paid a well-publicized visit to Panama, meeting with the Panama City mayor, as well as high government officials—at a time when PRC visits to the state were still virtually non-existent.[82] In 1980, ROC Premier Sun Yun-suan visited Panama himself, along with several cabinet members, to illustrate the importance he attached to bilateral cooperation, mostly in the fields of agriculture and technological development.[83]

Although the ROC was focused on Panama to a greater extent than the PRC was in this period, the PRC during the 1970s increasingly invested in its relationship with the Panamanians as well, following its general growing interest in the region. The PRC's efforts were not too dissimilar from the ROC's, providing mostly technical assistance, but also, in the early post-Mao period, exploring ways to expand bilateral trade. For example, several commercial missions were organized in the second half of the 1970s and the early 1980s, with

[78] Mora, "Sino-Latin American Relations," 98.

[79] Even more, Castro repeatedly compared PRC foreign policy with "Yankee imperialism", fighting which was Torrijos' *raison d'être*. See for example "Castro addresses rally on 26 July anniversary," *Havana Domestic Service*, 26 July 1978, FBIS Archive.

[80] The degree to which the Torrijos-Castro alliance and Castro-Mao split influenced recognition behaviour is still uncertain, as archival documents of communication on a more individual level is required, but not yet available to scholars. We do know, however, of Torrijos and Castro's personal relationship, their to a significant degree shared view of Third Worldism, and Castro's opinion on the PRC's 'malign' role in the Third World. Moreover, we know that Castro from the late 1960s onwards openly denounced the PRC in stark terms, for example calling Mao a "senile idiot" and later Deng Xiaoping a "caricature of Hitler". See Cheng Yinghong, "Fidel Castro and 'China's Lesson for Cuba': A Chinese Perspective," *China Quarterly*, no. 189 (2007): 26.

[81] Thomas J. Bellows, "Taiwan's Foreign Policy in the 1970s: A Case Study of Adaptation and Viability," *Asian Survey* 16, no. 7 (1976): 599–601; Gerald Chan, "Taiwan as an emerging foreign aid donor: developments, problems, and prospects," *Pacific Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1997): 47–48.

[82] "Taipei mayor arrives for friendly visit," *RPC TV*, 2 August 1971, FBIS Archive.

[83] "Improved Latin American trade ties anticipated," *Zhongyang Tongxunshe* (Taipei CNA), 30 August 1980, idem.

president Torrijos in 1975 even opening a PRC economic exhibit in Panama City.[84] Besides these materialist approaches, the PRC following its admission to the U.N. Security Council also tried to improve its image in Panama by overtly supporting several regional causes, including the joining in 1973 of a Latin American nuclear ban agreement, which was properly publicized in local media.[85]

As such, it is true that the PRC during the 1970s gradually increased its diplomatic activity and tried to strengthen its relations with Panama, yet the ROC's ties were older, better cultivated, and thus stronger; moreover, the focus of ROC diplomatic efforts illustrates their general diplomatic aptitude, while the PRC was still developing this in the post-Mao era.

6 Recognition behaviour of Guatemala in the late Cold War

6.1 *Background*

The Sino-Guatemalan relationship of the early Cold War was quite superficial and limited, and PRC foreign policy towards Guatemala was characterised by its ideological nature. In the mid-1940s to mid-1950s, Guatemala's 'ten years of spring' (*diez años de primavera*) were characterised by the rule of two democractically elected reformist presidents, preceded and succeeded by military dictatorships. The second president was Jacobo Árbenz, who instigated leftist social and economic reforms following his 1950 electoral victory. His land reform policies, however, angered the Americans, as they damaged the economic potential of the U.S.' United Fruit Company, which had massive banana plantations in the country. The displeasure with Árbenz' reforms ultimately led to the CIA fomenting a bloody military coup, the overthrow of the Árbenz government, and a civil war that would endure for decades.[86]

Although Sino-Guatemalan relations were minimal at this point, Mao certainly noticed both Árbenz' reformism and the American-fueled military coup. He not only denounced American imperialism and capitalism, but also invited Árbenz and his wife—by then both in exile—to visit him in Beijing. In July 1956, not even two years after the coup, the two talked at considerable length about Guatemalan history, the Sino-Guatemalan relationship, and importantly, their shared struggle against American imperialism. Mao made an effort to illustrate the comradery of the Chinese and Guatemalan people, arguing that they were in similar positions in their attempts to thwart the oppression caused by imperialism, concluding by stating in Communist jargon that they "are comrades" (*women shi tongzhi*).[87]

The leaders that came to power following the 1954 military coup were corporatist militarists, neoliberals who did not want to pursue land reform and wanted to return to an outward-looking economy, looking mostly to the U.S. for exporting raw materials. They

[84] "Torrijos opens first PRC exhibit in Panama," *Televisora Nacional*, 4 April 1975, FBIS Archive.
[85] The nuclear ban agreement was especially relevant for the Panamanians, as it also called for the extension of the Latin American "non-atomic zone" to the American military base in Panama. See "PRC joins Latin American nuclear arms ban pact," *Belgrade TANJUG*, 22 August 1973, FBIS Archive.
[86] Michael E. Allison, "Guatemala: Breaking Free from the Past?," in Kline, Wiarda, and Wade, *Latin American Politics and Development*, 413–414.
[87] "Conversation from [Mao Zedong's] Audience with Former President Árbenz of Guatemala and His Wife [Mrs. Árbenz]," dated 14 July 1956, *Gang er si Wuhan daxue zongbu* (ed.), *Mao Zedong sixiang wansui* (Long Live Mao Zedong Thought), vol. 3 (1949–1957): 102–107, accessed through the Wilson Center.

pursued heavy oppression of their people by extensive counterinsurgency programs. Under the militarist authoritarian rule of the 1970s and 1980s, more than 200,000 Guatemalans were killed in the civil war.[88]

6.2 *Ideology, domestic politics, and regional politics*

Three factors account for a situation in the early 1970s that made a Guatemalan recognition switch towards the PRC probable: ideology and the domestic and regional political context.

Ideology

Guatemala in the 1970s would have seemed fertile ground for the PRC to build its diplomatic relations and ensure formal recognition by the Guatemalan government. Despite its dependence on the U.S., Guatemala had a highly troubled relationship with the Americans: the 1954 military coup was crucial in the growth of a fierce and enduring anti-U.S. sentiment among the Guatemalan people (and more, the immediate reversal of land reforms by the new government would be a determining factor in the rise of guerrilla movements from the 1960s onwards,[89] causing even greater resentment). Here, the PRC could align itself with the Guatemalan people through its message of anti-imperialism and Third Worldism.[90]

Domestic politics

The Sino-U.S. rapprochement simultaneously provided a permission structure for the Guatemalan government to formally recognize the PRC. Guatemala's neighbour to the north, Mexico, had done so: following the détente between the Americans and the Chinese, the Mexican government was told it could establish diplomatic relations with the PRC, as to strengthen the PRC position in the Cold War and vis-à-vis the Soviet Union. As the Guatemalan government from the early 1970s was pro-U.S. and had much contact with Washington, following the Cold War course of the Americans would be logical. It has been theorized that additionally, the government could have considered increasing relations with the PRC to "get more, or at least more favourable, trade and aid commitments from the United States."[91] Even more, it would fit in the Guatemalan government's habit in the 1970s to present its governance as part of the ideological Cold War scheme—even when it was not.[92]

Regional politics

Despite obvious differences between the rightist leadership of Guatemala and the Communist leadership of the PRC, the two had found common ground in the 1970s: both saw Cuba as an international problem and a danger to Central American stability. In 1979, Guatemalan president Lucas expressed his concerns over Cuban interference in Central American affairs,

---

[88] Allison, "Guatemala," 414.

[89] Richard Gott, "The Fall of Arbenz and the Origins of the Guerrillas," in Daniel Castro (ed.), *Revolution and revolutionaries: guerrilla movements in Latin America* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1999), 93–96.

[90] Johnson, "China and Latin America," 53.

[91] Ratliff, "Communist China and Latin America, 1949-1972," 862.

[92] The most relevant example is the government's violence against indigenous populations, which it presented as a battle against 'Communist guerrillas' as part of the global Cold War. See Alexander, *China and Taiwan in Central America*, 161.

while simultaneously expressing his wish to expand relations with the PRC.[93] Previous sections have already established the schism between the PRC and the Cubans. The schism had worsened in the post-Mao years, when the PRC had transitioned from a revolutionary to a more realist foreign policy, in which there was no place for Cuban revolutionary interference in Central America.[94] Thus, a shared rejection of Cuban power would suggest a foundation for strengthening PRC-Guatemalan relations.

6.3 *Domestic politics, regional politics, and Chinese agency*

Guatemala seemed well-positioned to recognize the PRC in the early 1970s. Yet, it did not happen. To understand this, a closer analysis of the domestic and regional political context and the relations of Guatemala with PRC and ROC is necessary.

Chinese agency

During the 1970s, the PRC did expand its efforts to improve relations with Guatemala. For example, following an earthquake in 1976 that left over 20,000 Guatemalans dead, the PRC rapidly expressed its sympathy with the Guatemalan people and offered financial support.[95] The PRC also from the late 1970s onwards strengthened its economic ties with Guatemala, becoming the main buyer of its cotton, an important product for the Guatemalan economy.[96] In the late 1970s, both the Guatemalan president and vice-president expressed their satisfaction with PRC efforts, saying that the two states should "increase their commercial and cultural exchanges in order to reach a deeper understanding."[97]

However, while the PRC increased its diplomatic efforts and succeeded in growing bilateral economic ties, the ROC seemed to understand better what the Guatemalan government wanted. A militarist government itself, it knew how to present itself as a state with a similar political system and ideology.[98] More importantly, research has demonstrated that the ROC provided the Guatemalans with specific assistance that the PRC could not offer: it sent specialists to help the Guatemalan military in counterinsurgency training. In the early 1970s, the ROC began to train the Guatemalan armed forces "in political warfare, counterinsurgency, and information extraction techniques."[99] The ROC indeed was partly responsible for the oppressive and violent tactics of the Guatemalan authoritarian government against the Guatemalan people, mostly in the rural areas.[100] As such, the ROC knew how to deal diplomatically with the military authoritarian government in Guatemala, in a way that the PRC did not.

---

[93] "Xinhua correspondents interview Guatemalan president," *Xinhua*, 3 October 1979, FBIS Archive.
[94] Joseph Cheng and Franklin Zhang, "Chinese foreign relation strategies under Mao and Deng: a systematic and comparative analysis," *Journal of Third World Studies* 14, no. 3 (1999): 91–114. PRC state media reported in 1980 on Cuba's "Central American role" and its plans to extend its influence to Central American states, including Guatemala: "State official discusses Cuba's Central American role," *Xinhua*, 23 April 1980, FBIS Archive.
[95] "PRC Red Cross donates funds to Guatemala," *Xinhua*, 16 February 1976, FBIS Archive.
[96] "PRC cotton purchases," *El Imparcial*, 17 May 1978, idem.
[97] "Guatemalan leader on commercial, cultural exchanges with PRC," *Xinhua*, 29 September 1979, idem.
[98] Alexander, *China and Taiwan in Central America*, 192–193.
[99] *Ibid.*, 56–57.
[100] Scott Anderson and Jon Lee Anderson, *Inside the League* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co, 1986), 170, 214.

Regional politics

Despite the aforementioned shared dislike of Cuba by the Guatemalan and PRC governments and the PRC's more realist foreign policy in the 1970s, the presence of Cuba in the region had also exacerbated the already negative image of the PRC that existed among Guatemalan leadership. As noted in section 4.1, Cuba-inspired guerrilla movements before the 1970s were overtly supported through the Maoist foreign policy of the PRC. Guatemala had seen its share of these type of insurgencies, which had hardened the belief in Guatemalan leaders that Communism was a threat to Central American stability. In other words, Cuba had made the situation for the PRC in its relations with Guatemala distinctly worse, as it illustrated more vividly to the Guatemalan military government the dangers of Communism than any far-away Great Leap Forward or Cultural Revolution could.

Domestic politics

The domestic political context is tied to the previous two factors. Indeed, the nature of the regime that was in charge of the Guatemalan government in the 1970s and 1980s proved crucial. Hagan has argued that Guatemala belongs to a select group of states that has shown sharp foreign policy realignments following regime change.[101] In 1970, the Partido Institucional Democrático (PID) came to power, succeeding the moderate leftist rule of the Partido Revolucionario. The PID president, Colonel Arana, as well as his successors, shifted the Guatemalan position from anti-U.S. to pro-U.S.[102] It goes without saying that the aftermath of the revolution, which practically disabled progressive politics in Guatemala, benefited the ROC, as continuity of the 'ten years of spring' would have presented a vastly different political and ideological landscape; moreover, the new political regime was suddenly remarkably similar to the regime on Taiwan. Thus, the political leadership in charge of Guatemala in the 1970s and the significant shift it caused in Guatemalan foreign policy in 1970 was an important factor in the support for the ROC.

7 Discussion

The studies of Panama and Guatemala, considering ideology, Chinese agency, and the domestic political and regional political contexts, have indicated several factors that were crucial in the prolonged non-recognition of the PRC and the continued recognition of the ROC in the 1970s and 1980s. These factors are the following: (1) diplomatic aptitude, (2) political regime and individual leadership, and (3) Cuba.

First, the analysis of Chinese agency has shown that both PRC and ROC were diplomatically active in the region: the ROC had already established its presence in the early 1970s, while the PRC was in the process of expanding its connections in the region in the mid-1970s to the early 1980s. Both in Panama and Guatemala, the PRC did not mind engaging with governments that were of a different ideological affiliation. After its admission to the U.N. in 1972, it tried to be the champion of the Third World,[103] providing support for the Canal dispute of Panama with the U.S., and expressing sympathy for Guatemala in the case of humanitarian disasters and U.S.-instigated coups. Moreover, especially towards the

[101] Hagan, "Domestic political regime changes and Third World voting realignments in the United Nations, 1946-84," 513.
[102] *Ibid.*, 523.
[103] Kim, "The People's Republic of China in the United Nations," 312–315.

early 1980s, the PRC expanded the frecuency of bilateral exchanges of diplomatic and economic missions with these states, leading to growing economic ties and an increasing foothold in the domestic markets. This was not limited to these two states: in other Central American states the PRC showed increasing diplomatic and economic presence throughout this period as well.

It was, however, the ROC that showed real diplomatic aptitude in its relations with Panama and Guatemala. As stated before, where the PRC in this period tried, the ROC *delivered*. As the case studies illustrate, this could be in multiple ways: in Panama, for instance, the ROC already in the beginning of the 1970s was present in the state with high-level official visits, and it was capable of targeting Panama's specific needs,[104] which included assistance in technology, agriculture, and education. Furthermore, the ROC knew that it had an unmistakable advantage as well: as an authoritarian regime itself, the ROC government knew that it should present itself as such in contacts with Central American states with similar regimes, as to create both a sense of familiarity and trust. In this way, the domestic political context benefited the ROC. In the case of Guatemala, this diplomacy went much further by providing counterinsurgency training for Guatemalan soldiers. Although scholars still do not know the exact scope of this form of ROC assistance, it has been established that this also happened in at least El Salvador and Nicaragua.[105] As such, not only were diplomatic efforts by the ROC underway earlier than those of the PRC, which had to mostly catch up in the 1970s, ROC diplomacy also was more capable and valued by Central American governments.

It is important to point out that these diplomatic efforts cannot be considered the same as 'dollar diplomacy', although they undeniably are a precursor. Diplomacy in the 1970s and early 1980s was mostly focused on personal contacts and assistance efforts, with most assistance being in technology. For the ROC, the start of dollar diplomacy can be traced back to 1989, when a state fund was created with "the objective of providing foreign economic assistance"; most of this came down to direct financial aid—in other words, dollars.[106]

Second, the examination of the domestic political context has illustrated the difference a regime (change) can make. Even more, it illustrates the importance of the political leader as an individual: who is in charge matters, as individual leaders can radically, and sometimes surprisingly, change the foreign policy course of a state. In Central America, this happened in multiple states in the 1970s and 1980s. Omar Torrijos is an appropriate example: although he presented himself overtly as a rightist, anti-Communist authoritarian at the head of a military corporatist government, he was also a convinced Third Worldist, a fierce anti-colonialist, and a politician with clear anti-U.S. sentiments; moreover, he personally built an extraordinary alliance with Fidel Castro, leader of Communist Cuba. In other words, despite the rightist tendencies of his government and the pro-U.S. tendencies of the Panamanian elites, the individual Torrijos made choices that other leaders of his government would not have made.

In Guatemala, the individuals that lead the government in the 1970s and 1980s did conform to the nature of their political regime, as they all were military rulers who were effectively appointed to the position of president. They stood not out individually like Torrijos: instead, they reflected the militarist, rightist, and oppresive nature of their

[104] Chan, "Taiwan as an emerging foreign aid donor," 50–51.
[105] Anderson and Anderson, *Inside the League*, 178.
[106] Maggiorelli, "Taiwan's Development Aid to Latin America and the Caribbean and the One China Policy," 192.

government ideology. Yet their leadership did differ starkly from the period up to 1970: these leaders did not pretend to be democratically chosen, and were openly using violence and oppression to control the Guatemalan population. More importantly, the 1970 shift from Méndez to Arana altered Guatemalan foreign policy preferences significantly, as the regime change led to different attitudes towards the U.S., Cuba, and the PRC, among other powers.

Accordingly, the nature of political regimes and the nature of the individuals that headed these regimes were a relevant factor in the non-recognition of the PRC in this period. There were states like Guatemala, which following regime change or revolution abruptly altered their government's ideology and, consequently, its foreign policy preferences. There were also states like Panama, which had leaders whose governments had foreign policy preferences that did not necessarily hurt the prospects of a PRC recognition, but the leader's more personal ideology, and an often accompanying independent foreign policy outlook, did hurt the PRC, and benefited the ROC.

Third, a closer inspection of the regional political context shows the importance of Cuba, which in both cases hindered the PRC. Although a minor player in the global dynamics of the Cold War, in the Western Hemisphere, Communist Cuba was one of the most powerful players and probably the most influential one besides the U.S.[107] These regional power dynamics have often been overlooked by scholarship. In Latin America, most influenced were those states with greater proximity to Cuba: the Hispanophone Caribbean islands and Central America. This meant that when the Central American governments considered relations with the Communist PRC, they did so through the prism of their experience with the Cubans.

The Cuba factor had different outcomes on the prospects of PRC recognition, yet none were beneficiary. In the case of Panama, the Cuba factor was not beneficiary, as the alliance between Torrijos and Castro was very strong, while the relationship between Castro and the PRC at the same time was very weak. More commonly, in other Central American governments, the actions of the Cubans in their own states throughout the 1960s and 1970s made them frightened of Communism; unluckily for the PRC, they also tied Cuban Communism to PRC Communism. This was partly justified: despite the Sino-Cuban split and the PRC's new foreign policy that emerged in the early 1970s, the PRC in the earlier Mao era had supported those Cuba-inspired revolutions throughout the region. As such, although the PRC foreign policy towards Central America throughout the 1970s was not revolutionary anymore, but accomodating and realist, Cuba's revolutionary foreign policy at the same made it difficult for the PRC to convince some of these states of its foreign policy shift.

Finally, the case studies also illustrate that ideology is a relevant factor when theorizing why recognition of the PRC would have been probable; yet it does not suffice as a solitary explaining factor for the actual non-recognition during the late Cold War, in contrast with scholarship on the early Cold War. Although ideological considerations do remain relevant, the study shows that these considerations are always within the context of the other factors.

6.1 *The deviating cases of Mexico and Nicaragua*

So far, my argument has not included two states in the region that have distinctive recognition behaviour: Mexico and Nicaragua. At first glance both do not present stark differences with the states studied in the previous section, yet they did recognize the PRC in the late Cold War:

[107] Brands, *Latin America's Cold War*, 3.

in 1972 and 1985, respectively. Do these two cases, then, illustrate that my argument does not hold up, and that the three factors described above are flawed? I argue that this is not the case, and that the recognition of the PRC by both Mexico and Nicaragua in the late Cold War can be explained following my argument.

Mexico

Although Mexico is a North American state and not a Central American state, I include it in this discussion because of its proximity; furthermore, as a state just outside of the Central American region, it might provide an additional perspective. Mexico seemingly is an odd case: it *did* recognize the PRC early on, already in 1972. In the 1970s and 1980s, its rightist authoritarian government had a reasonably stabile yet lukewarm relationship with the U.S. Moreover, the Mexican government in the late 1960s and early 1970s was involved in the violent persecution of domestic guerrilla movements,[108] with whom the Chinese had sometimes aligned themselves.

However, at least three factors explain why the Mexicans still recognized the PRC. First, Mexico in the early 1970s was led by Luis Echeverría, a president who shared similarities with the previously discussed Omar Torrijos: both were outspoken conservative populists, wary of imperialism, and staunch supporters of the cause of Third Worldism.[109] Under Echeverría's leadership, Mexico took on a neutral position in the bipolar Cold War and was an outspoken member of the global Non-Aligned Movement, unlike any other state in Latin America.[110] As such, he openly criticized the U.S. and defended Cuba. He also was willing to work with Mao, despite their ideological differences. Thus, the individual leadership and personal ideology of Echeverría can be considered an important factor. Second, the impact of the Cuba factor that hurt the PRC elsewhere was limited in Mexico. Most importantly, this had to do with two reasons: one, in contrast with Central American states, the Castro regime did not consider Mexico a primary target;[111] and two, as Sloan has argued, in Mexico there was a "more tolerant and more fluid understanding of Communism", which was directly tied to Mexico's own revolutionary history.[112] This enabled Echeverría and other presidents to have good relations with Communist regimes, including the PRC. Third, Mexico is also a unique example of a North or Central American state where the PRC had a solid diplomatic foothold before the late 1970s. This was already the case during the rule of Echeverría's predecessors in the 1960s, when the administration of U.S. President Johnson expressed concern about Mexican ties to the PRC.[113]

The case of Mexico, however, also suggests that an additional factor is necessary to include in my argument. Mexico is, after all, a considerably larger state than the states of Central America. Although scholarly consensus on how to define state size has not yet been reached, Mexico can be regarded as a middle power, while Central American states can be

---

[108] Field, Krepp, and Pettinà, *Latin America and the Global Cold War*, 318.
[109] Clint E. Smith, *Inevitable Partnership: Understanding Mexico-U.S. Relations* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2000), 60–61.
[110] Brands, *Latin America's Cold War,* 134–135.
[111] José Luis Velasco, "Mexico: Democratization and violence," in Kline *et al.* (eds.), *Latin American Politics and Development*, 331.
[112] Julia Sloan, "Carnivalizing the Cold War: Mexico, the Mexican Revolution, and the Events of 1968," *European Journal of American Studies* 4, no. 1 (2009): 8.
[113] Christopher M. White, *Creating a Third World: Mexico, Cuba, and the United States During the Castro Era* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), 103–104.

considered small powers.[114] For such a power, the dynamics are arguably different from the dynamics of the smaller powers to its south: this includes more interest by the great powers, more potential for independent decision making, as well as more influence in international organisations.[115] As such, the case of Mexico emphasizes the importance of state size, especially for the factor of diplomatic aptitude. Simply put, neither the PRC nor the ROC would really be able to sway the foreign policy of a state of such relative power and importance to a significant degree, compared with those smaller powers of Central America, where that would be easier.[116] This provides an additional contrast between Central America and the rest of Latin America, as most of Latin America's smaller states are situated on the Central American isthmus. Thus, the deviating case of Mexico can be explained through the three factors indicated above, but it does also add one: state size.

Nicaragua

Nicaragua recognized the PRC in 1985. Again, the recognition of the PRC can be explained through the three factors. First, very similarly to the case of Guatemala, diplomatic aptitude of the ROC throughout the 1970s and the Cuba factor before and during that same period account for the delay and the rejection of PRC recognition. By the end of the 1970s, power in Nicaragua had been in the hands of the authoritarian rightist and pro-U.S. clan of the Somozas for over four decades. Since the early 1960s, the Somoza regime had fought a war against the Sandinista guerrillas, a socialist and Communist-backed rebellion. In 1979, a revolution overthrew the Somoza government. The Sandinistas subsequently installed a revolutionary government, to be led by Daniel Ortega.[117] The PRC was rapid in its response, congratulating the revolutionaries and recognizing the new Nicaraguan government within days.[118] Following the installment of a new, more ideologically aligned government, the PRC thus pursued better ties with Nicaragua. Yet, here the Cuba factor again becomes relevant.

Not too dissimilar to the case of Panama, the close relationship of the new Sandinista government with the Castro regime hurt the PRC in the early 1980s: following Cuba's lead, Nicaragua showed displeasure by the PRC's invasion of fellow socialist state Vietnam.[119] The invasion led to a low point in Sino-Cuban relations,[120] and similarly worsened Sino-Nicaraguan relations. But within two years, following an improvement in the Sino-Cuban relationship in the early 1980s, the Nicaraguan government also stopped denouncing the PRC; by then, a multitude of bilateral missions, conferences, and commercial agreements had also occurred, which suggests a success in PRC diplomacy to ease the tensions and pave the way

---

[114] See for example Louis Belanger and Gordon Mace, "Middle Powers and Regionalism in the Americas: The Cases of Argentina and Mexico," in Andrew F. Cooper (ed.), *Niche Diplomacy: Middle Powers After the Cold War* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 164–183.

[115] Boon Hoo Tiang and Charles Ardy, "China and Lilliputians: Small States in a Big Power's Evolving Foreign Policy," *Asian Security* 13, no. 2 (2017): 125–129; Robert Rothstein, *Alliance and Small Powers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 181–182.

[116] Maurice A. East, "Size and foreign policy behavior: a test of two models," *World Politics* 25, no. 4 (1973): 566–567; Jeanne Hey, "Introducing Small State Foreign Policy," in *Small States in World Politics: Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003), 1–12.

[117] David Close and Salvador Martí i Puig, "The Sandinistas and Nicaragua since 1979," in *The Sandinistas and Nicaragua since 1979* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012), 1–20.

[118] "Hua Guofeng's message on recognition of Nicaraguan regime," *Xinhua*, 26 July 1979, FBIS Archive.

[119] "Deputy foreign minister on support for Taiwan, Iran," *ANSA*, 22 October 1979, FBIS Archive.

[120] Mora, "Sino-Latin American Relations," 98.

for a new relationship.[121] In December 1985, the Sandinista government formally recognized the PRC.[122]

In 1990, Violeta Chamorro was elected as Nicaragua's new president. Being less ideologically aligned with the PRC, she reconsidered her government's recognition of the PRC. Noting the new dollar diplomacy efforts of the ROC, aimed at smaller states like Nicargua, Chamorro switched back to the ROC.[123] The aftermath of the 1989 Tiananmen square incident might also have impacted her decision; here, the ROC again showed its diplomatic aptitude by presenting itself as pro-democracy and a defender of human rights.[124] As such, the deviating case of Nicaragua can also be explained through the factors of diplomatic aptitude, the Cuba factor, and especially important, political regime and individual leadership. It also illustrates the transition to the post-Cold War period in the recognition rivalry, as it shows the emergence of dollar diplomacy as a key determinant.

As a result, the discussion of the cases of Panama and Guatemala and the deviating cases of Mexico and Nicaragua results in four factors that account for the non-recognition of PRC and the sustained recognition of ROC in the 1970s and 1980s: (1) diplomatic aptitude, (2) political regime and individual leadership, (3) Cuba, and (4) state size.

8 Conclusion

Following a growing body of scholarship on contemporary foreign relations of both PRC and ROC and the continuity of some support for the ROC by means of official diplomatic relations and recognition, mostly in Central America, this thesis has researched a critical question: why Central America? To contribute to an answer to this question, I have laid out an argument that is twofold.

First, I have argued that to understand why Central America nowadays is such a remarkable bulwark of ROC recognition, it is necessary to look at the 1970s and (early) 1980s. Scholarship has so far not explicitly taken this period into account when discussing the subject of recognition rivalry, yet it is my contention that this period has been crucial in the establishment of prolonged ROC support. The 1950s and 1960s have been an important period, as circumstances in this early Cold War era withheld virtually all of Latin America in recognizing the PRC. However, I have argued that in the 1970–1972 period, events altered the landscape and made recognition of the PRC a new possibility for these governments. It is in this period that the recognition trajectories of Central America and the rest of Latin America diverged, with almost all North and South American states recognizing the PRC in the following two decades. It is in this period that the roots for Central America's contemporary position lie.

Second, I have argued that four factors are crucial in our understanding of why Central American states in the 1970s and 1980s did not join the other Latin American states in recognizing the PRC. These factors are diplomatic aptitude, political regime and individual

[121] See for example "Government willing to start talks on relations with PRC," *Sistema Sandinista* (Nicaraguan state media), 22 August 1980, FBIS Archive.
[122] "'Full Text' of Communique," *Xinhua*, 7 December 1985, idem.
[123] JoAnn Fagot Aviel, "Nicaragua: Foreign Policy in the Revolutionary and Postrevolutionary Era," in Frank O. Mora and Jeanne Hey (eds.), *Latin American and Caribbean Foreign Policy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 53–54.
[124] As argued by Li, "Rivalry between Taiwan and the PRC in Latin America," 81–82.

leadership, Cuba, and state size. They are intertwined, and as such form a new framework that accounts for the Central American reluctance to recognize the PRC.

The first factor accounts for the diplomatic aptitude of both PRC and ROC in this period in Central America. Simply put, the PRC was not (yet) diplomatically apt enough, and throughout the 1970s and early 1980s could not properly deliver for these states, while the ROC could. The advantage of the ROC is not too surprising, given the development of PRC's foreign policy and the real expansion of its foreign policy efforts only beginning throughout the 1970s, after its admission to the U.N. Moreover, the relatively small size of Central American states made it worth for both PRC and ROC, in this period still developing their economies and without large financial reserves, to pursue these efforts here, in contrast to the larger and consequently less swayable states in the rest of Latin America.

The second factor accounts for the domestic political climate in Central America in the 1970s and 1980s, which benefited the ROC. Most states were lead by rightist and militarist authoritarian regimes, which happened to be quite similar to the nature of the ROC regime, and consequently also benefited the ROC in its diplomatic efforts. Moreover, individual leadership of those presidents like Torrijos and Ortega did not help the PRC, as their tendencies to pursue independent foreign policies and conscienciously contradict U.S. foreign policy and Cold War alliances thwarted PRC interests. As a consequence, these states did not follow suit following the Sino-U.S. rapprochement, often despite the wishes of other government officials and elites, and in contrast with states like Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela that were willing to aid the U.S. in de-isolating the PRC.

The third factor is Cuba. Central America is uniquely positioned as a region with close proximity to the two major players of the Cold War in the Western hemisphere, the U.S. and Cuba. The Cuba factor works in different ways; yet fundamentally, it is important to consider that for these Central American states, Cuba was one of the two powers in the region that was able to influence their domestic affairs, and continued to do so throughout the 1970s and 1980s. This was not the case for South American states, which had less proximity to Cuba, and in which Castro was less interested. In Central America, most governments saw the PRC through the prism of their experience with Cuba—somewhat ironically, given the Sino-Cuban split and repeated mutual denouncements afterwards. Moreover, the independent leaders mentioned in the previous paragraph aligned themselves with fellow anti-imperialist Castro, and consequently followed the Sino-Cuban split that reached its nadir in the 1970s. Hence, Cuba hurt the PRC in establishing relations with regimes that ideologically were far apart.

Finally, the fourth factor considers state size. As has been established in the discussion of the Mexico case, Central America is a region comprised of small powers. This has consequences for factors (1) and (3), too: the smaller state size made the impact of Chinese diplomacy greater than if it were done with a 'middle power' like Mexico; also, smaller state size made for greater possibility to establish foothold by guerrilla movements, both Cuba-sponsored and Cuba-inspired. Naturally, state size is related to the emergence of dollar diplomacy in the late 1980s as well: like with other forms of diplomacy, the smaller the recipient state, the easier it is for a donor to have sufficient influence.

These factors thus account for the roots of Central America's prolonged support for the ROC and its non-recognition of the PRC. The reasons why several Central American states in the late 2000s and 2010s eventually did make the switch have already been established, and have been accounted for in this thesis as well. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a new diplomatic rivalry between the PRC and ROC, nicknamed 'dollar diplomacy', provided a new dynamic, together with more generally the PRC's growing political and

economic power, as well as the U.S.' relative negligence in its southern 'backyard' and the accompanying permission structure of more independent foreign policy of the smaller powers.

But what is the relevance of this argument? First, it gives further credence to those scholars who have argued for a better understanding of the complexities of the Cold War in Latin America. My research has demonstrated that Central American states did not merely sustain recognition of the ROC because of their dependence on the U.S. or their fear of PRC Communism. To the contrary, the situation in most states was more complex and sometimes ambiguous, which makes the ideology factor insufficient as an explaining factor for the late Cold War period. This thesis has also shed more light on the nature of PRC and ROC foreign policies in this era, the limitations both faced, and the reasons why one should consider their foreign policy towards Central America different from the rest of the region.

The conclusions of this thesis are also relevant because they emphasize that the roots of Central America's support for the ROC nowadays are more diverse than previously understood. First, local agency was crucial: the study emphasizes the impact political regime changes and individual leadership can have on recognition behaviour. Second, the regional political context has been wrongly overlooked in most scholarship, as this thesis has demonstrated the importance of taking into account the agency of Cuba as a regional power. Third, this thesis has indicated that U.S. agency is more limited within the discussion than is usually assumed for the Cold War era. But these agencies do not exclude the relevance of both PRC and ROC: the case studies illustrate that in the 1970s especially, diplomatic aptitude by the ROC was crucial in maintaining Central American support, and this diplomacy could have far-reaching domestic consequences, as the counterinsurgency assistance suggests. Similarly, one can also point out that the lack of PRC diplomatic skills in the same period led to believe Central American governments not only that the ROC could serve them better, but the lack of diplomacy also caused the image of the PRC in the region not to improve. In other words, this thesis provides a new overview of the different agencies that were crucial in the early recognition rivalry between PRC and ROC in the region that would eventually become the ROC's last remaining hope.

Finally, this thesis indicates several grounds for further research. First, this thesis has focused on the roots of Central America's position in the recognition rivalry, and has identified the 1970s and (early) 1980s as the relevant period for this. Questions remain, nonetheless, about the period that followed. Although it has been established why in the post-Cold War period eventually Central American states started recognizing the PRC, this only happened from the late 2000s onwards. New research on the late 1980s onwards, taking into account the factors identified in this thesis, can provide a better understanding why it still took so long. Crucial in this research should be the factor of diplomatic aptitude. How did the PRC deal with the diplomatic fallout of the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, especially in Central America? How did it respond to the emergence of ROC dollar diplomacy in the same period, and how did it attempt to counter this in Central America? Did the PRC attempt to profit from relative U.S. disinterest in the region in the 1990s? Some questions about PRC foreign policy choices in the period discussed in this thesis also remain relevant. For example, how did the PRC actually try to leverage its position as new member of the U.N. Security Council in the early 1970s? Why did it not stand out in the Panama Canal discussions that were important in that period—why did the Panamanians not sufficiently notice PRC efforts, or did not care? Was the PRC aware of ROC diplomatic efforts in the region, most notably the counterinsurgency assistence, and how did it counter those specific efforts? These are just a few questions that provide ground for further research, building on this thesis.

Second, although this thesis has made use of archival documents to some extent, access to government documents that shed a direct light on contacts between key actors—notably the Central American states discussed, together with the PRC, ROC, and Cuban governments—should provide an even clearer picture. Illustrative for the history that still can be discovered is the relatively recent scholarship on the degree to which the ROC was involved in counterinsurgency efforts by militarist governments in the region in the 1970s. As noted in the Design section, accessability of Central American archives is very limited, and Chinese documents of the Mao era are scarcely published, too. Especially in the case of the PRC, however, gradually more archival documents are being made public; when this process continues, and perhaps is joined by similar efforts across the Pacific, new insights might come forward. With this, it is my hope that this thesis and further research will contribute to a better understanding of Sino-Latin American relations in the Cold War and the reasons why Central American states specifically still provide the ROC with some international recognition.

Appendix 1

	Costa Rica	El Salvador	Guatemala
Part of Latin America	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region	Central America	Central America	Central America
State size	Small	Small	Small
Political regime	Liberal	Rightist militarist	Rightist militarist
Political system	Multi-party democracy	Authoritarianism	Authoritarianism
Economic ideology	Neoliberal	Neoliberal	Neoliberal
Member of CACM	Yes	Yes	Yes
Relations with U.S.	Strong dependency	Strong dependency	Strong dependency
Formal ties with ROC	Yes	Yes	Yes
Formal ties with PRC	No	No	No

	Honduras	Nicaragua	Panama
Part of Latin America	Yes	Yes	Yes
Region	Central America	Central America	Central America
State size	Small	Small	Small
Political regime	Rightist militarist	Rightist militarist; leftist	Rightist miltiarist
Political system	Authoritarianism	Dictatorship; democracy	Authoritarianism
Economic ideology	Neoliberal	Neoliberal; socialist	Neoliberal
Member of CACM	Yes	Yes	No
Relations with U.S.	Strong dependency	Strong dependency	Strong dependency
Formal ties with ROC	Yes	Yes; temporarily no	Yes
Formal ties with PRC	No	No; temporarily yes	No

The table provides some basic information on the Central American states in the 1970s and 1980s, illustrating that considering this overview, Panama and Guatemala can serve as justifiable representations of this subregion. These data refer to domestic politics, regional politics, political ideology, and ties with the Chinas.

Note: the MCCA (*Mercado Común Centroamericano*), or Central American Common Market, was established in the early 1960s as an exemplary institution for further integration of the Central American states, and served as one of the precursors for the current regional political system, the SICA (*Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana*).

Appendix 2

Year	Recognition of the PRC	Further relevant events
		Sino-Soviet split[125]
		Cuban Revolution
1960	Cuba recognizes PRC	
		Sino-Cuban split
		Cultural Revolution
		Marxists gain power in Chile
1970	Chile recognizes PRC	
1971	Peru recognizes PRC	
		PRC admission to the U.N.
		Sino-U.S. rapprochement
1972	Argentina recognizes PRC	
	Mexico recognizes PRC	
1974	Brazil recognizes PRC	
	Venezuela recognizes PRC	
		End of the Mao era, Deng becomes new leader of the PRC
1980	Colombia recognizes PRC	
1985	Bolivia recognizes PRC	
	Nicaragua recognizes PRC	
1988	Uruguay recognizes PRC	
		End of the Chiang era in the ROC, Lee becomes leader
		Tiananmen square crackdown
1990	**Nicaragua** recognizes ROC	
		End of the global Cold War
		Decline of U.S. interest in Latin America
1997	Bahamas recognize PRC	
2004	Dominica recognizes PRC	
2005	Grenada recognizes PRC	
2007	**Costa Rica** recognizes PRC	
		Xi Jinping becomes PRC leader
2017	**Panama** recognizes PRC	
2018	Dominican Republic recognizes PRC	
	El Salvador recognizes PRC	

Chronology of switches in recognition to the PRC of Latin American states until present, as well as certain key historical events. Central American states are displayed in **bold**.

[125] The Sino-Soviet split can be traced back as early as 1956, beginning with Khruschev's denouncement of Stalinism, succeeded in the following years by increasing opposition from Mao and expressions of anti-revisionism. For example, see Friedman, *Shadow Cold War*, 25–59, and Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 46–47.

Appendix 3

Recognition of PRC by Central American states (1949–1970)	**Recognition of PRC by other Latin American states (1949–1970)**	**Recognition of PRC by Central American states (1971–1990)**	**Recognition of PRC by other Latin American states (1971–1990)**
Cuba (1960)	Chile (1970)	*none*	Peru (1971)
			Argentina (1972)
			Mexico (1972)
			Brazil (1974)
			Venezuela (1974)
			Colombia (1980)
			Ecuador (1980)
			Bolivia (1985)
			Uruguay (1988)

Overview of those Central American states that recognized the PRC before and after 1970, and those other Latin American states (Spanish and Portuguese-speaking North America, Caribbean, and South America) that recognized the PRC before and after 1970. 1990 is chosen as end year of the second group, as around that year the dollar diplomacy rivalry gained steam; the following development would be in 2007, when Costa Rica recognized the PRC.

Bibliography

Primary sources

Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Reports. “Taipei mayor arrives for friendly *RPC TV*, 2 August 1971. Report published 2 August 1971 (FBIS-FRB-71-154).

FBIS. “PRC joins Latin American nuclear arms ban pact.” *Belgrade TANJUG*, 22 August 1973. Report published 22 August 1973 (FBIS-FRB-73-163).

——. “Torrijos opens first PRC exhibit in Panama.” *Panamá Televisora Nacional*, 4 April 1975. Report published 7 April 1975 (FBIS-LAT-75-067).

——. “Fidel Castro delivers main report (conclusion).” *Havana Domestic Radio and Television Services*, broadcasted 17 December 1975. Report published 22 December 1975 (FBIS-LAT-75-246).

——. “PRC Red Cross donates funds to Guatemala.” *Xinhua*, 16 February 1976. Report published 17 February 1976 (FBIS-CHI-76-032).

——. “PRC cotton purchases.” *El Imparcial* (Ciudad de Guatemala), 17 May 1978. Report published 30 May 1978 (FBIS-LAT-78-104).

——. “Castro addresses rally on 26 July anniversary.” *Havana Domestic Service*, 26 July 1978. Report published 28 July 1978 (FBIS-LAT-78-146).

——. “Hua Guofeng's message on recognition of Nicaraguan regime.” *Xinhua*, 26 July 1979. Report published 26 July 1979 (FBIS-CHI-79-145).

——. “Guatemalan leader on commercial, cultural exchanges with PRC.” *Xinhua*, 29 September 1979. Report published 12 October 1979 (FBIS-CHI-79-199).

——. “Xinhua correspondents interview Guatemalan president.” *Xinhua*, 3 October 1979. Report published 12 October 1979 (FBIS-CHI-79-199).

——. “Deputy foreign minister on support for Taiwan, Iran.” *ANSA*, 22 October 1979. Report published 24 October 1979 (FBIS-LAM-79-207).

——. “State official discusses Cuba’s Central American role.” *Xinhua*, 23 April 1980. Report published 24 April 1980 (FBIS-CHI-80-081).

——. “Government willing to start talks on relations with PRC.” *Sistema Sandinista* (state media), 22 August 1980. Report published 27 August 1980 (FBIS-LAM-80-168).

——. “Improved Latin American trade ties anticipated.” *Zhongyang Tongxunshe* (Taipei Central News Agency), 30 August 1980. Report published 4 September 1980 (FBIS-APA-80-173).

——. “'Full Text' of Communique.” *Xinhua*, 7 December 1985. Report published 9 December 1985 (FBIS-CHI-85-236).

Wilson Center. “Conversation from [Mao Zedong's] Audience with Former President Árbenz of Guatemala and His Wife [Mrs. Árbenz],” dated 14 July 1956. *Gang er si Wuhan daxue zongbu* (ed.). *Mao Zedong sixiang wansui* (Long Live Mao Zedong Thought), vol. 3 (1949–1957). Wuhan, internal circulation, May 1968. Accessed on April 8th, 2021, see https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/230121.

——————. “*Jiu Banama renmin fandui Mei diguo zhuyi de aiguo douzheng dui "Renmin ribao" jizhe fabiao de tanhua* [Remarks to a *People’s Daily* reporter about the patriottic battle of the Panamese people against American imperialism],” dated January 12, 1964. Accessed on May 4th, 2021, see https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/240258.

——————. “Memorandum of Todor Zhivkov – Fidel Castro Conversation, Havana, 9 April 1979.” Accessed on May 13th, 2021, see https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/111071.

Secondary sources

Aguilera Peralta, Gabriel. “De espaldas al dragón. Las relaciones de Centroamérica con Taiwán.” *Nueva Sociedad*, no. 203 (2006): 171–179.

Alden, Chris. *China in Africa*. London: Zed Books, 2007.

Alexander, Robert J. *Presidents of Central America, Mexico, Cuba, and Hispaniola: Conversations and Correspondence.* Westport: Praeger, 1995.

Arias, Rodrigo. “El alcance de las relaciones entre Costa Rica y la República Popular China.” In Trejos, Marta (ed.). *Relaciones China – Costa Rica. Una referencia para Centroamérica*. San José: Centro Internacional para el Desarrollo Humano, 2006, pp. 19–26.

Aviel, JoAnn Fagot. “Nicaragua: Foreign Policy in the Revolutionary and Postrevolutionary Era.” In Mora, Frank O., and Jeanne A.K. Hey (eds.). *Latin American and Caribbean Foreign Policy*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003, pp. 46–62.

Bartelson, Jens. “Three Concepts of Recognition.” *International Theory* 5, no. 1 (2013): 107–129.

Belanger Louis, and Gordon Mace. “Middle Powers and Regionalism in the Americas: The Cases of Argentina and Mexico.” In Cooper, Andrew F. (ed.). *Niche Diplomacy: Middle Powers After the Cold War*. London: Macmillan, 1997, pp. 164–183.

Bellows, Thomas J. “Taiwan's Foreign Policy in the 1970s: A Case Study of Adaptation and Viability.” *Asian Survey* 16, no. 7 (1976): 593–610.

Biddick, Thomas. “Diplomatic rivalry in the South Pacific.” *Asian Survey* 29, no. 8 (1989): 800–815.

Brands, Hal. “Introduction.” In *Latin America’s Cold War.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010, pp. 1–8.

Brazinsky, Gregg. *Winning the Third World: Sino-American Rivalry during the Cold War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017.

Castro, Fidel. *My Life.* New York: Scribner, 2006.

Chan, Gerald. “Taiwan as an emerging foreign aid donor: developments, problems, and prospects.” *Pacific Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1997): 37–56.

Chang, Vincent K.L., and Zhou Yong. *Zouxiang pingdeng: Zhan shi Chongqing de waijiao jie yu zhongguo xiandai waijiao de liming shuguang (1938–1946)* [Toward Equality: Chongqing's Wartime International Circles and the Dawn of Modern Diplomacy in China]. Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2017.

Chen, Lung-chu. “Taiwan, China, and the United Nations.” In Henckaerts, Jean-Marie (ed.). *The International Status of Taiwan in the New World Order: Legal and Political Considerations* (London: Kluwer Law International, 1996, pp 189–206.

Cheng, Joseph, and Franklin Zhang. “Chinese foreign relation strategies under Mao and Deng: a systematic and comparative analysis.” *Journal of Third World Studies* 14, no. 3 (1999): 91–114.

Cheng, Yinghong. “Sino-Cuban Relations during the Early Years of the Castro Regime, 1959–1966.” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9, no. 3 (2007): 78–114.

Cheng, Yinghong. “Fidel Castro and "China's Lesson for Cuba": A Chinese Perspective.” *China Quarterly*, no. 189 (2007): 24–42.

Close, David; Salvador Martí i Puig, and Shelley A. McConnell (eds.). *The Sandinistas and Nicaragua since 1979*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2012.

Cohen, Lucy M. “The Chinese of the Panama Railroad: Preliminary Notes on the Migrants of 1854 Who ‘Failed.’” *Ethnohistory* 18, no. 4 (1971): 309–320.

Donoghue, Michael E. *Borderlands on the Isthmus: Race, Culture, and the Struggle for the Canal Zone*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014.

Dixon, Martin, Robert MacCorquodale, Sarah Williams, and Robert McCorquodale. *Cases & Materials on International Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.

East, Maurice A. “Size and foreign policy behavior: a test of two models.” *World Politics* 25, no. 4 (1973): 556–576.

Erickson, Daniel P., and Janice Chen. “China, Taiwan, and the Battle for Latin America.” *Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* 31, no. 2 (2007): 69–90.

Esteban Rodriguez, Mario. “China O Taiwan?: Las Paradojas De Costa Rica Y Nicaragua.” *Revista De Ciencia Política* 33, no. 2 (2013): 513–532.

Field, Thomas; Stella Krepp, and Vanni Pettinà. *Latin America and the Global Cold War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020.

Fossen, Anthony van. “The Struggle for Recognition: Diplomatic Competition Between China and Taiwan in Oceania.” *Chinese Journal of Political Science* 12, no. 2 (2007): 125–146.

Friedman, Jeremy. *Shadow Cold War. The New Cold War History*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

Garrard-Burnett,Virginia; Julio E. Moreno, and Mark Atwood Lawrence (eds.). *Beyond the Eagle's Shadow: New Histories of Latin America's Cold War*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013, pp. 1–20.

Greenhill, Brian. “Recognition and Collective Identity Formation in International Politics.” *European Journal of International Relations* 14, no. 2 (2008): 343–368.

Daase, Christopher; Caroline Fehl, Anna Geis, Georgios Kolliarakis, and Roger Boxill (eds.). *Recognition in International Relations: Rethinking a Political Concept in a Global Context*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Gordon, Leonard. “Communist China’s Foreign Policy in Historical Perspective.” *The History Teacher* 2, no. 4 (1969): 45–51.

Gott, Richard. “The Fall of Arbenz and the Origins of the Guerrillas.” In Castro, Daniel (ed.). *Revolution and revolutionaries: guerrilla movements in Latin America*. Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 1999, pp. 93–104.

Harris, Lillian Craig. *China's Foreign Policy toward the Third World*. New York: Praeger, 1984.

Hearn, Adrian H., and José Luis León-Manríquez. *China Engages in Latin America*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2011.

Henckaerts, Jean-Marie (ed.). *The International Status of Taiwan in the New World Order: Legal and Political Considerations*. London: Kluwer Law International, 1996.

Hey, Jeanne A.K. *Small States in World Politics: Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior.* Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2003.

Hu, Shaohua. “Small State Foreign Policy: The Diplomatic Recognition of Taiwan.” *China* (National University of Singapore. East Asian Institute) 13, no. 2 (2015): 1–23.

Hsieh, Chiao-chiao. “Pragmatic diplomacy: foreign policy and external relations.” In Ferdinand, Peter (ed.). *Take-off for Taiwan*? London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1996, pp. 66–106.

Hsieh, Pasha L. “Rethinking Non-recognition: Taiwan's New Pivot to ASEAN and the One-China Policy.” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 33, no. 2 (2020): 204–228.

Hsiung, James C. “China’s Recognition Practice and Its Implications in International Law.” In *China's Practice of International Law: Some Case Studies*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2014, 14–57

Jiang, Shixue. “La perspectiva de la política exterior china.” In Roett, Riordan, and Guadalupe Paz (eds.). *La presencia de China en el hemisferio occidental.* Buenos Aires: Libros del Zorzal, 2009, pp. 39–57.

Johnson, Cecil. “China and Latin America: New Ties and Tactics.” *Problems of Communism* 21, no. 4 (1972): 53–66.

Johnson, Cecil. *Communist China and Latin America, 1959–1967.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1970.

Joseph, William A. “China's Relations with Chile under Allende: A Case Study of Chinese Foreign Policy in Transition.” *Studies in Comparative Communism* 18, no. 2 (1985): 125–150.

Keen, Benjamin, and Keith Haynes. *A History of Latin America*. Boston: Houghton Harcourt Publishing Company, 2009.

Kelsen, Hans. “Recognition in International Law: Theoretical Observations.” *The American Journal of International Law* 35, no. 4 (1941): 605–617.

Kim, Samuel S. “The People’s Republic of China in the United Nations: A Preliminary Analysis.” *World Politics* 26, no. 3 (1974): 299–330.

Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. London: Penguin Press, 2011.

Kochi, Tarik. “Recognition and Accumulation.” In Hayden, Patrick, and Kate Schick (eds.). *Recognition and Global Politics: Critical encounters between state and world*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016, pp. 85–98.

Koster, R.M., and Guillermo Sánchez. *In the Time of the Tyrants: Panama, 1968-1990*. New York: Norton, 1990.

Kuijper, Hans. “Is Taiwan a Part of China?” In Henckaerts, Jean-Marie (ed.). *The International Status of Taiwan in the New World Order: Legal and Political Considerations* (London: Kluwer Law International, 1996, pp 9–21.

Larus, Elizabeth Freund. “Taiwan's Quest for International Recognition.” *Issues and Studies* 42, no. 2 (2006): 23–52.

Larus, Elizabeth Freund. “Soft Power versus Hard Cash: Retaining Democratic Allies.” In Tsang, Steve (ed.). *Taiwan and the International Community*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008, 153–188.

Li, He. “Rivalry between Taiwan and the PRC in Latin America.” *Chinese Journal of Political Science* 10, no. 2 (2005): 77–102.

Lindemann, Thomas, and Erik Ringmar (eds.). *International Politics of Recognition.* Routledge: New York, 2016.

Liu, Philip. “Cross-strait Scramble for Africa: A Hidden Agenda in China-Africa Cooperation Forum.” *Harvard Asia Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (2001): 1–9.

Lynch, Colum. “Guatemala Declares War on History.” *Foreign Policy*, 30 July 2019. https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/07/30/guatemala-declares-war-on-history-dirty-war-archives-jimmy-morales/.

Maggiorelli, Lorenzo. “Taiwan’s Development Aid to Latin America and the Caribbean and the One China Policy.” *Razón Crítica* 7, no. 7 (2018): 177–208.

Manke, Albert. “The Impact of the 1949 Chinese Revolution on a Latin American Chinese Community: Shifting Power Relations in Havana’s Chinatown.” *Revista Brasileira De Política Internacional* 61, no. 2 (2018).

Mao, Xianglin; Adrian H. Hearn; and Liu Weiguang, “China and Cuba: 160 Years and Looking Ahead.” *Latin American Perspectives* 42, no. 6 (2015): 140–152.

Mao, Xianglin, and Shi Huiye. “Latin American Studies in China during the Cold War.” *Latin American Perspectives* 45, no. 4 (2018): 141–147.

Martin, Garret. “Playing the China Card? Revisiting France's Recognition of Communist China, 1963–1964.” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 10, no. 1 (2008): 52–80.

McPherson, Alan. “Courts of World Opinion: Trying the Panama Flag Riots of 1964.” *Diplomatic History* 28, no. 1 (2004): 83–112.

Mearsheimer, John J. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics.* New York: Norton, 2001.

Meding, Holger M. “Historical Archives of the Republic of Panama.” *Latin American Research Review* 34, no. 3 (1999): 129–142.

Mora, Frank O. “The People's Republic of China and Latin America: From Indifference to Engage-ment.” *Asian Affairs* 24, no. 1 (1997): 35–58.

Mora, Frank O. “Sino-Latin American Relations: Sources and Consequences, 1977-1997.” *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 41, no. 2 (1999): 91–116.

Long, Tom. *Latin America Confronts the United States: Asymmetry and Influence*. Cambridge: Cam-bridge University Press, 2015.

Luo, Hui, and Lin Liping. “*Hu Jintao yu laifang de Gesidalijia zongtong Aliyasi juxing huitan* [Hu Jintao holds talks with visiting Costa Rican president Arias].” *Xinhua*, 24 October 2007. Accessed through http://www.gov.cn/ldhd/2007-10/24/content_785477.htm.

Lüthi, Lorenz M. *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Ness, Peter Van. “Three Lines in Chinese Foreign Relations, 1950-1983: The Development Imperative.” In Solinger, Dorothy (ed.). *Three Visions of Chinese Socialism*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1984, pp. 113–142.

Neumayer, Eric. “Distance, Power and Ideology: Diplomatic Representation in a Spatial, Unequal and Divided World.” *Area* 40, no. 2 (2008): 228–236.

Payne, Richard J., and Cassandra R. Veney. “Taiwan and Africa: Taipei’s Continuing Search for International Recognition.” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 36, no. 4 (2001): 437–450.

Pérez, Orlando J. “Panama: Political Culture and the Struggle to Build Democracy.” In Kline, Harvey F., and Christine J. Wade (eds.). *Latin American Politics and Development*. New York: Westview Press, 2017, pp. 435–448.

Portada, Robert. “The Final Frontier: China, Taiwan, and the United States in Strategic Competition for Central America.” *Chinese Journal of Political Science* 25 (2020): 551–73.

Portada, Robert; Steve Lem; and Uttam Paudel. “The Final Frontier: China, Taiwan, and the United States in Strategic Competition for Central America.” *Chinese Journal of Political Science* 25 (2020): 551–73.

Ratliff, William. “Communist China and Latin America, 1949-1972.” *Asian Survey* 12, no. 10 (1972): 846–863.

Ratner, Ely. “Reaping What You Sow: Democratic Transitions and Foreign Policy Realignment.” *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53, no. 3 (2009): 390–418.

Rawnsley, Gary D. “Selling Taiwan: Diplomacy and Propaganda.” *Issues & Studies* 36, no. 3 (2000): 1–25.

Rich, Timothy S. “Status for Sale: Taiwan and the Competition for Diplomatic Recognition.” *Issues & Studies* 45, no. 4 (2009): 159–88.

Ropp, Steve C. “Cuba and Panama: Signaling one Way, Going Another.” In Levine, Barry (ed.). *The New Cuban Presence In The Caribbean.* New York: Routledge, 1983, chapter 4.

Rothstein, Robert L. *Alliance and Small Powers*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1968.

Russell, Benjamin. “What a Controversial Deal in El Salvador Says About China's Bigger Plans.” *Americas Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (2019).

Shattuck, Thomas J. “The race to zero?: China’s poaching of Taiwan’s diplomatic allies.” *Orbis* 64 (2020): 334–352.

Shie, Tamara R. “Rising Chinese Influence in the South Pacific: Beijing's “Island Fever”.” *Asian Survey* 47, no. 2 (2007): 307–326.

Siu, Lok C.D. *Memories of a Future: Home Diasporic Citizenship of Chinese in Panama*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005.

Sloan, Julia. “Carnivalizing the Cold War: Mexico, the Mexican Revolution, and the Events of 1968.” *European Journal of American Studies* 4, no. 1 (2009): 1–12.

Smith, Tony. “New Wine for New Bottles: A ‘Pericentric Paradigm’ for the Study of the Cold War.” *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 4 (2000): 567–595.

Solomon, Richard (ed.). *The China Factor: Sino-American Relations and the Global Scene.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1981.

Sun, Junjian; Yuan Xinhua; and Zhang Mian. *Mao Tse-Tung’s International Politics Theory and Practice.* Reading, UK: Paths International Ltd., 2018.

Talmon, Stefan. “The constitutive versus the declaratory theory of recognition: *tertium non datur*?” *British Yearbook of International Law* 75, no. 1 (2005): 101–181.

Taylor, Ian. “Taiwan’s Foreign Policy and Africa: the Limitations of Dollar Diplomacy.” *Journal of Contemporary China* 11, no. 30 (2002): 125–140.

Tiang, Boon Hoo, and Charles Ardy. “China and Lilliputians: Small States in a Big Power's Evolving Foreign Policy.” *Asian Security* 13, no. 2 (2017): 116–131.

Velasco, José Luis. “Mexico: Democratization and violence.” In Kline, Harvey F., and Christine J. Wade (eds.). *Latin American Politics and Development*. New York: Westview Press, 2017, pp. 319–344.

Vidmar, Jure. “Explaining the Legal Effects of Recognition.” *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (2012): 361–387.

Watson, Cynthia. “Adios Taipei, Hola Beijing: Taiwan's Relations with Latin America,” *China Brief* 4, no. 11 (2004).

Wei, Liu. *China in the United Nations.* Hackensack: World Century, 2014.

Xi, Jinping. “Avanzar juntos hacia un futuro compartido.” *La Estrella de Panamá*, 30 November 2018. https://www.laestrella.com.pa/nacional/181130/futuro-avanzar-exclusivo-compartido.

Xia, Yafeng. “New Scholarship and Directions in the Study of the Diplomatic History of the People's Republic of China.” *The Chinese Historical Review* 14, no. 1 (2007): 114–140.

Xiang, Lanxin. “Otra mirada desde China.” In Roett, Riordan, and Guadalupe Paz (eds.). *La presencia de China en el hemisferio occidental: Consecuencias para América Latina y Estados Unidos.* Buenos Aires: Libros del Zorzal, 2009, pp. 59–76.

Yahuda, Michael. “The International Standing of the Republic of China on Taiwan.” *The China Quarterly*, no. 148 (1996): 1319–1339.

Yu, George T., and David L. Longenecker. “The Beijing-Taipei Struggle for International Recognition: from the Niger Affair to the U.N.” *Asian Survey* 34, no. 5 (1994): 475–488.

Westad, Odd Arne. *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

White, Christopher M. *Creating a Third World: Mexico, Cuba, and the United States During the Castro Era*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007.

Wolf, Reinhard. “Respect and disrespect in international politics: the significance of status recognition.” *International Theory* 3, no. 1 (2011): 105–142.

Zaid, Mark S. “Taiwan: It Looks like It, It Acts like It, but Is It a State – The Ability to Achieve a Dream through Membership in International Organization.” *New England Law Review* 32, no. 3 (1998): 805– 818.

Zheng, Binwen; Sun Hongbo; and Yue Yunxia. “The Present Situation and Prospects of China-Latin American Relations: A Review of the History since 1949.” In He, Shuangrong (ed.). *China - Latin America Relations: Review and Analysis*. Reading: Paths International, 2012, pp. 1–21.