Chinese Foreign Policy toward Mexico

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# Foreword

# Abstract

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Foreword

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Abstract

Chinese Foreign Policy has gone through different phases since Mao came to power in 1949. The events in the international arena and the domestic situation in China determined its international behaviour. Even though China has claimed a moral sympathy with the Third World, the later hasn’t been a priority in Chinese foreign policy. With the economic reforms, China suffered a transformation in its foreign policy and became more active in world affairs, always trying to preserve its sovereignty and its economic development.

Due to its needs for raw materials to carry out its development, China has started a new approach to Latin America but still Mexico is not a priority, being the main obstacle the deficit in the balance of trade between both countries. But there are also opportunities for cooperation, especially at the international level.

Keywords: Foreign Policy, Sino-Latin American relations, Mexico
1. Introduction

1.1 Presentation, purpose and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to understand the dynamics of the relationship, the origins and interests of the PRC in Mexico and discover if there is any possibility of further cooperation in the future, outside from trade.

Since the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and Mexico initiated diplomatic relations in 1972, there has been a non continuous interest between both parties to get closer to each other and it has just been in the last years that the relationship has got stronger, mainly with regards to trade.

The importance of studying this particular subject is that China is becoming a great power in the international system and Mexican politicians and people involved in trade often have an image of China as being a danger for Mexico, especially because it has displaced the latter as the second commercial partner with the United States. And this fear becomes more real because the Chinese “threat” is turning clearer in the commercial relationship between Mexico and China. There is a growing deficit in the Mexican balance of trade with China because of all the imports coming from the Asian country. But apart from these commercial ties, it is important to analyze if there are coincidences that could bring them closer and make both countries benefit from a stronger relationship.

It seems that talking about China today means talking about trade and market and talking about Mexico means talking about its neighbouring with the United States. But this thesis is neither about trade between China and Mexico and nor about the relationship that both countries have and have had with the United States. However it is necessary to acknowledge the inevitability of talking about both issues because those are two of the elements that have helped shape the relationship that exists today between China and Mexico.

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These considerations can be summarized in the following research questions: why has the relationship between China and Mexico been distant for most of the time since it began? and what are the obstacles and the advantages to develop a more constructive relationship?

It is probably needless to say that the topic is much understudied but it is important to stress it because it is a sign of how little interest there exists in each other.

1.2 Methodological considerations
The thesis is primarily based in secondary sources. Nevertheless, I also consulted primary sources, such as newspaper articles. This was important so I could give an overview of the relationship from 1997 to 2005. These articles mainly come from two newspapers, one Mexican and the other Chinese. Despite the bias that Chinese newspapers have it was important to use them because they present information produced in the place of origin and that has not been filtered by foreign sources. Foreign newspapers usually publish information that has a focus in their readers’ or national interest.

I consulted these newspapers in their online editions. I chose People’s Daily because its coverage of international affairs is extensive and most of its information is provided by Xinhua, the Chinese news agency which also provides with information to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The other newspaper is the Mexican Reforma.

The reason was that its online database is very rich and also because it has a correspondent in Beijing so apart from having news coming from news agencies there are articles that provide more in depth information. Another factor was that its coverage of international politics is very extensive.

The information from newspapers was complemented by some articles in other publications such as The New York Times.

These primary sources were helpful for reconstructing the relationship between both countries, each of them provides facts that when put together give the researcher a general overview of the exchanges and the quality of the relationship.

This research project is not based in observations, surveys or interviews. One of the reasons is that it was extremely difficult to talk to someone from the Chinese Foreign Ministry. The same goes for the Mexican Embassy in Beijing.
During the short pilot study I made in Shanghai I found out that interviews were not an appropriate method to analyze the relationship between the two countries, since the information that they would have provided was not original but rather official, this information wouldn’t have been any different than the yielded by documentary sources.

There were also financial and time constraints. Nevertheless, I complemented my findings with informal conversation with academics recommended by the Nordic Centre at Fudan University.

This is a qualitative research so all the sources have some bias depending of the author and of course the specific beliefs that a person has and where it was published. To reduce this bias I used sources that expressed different interests and the points of view from both Chinese and non Chinese authors.

As Alvesson and Sköldberg point out, qualitative research is never value free. When interpreting the reality there is no neutral and apolitical ground. This is the reason why I did research about Chinese foreign policy in different sources.

There are a few authors on Chinese Foreign Policy that have conducted thorough studies about its process, principles and evolution. Michael Yahuda in his Towards the end of isolationism. Foreign Policy after Mao, gives a historical overview of Chinese foreign relations and makes an analysis of how this relations changed after Mao’s death. It is also prospective since Yahuda outlines the challenges that China would have to face during its economic reform. Another author that presents a good study of Chinese Foreign Policy and its foundations, though focused in its relationship with the United States is David Shambaugh. In Beautiful Imperialist. China perceives America 1972-1990, Shambaugh explains the process through which Chinese leaders get information from abroad, specifically about the United States. It is a useful piece of scholarship because gives a picture of how different organisms in China participate in the foreign policy making process.

One of the books that have been considered as the first thorough study of the process of Chinese foreign policy making is the one by A. Doak Barnett, The Making of Foreign Policy in China. The author describes in detail the institutions and the people participating in this process, it also makes a thorough account of the evolution and

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specialization of the people participating in it after Mao died and a new leadership emerged.

Samuel S. Kim is one of the scholars that have studied the Chinese role in international politics and its relations with the rest of the world. *China and the World, Chinese Foreign Relations in the Post-Cold War Era*, is a very good analysis of China’s position in the world and towards the states and regions which China has a close or strategic relationship with. The book is a comprehensive study since it includes chapters on theory and sources of Chinese foreign policy.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

Following this introductory part, I will present my theoretical framework, which is mainly based in International Relations theories and concepts.

In Chapter 2 I will give an overview of Chinese foreign policy making and its principles, and how it has changed since the open-door policy was adopted in 1978. I will also give the background of the Sino-Latin American relationship.

In Chapter 3 I will present the evolution of the relationship between China and Mexico and also I will analyze the most representative issues in the relationship. Some of the issues represent obstacles or challenges and some other are opportunities for cooperation, especially at the international level.

Finally in my conclusion I will offer a balance of the relationship and try to suggest how to manage the relationship and approach in a more efficient way to China.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

A concept that has been broadly discussed in International Relations has been sovereignty. From the Realist concept to the most recent interpretations that consider the influence of globalization in a state’s sovereignty it has always been a concern how to keep certain degree of independence form the outside and how to exercise the state’s prerogative of power within its territory.

For the different schools of thought in International Relations, sovereignty varies in the way it is exercised. In this sense, for the liberal theories, states’ sovereignty is not absolute, since they have to interact with each other. In order to avoid anarchy in the international arena they have to give up part of their sovereignty so there could be order. That sovereignty is placed in international institutions which provide the states with rules that make their coexistence easier.
For the realist thought sovereignty is absolute and it is the way the state can defend itself. Since for Realism the state is the main actor, there is no other authority above it. The state is also sovereign within its territory, so no external power can intervene. The characteristic of the international system is anarchy, so each state is occupied with its own survival.

For the radical theories the international system is divided between the capitalists, the elites, and the proletariat or exploded class. So sovereignty is at the service of the capitalists, the state has no real power of decision because decisions are made by the economic capitalist elites.

The concept of sovereignty was first brought to the International Relations field with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 and since then it has evolved in its meaning. According to Krasner “the Westphalian state is a system of political authority based on territory and autonomy”, with territoriality meaning that there is political authority exercised over a specific geographic space rather than over people. The fact that there are no external actors playing within that defined territory gives it the autonomy.4

Barkin and Cronin use the definition used by John Ruggie who says that sovereignty is the “institutionalization of public authority within mutually exclusive jurisdictional domains”.5 They recognize that this definition is static and it doesn’t change along with the changes occurring in international relations.

The concept of sovereignty has been challenged by several elements, being globalization the current one and the most difficult to cope with at least for some states, like China. Treaties and international organizations also change the way sovereignty is viewed. When a state signs a treaty or is part of an international organization it gives up part of its right to pursue whatever interests it has. The state has to comply with rules and procedures that diminish its margin of action in international affairs, thus the state has to respond to other interests than its own. International organizations and treaties are necessary elements in processes such as globalization, and that is why globalization also threatens sovereignty. With globalization borders become blur and it is more difficult to keep control of a states’ population. Also certain economic activities are taken over by other groups that are not part of the state structure, i.e. private actors.

Throughout time China has demonstrated that its view of sovereignty is very orthodox. From the Chinese point of view, the state sovereignty is absolute and its attitude towards making commitments through international treaties or accords demonstrates this. A recent Chinese definition of sovereignty states that “the crucial principle is that the national authorities that rule over the people within a specific area are the ultimate authority for dealing with all domestic and foreign affairs faced by the nation state. These authorities alone enjoy these rights and responsibilities, to the exclusion of any other actor. Within their territorial area, they can freely and independently stipulate their national system and form of government, their internal organization, foreign policy and the form of legally sanctioned use of force.”

Thus, this definition gives Chinese leaders discretional power to judge a violation or an intrusion to the state’s sovereignty. In their point of view, sovereignty is the “last shield of developing countries against interference from the West”.

The contention between an orthodox exercise of sovereignty and the increasing involvement in world affairs and international economy led to the emergence of the maxi-mini principle. Samuel S. Kim created this term to explain Chinese behaviour in high politics, thus China sought to “maximize its security interests while attempting to minimize normative costs”, and it also worked towards “maximizing rights and minimizing responsibilities in global high politics”. This attitude has historical reasons that are also reflected in the fear of external influence that Chinese leaders have had.

In international relations theory it is important to identify the levels of analysis. J. David Singer identifies two useful levels of analysis. These levels are the International system or systemic and the national state.

The definition of a system is “an assemblage of units, objects, or parts united by some form or regular interaction”. The notion of system in international relations

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7 Tiejun Zhang, op.cit., p.291
9 *idem*
10 Singer is one of the main contemporary international relations theorists; he has analyzed which are the best and most comprehensive methods to study international phenomena. His studies are mainly on conflict and peace and he has put an emphasis on studying the states’ behaviour.
acquired relevance during the 50s when realist theorists defined international politics as a system. In a system the components have a habitual behaviour that creates patterns of interaction with each other. In the case of international politics, from the realist point of view, the main components are the states. It is important to mention that not all theories give the same importance to the system, so for Realists and Radicals the system is basic in their analyses, and for the liberals it is not that important since it does not possess enough explanatory power.

According to Singer the systemic level is the “most comprehensive of all levels available, encompassing the totality of interactions which take place within the system and its environment”\(^{12}\).

This level of analysis has some shortcomings such as the exaggeration of the impact of the system over the national actors and the homogenization of the nations in the international system.\(^{13}\)

These weaknesses can be reduced by using the second level of analysis, the state. For certain theories, such as Realism and Neorealism, the state is the primary actor in international relations, it is states that sign treaties, belong to international organizations, go to war and make foreign policies.

Using the state as the level of analysis allows going into detail and differentiating between states, it is not a homogenizing level of analysis as the systemic one.\(^{14}\) This level of analysis takes into consideration goals, motivations and purposes in national policy. This approach looks into the processes by which national objectives are selected, internal and external factors influencing those processes and the institutional framework from which they emerge.\(^{15}\)

There is a third level, the individual. Kenneth Waltz is the main proponent of man being the main actor in international relations. He calls this level, the “first image”. Thus, the “most important causes of political arrangements and acts are found in the nature and behaviour of man.”\(^{16}\) For studies based in this level, human behaviour would have to be modified in order to prevent conflict.

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\(^{13}\) *ibid*, pp.88-89

\(^{14}\) *ibid*, pp.89-90

\(^{15}\) *ibid*, p.91

This level focuses in the personality, perceptions, choices and activities of the
decision makers and individual participants.\textsuperscript{17}

International Relations theories try to describe the international system, and each of them uses a different approach. There are three core theories that seek to explain international reality. These are: Realism with its variant of Neorealism, Liberalism, and the Radical theory (which includes Marxism, Imperialism and Dependency theory). Lately some new approaches have appeared that have helped broaden the perspective of international relations studies, incorporating new elements to explain phenomena.\textsuperscript{18}

All these theories view the international system with different perspectives and have different premises to approach it. While the Realist tradition focuses in the anarchical nature of the system and the rationality of the states. Liberalism comes from the Idealist tradition; it considers that the interdependence in the international system and the good nature of the individuals are the elements that allow to states cooperate with each other.

The Radical theory has its main focus in social classes and economic actors, such as multinationals. Finally, Constructivism as one of the “new” theories has individuals as the main actors, in this perspective the state behaviour is influenced by social identity, collective norms and elite beliefs.\textsuperscript{19}

All these theories can help explain a specific phenomenon in international relations, in the case of analysing the foreign policy of a state we have to take into account various elements that shape it, so we can say that one theory would not be sufficient to describe the motivations and reasons in Chinese foreign policy behaviour. As I will show later, China’s motivations for decision making in foreign policy vary depending the situations and these can be economic, political or both. China’s participation in international organizations and in institutional structure during the Mao period was not active and lately it has started to get interested in belonging to these organizations. In some aspects and during certain periods China has behaved more like a Realist state that looks for its own survival, and since the economic reforms started in the late 70s its foreign policy has been more oriented towards maintaining economic growth.

\textsuperscript{17} Karen Mingst, \textit{op.cit}. p.59.
\textsuperscript{18} Like it would be the case of Constructivism, Postmodernism, Feminism, Green theories among others.
\textsuperscript{19} For a general overview about theories see Karen Mingst, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.62-80.
In this paper I will use the three levels of analysis, because it is important to place events in the international context to understand the motivations of China and Mexico to do or not to do something. It is important too to analyze what was happening within the states that could have influenced their foreign policy and ultimately the individuals are important because most of the time when there is an important or urgent decision to make it is the elite that makes that decision, that is, a few individuals. In China the decision making power on foreign affairs used to be monopolized by Mao and Zhou Enlai.20

Another concept utilized frequently by China to justify the direction that its foreign policy has taken through time is hegemony. In international relations theory hegemony refers to “a dominant state that has preponderance of power, often establishes and enforces the rules and norms in the international system” 21. Hegemony was part of the Chinese concern during the Cold War because of the competition between the United States and the Soviet Union to be the hegemon in the international system. China has always been afraid of hegemonic power and even nowadays it is fearful of the growing power of the United States.

But the generally known definition of hegemony is not the same that Chinese scholars utilize. Chinese scholars use different definitions that seemed to be influenced by the own country’s experience with Imperialism. As mentioned above, these definitions seem more to try to describe both the Soviet Union and the United States’ behaviour during the Cold War period, when the world was a bipolar one and when a state had to choose sides and each of the powers was trying to expand its influence to as many countries as possible. The Chinese concept of hegemony was used along with the term “social-imperialism”. In Chinese foreign policy there is no single definition for hegemony, rather it is a concept that changes according to the foreign policy it refers to. As Shambaugh argues, the definitions are contextual.22 These definitions make reference to aggression and a certain abuse of the powerful over the weak. The concept is rooted in China’s history and does not correspond to the way hegemony is perceived and exercised in the contemporary world.

21 Karen Mingst, op.cit., p.318
2. Chinese Foreign Policy

2.1 Foreign Policy Making Process

The processes of making foreign policy vary from country to country and China is not exception to this rule. Thus it is important to understand which the foundations of the Chinese foreign policy are. These sources tend to be different depending on the country which the policies are directed to.

To begin with one of the main sources during Mao period was Mao’s interpretation of the Marxist-Leninist thought. Several authors identify this as a main source of policy making in regards to foreign affairs. Mao was committed to the Marxism-Leninism ideology and that’s how he managed the country, but in regards to foreign policy Shih finds that it was more a matter of style than ideology what was relevant. But even with the emphasis on style, China’s foreign policy was determined by the a loyalty to Marxism-Leninism thought and that is why China broke its alliance with the Soviet Union in the 50s, because there was the idea that the Soviet Union was being revisionist with that ideology and was no longer faithful to the original principles. Marxist-Leninist theory establishes that all actions of the sate have an economic foundation; capitalists seek to increase their profits by having colonies and exploiting them. This desire is translated into Imperialism. Thus, finance capitalism is the source of international conflict as well. China aspired to live in an environment with no Imperialism, no aggression and where capitalism would be substituted by socialism.

Barnett identifies several sources of foreign policy making. The Foreign Ministry plays an important role, since it doesn’t just implement policy but helps shaping it through the activities performed by its diplomats abroad. Also, top leaders in the Ministry recommend policies and also participate in the decision making.

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23 This was pointed out to me by Liu Aming, during an interview in the Nordic Centre, at Fudan University, Shanghai in September 2005.
24 Chih-yu Shih, The Spirit of Chinese Foreign Policy, a Psicocultural View, Hong Kong, MacMillan, 1990, p. 81.
Another important role of the Foreign Ministry is providing reliable information to central decision-makers.27 The personnel working for the Foreign Ministry has gotten more professional and this is especially important because the Cultural Revolution also resulted in a lack of trained and skilled people that could provide of information and analysis. A second source that has a lot of influence in decision making is the press. The New China News Agency (Xinhua) publishes everyday the Reference Materials (Cankao Ziliao), which used to be a classified internal circulation (neibu) daily compilation of news and articles from newspapers and journals published around the world. This report is sent to top leaders and policymakers involved in international affairs. Its distribution takes place through organizational channels.28 This report is not the only source of information from abroad, top journalists also take part in the foreign policy making since they are present in discussions between Chinese leaders and give their own point of view.29 This is a very special feature of Chinese foreign policy making, because in most countries of the world the role of the media can be influential in how citizens perceive the state’s behaviour in foreign policy, but not in how the state behaves according to external perceptions.

The research community in China is another source for foreign policy making. This community is localized in the different research institutes, some as part of the government and others that belong to universities. Think tanks are important actors in the foreign policy making process, but their influence varies. This influence depends on the issue, the competence of the bureaucracies involved and the personal influences and connections of the directors or staff members.30 Despite that these think tanks have professionalized during the last years and have recovered from the Cultural Revolution when institutes and universities were closed, they are not truly independent institutions. They operate within the state organization, and often their analyses have to support policies.31

28 See A Doak Barnett, op.cit., pp.82-85
29 ibid, p.111-112
31 ibid, p. 579
The more China gets involved in world affairs the more the importance of think tanks, because there is a greater need for their analyses and studies.

In the last years think tanks are facing more competition for influencing and advising on policy making and they also have gone through some transformations, which include, better educated and better informed researchers. Most of the researches have advanced degrees from Western universities and this in turn has produced more open-minded researchers. Institutes have also increased their contacts with foreigners, whether they visit Chinese institutes or Chinese scholars travel abroad.32

For some authors such as Bachman, Chinese foreign policy is just the continuation of its domestic policies.33 The reason for this is that the decisions-making structures are the same for both domestic and foreign policy. Bachman identifies three elements as the domestic sources of Chinese foreign policy: the leadership, the political structure and the political economy. Bachman argues that the new leadership lacks the legitimacy that Mao and Deng had so it is difficult to change policies in issues that would compromise Chinese sovereignty, like Taiwan and Tibet. In the same way, the leaders have to maintain the same economic policy that they inherited because they must keep delivering economic benefits to the population and that means not changing the foreign trade policies.

Chinese political structure is highly organized and bureaucratized, it has too many systems or groups and they are not always in direct communication with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sometimes the leaders make decision and the Foreign Ministry is not aware of them. One example is the sale of missiles to Saudi Arabia, Deng had authorized the deal but he didn’t know its details and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs didn’t know about the sale.34 Nowadays there is more coordination in arms sales issues but this was an example of how complex the political structure is. It is so fragmented that it makes difficult to keep track of all the issues that could concern the Foreign Ministry.

In regards to the political economy it is clear that most of Chinese foreign policies are economic driven. The necessity of maintaining economic growth is one of the main elements that influence Chinese behaviour in the exterior. This is one of the

34 ibid., p.51
exceptions if not the only one that allows compromising the state’s sovereignty. An example is when the Chinese government allowed the United States to condition its status as Most Favoured Nation in the 1990s to a favourable human rights situation in order to keep trading with them, during the GATT years. A more recent example is the adherence to the World Trade Organization in 2001, which means that China has to play according to international rules and not just for its own benefit.

One more recent source of foreign policy is the one that came with the adherence of China to different international organizations and regimes. The signing of protocols and the joining to multilateral institutions helped change China’s institutions and created study groups, epistemic communities and research teams that eventually influenced the foreign policy making. With these regimes there is a transmission of new ideas and knowledge from the international community which help to shape new behaviours. Regimes usually require adjustments in domestic actors and bureaucracies that influence policy outcomes. Through international regimes countries like China receive resources and advice from experts that change the way local experts think and that later will influence policy makers. Regimes also help with the establishing of “institutions and laws that address new activities relevant to the international regime.” They also provide the benefits introducing the same values of the regime, thus transforming the actor involved in promoters of changes in foreign policy and attitudes.

An example of how regimes have influenced Chinese actors and policies is the environmental issue. China joined the Montreal Protocol, after establishing a study group that analyzed the advantages of joining it. They concluded that China could contribute to the solution of environmental problems and would be helpful to its image.

Another example is when China put into practice reforms on copyright protection and allowed the patenting of pharmaceuticals and chemicals, all these following international practices on the matter.

2.2 Foreign Policy Principles

35 Elizabeth Economy, “The Impact of International Regimes on Chinese Foreign Policy-Making: Broadening Perspectives and Policies... But only to a point”, in David M. Lampton (ed), *op. cit.*, pp.236-237
36 ibid., p. 237
37 ibid., pp.241-244
38 ibid., p.239
Chinese Foreign Policy has been guided for different sets of principles that have emerged in specific moments or within specific circumstances. Kim argues that China needs a constant legitimization and it is external behaviour that confirms its self-image, this results in a constant reformulation of Chinese foreign policy principles. According to Kim this pragmatism or flexibility allows China to be anything to any nation on any international issue.

Chinese foreign policy has three main objectives which are: to safeguard state’s sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity; serve the main national task; and contribute to regional and world peace and stability as well as to common development.

Despite the adjustment of ideas on how to achieve Chinese foreign policy goals and deal with the world, these three objectives have been the same through time and there are five guidelines that help to achieve them. These are: independence and self-determination; opposition to hegemony and to the policy of force; the Five principles of Peaceful Coexistence; the pacific solution of international disputes; and equality, mutual benefit and common development.

The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence stand as the most important way for China to carry out its foreign relations and resolve conflicts. The origins of these principles are found in “The Sino-Indian Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet region of China and India”, signed in 1954, by which India recognized Tibet as a Chinese autonomous region and each country could maintain its trade agencies in the other country. This agreement was not a mere trade accord but it set the guidelines for Chinese future relations with India, later the rest of Asia and eventually with the rest of the world.

These principles apart from outlining the way China behaves and expect other countries to behave serve as a justification for its reluctance to allow human rights

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41 ibid., pp160-162.

42 The five principles are: respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty; non-interference in domestic affairs; equality and mutual benefit; non-aggression; and peaceful coexistence.

watchers and to discuss human rights issues within the international community. They are also the premise under which China behaves in the United Nations, especially on matters such as peacekeeping interventions.

Chinese foreign policy has gone through different periods and in each period these principles acquired more or less weight and were complemented with other theories. Yahuda identifies three phases. The first one was the alliance between China and the Soviet Union. This alliance got weaker throughout the 1950s and eventually broke. It was during these phase that China gave a greater importance to the Third World and its foreign policy acquired this dimension. This meant the recognition that the nationalist leaders of the newly independent Third World countries were potential allies of the Chinese against imperialism. Chinese leaders emphasized the common history of colonialism between China and the Third World countries and the need for developing their backward countries. The rapprochement with the Third World was a response to a United States more interventionist role in Third World countries, so China wanted to create a united front to resist those interventionist attempts.

A second phase was an era of isolation. During the 1960s China wasn’t playing on either sides of the bipolar world and the united front they had against the capitalist powers was let aside during the first years of the Cultural Revolution and its position became more isolated.

The third period is characterized by a full entry into the international arena. This included a seat in the United Nations and the normalisation of relations with most countries, including the United States. It was during this period that Mao enunciated his Three World Theory.

The Three World Theory was part of the efforts to make a united front of all Third World countries that have suffered from imperialism to resist great powers. It was first enunciated by Deng Xiaoping in a speech at the United Nations in 1974. According to this theory the First World was composed by the United States and the Soviet Union; developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America were part of the Third World; and the Second World included all the developed countries that were

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44 See Michael Yahuda, *op.cit.* pp.25-43
45 Michel Yahuda, *op.cit.*, p.31
not in either the First or the Third World. All the socialist states, the Soviet satellites, were placed in the Third World, to which China belonged too.46

2.3 Foreign Policy After Mao

The main characteristic in foreign policy since Mao’s death and that has been kept to date is that all decisions and policies should lead the country to economic development. Since the open door policy was established in 1978 under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, the Chinese government main concern has been to deliver economic growth and the benefits that come from it to as much population as possible. This has also helped as a shield against domestic demands for a political change.

This open door policy, as its name reveals, implies a closer and deeper relationship with the outside world. In order to achieve economic development China had to interact with other countries so that could benefit from the scientific, technological, cultural, commercial and knowledge exchange. China had to reconsider its relationship with the outside and its institutions. An in this process China decided to apply a strategy through which it would take as much advantage as possible without compromising its sovereignty or its principles of foreign policy: the maxi-mini code of conduct. With a change for a more active foreign policy, China started participating in International Organizations and regimes. The country found itself unable to retreat from what the rest of the world was doing. Thus it joined institutions such as the World Bank that once were considered as instruments of the imperialist world.

China’s participation in institutions such as the World Bank, or the International Monetary Fund brought benefits in terms of funds and technical knowledge. One example that shows how China applied the maxi/mini principle is the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer from 1987. In this case China was encouraged by industrialized countries to join it, China setup a working group that was not very productive and China conditioned the signing of the protocol to financial support and transfers of technology from the international community. In response a multilateral fund was established. Results have been mixed, some

measures have been taken but Chinese bureaucracy is a major obstacle for enforcing the protocol measures, since funds and assistance do not reach small enterprises.47 This is just one example of how China takes advantage of its involvement in the international institutions that help regulate the international community. On one hand, by joining these institutions China saves face before the international community and appears as a country willing to cooperate in global issues and on the other it benefits from whatever knowledge and resources that come from this institutions without meeting or making the effort to meet the goals proposed by such institutions and regimes.

The Tiananmen incident in 1989 made China realise how linked domestic and foreign policies are. The massacre put China in a position in which the country was subject to sanctions and conditions to continue trading with its commercial partners. China’s accession to the World Trade Organization in December 2001 marked a new period for Chinese behaviour in the exterior. It marked a more open attitude to international affairs and a more active participation in global and regional organisms. It also marked the withdrawal from the Five Principles of Peaceful coexistence, since the participation of China in organisms like ASEAN+3, the participation as observer in the G-8 meetings and hosting the APEC meeting in 2001 represented the opposite of what the principles meant, that is isolation and poor participation in international affairs.

In recent years a new concept in international relations arose among the Chinese leadership: “peaceful rise”. This concept was first mentioned in 2003 by Zheng Bijian, the chairman of the China Reform Forum and dean of the School of Humanities of Social Sciences in the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Peaceful rise was the concept describing the reform and opening up of China that suited China’s national conditions and that also conformed to the modern times. This peaceful rise would be achieved by building socialism with Chinese characteristics while participating in economic globalization.48

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47 See Elizabeth Economy, op.cit., pp.241-244
This idea was later supported by Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao, and a national debate started. Wen Jiabao presented a five point list that represented the guidelines for a peaceful rise.\(^{49}\)

The peaceful rising theory soon encountered critics and was left aside due to theoretical shortcomings and the obstacles that Taiwan and the United States would represent to this China’s peaceful rise.

It is not clear if this “peaceful rising” theory meant that China was going to work for its own benefit and just kept developing and achieving its economic goals. This concept also posed a contradiction to one of the principles of its foreign policy, which is the opposition to hegemonic states.

2.4 China, Latin America and Mexico

China started to show some interest in Latin America during the 1960s, due to the Cuban Revolution, which resulted in the installation of a Communist regime in a region considered as part of the United States area of influence. After the split between the Soviet Union and China, the latter found itself isolated and Latin America became an option though not a priority. China started supporting guerrilla and radical movements in the continent and remained diplomatically unrecognized in region except for Cuba.

The role of the United States through time has been very important since it has worked as the element that determines the closeness or distance between China and Latin America. The Chinese support to revolutionary movements prevented Latin American countries from seeking a closer relationship with China since they were more interested in having the favour of the United States and developing ties with a communist state was not looked with good eyes in Washington.

It was until the visit of Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon in 1971 and 1972, that Latin America got the “sign of approval” for establishing diplomatic relations with China. China was eager as well to officialise its relationships with the Latin American countries because that would put Taiwan in a position of isolation. This is

\(^{49}\) These guidelines were: take advantage of the world peace to promote China’s development and safeguarding world peace through China’s development; based on China’s own strength and independent hard work; achieved through the opening-up policy and an active set of international trade and economic exchanges; it would take several generations; it would not stand in the way or pose a threat to any other country, or be achieved at the expense of any particular nation. Robert L. Suettinger, *op.cit.*, p.4
a clear example of how Chinese policy is linked to its domestic policy and it is used to achieve and legitimize domestic goals. Mora identifies 1977 as a turning point for both Latin America and China because both parties experienced changes that would affect the relationship with each other. In China Deng Xiaoping started a shift in Chinese economic policies to a more open economy that would eventually lead to the country’s development. At the same time in Latin America entered a transformation that eventually led in the 80s to the end of the authoritarian regimes and the emergence of democratic governments; and the economic policies changed from the import substitution policies to more open economic and trade policies. These conditions opened opportunities for strengthening the diplomatic and commercial ties. It was during the period that goes from 1970 and 1977 that China got the diplomatic recognition of 11 countries. The first high-level Chinese delegation was sent to Latin America in 1981 and its visit covered 3 countries: Mexico, Colombia and Venezuela. That same year Huang Hua, the Chinese Foreign Minister, attended the International Conference on Cooperation and Development in Cancun, Mexico. In 1984 Foreign Minister Wu Xuequian went on a tour to Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina and Brazil. The diplomatic rapprochement with Latin America was also reflected in the academic area. In the period that goes from 1965 to 1985, more than 300 Chinese students were sent to study in Latin America and 160 students coming from Latin countries studied in China.

During the 1980s, the period that corresponds to the first years of Chinese economic modernization, the relationship with Latin America was driven mainly for economic reasons. Latin America represented a source of raw materials that China very much needed. At the same time, Latin America was looking to diversify its economic relations and China represented a potential market. Thus, the relationship was “characterized by technology transfers, direct investments, extension of credit, and increased trade in commodities”.

51 Frank O. Mora, *op. cit.*, p.98.
52 *ibid.*, pp.98-99
Also during this period China played in two different tracks, trying to establish closer relationships with the United States, because it was in its interest to obtain credits, loans and technological transfers from the developed world.

After the Cold War the United States once again played an important role in Sino-Latin American relations, because the region became less interesting for the United States and also China lost some of its bargaining power, due to the end of the bipolar confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States. The new countries that emerged from the former Soviet Union got attractive for the United States and represented new markets.\(^{53}\) Also China was interested in a “more just and equitable world order”\(^{54}\) based in their five principles of peaceful coexistence.

During the 1990s Argentina, Brazil and Mexico were the strongest and most powerful countries of Latin America thus they represented the opportunities for China to increase trade, make investments in form of joint ventures and seek raw materials like iron ore, wheat, wool, sugar, paper pulp, urea, among others.

The signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Mexico, the United States and Canada in 1993 and its enforcement in January 1994 represented a window of opportunity for China, since Mexico could be the bridge to access the North American market and that is a reason why scholars like Xu thought that the relationship between China and Mexico would improve.

At the same time there were views coming from China that expressed concern. They were worried about the creation of regional commercial blocs that would exclude non-members and thus affect their trade. These worries increased by the fact that at the time of the signing the relationship between the United States and China was not in its best moment, the Tiananmen incident was still fresh in the memory of Washington leaders and China feared it would be hard to introduce its products in the United States and Mexico would take over the production of products exported to the United States due to the geographical closeness and the low costs associated with it.\(^{55}\)


\(^{54}\) *ibid*, p.155

The signing of NAFTA meant that Mexico was focusing more in the North American market and that its interests of diversification were at least put on hold. It also meant a closer political relationship with the United States, which could have provoked some worries in China, since Mexico was a key element in strengthening Chinese relations with Latin America.

All these fears were proved to be unfounded since today China has the sufficient leverage to approach the region and the United States. Chinese trade with the United States has grown exponentially during the last years and it is even in the American interests to have a better and closer relationship with China. One prove of the importance of China in the United States foreign policy is its role in the six party talks to deter North Korea from its nuclear program.

The interest of China in Latin America, specially the South American countries, is very evident. In the last couple of years, Chinese high level representatives and President Hu Jintao have visited the region and signed accords to obtain raw materials. An example is the visit of the Chinese President Hu Jintao in November 2004 to Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Cuba, at the time the Chinese spokeswoman Zhang Qiyue declared that relations with these countries had developed very rapidly in the recent years. She also said that these countries and China had kept close exchanges and stressed the similarity in their views of many regional and international issues.56

These recent developments in the Latina American-Chinese relations also respond to the cooling of the American-Latin American relations. The events of September 11 2001 provoked a change in Washington’s foreign policy and Latin America started receiving less attention. This situation opened a window of opportunity for China to secure relations with the countries that can provide with the necessary materials for Chinese economic consolidation, it is an occasion as well for resisting the hegemony of the United States. It has also represented the opportunity for China to play as the protector of the Third World.

It is interesting to note that Chinese closeness to Latin America mainly focuses in countries like Brazil, Argentina and Venezuela, all of them with left wing governments. The deals with Brazil and Argentina are focused in energy and with Venezuela the main element is oil. In January 2005, Venezuela signed 19 cooperation

agreements with China during the visit of Vice President Zeng Qinghong to Caracas. These agreements included long-range plans for Chinese stakes in oil and gas fields.\footnote{Juan Forero, “China’s oil diplomacy”, \textit{The New York Times}, March 1, 2005. \url{http://travel.nytimes.com/2005/03/01/business/worldbusiness/01oil.html?ex=1166418000&en=d8876aa89e29cc7d&ei=5070} Last accessed in March 2005.} Mexico doesn’t seem to come in the picture and part of the reason could be Mexican domestic politics. The Mexican legislation in what refers to oil and gas determines that there can’t be any foreign investment in these sectors, so that is discouraging for countries in the need to get these natural resources.

Another element that restrained the relation between China and Mexico was the Mexican policy followed towards Cuba. With the arrival of president Vicente Fox into power there was a shift in foreign policy, this shift was reflected in the relationship maintained with Fidel Castro’s regime. The relationship got colder and there was almost a break up in diplomatic relations. Being Cuba the Chinese ideological ally in the region, China had to turn to other countries that were less critical to Cuba’s regime and human rights policies.

As it is evident, Chinese relationship with Latin America and specifically with Mexico has been determined by what happens in the international arena and very much by the United States policies and interests.

The differences in the political systems between Mexico and China has been an obstacle too, because as Mexico consolidates its democratic system and participates more actively in international organizations, as was the case of being a non permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2003, it acquires the responsibility of giving opinions concerning global issues that for some countries are considered domestic matters, such as human rights. An example of this was the vote of Mexico in the UN Human Rights Commission condemning three consecutive times the human rights situation in Cuba.

3. China and Mexico: competitors or partners?

Since 1996 China started establishing partnerships with major regional powers. These partnerships are different depending on the country they are being established with.
In the case of Mexico, it was set in December 1997 and it was a “comprehensive partnership straddling over the present and the next centuries”.\textsuperscript{58}

The partnerships that China maintains with major powers are based in equality, friendly cooperation and lack of confrontation. With these partnerships Chinese leaders seek to begin a long term relationship that would enhance mutual cooperation focusing especially in economic, trade, scientific and technological exchanges. The strengthening of communications, exchanges of visits at head of state level, meetings between premiers, joint commissions involving senior officials, hot lines and other channels of communications are among the stipulations in these partnerships.

The main objective of these associations is help China achieve its strategic objectives which are: to maintain a stable and peaceful international environment so China can concentrate on its economic development; ensure recognition of China’s major power status and enhance its influence in international affairs through the dialogue with major powers and regional organizations; foster multipolarity and prevent the United States hegemony; facilitate the progress of economic diplomacy to open up markets and attract investment, technology and management expertise; and improve China’s image in the international arena. In brief, to assist the Chinese economic development.

The partnership with Mexico was located in the second level of the hierarchy of the partnerships that China has with major and strategic powers. The first place is occupied by the strategic partnerships that China sustains with Russia and the United States. Mexico is considered a regional major power that shares the interest with China of becoming more active in international affairs through global multipolarization.\textsuperscript{59}

In December 2003 China signed a strategic partnership with Mexico placing the Latin-American country at the same level of the United States and Russia. The partnership was established to put forward five proposals according to the Chinese government. the proposals were: the creation of an intergovernmental standing committee to guide and coordinate bilateral cooperation in various fields; intensification of exchanges of governments, parliaments, parties and non governmental organizations while the role of the existing cooperation mechanism in diplomacy, trade, culture and education, and science and technology should be fully


\textsuperscript{59} \textit{ibid}, p. 245-246
played; diversification of bilateral economic cooperation; deepening of the bilateral exchanges in culture, education and science and technology; and finally the strengthening of the coordination and cooperation in multilateral affairs.60

3.1 Evolution of the relationship
Since 1972, when the diplomatic ties were made official, and until 1997 the relationship was a one cordial but with not much content. It was until 1997 that both nations started signing cooperation agreements.

After the signing of the “comprehensive partnership”, the relationship has been kept at the level of high officials exchange of visits and despite the signing of different agreements on education and cultural exchange, the really important topics such as the fight against piracy and illegal imports of Chinese products to Mexico have remained almost untouched. A reason for this could be that Mexico wants to improve the balance of trade with China and there is a fear that by “blaming” the Chinese of smuggling will not help the relationship and it might even freeze any kind of negotiation on trade with Beijing.

3.1.1 General Issues
In May 1997 both countries established a Programme for Technical and Scientific Cooperation 1997-1998, with 55 projects of cooperation in agriculture, energy, telecommunications, hydraulic resources, social development, health, air quality, biotechnology, traditional medicine and others.61 The antecedent of this project is the programme for technical and scientific cooperation installed in 1995-1996, which included 80 cooperation projects in different areas.

In December of that same year Jiang Zemin visited Mexico as President of China. During that visit the Chinese president and Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo signed bilateral agreements. They signed an agreement to implement an Integral Development Project of Mexican Agriculture, by which China committed to invest 30 million dollars for the exploitation of land in Campeche in association with Mexican producers.

Another outcome of this visit was the agreement to eliminate the visas in diplomatic, official and service passports. These agreements were complemented with others on academic exchange and cooperation between the Chinese Academy of Science and the National Council of Science and Technology of Mexico (CONACYT).

In 2003 the Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao visited Mexico and during that visit both countries agreed on a Programme of Educational and Cultural Cooperation 2003-2006. The aim of the programme was to establish specific actions in regards to education such as language teaching; development of human resources and exchange of fellow students; international festivals; collaboration between museums, archives and libraries; and others.62

The first binational meeting between China and Mexico was held in August 2004 in Beijing, and the aim of it was to bring closer both countries in all aspects but especially to fix the lack of balance in the trade between the two nations. It was also a sign from the Mexican government that China represented one of the main challenges of Mexican foreign relations.

Among the results of the binational was the agreement on air transportation that included the double airlines designation per country. The idea was that there was direct flight from Mexico to Shanghai that could start operating in September or October 2005. To date this hasn’t happened.

Another outcome from this meeting was the negotiation process of three different agreements on investment and taxes.

One of the areas that have seen some cooperation and that represent potential benefit for both countries is poverty alleviation. The Mexican Ministry of Social Development [Secretaría de Desarrollo Social] had an exchange of experiences with the Chinese Ministry of Civil Affairs, about programmes and actions to alleviate poverty in 2004. The experience of China and Mexico trying to fight poverty and reduce the gap between the most privileged and the people with the lowest income could result in a positive and enriching experience for both countries.

In January 2005 Chinese Vice President Zeng Qinghong visited Mexico and he expressed then the areas in which Mexico and China could have more cooperation. These areas were: telecommunications, household electrical appliances, the light industry, ship-building and high-tech industries. It is important to mention that Mexico would benefit the most from the cooperation in these issues since Mexico devotes a limited budget to science and technology, in this sense an association between both countries would combine the Chinese economical resources and the Mexican expertise in diverse areas.

The agreements that were reached during that visit were on issues such as criminal and judicial assistance, maritime transportation, sanitation, quarantine requirements and the offer of loans to each other.\(^{63}\)

In September 2005 President Hu Jintao visited Mexico and during that visit both countries confirmed their commitment to strengthen the cooperation in international affairs, cultural exchanges and the promotion of tourism.

It is also important to mention that there are no plans for signing a free trade agreement in the near future. Part of the reason is that it would be difficult to find the way to make an agreement of this nature favourable for Mexico since items that are already very cheap to import would lose all kind of tariffs that might apply to them, and in part it might just legalize the smuggling of goods. In addition to this China has not been interested in it.

### 3.1.2 Smuggling and counterfeiting

One of the most sensitive issues between China and Mexico is the one referring to counterfeiting and illegally imported merchandise. In this sense there have been some declarations and intentions of efforts to solve this problem but it is still a serious problem that keeps growing and it is already affecting the Mexican production and therefore the economy.

In 2002, 26 million s of pairs of shoes coming from China entered Mexico illegally and only 676,534 were confiscated. For 2003 it was estimated that 30 millions of pairs were imported illegally. Some of the contraband gets into Mexico with forged

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papers and some other gets in via the United States or Hong Kong, which exempt the payment of a 1000% duty for shoes.  

From January to August 2003, 5000 jobs were lost in the shoe industry in the Mexican state of Guanajuato due to smuggling.

In December 2003 both countries agreed on the creation of a binational committee for attacking smuggling. During the binational meeting of 2004 both countries signed another agreement that would enhance cooperation to initiate a programme that would allow detection and that would permit authorities of both countries to take more severe actions.

The loss in employment due to the counterfeiting of Mexican handcraft was of 2,250 jobs in 2004.  

The committee and this later agreement hasn’t been effective since as late as August 2005, 280 tons of shoes were confiscated in Mexico because they were introduced to the country illegally.

The most commonly illegally imported products are textiles and shoes. This situation brings an element of tension to the relationship and that was notorious in the last visit of President Hu Jintao to Mexico in September 2005, when the topic of smuggled merchandise wasn’t in the agenda. One of the reasons why such an important topic was left out of the programme could be that both parties didn’t want to contaminate the negotiations of other issues. Probably for the Mexican government at that point was more important to secure investments from China. Besides to solve the problem Mexico has to work harder with unilateral actions and finish with the corruption within its customs.

### 3.1.3 Tourism

This is one of the issues in which there could be more cooperation and that could benefit both nations. So far, there are some agreements between the two countries but

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64 “Controla el barrio el contabando de calzado” [The neighbourhood controls the shoe smuggling], Reforma, November 10, 2003.  

65 “Relanza México relación bilateral con los chinos” [Mexico re-launches bilateral relationship with the Chinese], Reforma, August 16, 2004.  

66 “Patea la AFI calzado chino” [AFI kicks Chinese footwear], Reforma, August 5, 2005.  
as mentioned earlier there is not a direct flight from Mexico City to any of the main Chinese cities, and that represents a limit to the promotion of tourism between Mexico and China.

One of the outcomes of the binational meeting in 2004 was the recognition of Mexico as a touristy destination by China. This happened after Brazil and Argentina had already got this recognition. The preparation work for this recognition finished in September 2005, and then it was made official that Chinese tourists were allowed to visit Mexico.67 Since September 2004 both Chinese and Mexican tourists can travel between both countries without a visa and can stay there for 90 days.

3.1.4 Culture and Education

In cultural matters Mexico and China had been working together in various projects and so far these two items seem to be the ones that have been getting more attention. The first cultural exchange took place in 1974, after the Mexican president Luis Echeverria visited China in 1973 and invited 30 young Chinese to El Colegio de México to improve their Spanish.

In June 2001, the Mexican President Vicente Fox, inaugurated an exhibition in Beijing titled “Mysterious Maya”, the ancient Mexican civilization.68 In June of that same year the Museum of Glass in Monterrey held an exhibition of Chinese relics dating back to the Ming dynasty, the exhibition also included the terra-cotta warriors. In April 2003 Beijing sent 31 Chinese coaches to help train Mexican athletes in 12 different disciplines. This experience had the aim, apart from sharing their knowledge in sports, to contribute to the mutual understanding between Mexican and Chinese people and to spread knowledge about China, its culture, people and policies of reforms.69 This was a result of the Sino-Mexican cultural agreement signed a year earlier.

In 2004 Mexico was invited to be the guest of honour in the main cultural festivals in Beijing and Shanghai in 2006. Meanwhile China was the honour guest at the Festival Cervantino in Guanajuato in 2005.

In 2004 also, Mexico expressed its intentions of having a Mexican Cultural Centre [Casa de la Cultura de México] in China. On the other hand China wanted to have Confucius Institute in Mexico, which would be the mandarin language school. The first one in Mexico is planned to start in January 2007 and there will be 4 institutes all together in Mexican territory. There is no Mexican Cultural Centre in China yet.

In October 2004 was launched the first issue of the Chinese magazine “China Today” published in Mexico City. The magazine is published in and distributed from Mexico to the rest of Latin America. The publishing of the magazine represents a way for China to bring the Chinese culture closer to the countries in the region and it was a sign of the interest China has to strengthen its relationship with the Latin American countries.

3.1.5 International issues

Among the international issues where there is a potential for cooperation is the environmental issue.

Mexico and China as developing countries face the problem of environmental deterioration and have to find ways to maintain their natural resources diversity.

In 2002, before the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, Mexico organized a meeting in Cancun to sign the declaration that created the Group of Like-Minded Mega diverse Countries. The objective of the group, which included China, was to create an international regime that would promote and safeguard the equitable and fair distribution of the benefits derived from the use of biological diversity.70

Mexico also presented an initiative during the summit in Johannesburg about preventing bio piracy; to prevent the stealing of plants or traditional medicine recipes from indigenous communities in order to exploit these elements.

This is an example of how cooperation can be reached on one of the most important global issues. The fact that China has a very big territory and the biggest population of the world makes it a very important element in the environmental protection movement. China along with Mexico and other developing countries could press the

70 Victor Lichtinger, “Biodiversidad, una iniciativa mexicana para su conservacion y uso sustentable” [Biodiversity, a Mexican initiative for its conservation and sustainable use], Reforma, August 22, 2002
developed countries, like the United States, to sign the Kyoto Protocol and to commit to the environmental protection.

Another international issue in which there could be cooperation between both countries is the one referring to the reform of the United Nations. The organisation needs a reform so it could work on the issues that need the cooperation of its members in a more efficient way. Mexico is one of the proponents of a reform that would put more emphasis in the preservation of peace. Mexico also proposed that resolutions should be obligatory and not an optional resort and also intermediate mechanisms for the solution of conflicts that could be an alternative to economic sanctions and military interventions. The group was called “Friends of the Reform” and strived for including 20 countries. China could be part of this group and make the proposal stronger because of its position as a permanent member of the Security Council.

4. Conclusions

Chinese foreign policy has gone through several phases since the foundation of the PRC, its relationship with Latin America has not always been close. It is in the last years that China started to get interested in the region. When in 1997 China signed a “comprehensive partnership” with Mexico a new phase started in the relationship between both countries. At that moment Mexico was seen as a bridge to get close to the United States and also to form a counterbalance for the United States hegemony. Since that year and until 2005 the relationship hasn’t evolved much, the main issue is trade and it is a difficult one, with a deficit in the Mexican balance of trade. Despite the efforts of the Mexican government to get closer to China and benefit from its economic boom, the relationship is not consolidated yet.

The agreements on education and culture and on tourism are not enough to build a constructive relationship. There seems to be either a lack of interest or the implementation of a poor strategy to make things work. On tourism, there is not a direct flight yet from Mexico City to any of the main Chinese cities, even when plans for opening it started in 2004.

One of the issues that bring tension to the relationship is the smuggling of Chinese merchandise into Mexico. This puts Mexico in an uncomfortable situation, because it has to find the way of making China commit to fight against smuggling but at the same time maintain and improve a relationship from which both parties benefit.

However, there are some other issues at the international level that due to the size of both countries and especially to the increasing economic importance of China could be advanced by the two states, such as environmental protection and the UN reform. Mexico also has to make the effort of showing its interest in China, and a way to begin is to plan in a better way state visits, because as it happened during the binational meeting in 2004, the Mexican delegation made logistic mistakes that sent the Chinese the sign that Mexico don’t care about the relationship.

Chinese foreign policy has always been a function of domestic politics, a way of legitimizing policies implemented in the country and, since the economic reforms started it has also been an instrument that helps to their achievement. China put its sovereignty as a top priority when doing foreign policy and, and any country wanting to develop a close relationship with China would have to take this into account, because right now, it is China who is in a position to choose who to get close to and who offers more benefits.
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