

INTRODUCTION

Three booking agents and two assistants were on duty at 4:30 PM when a brick shattered the window of the China Viaje travel agency in Tijuana's business district. At 6:00 PM all five were sitting in a row before their manager and two representatives of the Chinese Association of Tijuana. Pedro, the owner of the business, spoke to me in a surprisingly calm voice: "Now do you see? This is what I was telling you about: it's been happening more and more to Chinese businesses. This has been a bad year. Is it because our employees are Chinese? When these things happen we try to hold our heads high and carry on without retaliating, and without drawing attention to ourselves. You're the anthropologist, so you tell me, what's going on? Have we done something wrong?" (interview, October 16, 2008).

The incident at China Viaje was not isolated. In November, a month earlier, a Chinese supermarket three blocks away had been vandalized and robbed, and the owners of a local department store specializing in imported Chinese home appliances discovered the words "*pinche Chinos*" (damn Chinese) spray painted on its front window. When the mayor announced his support for the establishment of a Chinatown in downtown Tijuana, the opinion pages of local newspapers showed strong opposition: "How ridiculous, the damn Chinese have already inundated us with commercial piracy, and now they want to put a Chinatown in

Tijuana” (Salinas 2008). A similar comment appeared in relation to the newly established Chamber of Chinese Enterprises in the nearby city of Mexicali: “First they invade us [and] now they are getting organized to demand guarantees?? I hope the people of Sinaloa don’t plan to do the same” (Minor 2010). Comments like these, and the hostile actions that accompany them, reveal profound insecurity about China’s cultural and economic impact in Mexico.

Eighteen hundred miles away a distressed group of Chinese descendants convened at a popular restaurant in Havana’s Cuchillo Lane, the heart of Latin America’s oldest Chinatown. Public hostility, inadequate legal protection, and official neglect were not among their concerns. On the contrary, they were worried about the growing attention and incessant commercial regulations they had attracted from the Cuban state. The goal of their meeting was to appraise, five years on, the 2006 dissolution of the district’s coordinating body, the Grupo Promotor de Barrio Chino (Promotion group of Chinatown) and the assumption of its administrative responsibilities by a government institution called the Office of the Historian of the City. Everything from foreign donations to proposals for cultural festivals and tourism development had since been assessed and regulated by the Office, signifying a total reorganization in the conduct of local business and politics.

Attending the meeting were Yrmina Eng Menéndez, Julio Hun Calzadilla, and Carlos Alay Jó, three founding members of the Grupo Promotor. Each had been instrumental in the revival of Havana’s Chinatown (hereafter Barrio Chino) in the 1990s and early 2000s, and each believed that the Office’s centrally devised plan for growth and development had weakened the district’s cultural and economic potentials. The irony of their predicament, they said, was plain to see: “The tourists come here to see the new gift shops, the restored restaurants, and streets with fashionable cafés. What they don’t see is the human cost below the surface. Our social activities are not supported, our elderly residents are neglected, and our restaurants are paying higher taxes than ever. . . . The bureaucrats behind all this become suspicious whenever we try to do something really useful for our community” (interview, February 22, 2011).

In both Cuba and Mexico, Chinese immigrants and their descendants are confronted by a common problem: their commercial activities are believed to be strongly bound up in ethnic favoritism and therefore ad-

verse to national interests. It is a recurring narrative that has resurfaced in both countries during times of economic hardship, most powerfully in the 1930s when the Great Depression provoked the forced closure of Chinese businesses in Cuba and the expulsion of some ten thousand Chinese people from Mexico. Today the narrative is fueled by China's growing global influence and the role that overseas Chinese communities are thought to play in it.

It is striking that similar preoccupations should emerge in Cuba and Mexico, countries at opposite ends of the spectrum in terms of economic openness and political ideology. A combination of downward coercion and upward nationalism continues to maintain the Cuban state's firm grip on civic and economic administration. In contrast, three decades of privatization in Mexico have eliminated nearly all forms of state intervention. China's growing impact has exposed problems with both approaches. In Cuba, nascent bilateral trade and investment agreements have provoked a grudging awareness that uncompromising state control is ill suited to post-Cold War economic rationalism. In Mexico, unrelenting Chinese commercial competition has fueled new accusations of inadequate industrial policies and insufficient state support for manufacturers.

China's rise and the so-called Asian Century it heralds are forcing politicians, businesspeople, and researchers to debate and formulate fresh solutions to an old problem: what balance of state, market, and civic inputs can best harness the world's shifting economic currents? While Cuban and Mexican policy makers approach this question from contrasting ideological systems, all of them recognize a need for forms of public-private cooperation that diverge from conventional development models. As both countries attempt to respond to the challenges and opportunities brought by China, there is a growing awareness that more mixed approaches are needed to diversify productivity and to leverage the capacities of resident Chinese communities.

Integration with China is prompting the governments of Cuba, Mexico, and most other countries to rethink the structure of their economies. The Cuban government's 2011 *Lineamientos de la política económica y social del partido y la revolución* (Economic and social policy guidelines of the party and revolution) articulates the need to connect large state-owned enterprises with emerging private businesses, just as China began

to do in the 1980s. Chinese advisors have long recommended this course to their Cuban counterparts, who are in no position to disagree as their nation becomes increasingly reliant on Chinese trade, investment, and loans. In Mexico, the administration of President Enrique Peña Nieto has acknowledged that long-established tax concessions and financial incentives for the most powerful and successful sectors must be balanced with greater access to loans, information, and logistical support for small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs). China has taught Mexico this lesson not by example but by force: as Mexican textiles, electronics, and even automobiles face growing Chinese competition in the U.S. market, empowering the nation's acutely underresourced SMEs is not only desirable but critical.

In social engagement, too, China's rise is pushing the Cuban and Mexican governments to explore less top-down approaches. Cuban politicians and administrators have largely overlooked their nation's Chinese community for decades—some would say since the mid-nineteenth century. As Chinese diplomats and businesspeople forge new ties with Havana's Chinese diaspora, particularly its enthusiastic descendant population, the Cuban government has had to accommodate local demands for resources or risk being bypassed. Mexico's government has been slower to act, but it too is beginning to engage with its Chinese residents. It is doing so more out of necessity than by choice: engagement offers the best hope for containing unregulated trade in goods, services, and people.

How are we to make sense of this forced disposition of governments to engage more assertively with their economies and societies? This book attempts to do so through concepts like public-private cooperation, synergy, linkage, and social capital. The first two invoke vertical notions of state-society engagement, and the last two horizontal conceptions of community solidarity. The book argues that a convergence of these vertical and horizontal forces is necessary to unlock the opportunities for development and prosperity brought by China's rise. The catalyst for this convergence, I argue, is trust.

Chapters 1 and 2 examine how pressure is growing on the Cuban and Mexican governments to reach out beyond national champions to SMEs, and in the process reap the political and economic dividends generated by independent cooperation at the grass roots. Chapters 3 and 4 show that government engagement with Chinese communities in Cuba and

Mexico is beginning to simultaneously leverage and engender purposeful solidarity within Chinese neighborhood associations. In all cases, vertical state-society synergies and horizontal community linkages are interacting in new ways to condition economic and social life, a process of convergence stimulated—and compelled—by China's rise.

As China reaches out to international markets and diasporas, governments cannot hope to contain the resulting exchanges in official programs. Instead they must design more flexible development agendas that simultaneously accommodate global change, attract local participation, and build trust. The book explores how two nations with deeply contrasting economic and political orientations are responding to this challenge. It shows that their responses reflect different histories, cultures, and political structures but also a common convergence toward a more centrist balance of state, private, and civic power. This is not simply because the Chinese government is encouraging them along this path or because of their independent political evolution, but also because rebalancing these structural forces is a necessary response to China's global expansion.

ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH CHINA: LIKE A BICYCLE

After Venezuela, China is Cuba's second largest trading partner: their bilateral trade reached \$1.39 billion in 2014, one-third of which consisted of Cuban exports. China is also Mexico's second largest trading partner (after the United States): trade reached \$72.24 billion in 2014, but only \$5.98 billion of this flowed in Mexico's favor (United Nations Commodity Trade Statistics Database 2015). Neither Cuba nor Mexico exports large quantities of natural resources to China, making them exceptions in Latin America—a region whose rich endowment of commodities has seen trade with China grow from \$10 billion in 2000 to over \$250 billion in 2014. The flow of mineral, energy, and agricultural products westward across the Pacific is reciprocated by an eastward flood of toys, clothes, home appliances, and industrial equipment from the factories of southern China. Cuba and Mexico do not share their neighbors' concerns about resource dependency on China, but both are witnessing an unprecedented influx of Chinese consumer goods, with the full range of reactions this brings.

Cuba's relationship with China is now more harmonious than Mexico's,

but it has not always been. In 1960 Cuba's new revolutionary government became the first in the Americas to officially recognize the People's Republic of China. However, against Mao Zedong's wishes, Fidel Castro soon drew closer to the Soviet Union, whose leadership of international communism was disputed by China. Despite their contrasting relationships with the Soviet Union, Cuba and China never broke diplomatic ties with each other. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1989–90, China replaced it as Cuba's main foreign ally, enabling the Castro government to keep its struggling economy afloat. Asking its citizens for renewed austerity and self-sacrifice to overcome the warlike conditions of the so-called Special Period in Time of Peace, Cuba might well have imploded without Chinese support. Sustained by Chinese President Jiang Zemin's determination to "save Cuba's revolutionary project," the two countries commenced what a Chinese government newspaper called a "period of completely new and steady development" (*People's Daily* 1996).

The Chinese government has taken interest in the discovery of oil off Cuba's north coast. As well as securing exploration rights, the Huanqiu Contracting and Engineering Corporation (owned by the Chinese state and a subsidiary of the oil giant China National Petroleum Corporation) is the lead financier of a \$5.5 billion refinery in Cienfuegos. Furthermore, Chinese trade credits and unsecured loans have helped Cuban gross domestic product to rebound, according to the World Bank (2015b), from \$32 billion in 2004 to \$234 billion in 2014 (measured as purchasing power). This financial support has enabled Cuba to buy Chinese buses and trains to help alleviate the island's transportation crisis, as well as consumer goods ranging from clothing to home appliances and computers.

As is the case in other Latin American nations, China's impact is pervasive in the daily lives of ordinary Cubans. However, unlike in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and many other countries, in Cuba China's growing influence has not given rise to public hostility toward Chinese products and people. China poses no threat to Cuba's domestic industries, and furthermore, the Cuban government goes to great lengths to emphasize China's standing as a historical friend and ally. Televised documentaries and mainstream literature often invoke Beijing's loyalty in the wake of the Soviet meltdown.

Despite the apparent resonance of their political philosophies, China and Cuba no longer look to socialist solidarity as the prime mover of their

relationship. Pragmatism is replacing ideology, in the process redefining the basis for trust between the two nations and reconfiguring the structure of the Cuban economy. China's prior experience with reform and opening—professed by a constant stream of advisors from Beijing—provides Cuban leaders with insights into the making of a market economy. As chapter 1 shows, the countries' newfound common interest in market socialism is producing impressive results, but as yet neither China nor Cuba trusts nonstate actors to exchange goods, services, and ideas.

Unlike Cuba's relationship with China, Mexico's has suffered from a lack of political engagement and economic complementarity. The impact of Chinese exports on Mexico has been severe, displacing Mexican producers of clothing, toys, shoes, and other manufactured products at home and in the U.S. market. Mexican manufacturers argue that for every two products they export, ten enter the country from China, and that consequently, between 900,000 and one million workers have lost their jobs (*El Mural* 2011).

Chinese officials insist that to remedy the chronic bilateral imbalance, Mexico should permit Chinese investment in the oil sector. Peña Nieto's energy sector reforms may advance this prospect, but Chevron, Exxon, and other established multinationals have been waiting at the front of the line for contracts ever since President Lázaro Cárdenas expelled them during his 1938 oil nationalization program. With oil unlikely to bring balance to Sino-Mexican trade relations, Presidents Peña Nieto and Xi Jinping have turned instead to tequila, pork, and tourism. Here too, though, the search for complementarity will be an uphill journey. Even if the Chinese government reduces agricultural tariffs, encourages its citizens to visit the Mayan pyramids, and awards safety approval to Mexican foods and drinks, Mexican firms are in a poor position to grasp resulting opportunities.

With little access to loans, tax breaks, overseas promotion, and government start-up grants, most Mexican companies are struggling to compete in their own market, let alone in China. Their predicament reflects the legacy of an outdated industrial policy, introduced by President Miguel de la Madrid in response to Mexico's 1981 oil crisis and the (consequently) unsustainable spending of his predecessor. Joining the international wave of state retrenchments and privatizations of the 1980s, Mexico internalized the economic ideology championed by U.S. presi-

dent Ronald Reagan and UK prime minister Margaret Thatcher. Ever since then, government assistance in Mexico has focused on a narrow set of leading private firms in sectors such as automobiles, banking, and media. Represented by powerful industry associations, these enterprises secure tax concessions and the lion's share of government funding for research and expansion (Schneider 2002).

Chinese competition has hit Mexico hardest in the manufacturing sector, which has lobbied against the relaxation of tariffs on Chinese imports and for greater government protection from the so-called China threat. Conscious that the sector accounts for 20 percent of Mexico's \$1.1 trillion gross domestic product, politicians eager for votes have heard the manufacturers' call and have kept tariffs on most Chinese items at 35 percent. But in a nation beset by inadequate law enforcement and organized crime, high import duties have bred illegal countermeasures. Falsification of documents, collusion between Chinese exporters and the informal sector of the Mexican economy, and bribery of customs officials are commonplace, undermining public trust in the state's ability to govern. A more effective industrial policy would rely less on import tariffs, broaden the tax base, and extend the funding and concessions enjoyed by big business to smaller, more dynamic enterprises. Chapter 2 shows that such an adjustment is tentatively beginning, and that its full implementation over time would build trust and cooperation where they are needed most: horizontally between Mexican businesses and citizens, vertically between state and society, and broadly between Mexico and China.

For Cuba and Mexico, China's economic impact reaches beyond trade and investment to the heart of industrial relations. Large enterprises—whether state owned or private—cannot by themselves effectively design and implement national responses to twenty-first-century globalization. The monolithic state-owned enterprises behind Cuba's agriculture and energy sectors, for instance, are not efficient and competitive enough to meet domestic demand, let alone profit from China's hunger for food and oil. Similarly, the small group of elite private firms at the helm of Mexico's automobile sector faces unprecedented challenges as Chinese car makers establish factories in Latin America and set their sights on the U.S. market.

Small businesses have an increasingly important role to play in Cuba and Mexico, but they will require support if they are to generate jobs,

confidence, and stability. Both governments recognize this dynamic and are experimenting with policies to widen access to permits, finance, and markets. The reforms outlined in the Cuban government's *Lineamientos* encourage self-employment in sectors ranging from tourism to education, particularly if independent providers can efficiently supply larger state-owned enterprises (República de Cuba 2011). Meanwhile, Mexico's reforms seek, among other things, to lower the cost of electricity, telecommunications, and finance for small businesses. These initiatives respond as much to domestic pressures as they do to global circumstances, including the erosion of citizens' trust in the capacity of their nations' public and private sectors to create economic opportunities.

In both countries the need for economic diversification, and proposals for achieving it, are documented in government statements, independent position papers, and academic literature. However, the pathway from publication to policy is less certain. Chapter 1 shows that the pace of Cuba's economic liberalization has been slowed by its expansive informal sector, which will continue to grow in the absence of functional wholesale supply chains. Chapter 2 points out that Mexican reforms that would augment opportunities for small businesses face competition from powerful lobby groups such as the Consejo Coordinador Empresarial (Council for Business Coordination) and the Consejo Mexicano de Hombres de Negocios (Mexican Council of Businessmen). These domestic dynamics highlight a broad challenge facing both countries: to see through policies that stimulate local initiatives in ways that build trust rather than erode it.

The chapters that follow show that government support should not be overbearing, even when it is needed to pull through the bad times, but neither should it fade away into complacency in the good times. As the economist Robert Reich once wrote, "economies are like bicycles. The faster they move, the better they maintain their balance unaided" (1982, 852). Cuba has found that economic bicycles do not accelerate under a domineering rider, while Mexico has found that when the road goes up-hill bicycles cannot ride themselves.

HARNESSING OVERSEAS CHINESE NETWORKS

As global economic dynamism shifts to Asia, comprehensive responses require government engagement not only with businesses but also with

people, especially those with professional and personal knowledge of China. To this end, the worldwide Chinese diaspora is a powerful but often overlooked human asset. Its associations, small enterprises, and cultural activities are the human face of China, and when appropriately supported, they have begun to play a critical role in the formation of bilateral trust.

For overseas Chinese actors, brokering trust across borders means balancing allegiances among their homelands, host countries, and local communities. David Palumbo-Liu writes that this “political strategizing” animates diasporic identities at least as much as nostalgia for home does (2007, 283). As the book’s case studies demonstrate, widespread perceptions that Chinese expatriates and descendants are eternally loyal to the Chinese motherland fail to appreciate their disposition to pursue the new opportunities for internal and external collaboration generated by China’s rise. Chinese authorities are partly responsible for perpetuating exaggerated notions of nationalist loyalty among overseas Chinese communities, describing them since imperial times as *huaqiao* (华侨). This term, writes Wang Gungwu, “was never used to depict the usual reasons for leaving home, such as to make a living, to trade, to seek one’s fortune, or to migrate in search for a better place to settle. Instead, it captured a sense of doing what had to be done, fulfilling duty. . . . But one thing is clear. Assimilated or not, the Chinese overseas did change. They have been variously adaptable, and they have demonstrated that the idea that ‘once a Chinese, always a Chinese’ is simply not true” (2000, 39 and 47).

Chinese migrant workers have been building bridges to Latin America since the sixteenth-century voyages of the Manila Galleons, which for over two centuries brokered trade between the Chinese and Spanish empires (see chapter 4). By the mid-nineteenth century Chinese migration to Latin America had begun in earnest, underpinning Philip Kuhn’s observation that “emigration has been inseparable from China’s modern history . . . neither Chinese history lacking emigration nor emigration lacking the history of China is a self-sufficient field of study” (2008, 5).

To establish a foothold in Latin American economies, Chinese immigrants endured and sometimes overcame repressive work regimes and discriminatory commercial regulations. But their hard-won progress, writes Evelyn Hu-Dehart, provoked harsh responses: “The eventual success of Chinese in converting themselves into small urban business pro-

prietors and the influx of free Asian immigrants to Latin America in ensuing decades were accompanied everywhere by anti-Asian agitation and mob action, as well as more organized state campaigns and persecution. In emulation of the U.S. Exclusion Act, Latin American governments in the early twentieth century enacted laws to severely limit further Asian, especially Chinese, immigration” (2007, 51). Discriminatory laws influenced Chinese patterns of trans-Pacific immigration, settlement, and commerce, but as Adam McKeown has argued, the impact of such laws was conditioned by specific contexts of place, time, and hierarchy (2001, 26–27). Social forces were as important as legal codes, evident in the formation of solidarity networks to navigate and circumscribe official rules. Membership in mutual aid associations provided protection from discrimination, pathways to employment, and finance for small business development. But the same associations also deepened the segregation of their members from broader civic and social landscapes, perpetuating a vicious circle of external hostility and internal protection. Every rotation of this circle broadened the perception that resident Chinese groups were closed and self-serving (Chang 1973; Hira 2007, 64–66; Oxfeld 1993).

Twenty-first-century anxieties about China’s growing global influence, intensified by the competitive apprehension of domestic manufacturers, have brought new pressures to bear on overseas Chinese communities. Ethnic associations continue to fill protective functions for their members, including providing alternative pathways for economic advancement, defense against discrimination, and mechanisms for bypassing regulations that are perceived to be inappropriate or unfair. Where external pressure has fomented in-group solidarity and loyalty over time, fairness is conceived not only in terms of individual advancement but also as the promotion of collective cultural and economic security (Hu-DeHart 2010; Velázquez Morales 2001). Family ties and ethnic allegiances have furnished network members with benefits such as start-up capital, market access, a flexible labor force, a loyal customer base, and informal advice about opportunities (A. Smart 1993; A. Smart and Hsu 2004; Y. Yan 2009).

While Chinese networks have sustained collective notions of exchange, loyalty, identity, and fairness, their informality and ethnic partiality have led them into conflict with host country laws and public values. Internal affinities among Chinese people and their descendants in Indo-

nesia and Malaysia, for instance, provoked riots against them in the late 1960s and continue to complicate the multicultural agenda in both countries (Yahuda 1985, 222–23). Recent studies show that perceptions of ethnic favoritism have also generated hostility toward Chinese immigrants across Africa and parts of Latin America. Governments, businesses, and societies in both regions have struggled to incorporate Chinese immigrant groups into domestic structures of governance and commercial compliance.

The following chapters show that entrenched ideologies, in support of state socialism or market liberalism, have impeded government engagement with Chinese communities. Centralized regulations in Cuba are unable to accommodate the grassroots priorities and productive capacities of Chinese ethnic associations and neighborhood leaders. Meanwhile, the hypersensitivity of Mexican politicians and businesspeople to the opinions of voters and customers has prevented them from openly collaborating with resident Chinese entrepreneurs to leverage their unique potentials. Both states' vertical linkages are too narrow to harness the capacities of the Chinese diaspora.

In Cuba, the revolution of 1959 led to the nationalization of Chinese businesses, the emigration of Chinese entrepreneurs to the United States, and mandatory recognition of the People's Republic of China by Chinese ethnic associations. Twelve associations and their coordinating body, the Casino Chung Wah, survived these pressures and in the early 2000s were reinvigorated by the induction of over 2,500 enthusiastic second-, third-, and fourth-generation descendants. Biologically and socially integrated with Cubans of European and African origin, the island's Chinese descendants have gradually climbed through the ranks of the associations and initiated a range of dynamic initiatives. These include hosting international conferences on Chinese cultural influences in Cuba, converting the associations' canteens into thriving restaurants with investments from the state and foreign sources, and increasingly conducting commercial exchange with partners in mainland China. As the number of visiting Chinese diplomats and businesspeople grows, the Cuban state's traditional strategies for inserting itself as an intermediary between local actors, foreign nongovernmental organizations, and visiting delegations cannot keep pace. Instead, as chapter 3 demonstrates, government offi-

cials are increasingly forced to deal with Chinese associations on their own terms, which include demands for recognition and resources.

In Mexico, macroeconomic tensions with China have not stopped enterprising Chinese community leaders from reaching out both to their motherland and to the Mexican state. In the northern state of Baja California, they have worked with the city governments of Tijuana and Mexicali to create trade networks that are beginning to produce concrete benefits. In contrast to the situation in Cuba, the number of first-generation Chinese immigrants in Mexico has grown rapidly since the mid-twentieth century, but owing to the undocumented status of many of them, Mexican scholars have little faith in official statistics. While the census of 2010 reports 6,655 Chinese-born people residing in Mexico, the Chinese embassy in Mexico counts three thousand as well as twenty thousand Mexicans of Chinese origin—with the majority of both groups employed in the food industry, trade, and to a lesser extent, bureaucratic professional services. The Overseas Chinese Affairs Office in Beijing calculates only half the number of naturalized Chinese people in Mexico, living primarily in the northern border cities of Tijuana and Mexicali, the urban metropolis of Mexico City, and the southern state of Chiapas. Unofficial counts from Tijuana and Mexicali indicate that these two cities alone are respectively home to 25,000 and 35,000 Chinese immigrants and their descendants, many of whom arrived since 2000 and are not legally registered. Whether in Mexico City or on the northern border, Chinese people speak of a division between old and new arrivals, the former descending from the Cantonese-speaking immigrants of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with corresponding ties to the Chinese National People's Party (the Kuomintang, or KMT), and the latter hailing from the Mandarin-speaking urban centers of eastern China.

China's growing influence in Mexico has subdued some of the differences between old and new arrivals and aggravated others. Since 2000 the Chinese government has offered commercial partnerships and orchestrated prestigious visits from senior officials to persuade Mexico's Chinese associations to renounce recognition of the KMT and adopt Mandarin as their official operating language. However, the recent wave of Chinese immigrants, most of whom are Mandarin-speaking young people with little interest in traditional ethnic associations, remains

disengaged from the older Cantonese-speaking communities and from Mexican society in general. These recent immigrants have generally focused on commercial activities, such as importing and retailing low-cost Chinese consumer goods, and have consequently drawn their predecessors' scorn.

A string of conservative Mexican governments has been reluctant to engage with the nation's Chinese diaspora. Chapter 4 shows that the need to integrate Chinese commercial activities into an enabling and clearly governed environment is becoming more urgent. The bilateral trade deficit, the expansion of the black market, and the growing tide of negative attitudes toward China are all good reasons for more assertive leadership from above. An even more poignant call to action is the illegal exploitation of Chinese workers in Mexican factories, a practice that Chinese associations have done little to stop and have sometimes supported.

The poor track record of Cuban and Mexican officials in working with Chinese communities is conditioned by contrasting ideological orientations, the Cubans favoring top-down control and the Mexicans almost complete neglect. As Chinese communities deepen their ties to the mainland, however, both governments are assessing the merits of closer engagement with the Chinese diaspora. This growing disposition to engage is motivated in part by fears that unregulated commercial exchanges could increase in step with deepening interpersonal ties, but it is also driven by hopes of leveraging local capacities to strengthen relations with China. Fueling these fears and hopes is a growing appreciation of the threats and opportunities posed by *guanxi*, social capital, and trust.

GUANXI, SOCIAL CAPITAL, AND TRUST: PERSONAL FAVORS OR PUBLIC GOODS?

The term “*guanxi*” (关系, meaning relationship or connection) encompasses a wide range of formal and informal exchange practices that are pursued for both affective and instrumental reasons. Traditions of reciprocity vary widely in meaning and purpose, but in most cases the “relationship must be presented as primary and the exchange, useful as it may be, treated as only secondary” (A. Smart 1993, 399). In the gradual construction of *guanxi*, each transaction should be treated as a step in a series of interactions designed to deepen the relationship and foment certainty, especially when formal legal and financial institutions are weak

(M. Yang 1994). In such contexts, *guanxi* has fostered the confidence necessary for foreign investment, informal loans, community mutual aid, and business partnerships (Hsu 2005; Keister 2002; J. Smart and A. Smart 2009; Velázquez Morales 2001). Unlike many Western conceptions of gifting, in which instrumental considerations taint supposedly pure emotional ties, Chinese Confucianism envisions the formation of affective relationships through the exchange of useful goods and helpful actions (Carrier 1999; Lo and Otis 2003).

Chinese business practices developed in domestic and foreign contexts where legal and financial institutions were deficient and antagonistic. Contracts were difficult, if not impossible, to enforce through legal means (A. Chen 1999). Small business owners had little recourse against harassment from police and more influential competitors, and banks generally refused to loan them capital (Tsai 2002). *Guanxi* compensated for insecure contracts, weak institutional guarantees, and closed doors. Through ever-expanding networks of friends, aspiring business owners could raise capital, form partnerships, seek suppliers, gather information, and conduct relatively secure transactions.

Drawing on *guanxi* relationships, investors from prospering communities in the Chinese diaspora (particularly in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia) were able to make connections and build cooperative relationships with actors in China. These investors were willing to send their capital “home” despite the lack of legal protections because *guanxi* provided grounds for security (Hsing 1998). *Guanxi* networks allowed them to penetrate the Chinese market more quickly and successfully than other investors, and as China began to integrate itself into the capitalist world economy, these overseas compatriots became key sources of finance, connections, and information. Ironically, insecure property rights and ambiguous or lax legal regulations for investors, along with widespread distrust of the system, encouraged reliance on personal relationships, which helped produce one of the fastest growing economies in history (Hearn, Smart, and Hernández Hernández 2011).

The unwritten rules of *guanxi* constitute mechanisms of coordination, enforcement, and dispute settlement that are commonly known and relatively openly practiced in China (Bell 2000; X. Chen and C. Chen 2004; Hurst 2002, Wang H. 2000). *Guanxi* therefore differs from Western forms of reciprocity not only because it more seamlessly blends instrumental

goals with affective bonds, but also because liberal democracies publicly regard nepotism as antithetical to the principle of equal opportunity. In practice, meritocracy rarely exists free from bias anywhere in the world, but it is formally enshrined in Western codes of conduct from the law court to the company boardroom. Hence, as globalization exposes Chinese enterprises to Western norms, Douglas Guthrie posits “the declining significance of *guanxi*” (1998).

Despite its more open public expression, *guanxi* has much in common with Western formulations of social capital. Wherever we live, we can all agree that well-connected friends are a valuable resource—if we have them. However, if we do not, we may conclude that social capital, like *guanxi*, impedes upward mobility and maintains the status quo. Nan Lin (2001, 24) sees a theoretical reflection of this rift in the contrast between Émile Durkheim’s cross-societal “organic solidarity” and Karl Marx’s class antagonism. While the former concept evokes the biological metaphor of individual organs functioning cooperatively for the benefit of the larger organism, the latter focuses on the economic inequalities that result from the domination of some sectors by others and the construction of exclusionary social boundaries between them. This core tension finds contemporary expression in analytic distinctions between social capital’s exclusive and inclusive dimensions.

Robert Putnam describes the exclusive, inward-oriented loyalties of a given network’s members as “bonding social capital,” in contrast to a more outward-oriented (and uncommon) form of solidarity that may extend to nonmembers, which he calls “bridging social capital” (2000, 22–23). Case studies from around the world generally substantiate this distinction, demonstrating the tendency of strong internal bonds to discourage the formation of external relationships. Alejandro Portes and Julia Sensenbrenner (1993) for instance, find across a range of immigrant communities that exclusion of outsiders is related to the pressures of group membership. Among these pressures are demands for subjects’ time and resources, restrictions on individual freedoms, and “downward leveling norms” that gradually drain members’ confidence and capacity to find common cause with those beyond their reference group (Portes 1998, 15). Putnam acknowledges these constraints, but more recently he has argued that bonding and bridging social capital are not mutually exclusive: “Without really thinking about it, we assume that bridging social capital

and bonding social capital are inversely correlated in a kind of zero-sum relationship: if I have lots of bonding ties, I must have few bridging ties, and vice versa. As an empirical matter, I believe that assumption is often false. In other words, high bonding might well be compatible with high bridging, and low bonding with low bridging. . . . Bonding social capital can thus be a prelude to bridging social capital, rather than precluding it” (2007, 143–44 and 165).

The prospect of mutually supportive bonding and bridging social capital raises a pressing policy question for community development institutions, articulated by Michael Woolcock: “Do the high levels of integration characterizing indigenous social relations in many poor communities actually constitute a resource that can be used as a basis for constructing substantive development programs? If so, how?” (1998, 181). Scholars who study diasporas do not deal with “indigenous social relations” in a conventional sense, but they are well placed to explore this question, and the growth of Chinese communities around the world provides a valuable source of insight. As Rhacel Parreñas and Lok Siu observe, the inward pull of ethnic affinity among overseas Chinese communities does not necessarily impede their outward cooperation with external actors: “there is nothing inherent in diasporic identifications that prevents the formation of broader political alliances. It does not have to be one or the other, but both forms of collective identification can coexist” (2007, 10).

In the Cuban and Mexican Chinese diaspora, people who simultaneously forge horizontal linkages within their community and vertical synergies with the public and private sectors are rare. As Mark Granovetter observed forty years ago, this is because such people possess an unusual ability to work at arm’s length from the communities they bridge, enabling them to leverage the “strength of weak ties” (1973). Anthropologists are trained to seek out such liminal people precisely for their ability to explain and broker local relationships (Rabinow 1977). Chapter 3 shows that the difficulties of balancing allegiances to community and state in Havana’s Barrio Chino have spelled the undoing of several would-be intermediaries. Similarly, chapter 4 shows how Chinese community leaders in Mexico who have developed strong ties with the export-processing maquiladora sector have seen their interests come into conflict with those of the immigrant Chinese workers they ostensibly protect.

Intermediaries demonstrate the embodied nature of social capital, for however widely and densely connected they may be, their personal identities underpin its efficacy. Like *guanxi*, social capital requires direct interactions between individuals who know each other or wish to, and it is therefore limited by the scope of the networks in which it operates. Social capital may generate “positive externalities” (Fukuyama 2000, 15), and societies with greater stocks of social capital are said to function more effectively and inclusively (Coleman 1988; Fedderke, de Kadt, and Luiz 1999; Woolcock 1998). However, these stocks consist not of a collective public good, but of a cumulative reserve of personal favors to be reciprocated and of rewards and sanctions to be expected. Reserves of social capital are accessible only to group members and consequently are not fungible across distinct communities. Unlike financial capital, writes Ariel Armony, “social capital does not have the same portability; therefore, it cannot be easily transferred from one setting to another” (2011, 49).

Trust relates better to collective scenarios than *guanxi* or social capital do, providing a more encompassing and inclusive organizing principle for responding to China’s rise. Long associated with efficiency, productivity, and prosperity, trust can take a “particularized” form between individuals who know each other but also a “generalized” form between “those whom we don’t know and who are different from us” (Armony 2004, 21; also see Arrow 1974, 26; Uslaner 1999, 124–25; Yamagishi and Yamagishi 1994). Lin describes trust as a public resource necessary for civic order: “Societies must have consensual rules and collective trust for them to function” (N. Lin 2001, 148). Similarly, Francis Fukuyama argues that “one of the most important lessons we can learn from an examination of economic life is that a nation’s well-being, as well as its ability to compete, is conditioned by a single, pervasive cultural characteristic: the level of trust inherent in the society” (1995, 7).

It is widely agreed that generalized trust, untethered to specific exchanges between associated individuals, is an asset to any society, but pathways from personal favors to public goods are harder to define. Johannes Fedderke, Raphael de Kadt, and John Luiz argue that governments should encourage the assimilation of community-level allegiances and loyalties into a wider national system of regulated exchange. This “rationalization of social capital” involves the “the gradual replacement of informal associations and networks by formal administrative struc-

tures, and the impersonal market mechanism no longer tied to individual identities of trading agents” (1999, 719). Particularized trust based on informal reciprocity (for example, the exchange of gifts and favors) thus evolves into generalized trust based on formal transactions and codified civic norms (such as contracted exchanges of goods and services). Governments can encourage and benefit from this evolution by investing in family, community, and education programs that build understanding, skills, and human capital appropriate to national development priorities (ibid., 736–38). As Theda Skocpol has argued, associational activity, entrepreneurial initiative, and the welfare state can thus reinforce each other in “close symbiosis” (1996, 20).

Others are skeptical that governments can inspire citizens to trust in each other and in shared civic norms. Fukuyama warns that state intervention is futile because excessive “legal apparatus” is a “substitute for trust” (1995, 27). In a working paper for the International Monetary Fund, he supports this argument with historical examples:

If the state gets into the business of organizing everything, people will become dependent on it and lose their spontaneous ability to work with one another. France had a rich civil society at the end of the Middle Ages, but horizontal trust between individuals weakened as a result of a centralizing state that set Frenchmen at each other through a system of petty privileges and status distinctions. The same thing occurred in the former Soviet Union after the Bolshevik Revolution, where the Communist Party consciously sought to undermine all forms of horizontal association in favor of vertical ties between party-state and individual. This has left post-Soviet society bereft of both trust and a durable civil society. (2000, 15–16)

The conservative commentator George Will offers a similar zero-sum assessment of state intervention and trust: “as the state waxes, other institutions wane” (quoted in Skocpol 1996, 20; also see Schambra 1994). From this perspective, the state’s monitoring and compliance regulations impose cumbersome expenses and transaction costs while undermining the natural inclination of private actors to trust and cooperate with each other.

China’s impact in Cuba and Mexico opens a window into the politics of trust. The need for fresh development models in both countries is

forcing governments, businesses, and citizens to interact in new ways. To leverage benefits from these interactions requires smart policy making that is sensitive to social dynamics. Concepts like synergy, linkage, and public-private cooperation can help formulate government policies, but they are ultimately social propositions that envision distinct communities working together for a greater good. If they are to gain any traction on the ground, these concepts and the policies they inform must be used to build trust between strangers.

Whether the resources and responsibilities for participatory development should come from the top down, the bottom up, or both has long been a matter of intense disagreement. Conflicting political philosophies have prevented academic theorists from finding common ground on this point, but entrenched ideologies have too often inhibited politicians from even debating it. The pressures and opportunities generated by China's rise are stimulating more open public discussions about the optimal balance of state, market, and civic power. Setting out from contrasting political and economic systems, Cuba and Mexico show that forming more inclusive industrial policies (see chapters 1 and 2) and achieving civic engagement with resident Chinese communities (see chapters 3 and 4) are challenges that governments of all ideological stripes must address.

BLACK MARKETS: THE DARK SIDE OF TRUST

There is no single formula for optimizing the balance of public, private, and civic inputs, but there are more and less effective blends for addressing specific challenges. The informal sector is a case in point. In Cuba, the gradual opening of consumer retail to small private entrepreneurs reflects a slow top-down process of decentralization, creation of regulated supply chains, and assessment of results. Increasingly reliant on Chinese manufactured products and finance, this state-guided process aims to contain the expansion of the black market—a prerequisite for further liberalization (see chapter 1). In Mexico, high import tariffs on Chinese textiles, handicrafts, and other products have encouraged smuggling and fraud. Evidence is mounting that more sophisticated forms of state support, such as easier access to loans for small businesses and official sponsorship of trade fairs, would better assist affected sectors of the economy (see chapter 2). While deepening commercial connections with

China are affecting the Cuban and Mexican informal sectors in different ways, they are exposing a common need for more innovative government policies.

A careful balance of state regulation and private initiative will also be necessary if the activities of Chinese diasporic communities are to be leveraged in support of national development. For a century and a half, Chinese associations in Cuba and Mexico have drawn on informal networks, personal determination, and trust to sustain connections with their motherland. Premised on shared ethnicity, these relationships have deepened in the twenty-first century, joining together people on opposite sides of the Pacific who often have little or no personal knowledge of each other. It is not unusual for mainland Chinese exporters and investors to take risks, brokered by intermediaries, with diasporic business partners they have never met. In these circumstances, writes Steffen Mau, trust is at once inclusive and exclusive: “Transnational trust is a form of generalized trust in the sense that it is extended to individuals whom we do not know and who are unlike us. And yet, it does not extend to an abstract other, but to a specific nationally defined group” (2010, 110). With consensual policy making the state may harness the elusive social connections of Chinese and other diasporic communities for use in official development projects, but as the Cuban and Mexican governments have found, administrators are hard pressed to regulate—let alone control—the deployment of trust.

Less reliant on preexisting exchanges between specific people, trust within the transnational Chinese diaspora is more mobile and fungible than *guanxi* and social capital. Shared ethnic roots, real or imagined, constitute an affinity among some fifty million overseas Chinese people spread around the globe. But even globalized ethnicity does not define the outer limits of collective trust. Broadly shared experiences—for instance, of life and livelihood in the developing world—can also provide a platform for common cause. The convergence of distinct yet overlapping practices, such as the Chinese tradition of conducting business through the “back door” (*hou men* 后门), the Cuban custom of resolving problems “below the cover” (*bajo el tapete*), and the Mexican convention of “leveraging” favors (*palanca*), provides a basis for informal cooperation between people who may otherwise have little in common. Such a convergence could pose new challenges to the rule of law in Latin America

as Chinese diasporic communities relink themselves with the mainland (Armony 2011, 40–41; Tokatlian 2008, 77).

Enabling foreigners to find their social bearings, generalized trust built on similar precursor experiences—what Armony calls “GPS capital” (2011, 27)—provides common ground between strangers. As this ground is traversed, though, strangers become friends and their trust evolves. Whether or not their relationship draws strength from ethnic solidarity, they likely belong to independent social capital networks whose goals and priorities may or may not overlap. Should the priorities of their broader networks intersect, the strangers-*cum*-friends may become channels of intergroup contact and mediation. For example, some Chinese community leaders in northern Mexico have become well connected with the region’s political and economic elites and now broker partnerships for them with mainland Chinese wholesale suppliers and labor contractors. These exchanges may have originated in generalized trust built on ethnic affinity, shared experiences of development, familiarity with informality, and even appreciation of Chinese art (as in one case discussed below), but over time they have become more instrumental and focused. The material benefits they generate are unevenly distributed among managers, intermediaries, and factory workers, and the trust underpinning them has become exclusive and particularized.

The transformation of generalized trust into more particularized forms casts new light on Guthrie’s argument for the “declining significance of *guanxi*” brought on by China’s integration into the global economy. Instead, as Mayfair Yang has argued, “*guanxi* practices may decline in some social domains, but find new areas to flourish” (2002, 459). Drawing both on ethnic solidarity and “GPS capital,” trust is fomenting new links between China and the Chinese diaspora in Cuba, Mexico, and elsewhere. As these linkages deepen, *guanxi* may find new grounds for consolidation.

From a policy perspective, the business generated by resident Chinese communities can augment tax revenue and widen trade networks, but only when it operates within the law. When it does not, ethnic entrepreneurship can evolve into organized crime, and broad-based benefits into private profiteering. As Alejandro Portes puts it, “the capacity of authorities to enforce rules (social control) can [be] jeopardized by the existence of tight networks whose function is precisely to facilitate viola-

tion of those rules for private benefit” (1998, 15). Inward-looking informal networks impede the efforts of governments and markets to harness domestic talent and scale up local capacities for an ostensibly greater national good. The policy challenge, once again, is to intervene in ways that leverage trust rather than destroy it.

Government programs the world over attract public trust when they affirm community values. As a series of papers from the John F. Kennedy School of Government argues, regulatory frameworks are most effective when they are socially “embedded” and “tailored to take account of the culture, education, and priorities of intended audiences” (Fung et al. 2004, 4 and 5; also see M. Graham 2001; Weil 2002). This book finds that responsiveness to bottom-up demands is becoming more central to the capacity of the Cuban and Mexican governments to establish and sustain the rule of law. Unofficial connections to China, whether through illicit trade networks or diasporic communities, require more refined policies of social engagement.

THE POLITICS OF WRITING TRUST

China’s profound impact on Latin America has generated a rich literary response. Trade is the most quantifiable dimension of this impact, as is evident in the early appearance of reports from the Inter-American Development Bank (Agosin, Rodas Martini, and Saavedra-Rivano 2004), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Blázquez-Lidoy, Rodríguez, and Santiso 2006), and the World Bank (Lederman, Olarreaga, and Perry 2008). Kevin Gallagher and Roberto Porzecanski’s *The Dragon in the Room* draws on these efforts to spell out the economic pressures that China has brought to bear on the region. China’s unprecedented demand for its natural resources, the authors argue, has kicked away the ladder that might otherwise lead to upgraded industries and value-added exports (2010).

The political implications of Sino–Latin American engagement have also attracted attention. Joshua Kurlantzick’s *Charm Offensive* (2007) presents interviews, media excerpts, and survey data that reveal the Chinese government’s soft power initiatives in Latin America and elsewhere, from Confucius institutes to sports infrastructure. *China in Latin America* (2009) by R. Evan Ellis zeroes in on the strategic positioning of

Chinese state-owned enterprises in the region and the security dilemmas they may arouse. The seven case studies that constitute *Latin America Facing China* (2010a), edited by Alex Fernández Jilberto and Barbara Hogenboom, illustrate the risks of unbalanced Sino–Latin American trade, which emerged in sobering clarity when commodity prices collapsed in 2008. The need for longer-term planning and coordination, the editors conclude, has fomented a “paradigmatic convergence between China and the leftist governments in Latin America” (Fernández Jilberto and Hogenboom 2010b, 191).

Chinese commentators steer clear of advocating any ideological convergence with Latin America, at least in *China–Latin America Relations: Review and Analysis* (2012), a characteristically dutiful volume edited by the Latin Americanist He Shuangrong of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The book’s twelve authors appear in order of descending rank, dwelling on officially sanctioned concepts like mutual benefit, collaborative development, and food and energy security. Although some of the book’s arguments resemble (and may well have informed) official policies, others elucidate Chinese perspectives on less-publicized topics, such as whether China is complicating security arrangements in the Western Hemisphere and anxieties that China’s rise may stir among Western analysts. Lin Hua’s chapter on overseas Chinese communities offers a glimpse into Beijing’s efforts to advance foreign policy goals through Latin America’s Chinese diaspora, which the author argues is “the most direct source to carry forward and spread Chinese traditional culture” and to “promote the development of China–Latin America trade relations” (2012, 115 and 116).

Two volumes have explored Sino–Latin American interactions on the ground. *China Engages Latin America*, which José Luis León-Manríquez and I edited (Hearn and León-Manríquez 2011), combines cross-regional analysis with country studies that examine how political ideologies, domestic histories, and informal social ties are embedded in official relations with China. And *From the Great Wall to the New World*, edited by Julia C. Strauss and Ariel C. Armony (2012), presents ten essays that illustrate how Chinese relations with Latin America have moved beyond trade and investment into the political and social spheres of sustainable urbanization, media (print and online), understandings of hegemonic challenge, and engagement with Chinese diasporic communities. The

editors argue that this “thickening” of Sino-Latin American interactions invites researchers to formulate new empirical approaches that “recast the ways in which we think about contemporary processes of globalization” (Armony and Strauss 2012, 17).

The following chapters take up Armony and Strauss’s invitation by exploring China’s impact on the intersection of international engagement, domestic industrial relations, and community development. Researching these connections is as much a methodological challenge as a theoretical one, owing to a persisting academic division of labor that does not favor concurrent attention to macro and micro perspectives. The book draws inspiration from the pioneering cross-disciplinary work of Michael Burawoy (2000), George Marcus (1995), and Aihwa Ong and Stephen Collier (2004), which established a two-way street between global economic systems and local initiative.

No single methodology can fully apprehend Chinese transnationalism, but a combination of historical and anthropological analysis can illuminate the articulation of international relations with social process over time. Multisited ethnography is well suited to explore transnational phenomena because, as Marcus writes, it opens the possibility of “tracing a cultural formation across and within multiple sites of activity” (1995, 96). Setting out with this orientation, the book traces the cultural formation of trust, first as a principle for formulating China’s political interactions with—and within—Cuba and Mexico (chapters 1 and 2) and then as a catalyst for purposeful solidarity among Chinese communities in the two countries (chapters 3 and 4). The goal is to generate insight into how top-down policies and bottom-up proposals at times converge and at other times diverge in response to China’s rise, and how trust shapes these critical junctures.

To see beyond official statements and statistics on China’s engagement with Latin America requires time on the ground. Time, though, is a dwindling resource for twenty-first-century researchers. University budgets are shrinking, teaching loads are growing, and publications are increasingly assessed for their short-term impact. Graduate students in the social sciences—anthropology, in particular—are probably the last remaining group expected (and, if lucky, funded) to leave campus for extended periods to gather data. They can therefore contribute much to the future study of Chinese–Latin American relations, and established

scholars stand to deepen their knowledge by seeking out and supervising them.

I have been fortunate to secure a series of grants and fellowships to sustain fifteen years of full-time research and writing on Cuba, China, and Mexico. From 2000 until 2002 I lived in Havana and Santiago de Cuba to learn how Afro-Cuban religious associations were filling new civic spaces to compensate for underresourced government services (Hearn 2008a). These insights provided conceptual orientation for my subsequent work in Barrio Chino, where Chinese associations were also reaching out. Like their Afro-Cuban counterparts, they were consolidating their internal strengths, building bridges to other grassroots associations, and selectively participating in government programs that might empower them. Other neighborhood groups were also emerging at the time, with varying degrees of autonomy, to advocate women's rights, Christian welfare projects, self-employment, and other civic agendas. To document this "rise of the local," as it was becoming known among Cuban observers, I worked with Ernel Mastrapa and María Teresa Montes de Oca Choy at the University of Havana to convene fifteen researchers from Havana, Santiago de Cuba, and Camagüey to share their insights in a workshop and a book (Hearn 2008b).

Shortly after President Hu Jintao's celebrated visit to Cuba in 2004, I returned to Havana for eight months to see Barrio Chino becoming a mass-mediated stop for visiting Chinese diplomats. Its street markets were bustling with local and foreign clients, and its rich cultural heritage was reemerging into public view. The dawn *wushu* tai chi sessions long conducted privately in the Chinese associations were expanding into vacant lots and public parks. Small votive statues of the Chinese deity Guan Gong (关公, known locally as San Fan Con) were appearing in Barrio Chino's informal markets and on ecumenical home altars around Havana. The Chinese associations were welcoming tourists into their flourishing restaurants and in-house museums.

Studying these issues over time inevitably drew me into local politics, reminding me of a lesson from undergraduate anthropology: it is impossible to be a fly on the wall. On several occasions I failed to appreciate how this theory works in practice, only to recognize in hindsight the consequences of my actions. In 2013 Barrio Chino's local government set about renovating a traditional Chinese pharmacy and asked my help

to find a Chinese source of homeopathic products (see chapter 3). I saw no harm in this, and with the assistance of colleagues in Beijing, had the government's proposal translated and presented to a supplier we identified. Subsequent discussions in Barrio Chino revealed a broader agenda: a Chinese association was already importing these items formally and informally from China, generating unwanted competition for the government. My matchmaking may have unwittingly undermined this competition and compromised exchanges that over time could have benefited Havana's Chinese community. On reflection I was reminded that participant observation is never an innocent endeavor, a point I have tried to incorporate into this book by including occasional excerpts from my research diary.

As China's engagement with Latin America deepened, conferences on the topic identified a need for closer dialogue with Chinese researchers. I shared this concern, and in 2007 I relocated to Beijing for one year to study Mandarin and explore the development of Latin American studies in Chinese universities and research institutes. I presented the preliminary arguments of this book at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Fudan University, Nankai University, Jinan University, and the China Center for Contemporary World Studies. Ensuing debates opened my eyes to the multiple opinions, agendas, and political pressures conditioning Chinese interactions with Latin America. These exchanges were the starting point for a series of workshops at the University of Sydney; the University of California, Berkeley; the Inter-American Dialogue; and the University of Chicago. Support from the Open Society Institute, the Australian Research Council, the Latin American Studies Association, and the Worldwide Universities Network enabled Chinese scholars such as Jiang Shixue, Sun Hongbo, Yang Zhimin, Wang Ping, Zhang Jianhua, and Zhang Xuegang to participate in these events, in turn generating a series of publications (Hearn 2010; Jiang 2011; Mao, Hearn, and Liu 2015; P. Wang 2013; also see Strauss and Armony 2012).

Working with Chinese scholars revealed the controversial place of Mexico in China's foreign relations and sparked my curiosity about how China was perceived in Mexico. In 2008 I took up a lecturing position at the Autonomous University of Baja California (UABC) in Tijuana, home to one of Mexico's largest Chinese diasporic communities. Classroom debates about the impact of Chinese manufactured exports on the city's

small businesses provided me with valuable leads for follow-up research, and the UABC historian Catalina Velázquez Morales shared her extensive archives on Chinese settlement in the region. The Chinese consul general had recently gone on record condemning violence against Tijuana's Chinese community and accepted an invitation to participate in a public debate on Chinese-Mexican relations at the UABC. He introduced me to Chinese business and cultural leaders, who in turn arranged meetings for me at the Chinese associations of Tijuana and Mexicali between 2008 and 2011. The China-Mexico Research Center at the National Autonomous University of Mexico also became a focal point for me to consult with researchers and Chinese entrepreneurs in Mexico City between 2010 and 2014.

Countless people contributed sensitive personal and political insights to enrich this book. I have tried to convey their perspectives as faithfully as possible and to build the book's conceptual analysis on their ideas. My attempt to mediate bottom-up experiences of China's impact with top-down analysis of state-society relations has involved compromises, which I hope will validate the trust of the many people who shared their knowledge with me. The mediations pursued by governments, companies, and community associations in their quest for effective responses to China's rise have also required compromise. How diaspora and trust condition these interactions is the question to which we now turn.