

# Argentina and the Spatial Politics of Extractive Infrastructures under US–China Tensions

*Marcelo I. Saguier and Maximiliano F. Vila Seoane*

Tensions between the US and China over the role that infrastructure plays in their geopolitical imaginaries and prospective scenarios of global governance and (geo)politics are central to ongoing academic and public debates. Disputes revolve around the politics and competition to lead, influence, and control the technical capacities to forge global interconnectivity through infrastructure integration (Brenner, 2004, 2019; Schiller, 2011; Schindler et al, 2021). This raises questions surrounding the relationship between infrastructure integration and shifting configurations of global power, including the implications of US–China competition on industrializing countries in the Global South (Mora, 2018, 2019; Vila Seoane, 2020, 2021; Vila Seoane and Saguier, 2020).

We explore how US–China tensions influence the politics of infrastructure in Argentina. Specifically, we look at the shale gas and oil and lithium mining sectors where the US and Chinese governments have expressed particular interest in promoting infrastructure projects or resisting rival efforts to do so. We ask: how is the manifestation of these infrastructure projects related or attributable to US–China competition? Second and more importantly, what can we learn about the processes around which spatial politics are structured and contested within ongoing trajectories of global infrastructure integration?

Mainstream media and some scholarship have identified an emerging ‘new Cold War’ between the US and China, but in the case of Argentina, this discourse obscures rather than illuminates the ongoing processes of state restructuring (Cox and Schechter, 2002; Brenner, 2004, 2019). Argentina’s state spatial strategies are geared towards the transformation of

state–society–nature relations in the context of a global political economy no longer centred in the US with increasing orientation towards China. Drawing on the concept of the infrastructure state, which exhibits agency in pursuit of state spatial strategies, we highlight its multiscalar nature through examples that: (a) are publicly supported by US and/or Chinese authorities; (b) are paradigmatic in their sector; and (c) generate connectivity to global value chains where the US and/or Chinese companies have leading and/or competing roles. We show how spatial politics are (re-)organized as part of the ongoing restructuring of the state in response to US–China competition. In this context, actors situated at multiple scales pursue diverse strategies of territorial integration in attempts to connect with global value chains. The infrastructure state is therefore multiscalar and adept at navigating the complexity of international relations, yet its domestic policy has sought to transform state–society–nature relations, and this has provoked socio-ecological conflicts.

### **Argentina in the global politics of infrastructure: in the midst of a ‘new Cold War’?**

Argentina experienced significant economic challenges during the last decade, such as difficulty in sustaining economic growth and persistent and high levels of poverty (approximately 30 per cent in 2019, which increased up to 40 per cent after COVID-19). Reducing inflation and attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) has been an enormous task. Although the agricultural sector that is focused on soybean production remains Argentina’s largest source of export revenue, its current accumulation regime is skewed in favour of a small minority, rather than satisfying the needs of the country’s 45 million inhabitants. Consequently, diversifying the country’s economy and increasing exports is an overarching objective regardless of the political party in power. Multiple scales of government within Argentina are developing spatial strategies with these ends in mind.

Argentina’s relationship with the US was strained during the centre-left administration of Néstor Kirchner (2003–07). Emerging from the crisis that erupted in 2001 after decades of neoliberal policies, Kirchner’s government was characterized by a neo-Keynesian and redistributive orientation and advocated South American regionalism as a developmental alternative to the US-sponsored market-led integration such as the Free Trade Area for the Americas (Saguier, 2007; Riggirozzi and Wylde, 2018; Vivares, 2018). During the subsequent administrations of President Cristina Kirchner (2008–15), the US sided with debtors in escalating financial disputes (Míguez, 2016), which locked the country out of international financial markets. As part of a policy of not borrowing from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Argentine government turned to other funding sources, mainly

China, which offered the country's central bank several currency swap deals in Renminbi (Brenta and Larralde, 2018). Furthermore, in 2014 Argentina and China signed a comprehensive strategic partnership, which paved the way for increasing Chinese investments in key strategic infrastructure projects such as the upgrading of railways, the construction of hydroelectric dams (Mora, 2018), and the installation of a deep space station in Patagonia (Frenkel and Blinder, 2020).

During the campaign for Argentina's 2015 national elections, the centre-right opposition coalition, led by ex-businessman Mauricio Macri, promised a realignment with the US (Frenkel and Azzi, 2018). His victory heralded a reversal of the country's foreign policy, and his anti-China stance was welcomed by US analysts (Ellis, 2017). The new ruling coalition, Cambiemos, believed that the political realignment with the Obama administration would precipitate much awaited 'investments rain' from Western foreign investors. However, these expectations were largely unmet, while the context changed with the arrival of Donald Trump and the so-called US trade war with China. In a sharp turnaround from his campaign promises, Macri reprioritized relations with China (Busso, 2017). He participated in the first Belt and Road Forum, citing the BRI as an 'an opportunity that we do not want to miss' (Casa Rosada, 2017). During the trip, the administration signed the '2017–2021 China–Argentina comprehensive five-year plan for cooperation in infrastructure' (Ministerio de Finanzas, 2017), spanning infrastructure projects in transport, energy, natural resources, and the information and communications technology sectors.

Macri's policy towards China provoked consternation in Washington, where persuasion and coercion were used in an attempt to push Argentina away from China. For instance, after a bilateral meeting between President Trump and President Macri at the 2018 G20 summit in Buenos Aires, the US spokeswoman claimed that both had agreed to combat China's 'predatory behavior', a statement that Argentina's chancellor rushed to deny (Rodriguez, 2018). Likewise, since 2018 the US has made several pledges to invest in Argentina to compete with China, some of which we detail in the following sections. Perhaps the most significant support to the Cambiemos administration was US pressure on the IMF to approve the largest loan in its history to Argentina. According to the US Executive Director at the IMF, its purpose was to prevent Peronists' return to power (Lejtman, 2020). Despite the IMF loan, however, Peronists won the following election and have been in power since December 2019. Immediately after the election, the US expressed concerns over China to a leading member of the new ruling coalition, Sergio Massa, who answered that Argentina is 'friends of all, but satellite of none' (Lugones, 2019). In 2020 Argentina became a member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, a process initiated by Cristina Kirchner in 2015.

This summary of a mainstream reading of Argentine foreign policy vis-à-vis China and the US suggests the country has struggled with the strategic decision to either remain unaligned or side with one or the other. Argentina is not the only country to face this difficult balancing act, as tensions between the US and China have escalated in the domains of trade, currency, technological innovation, and military cooperation. Some have interpreted these tensions as evidence of a ‘new Cold War’, which is accompanied by rhetoric that identifies China as a threat to US vital interests (Mearsheimer, 2006; Pillsbury, 2016; Allison, 2017; Pompeo, 2020). The diffusion of this narrative has direct implications for countries like Argentina that have enhanced their economic and political relations with China in recent decades. However, in many ways it is reminiscent of accounts offered by right-wing leaning publications at the turn of the century, which perceived China as an ideological, strategic, and economic challenge to the US (Broomfield, 2003). Its contemporary resurrection obscures many of the state restructuring processes taking place in Argentina to enable infrastructure projects which can be interpreted as responses to changing configurations of the global political economy that have rendered infrastructure integration a field of geopolitical contestation.

Language and narratives define roles, legitimacy, expectations, and shape reality. They capture the political imagination on the prospects and options that countries like Argentina face in a context of a transforming global political economy no longer underpinned by US leadership. In this case, a new Cold War narrative preconfigures options and forces countries to align with the US or China. In response to this pressure, a group of prominent intellectuals associated with former progressive governments in Latin America warn about the dangers of falling prey of this polarizing discourse, particularly at a time of unprecedented economic crisis amid weak and fragmented South American regional governance (Fortín et al, 2020). They call for an ‘active non-alignment’ foreign policy that is capable of calibrating a middle path between Washington and Beijing, where states can maximize benefits in their links with the global economy and establish their own development models (Fortín et al, 2020, 122). This view obscures the spatial dimension of the internationalization of the state, where changing relations to global capitalism historically reconfigure relations between politics and space (Brenner, 2004; Sassen, 2006).

The interplay between the scaling of political space and state spatial projects (Brenner, 2004) is increasingly influenced by developmental challenges. As noted earlier, Argentina has experienced a prolonged economic crisis. This has deepened its dependence on extractive sectors to generate export revenues to manage ongoing macroeconomic tensions. Extractivist-led policies have generated increasing strains on the environment leading to a social mobilization and resistance; notably in opposition to mining projects

(Saguier and Peinado, 2016), hydroelectric dams (Saguier, 2017; Mora, 2018) and industrial agriculture of the soja complex. With the consolidation of the extractivist elements of a development strategy, space politics relations are shaped by governments' responses at multiple scales driven by the opportunities to link up in global chains that open in a complex geopolitical context. To explore these dynamics, we analyse two sectors: shale gas and oil in which US firms are the primary foreign investors, and lithium extraction in which Chinese actors are the main investors. We argue that Argentina is an 'infrastructure state' in the sense that it understands its developmental objectives to be dependent on significant infrastructure investments, which in turn (re)produce relations between space and politics at multiple scales (Brenner, 2004; Sassen, 2006; Schindler et al, 2021). We find that state actors strategically employ opportunities offered by the initiatives that the US and China provide amid their rivalry, yet rather than choosing sides, this is part of a dynamic multiscale spatial strategy designed to foster export-oriented industrialization and economic growth.

### **Shale gas and oil: the allure of *Vaca Muerta***

Argentina became a net importer of gas and oil for the first time in 2011, causing even more damage to the precarious financial situation of the country. In this context, former President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner introduced a bill in Congress to renationalize Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales (YPF), the main gas and oil firm. It had been under the control of Repsol, a Spanish firm, since 1999, which had been accused of underinvesting in infrastructure and compromising national energy sovereignty. In 2012, Congress passed Law 26.741, reasserting state sovereignty over hydrocarbons by nationalizing Repsol YPF.

Most consequentially, the law unleashed a state-led spatial strategy to invest in developing the Vaca Muerta reserve, a geological formation that spans 30,000 km<sup>2</sup> in the Patagonian province of Neuquén. By some estimates, Vaca Muerta has the second-largest shale gas and the fourth-largest shale oil reserves in the world (US Energy Information Administration, 2015). Unsurprisingly, the development of Vaca Muerta has become the main state spatial strategy for every administration in power, and YPF its main instrument of exploration and extraction. Indeed, the national company has approximately 40 per cent of the basin in concessions. Similarly, the administrations of Neuquén Province, whose GDP depends largely on hydrocarbons, envision Vaca Muerta as a key driver of the provincial economy.

The extraction of shale gas and oil requires the development of infrastructure and significant investments, the cost of which is prohibitive to the national and provincial governments. The main political forces that govern Argentina accept that more foreign investments are needed, and efforts to woo investors



have focused on US actors given their managerial and technical experience pioneering the shale gas and oil industry in the Permian Basin in Texas and New Mexico. Partnerships with US firms did not take long to materialize. In 2013, YPF signed its first collaboration agreement to exploit Vaca Muerta with Chevron. The US firm committed about US\$1.24 billion to a pilot project to drill 100 wells and expand activity in subsequent years. The text of the agreement was confidential, and anti-fracking activists protesting its ratification by the provincial legislature were violently repressed, exposing a nasty face of the state in its pursuit of energy self-sufficiency. It is important to stress that the agreement was signed during a period in which, from a foreign policy perspective, bilateral relations between Argentina and the US were strained, with the former more aligned with China.

Since then, international gas and oil firms from other nations – such as Shell, Total, and Petronas – have invested in Vaca Muerta. Even Chinese and Russian state-firms, like Sinopec and Gazprom, have attempted to partner with YPF, though unsuccessfully thus far. Nonetheless, the state has prioritized partnerships with US firms. For instance, in 2017, Exxon Mobile confirmed a US\$200 million investment in Vaca Muerta in partnership with a provincial state firm. Furthermore, Argentina and the US signed an Energy Cooperation Framework Agreement in 2018 that contains a core objective of exploiting shale natural gas, primarily from Vaca Muerta. According to the [US State Department \(2020\)](#), this agreement is part of the Growth in the Americas Initiative, which was designed to compete with China's BRI in the region. It was introduced as a whole-of-government approach to 'support economic development by catalyzing private sector investment in energy and other infrastructure projects across Latin America and the Caribbean' ([US State Department, 2019](#)), supposedly in a sustainable manner, something that the US accuses the BRI of lacking. Similarly, in 2019, the former Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) approved a US\$450 million loan for two Argentine shale gas and oil companies operating in Vaca Muerta ([US Embassy in Argentina, 2019](#)).

The state spatial strategy of developing Vaca Muerta has faced staunch resistance due to its socio-environmental impacts ([Riffo, 2017](#); [Delgado, 2018](#)). Indeed, the main technology of extraction, hydraulic fracturing (fracking), causes serious environmental harms, such as polluting water and air, or even inducing earthquakes, with grave consequences for nearby inhabitants. In response to these potential effects, neighbouring indigenous populations, such as the Mapuche, have mobilized in protest and been at the forefront of resisting the state fracking strategy ([Riffo, 2017](#)). At the same time, civil society organizations from the US organized opposition to the project on the grounds that shale gas and oil extraction is unsustainable ([FARN, 2019](#)), yet these efforts were unsuccessful, perhaps because of the project's geopolitical implications.

Analysts from the Center for Strategic and International Studies have argued that the US should provide funding to develop Vaca Muerta, and prevent other nations such as China or Russia from operating there ([Runde and Schreyer, 2019](#)). Similarly, in 2018, the US Embassy in Argentina announced that the US Southern Command would build a US\$1.3 million Emergency Operations Center to assist the province of Neuquén in disaster preparedness and response ([US Embassy in Argentina, 2018](#)). This news unleashed a flurry of criticism, protests, and demands from members of parliament, who denounced the project as a mere façade designed to protect American investments in Vaca Muerta and to spy on a nearby Chinese satellite deep space station. As a result, the project stalled due to political pressure and resistance, together with the change in national administration in Argentina, yet US concerns over Chinese investments in the country remain.

Irrespective of political leanings, the urge to develop Vaca Muerta to secure energy self-sufficiency has tightened the links between provincial and state actors with firms and investors from the US. Argentina's ambassador to the US under President Fernández has already pledged to seek new investments in Vaca Muerta. However, it remains to be seen whether Biden's policies to address climate change will influence US investments in fracking. In this context, Chinese interest in funding infrastructure projects for Vaca Muerta have resurfaced ([Garrison, 2020](#)), such as in a rail project to export gas and oil to Brazil. This shows how the need for funds for infrastructure is a better guide to understand Argentina's geopolitical strategy vis-à-vis the US and China, rather than a new Cold War frame. Indeed, as the following case shows, the malleable way of linking territories makes it hard for Argentine authorities to choose between one side or the other.

### **Lithium: white gold and electromobility**

When Xi Jinping arrived in Buenos Aires for the 2018 G20 summit, he was received at the airport by Gerardo Morales, the Governor of Jujuy, one of Argentina's smallest and poorest provinces in the remote northeast. Since assuming office in December 2015, Morales has made continuous efforts to cultivate links with China. His efforts paid off in the form of a US\$331.5 million loan by the Export–Import Bank of China for the construction of three solar power plants to be built by Power China and Shanghai Electric Power Construction ([El Tribuno, 2017](#)). Likewise, the Chinese firm ZTE won a US\$24 million tender to build communications and video surveillance systems for the province ([Gobierno de Jujuy, 2019b](#)), a deal that international media quickly portrayed as an extension of China's surveillance state. One of the most significant links between Jujuy and Chinese capital is related to the extraction of lithium.

Known as ‘white gold’, this alkali metal is the key component of lithium-ion batteries, which are central to current and future consumer electronics and electric cars. In light of the shift in the transport industry towards electromobility, the control of lithium extraction and supply chains has become a much-coveted target for mining companies and states. However, lithium is very unevenly distributed. Almost 60 per cent of global lithium reserves are located in South America (Martin et al, 2017), mainly in the so-called Lithium Triangle that spans territories across Argentina, Bolivia, and Chile. The province of Jujuy contains 37 per cent of Argentina’s known lithium reserves (López et al, 2019).

The Jujuy government’s development strategy increasingly centres on the extraction of lithium. International mining firms from Australia, Canada, China, Japan, Italy, among others already operate in the province or have expressed interest in doing so. For instance, the Canadian firm Lithium Americas Corporation has been working in Jujuy since 2007. The provincial government also formed a joint venture with an Italian firm, SERI Group, to produce batteries in the province and add value to its exports (Gobierno de Jujuy, 2017). Despite these partnerships and further interest from Western enterprises, the provincial government identified China as the central partner to develop its lithium ecosystem (Gobierno de Jujuy, 2018). There are two reasons for this decision. First, the Jujuy government anticipates that China will not only invest heavily in the lithium sector, but that it will also support other state spatial projects in the province. Second, the preference for China is based on a forecast of future demand, which will be driven by its potential electric car market.

Jujuy’s public officials have made frequent business and political trips to China in attempts to attract investments. Upon their return they stress the unbounded opportunities such relations offer the province’s development, in particular in lithium mining. These efforts have borne fruit, and in 2018 the Chinese firm Ganfeng Lithium entered into partnership with Lithium Americas Corporation. Together they invested US\$160 million in the Cauchari–Olaroz project to increase lithium production from 25,000 to 40,000 tons per year (Gobierno de Jujuy, 2019a). Ganfeng Lithium subsequently acquired a majority stake over its joint venture with Lithium Americas in 2020, exemplifying increasing Chinese interest in Argentina. Other firms from China’s Guizhou province, with which Jujuy entered into a twinning agreement, also expressed interest in investing in the province’s lithium mines (Gobierno de Jujuy, 2019c).

Argentina’s national government is proactively supporting Jujuy’s state spatial strategy, and it considers lithium a potential driver of export-oriented growth. Indeed, in 2021, the Fernández administration signed a memorandum of understanding with Guoxuan Hi-Tech, a Chinese company specializing in lithium-ion power batteries, to manufacture



batteries and electric cars in the country. Thus, lithium extraction and joint ventures with Chinese firms have become central components of a broader industrial strategy (Télam, 2021). Moreover, the national government plans to introduce an electromobility law designed to attract investment and foster industrial growth, thereby making Argentina a regional leader in electric vehicle value chains.

Similar to the previous case, the exploitation of white gold has considerable environmental costs. The lithium extraction process uses evaporation ponds that require huge amounts of water. Although there is no consensus on the sector's long-term environmental impacts on the region, critics contend that mining companies will jeopardize access to freshwater in what is already an arid area (Wanger, 2011; Flexer et al, 2018). Furthermore, the extraction process employs chemicals that may cause irreversible damage to groundwater, biodiversity, and human health if not properly managed (Wanger, 2011), which explains why indigenous communities living nearby oppose lithium extraction (Gullo and Fernández Bravo, 2020). Yet, the government has so far subordinated these concerns in the name of development and progress (Fornillo, 2018).

Although the US–China rivalry has thus far not influenced Argentina's state spatial strategy with regard to lithium extraction and processing, the geopolitics of lithium extraction influenced events in neighbouring Bolivia. It has the largest known reserves of lithium in the world and according to former President Evo Morales, US support of Bolivia's 2019 *coup d'état* was a form of retaliation for Bolivia's alignment with China and Russia in the lithium sector (AFP, 2019). Even Tesla CEO Elon Musk infamously tweeted support for the US intervention in Bolivia. Although this allegation was dismissed as mere conspiracy by American analysts and other critics of Morales, it is clear that China's clout over global lithium supply chains troubles US policy makers who fear the military applications of lithium-ion batteries and what an increasing dependence on China for acquiring such a strategic resource might mean (US–China Economic and Security Review Commission, 2019).

Overall, attempts by Jujuy's government to foster close links with Chinese actors and firms to develop the lithium industry exemplify the rescaling of Argentina's infrastructure state and the increasing importance of subnational diplomacy with China and Chinese provinces.

## Conclusion

This chapter has explored how Argentina is positioned vis-à-vis the rivalry between China and the US. According to many commentators this rivalry is structuring an emergent bipolar international order in which states must side with the US or China, or stake out a non-aligned position. This

model centres the analysis on states and neglects other actors shaping inter- and transnational relations such as firms and civil society organizations. Furthermore, it assumes that the state is a unitary actor whose foreign policy is driven by external pressures, neglecting the spatiality of the state and its spatial strategies to transform how territories link with global value chains.

Argentina is geographically distant both from China and the US, and its relations with each are neither adversarial nor cooperative. Government at multiple levels has sought to expand Argentina's connectivity to global value chains, and attract investment from both countries. In the case of shale gas and oil in Neuquén Province, partnerships with American actors are prioritized, while Chinese actors have been identified as the most suitable partners in the lithium sector in Jujuy. Therefore, the 'active non-alignment' proposal of progressive thinkers of the region is not an outcome of the 'new Cold War' reality, but rather it reflects the heterogeneous ways of linking with China and the US. Rather than a security state at the centre of geopolitical struggles as some propose, Argentina is emerging as a multiscalar infrastructure state in pursuit of spatial strategies whose overriding objective is to stabilize and diversify the economy. Rather than geopolitics, this strategy is animated by contestations surrounding state–society–nature relations that are configured to accommodate resource extraction. Indeed, Argentina's infrastructure state overwhelmingly focuses on the promise of economic growth through the exploitation of nature, neglecting the serious environmental and social consequences of extractivist development.

## References

- AFP (2019) 'Morales claims US orchestrated "coup" to tap Bolivia's lithium', 24 December. Available from: <https://news.yahoo.com/morales-claims-us-orchestrated-coup-tap-bolivias-lithium-211124837.html>
- Allison, G. (2017) *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Brenner, N. (2004) *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brenner, N. (2019) *New Urban Spaces: Urban Theory and the Scale Question*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Brenta, N. and Larralde, J. (2018) 'La internacionalización del renminbi y los acuerdos de intercambio de monedas entre Argentina y China, 2009–2018', *Ciclos*, 25(51): 55–84.
- Broomfield, E.V. (2003) 'Perceptions of danger: the China threat theory', *Journal of Contemporary China*, 12(35): 265–84.
- Busso, A. (2017) 'El rol de los Estados Unidos en el diseño de política exterior del gobierno de Mauricio Macri. Conceptos básicos para su análisis', *Anuario de Relaciones Internacionales*, 23, Universidad Nacional de La Plata.

- Casa Rosada (2017) 'El Presidente expuso en el foro 'Una Franja y una Ruta para la Cooperación Internacional'. Available from: [www.casarosada.gob.ar/slider-principal/39552-el-presidente-expuso-en-el-foro-una-franja-y-una-ruta-para-la-cooperacion-internacional](http://www.casarosada.gob.ar/slider-principal/39552-el-presidente-expuso-en-el-foro-una-franja-y-una-ruta-para-la-cooperacion-internacional).
- Cox, R. and Schechter, M.G. (2002) *The Political Economy of a Plural World: Critical Reflections on Power, Morals and Civilization*, London: Routledge.
- Delgado, E. (2018) 'Fracking Vaca Muerta: socioeconomic implications of shale gas extraction in northern Patagonia, Argentina', *Journal of Latin American Geography*, 17(3): 102–31.
- El Tribuno* (2017) 'Se firmó en China el convenio para la construcción del parque de energía solar en Cauchari', 23 November. Available from: <https://www.tribuno.com/jujuy/nota/2017-11-23-16-13-2-se-firmo-en-china-el-convenio-para-la-construccion-del-parque-de-energia-solar-en-cauchari>.
- Ellis, R.E. (2017) 'Argentina at the crossroads again: implications for the United States and for the region', *Military Review*, 97(2): 27–37.
- FARN (2019) 'Members of Congress, Argentinian and US groups call on OPIC to reject financing for fracking in Argentina', 10 September. Available from: <https://farn.org.ar/piden-a-opic-que-rechace-el-financiamiento-para-el-fracking-en-argentina/>.
- Flexer, V., Baspineiro, C.F., and Galli, C.I. (2018) 'Lithium recovery from brines: a vital raw material for green energies with a potential environmental impact in its mining and processing', *Science of the Total Environment*, 639(15): 1188–204.
- Fornillo, B. (2018) 'La energía del litio en Argentina y Bolivia: comunidad, extractivismo y posdesarrollo', *Colombia Internacional*, 93: 179–201.
- Fortín, C., Heine, J., and Ominami, C. (2020) 'Latinoamérica: no alineamiento y la segunda', *Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica*, 20(3): 107–15.
- Frenkel, A. and Azzi D. (2018) 'Cambio y ajuste: la política exterior de Argentina y Brasil en un mundo en transición (2015–2017)', *Colombia Internacional*, 96: 177–207.
- Frenkel, A. and Blinder, D. (2020) 'Geopolítica y cooperación espacial: China y América del Sur', *Desafíos*, 32(1): 1–30.
- Garrison, C. (2020) 'PowerChina eyes rail project to transport oil and gas from Argentina's Vaca Muerta', Reuters, 17 September. Available from: [www.reuters.com/article/argentina-shale-rail-idUKL1N2GE2CN](http://www.reuters.com/article/argentina-shale-rail-idUKL1N2GE2CN)
- Gobierno de Jujuy (2017) 'Morales concreta la instalación de la fábrica de baterías de Litio', 9 June. Available from: <https://prensa.jujuy.gob.ar/2017/06/09/morales-concreta-la-instalacion-de-la-fabrica-de-baterias-de-litio/>.
- Gobierno de Jujuy (2018) 'Jujuy apuesta a un ecosistema de litio y más inversiones desde China', 29 May. Available from: <https://prensa.jujuy.gob.ar/2018/05/29/jujuy-apuesta-a-un-ecosistema-del-litio-y-mas-inversiones-desde-china/>.

- Gobierno de Jujuy (2019a) 'Afianzan la producción de Litio en la Puna Jujeña', 10 September. Available from: <https://prensa.jujuy.gob.ar/2019/09/10/afianzan-la-produccion-de-litio-en-la-puna-jujena/>.
- Gobierno de Jujuy (2019b) 'Avanza el Plan Jujuy seguro e interconectado'. Available from: <https://prensa.jujuy.gob.ar/ekel-meyer/avanza-el-plan-jujuy-seguro-e-interconectado-n64377>.
- Gobierno de Jujuy (2019c) 'Jujuy y China tienden lazos en el campo minero', 10 July. Available from: <https://prensa.jujuy.gob.ar/2019/07/10/la-mineria-acerca-lazos-comerciales-entre-jujuy-y-china/>
- Gullo, E. and Fernández Bravo, E. (2020) 'White gold: the violent water dispute in Argentina', *Diálogo Chino*, 20 May. Available from: <https://dialogochino.net/en/extractive-industries/35354-white-gold-the-violent-water-dispute-in-argentina/>
- Lejtman, R. (2020) 'Un asesor de Trump reveló por qué ayudaron al gobierno de Macri a acceder a un rescate del Fondo Monetario Internacional', *infobae*, 28 July. Available from: [www.infobae.com/politica/2020/07/28/un-asesor-de-trump-revelo-por-que-ayudaron-al-gobierno-de-macri-a-acceder-a-un-rescate-del-fondo-monetario-internacional/](http://www.infobae.com/politica/2020/07/28/un-asesor-de-trump-revelo-por-que-ayudaron-al-gobierno-de-macri-a-acceder-a-un-rescate-del-fondo-monetario-internacional/)
- López, A., Obaya, M., Pascuini, P., and Ramos A. (2019) *Litio en la Argentina. Oportunidades y desafíos para el desarrollo de la cadena de valor*, Secretaría de Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación Productiva.
- Lugones, P. (2019) 'Reunión reservada en Washington Estados Unidos le planteó a Massa su preocupación por cómo sería un posible gobierno de Alberto Fernández', *Clarín*, 8 October. Available from: [www.clarin.com/politica/unidos-planteo-massa-preocupacion-posible-gobierno-alberto-fernandez\\_0\\_2F2d5qub.html](http://www.clarin.com/politica/unidos-planteo-massa-preocupacion-posible-gobierno-alberto-fernandez_0_2F2d5qub.html)
- Martin, G., Rentsch, L., Höck, M., and Bertau, M. (2017) 'Lithium market research: global supply, future demand and price development', *Energy Storage Materials*, 6: 171–9.
- Mearsheimer, J.J. (2006) 'China's unpeaceful rise', *Current History*, 105(690): 160–62.
- Míguez, M.C. (2016) 'La política exterior Argentina y su vinculación con los condicionamientos internos del Siglo XXI', *Relaciones Internacionales*, 89(2): 125–42.
- Ministerio de Finanzas (2017) 'Plan Quinquenal Integrado China-Argentina para la Cooperación en Infraestructura (2017–2021)'. Available from: <https://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/270000-274999/274612/norma.htm>
- Mora, S. (2018) 'Resistencias sociales a la cooperación de China en infraestructura: Las represas Kirchner-Cepernic en Argentina', *Colombia Internacional*, 94: 53–81.
- Mora, S. (2019) 'El *Going Out* agrícola de China. Un análisis de su desarrollo en Argentina', *Si Somos Americanos*, 19(2): 89–103.

- Pillsbury, M. (2016) *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower*, New York: St. Martin's Griffin.
- Pompeo, M.R. (2020) 'Communist China and the free world's future', US Department of State. Available from: <https://2017-2021.state.gov/communist-china-and-the-free-worlds-future-2/index.html>
- Riffo, L.N. (2017) 'Fracking and resistance in the Land of Fire', *NACLA Report on the Americas*, 49(4): 470–75.
- Riggirozzi, P. and Wylde, C.(eds) (2018) *Handbook of South American Governance*, London: Routledge.
- Rodriguez, J. (2018) 'White House statement drags Argentina into US-China brawl', *Politico*, 30 November. Available from: [www.politico.com/story/2018/11/30/us-china-argentina-g20-1036939](http://www.politico.com/story/2018/11/30/us-china-argentina-g20-1036939).
- Runde, D.F. and Schreyer, W.A. (2019) 'OPIC should strengthen US-Argentine partnership with Vaca Muerta deal', *The Hill*, 10 September. Available from: <https://thehill.com/opinion/finance/460621-opic-should-strengthen-us-argentine-partnership-with-vaca-muerta-deal>.
- Saguier, M.I. (2007) 'The Hemispheric Social Alliance and the Free Trade Area of the Americas process: the challenges and opportunities of transnational coalitions against neo-liberalism', *Globalizations*, 2(4): 251–65.
- Saguier, M.I. (2017) 'Transboundary water governance in South America', in P. Riggirozzi and C. Wylde (eds) *Handbook of South American Governance*, London: Routledge, pp 373–84.
- Saguier, M.I. and Peinado, G. (2016) 'Canadian mining investments in Argentina and the construction of a mining-development nexus', *Latin American Policy*, 7(2): 267–87.
- Sassen, S. (2006) *Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Schiller, D. (2011) 'Geopolitical-economic conflict and network infrastructures', *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 4(1): 90–107.
- Schindler, S., DiCarlo, J. and Paudel, D. (2021) 'The new cold war and the rise of the 21st century infrastructure state', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 47(2): 331–46.
- Télam (2021) 'Argentina y una empresa china firman acuerdo para producir vehículos eléctricos en el país', 3 February. Available from: [www.telam.com.ar/notas/202102/543541-argentina-y-empresa-china-firman-acuerdo-para-producir-vehiculos-electricos-en-el-pais.html](http://www.telam.com.ar/notas/202102/543541-argentina-y-empresa-china-firman-acuerdo-para-producir-vehiculos-electricos-en-el-pais.html).
- US-China Economic and Security Review Commission (2019) 'Report to Congress'. Available from: [www.uscc.gov/annual-report/2019-annual-report-congress](http://www.uscc.gov/annual-report/2019-annual-report-congress)
- US Embassy in Argentina (2018) 'United States funds the construction of an Emergency Operations Center for Neuquén Province', 1 June. Available from: <https://ar.usembassy.gov/united-states-funds-the-construction-of-an-emergency-operations-center-for-neuquen-province/>.



- US Embassy in Argentina (2019) 'OPIC approves financing for energy projects in Argentina', 11 September. Available from: <https://ar.usembassy.gov/opic-approves-financing-for-energy-projects-in-argentina/>.
- US Energy Information Administration (2015) 'World Shale Resource Assessments', 24 September. Available from: [www.eia.gov/analysis/studies/worldshalegas/](http://www.eia.gov/analysis/studies/worldshalegas/)
- US State Department (2019) 'Growth in the Americas'. Available from: [www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/America-Crece-One-Pager-003-508.pdf](http://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/America-Crece-One-Pager-003-508.pdf).
- US State Department (2020) 'US Relations with Argentina, Bilateral Relations Fact Sheet', Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs, 10 August.
- Vila Seoane, M.F. (2020) 'Alibaba's discourse for the digital Silk Road: the electronic World Trade Platform and "inclusive globalization"', *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 13(1): 68–83.
- Vila Seoane, M.F. (2021) 'Chinese and US AI and cloud multinational corporations in Latin America', in T. Keskin and R.D. Kiggins (eds) *Towards an International Political Economy of Artificial Intelligence*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp 85–111.
- Vila Seoane, M.F. and Saguier, M.I. (2020) 'Cyberpolitics and IPE: towards a research agenda in the Global South', in E. Vivare (ed) *Routledge Handbook of Global Political Economy*, London: Routledge, pp 702–18.
- Vivares, E. (ed) (2018) *Regionalism, Development and the Post-Commodities Boom in South America*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wanger, T.C. (2011) 'The lithium future: resources, recycling, and the environment', *Conservation Letters*, 4(3): 202–6.