

Academic Exchanges between Brazil and China: The case of the Confucius Institutes in Brazil

Os Intercâmbios Acadêmicos entre Brasil e China: O caso dos Institutos Confúcio no Brasil

Intercambios Académicos entre Brasil y China: El caso de los Institutos Confucio en Brasil

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Abstract

We examine academic exchange between Brazil and China, specifically the case of the Confucius Institutes (CIs) in Brazil, through the experiences of UNESP and UNICAMP. The aim is to understand how the CIs contribute to academic exchange in the context of economic and cultural cooperation between Brazil and China. Bibliographic and bibliometric research was carried out, through a multi-method methodology, which unites quantitative and qualitative research. The justification is found in the political, cultural, and economic movements that foment Brazil-China relations through the BRICS. Brazil has twelve CIs and no one from them seeks to indoctrinate through Confucianism, rather their aim is to spread the Mandarin language.

Keywords: International Student Mobility; Confucius Institutes; Brazil-China Exchange; Teaching.

Resumo

Este artigo trata do intercâmbio acadêmico entre Brasil e China, especificamente o caso dos Institutos Confúcio (ICs) no Brasil, através das experiências da UNESP e da UNICAMP. O objetivo geral foi construído a partir da ideia de que é preciso compreender como os ICs contribuem para o intercâmbio acadêmico na área de cooperação econômica e cultural entre Brasil e China. Nesta pesquisa, fez-se pesquisas bibliográfica e bibliométrica, através de uma metodologia multi-método, que une pesquisas quantitativas com qualitativas. A justificativa se encontra na movimentação política, cultural e econômica proporcionada pelas relações Brasil-China, através dos BRICS. O Brasil possui 12 ICs e nenhum deles pretende doutrinar o *confucionismo*, mas sim difundir o idioma Mandarim.

Palavras-chave: Mobilidade Estudantil Internacional; Institutos Confúcio; Intercâmbio Brasil-China, Ensino.

Resumen

Este artículo aborda el intercambio académico entre Brasil y China, específicamente el caso de los Institutos Confucio (IC) en Brasil, a través de las experiencias de la UNESP y la UNICAMP. El objetivo general se construyó a partir de la idea de que es necesario comprender cómo las IC contribuyen al intercambio académico en el área de cooperación económica y cultural entre Brasil y China. En esta investigación se realizó una investigación bibliográfica y bibliométrica, a través de una metodología multimétodo, que combina investigación cuantitativa y cualitativa. La justificación está en el movimiento político, cultural y económico proporcionado por las relaciones Brasil-China, a través de los BRICS. Brasil tiene 12 CI y ninguno de ellos pretende adoctrinar el confucianismo, sino más bien difundir el idioma mandarín.

Palabras clave: Movilidad Estudiantil Internacional; Institutos Confucio; Intercambio Brasil-China, Enseñanza.

1. Introduction

This article addresses the issue of academic exchange between Brazil and China, specifically the case of the Confucius Institutes (CIs) in Brazil, through the investigation of the experiences in the State of São Paulo, Brazil, the cases of UNESP and UNICAMP. We seek to understand how the dynamics of Science and Technology work that will foster university outreach

spaces to the point of integrating students from all over the world. The emergence of spaces that seek to maximize autonomy is discussed, with the intention of facilitating the performance of a new generation of globalized citizens, producers and managers of academic knowledge. These are groups that are also aligned with the discussions of ecological issues. The intention of the study was to map the instruments used by these groups, as well as to find ways to generate public policies to democratize the possibilities of exchange with China, through the Confucius Institutes.

Thus, the general objective and central question of this article were built around the idea that it is necessary to understand how CIs contribute to academic exchange in the area of economic and cultural cooperation between Brazil and China. In this way, we discuss how these particular relationships contribute to the social stratification of the two countries, with the intention of demographically reconfiguring Brazil, democratizing access to exchanges and enabling integration with academic elites. Within this perspective, foreign students would bring a very interesting cultural, social and economic diversity to Brazil as well as to China. Therefore, the groups would contribute to the social, political, economic and cultural relations between countries. They represent investments in the formation of a future elite of the country within the aspect of globalization not only of the economy, but also of “individuals” (Dwyer, 2016; Ortiz, 2000).

The fact that students add relevant contributions was consolidated with the Lula (2003-2010) and Dilma (2011-2016) governments, which invested heavily in public education through federal and state universities. Education became important precisely when it could be international, which would be configured as a national economic strategy. It would be an effort to stand out in a post-American world (Dwyer, 2016, p. 265; Guilhonabquerque, 2014).

Regarding methodology, if, on the one hand, our reflections start from microsocial objects in the face of a microphysical reality – in this case, the Confucius Institutes of UNESP and UNICAMP – our examination of the issue has also never been detached from the more global perspectives on the subject. It was, therefore, a kind of dance between local action and global thinking that currently characterizes current considerations on science and technology - S&T - (Velho, 2010) and which reflect the behavior of young people in exchange situations (Dwyer, 2016).

2. Methods

In this research, we carried out a multilevel analysis, interweaving qualitative and quantitative analyses. From this perspective, phenomena were observed at a macro level, through structural patterns and large-scale trends, bringing together elements of Economics and International Relations. We focused on the definition of the concept, the description of the characteristics and the identification of situations in which the combination of techniques was analytically desirable. The main recommendations in the literature were considered, and examples of concrete situations were used to illustrate how the triangulation of techniques can be used. We conducted document research and bibliometrics, enabling us to better understand academic exchanges, through the search for results using keywords for this quantitative approach. We were interested both in the number of articles published per year on the subject and in the search for theoretical niches that fit the selected keywords (Pritchard, 1969; Faria et al 2011).

Denzin (1970) stated that the combination of different theories, methods and data sources can help to overcome the natural and humanistic bias that affects studies with single-method, single-observer, single-theory approaches, and it seems that the mixed methods approach is, indeed, the destiny of Social Sciences and also of interdisciplinary studies (Ostrom, 2011). Therefore, complex realities require methods and systemic perspectives that need to go beyond binary patterns to deal with heterogeneous and asymmetric realities, as is the case in Brazil. Visions that combine micro, meso and macrophysical perspectives are required to be able to answer the questions that stand out.

In this perspective, this article addresses the following main themes: (1) China’s historical and economic context; (2) Data on the Confucius Institutes in Brazil; (3) Discussions around the issue of antithesis to the Chinese perspective of international

academic mobility; (4) The theme of Brazilian academic exchange within the discussions concerning the universe of contemporary Sociology; (5) Some data on international academic mobility; (6) Data on academic exchange in Brazil; (7) Bibliometric quantitative data and analysis of the topic within the two most important databases, Scopus and Web of Science and; (8) By way of final considerations, we will present a series of issues that need to be faced by specialists and all actors referring to the universe of international academic mobility in relation to the case of CIs in Brazil.

3. Discussion

3.1 China: historical and economic context

China is one of the oldest civilizations in the world. It arose in City-states in the Yellow River Valley (Huang He or Huang Ho). Historically, through centralized bureaucratic control, Chinese empires emerged, and, with the imposition of a common writing system (Mandarin), there occurred unification between the City-states. The fragmentation of this Empire led to the rule of the Mongols and other foreign nations. Chinese geography is also a strong source of knowledge of Chinese culture. To the north, the climate is cold and dry, leading to high wheat production. The population is dense, and production takes place through enormous human effort, with very little use of technology, which brings about a system of cooperation, both in the North and in the South. In the south, the climate is hot and humid, with its geography delineated by mountains and valleys. The swamp climate favors rice production, which is now also cultivated in the North thanks to the fact that the South shares its water (Fairbank, 2006).

China is the largest country in East Asia and the most populous in the world. In 2016, it had more than 1.36 billion inhabitants, a fifth of the earth's population. It is a socialist republic, ruled by the Communist Party of China (CPC), having a one-party system that guides provinces, whose capital is Beijing. It is historically organized by hereditary monarchies (dynasties), having its beginnings with the semi-mythological Xia (approximately 2000 BC) and its fall with the fall of the Qing in 1911 (Fairbank, 2006).

From 1946 to 1949, the Chinese Civil War took place, when the Communist Party defeated the nationalist group, establishing the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949 (COGGIOLA, 1986). In the first decades of the 2000s, China was one of the fastest-growing economies, being the largest exporter and the third-largest importer. Industrialization radically reduced the rate of poverty from 53% (1981) to 8% (2001). Currently, China has more than 150 million inhabitants living in poverty, is the second-largest economy in the world and holds very important positions in world geopolitics. It is a permanent member of the UN Security Council and of several multilateral organizations such as the World Trade Organization, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, the Group of Twenty, the BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. However, with modernization China began opening up to the West. The Chinese began to study in France, the United Kingdom, the United States, thereby incorporating Western elements and deeply rooting them in their social structure. Concepts like “nationalism”, “Marxism”, “communism”, “nation” are strictly Western, not native categories. The fact that they proclaim themselves a people's “republic” of China is further evidence of this openness. The question then arose: how do Asians position themselves vis-a-vis the West? How should we understand China historically without falling into ethnocentrism?

Hence the importance of teaching Mandarin, as we can only really understand China if we master its language. Thus, faced with the problem of opening up the economy, what is central in the literature is: everything is linked to the issue of industrialization, after all, we are facing a new Industrial Revolution (Medeiros, C. A. 1999; FREEMAN & SOETE, 2008). Some say industrialization was largely forced. The industrialization pattern that emerged at the end of the 19th century required: (i) high investments in fixed capital; (ii) adequate coordination to market demands; (iii) funding sources; and (iv) offers of labor and agricultural modernization. Now, with the modernization of the countryside and its consequences, a range of new jobs

opened in the cities and industrial productivity began to revolve around a significant increase in production and salary increases (Medeiros, 2013).

An industry that started with steel, chemical and electrical equipment, over time became heavily specialized. The textile industry gained a privileged place, offering cheap labor in an increasingly specialized market. The sophistication of China's exports thus began to influence the global economy. From 1978, the central government promoted a liberalization of the commercialization of family agriculture. The consequences of this were the increase in income and agricultural productivity with the possibility of maintaining surpluses, combining work in manufacturing with maintaining residence in rural areas; planning of urban activities, successful industrialization of rural areas, among others. From the 1990s onwards, some economic reforms were carried out, such as: fiscal reform, modernization of state-owned companies, privatization of smaller and less important companies, of the financial and banking system, incentives in light industry (for example, textiles), possibility of laying off employees – always operating more and more like capitalists (Medeiros, 2013).

From 1980 onwards, there was a significant commercial opening. China got closer to the United States and started to have preferential treatment in tax incentives on exports, for example. The change in the strategies of large global companies (especially electronics and in the technological area) made labor cheaper, which often was and continues to be slave and child exploitation (Springut; Schlaikjer; Chen, 2011; Pinheiro-Machado 2011; Pinheiomachado 2008). Thus, in the face of economic globalization, China found itself in need of having its own brands, such as Xiaomi or Lifan, for example.

The vector of innovation became fundamental in the strategies of the Chinese government and industrialization became strongly encouraged by the State. Thus, from 2000 to 2008 (Medeiros, 2013) there was an export boom, which had a brutal effect on the global economy. Combining exports with domestic investment, China has become a world power with a “western” standard of living, with large urban centers and a fully industrialized economy, even though there is still a lot of poverty. In this sense, the explosive increase from 1991 to 2013 in China's share in the world's manufacturing product led to a growth in the export vector allied to the infrastructure vector, so that one could not occur without the other (MEDEIROS, 2013). And, thus, vector-innovation is faced with the environmental problem, as a questioner of this unbridled development (Ferreira, Leila C.; Barbi, 2014).

3.2 The context of the Confucius Institutes in Brazil

The world's first Confucius Institute (CI) was built in June 2004 as a pilot institute in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. However, the first official IC was inaugurated in Seoul in the Republic of Korea on November 21st, 2004, emulating European experiences such as the British Council and the Alliance Française as part of the Chinese government's plan to use culture and language to develop friendly relations with other nations. The Confucius Institute (Simplified Chinese: 孔子学院; Traditional Chinese: 孔子學) is linked to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China with the aim of promoting the Chinese language and culture and supporting Chinese language teaching and facilitating worldwide exchanges through the association of the Confucius Institutes. Its headquarters are in Beijing. The Institute is named in honor of the remarkable Chinese thinker, Confucius. Many Portuguese-speaking countries signed a contract with the Confucius Institute program. In Portugal, there are Confucius Institutes installed in the following higher education institutions: the University of Lisbon, University of Coimbra, University of Minho, University of Algarve, University of Aveiro, Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, Polytechnic Institute of Castelo Branco and Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, in addition to having a partnership to support Chinese language teaching in some public secondary schools in Portugal (Hanban, 2019).

In this way, CIs are non-profit organizations based on the following essential services: (i) teaching the Chinese language; (ii) training instructors capable of teaching the Chinese language who will experience other cultures; (iii) providing resources for teaching the Chinese language; (iv) Administer the Hanyu Shuiping Kaoshi (HSK, Chinese Proficiency Test); (v) provide

information and consultancy services related to education, culture and other areas; (vi) bring the Chinese community together with the local university community; (vii) conduct language and cultural exchange activities between China and other countries.

In Brazil, according to recent data from Hanban (2019), there are Confucius Institutes installed in public and private institutions of higher education, in the five regions of the country: Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP), State University of Campinas (UNICAMP), University of Brasília (UNB), Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), University of Pernambuco (UPE), Federal University of Ceará (UFC), State University of Pará (UEPA), Armando Álvares Penteado Foundation (FAAP), Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-RIO). It is worth mentioning that in 2018 and 2019, another two CIs were created in the states of Amazonas and Maranhão, known as “UNESP Confucius Institute Rooms”, which in practice mean a continuation of the work of the UNESP CI in São Paulo. The first CI created in Brazil was at UNESP in partnership with the University of Hubei on 11/26/2008. The CI at UNICAMP emerged from a partnership with the University of Beijing initiated on the 23rd of March, 2015 (Martinelli, 2020).

Thus, CIs are seen as a possibility to undertake bilateral cooperation between China and foreign countries, which is not always the case, as we will see in the next item. The alliance, therefore, takes place through partnerships between Chinese and foreign universities; between Chinese and foreign high schools (also called “Confucius classroom”); partnerships between foreign NGOs and Chinese universities; collaboration between foreign governments and the Chinese government; and partnerships between companies and universities. According to the Constitution and Statute of CIs (according to Hanban), an interested foreign Institute must first present a headquarters (such as in Campinas within UNICAMP), which is affiliated to the Ministry of Education of China and governed by the Council of CI host headquarters. The Board is composed of an executive (director) and members of the Board in general. Therefore, representatives of different States and Institutes are recommended by the Chinese State Council as members of the General Council, who are heads of the CI Board of Directors abroad. Each CI can be analyzed, according to Kuan (2013), from the sites they build. The author carried out an in-depth study of these sites in question (Kuan, 2013, p. 113-114).

Kuan (2013) analyzes three websites of the Confucius Institutes in Canada, which differ from the British Council and the Alliance Française, as they are more involved with the local population, through their institutional format, and with local institutes. The CIs studied by the author are better adapted to the host countries, as they add more constructive value, from the point of view of the theories of International Relations, having greater intersubjective meaning, strengthening the relations between nations more, and consequently influencing the decisions taken. decision of each country, at the microphysical level. There is also greater interaction with the university community since they are located within the universities. CIs form, therefore, a constitutive lens for the behavior of nations, allowing foreign citizens the ability to develop a sense of identity even far from contemporary China (Kuan, 2013). However, regarding the fact that they are located inside universities is regarded as the downside to this model, which, as we will see, is the antithesis to the Chinese model for cultural exchange.

3.3 Brazilian University Exchange: the field of academic outreach as a space of pluralities

De Brito (2000) pointed to the emergence of “migrant-students”, positioned in the world and not just in the community or tribe, also representing the emergence of a hierarchy that polarizes the academic field in general. They are what Mills (1963; 1981) called Metropolitan Citizens. “Elite” refers to a minority that holds prestige and dominion over the social group, or what is most valued and of the best quality, especially in a given social group (De Brito, 2000; Mills, 1981).

The importance of studying elites enables a better understanding of the possibility of democratizing exchange tools between Chinese and Brazilian universities and of creating public policies to facilitate this access. In that sense, this article seeks to approach exchange programs as forms of making ascension possible, since they place students in an international community, generating a status that they did not have before and adding value in the political, economic and social sense, allowing everyone

to be part of this elite.

In the Brazilian case, programs such as Science without Borders, Languages without Borders, Paraná Fala Inglês and the Confucius Institutes fostered the emergence of these globalized citizens and, as they are the most recent programs in Brazil, they were given special attention in this article. The University of São Paulo (USP), for example, already had an undergraduate course in Chinese for many years. Some of the best private elementary schools in São Paulo offered and still do offer Chinese language courses. Private language schools offer Mandarin courses (Paulino, 2019).

By using bibliometric techniques, it was possible to understand the strengthening of the phenomenon of the academic exchange through the search for results of theoretical-methodological niches in the published and indexed scientific literature, which point to the performance of universities around the world. Mercosur, as a free trade zone, favored the emergence of exchanges, as it favored cooperation in S&T, trying to overcome the dependencies of countries with more developed technologies (Velho, 2010; Pritchard, 1969).

According to Mills (1981), members of power elites were either members of: (i) a political class, or (ii) an economically privileged class, or (iii) they were of military origin, able to attend the so-called “high wheels” of modern society because of their high social status. This is the basis of the concept of the elite, according to Mills (1981, p. 11-41).

But there is a link between high status and the vision of these people as having greater economic power to travel, hence the idea of the cosmopolitan citizen directed to a world-community that is the basis for international academic exchanges. It would then be the emergence of a new elite category, a traditionally academic category, which seeks to leave the country, through its own resources or through exchange scholarships (sandwich), and this Almeida (2004) pertinently describes when analyzing the formation of Brazilian intellectual elites. This is where Mills’ theory connects with Bourdieu’s theory, as cosmopolitan habitus only makes sense when people primarily seek to progress economically and intellectually (Mills, 1981; Bourdieu, 2004, Almeida, 2004).

The importance of approaches such as Brito’s (2000) is due to the fact that they synthesize Mills’ ideas (1981) in order to pay attention to peculiar aspects of Brazilian culture and society. Furthermore, they are approaches that underlie the discussion around academic exchanges precisely because they show this unique richness of Brazil and there must be a connection between the approaches. However, the theory of Elites only makes sense for us to think systemically and analytically about post-industrial societies in the sense of looking for ways to deal with these hierarchies without falling into polarizations or binarism. Thinking about public policies and international agreements that favor the entire Brazilian social stratification and understanding it in a complex way seems to be very important and this is the main objective of the study of international exchanges, creating, for example, better programs to promote affordable scholarships for everyone and also for the underprivileged strata.

3.4 Recent Academic Exchange in Brazil: exchange as university outreach

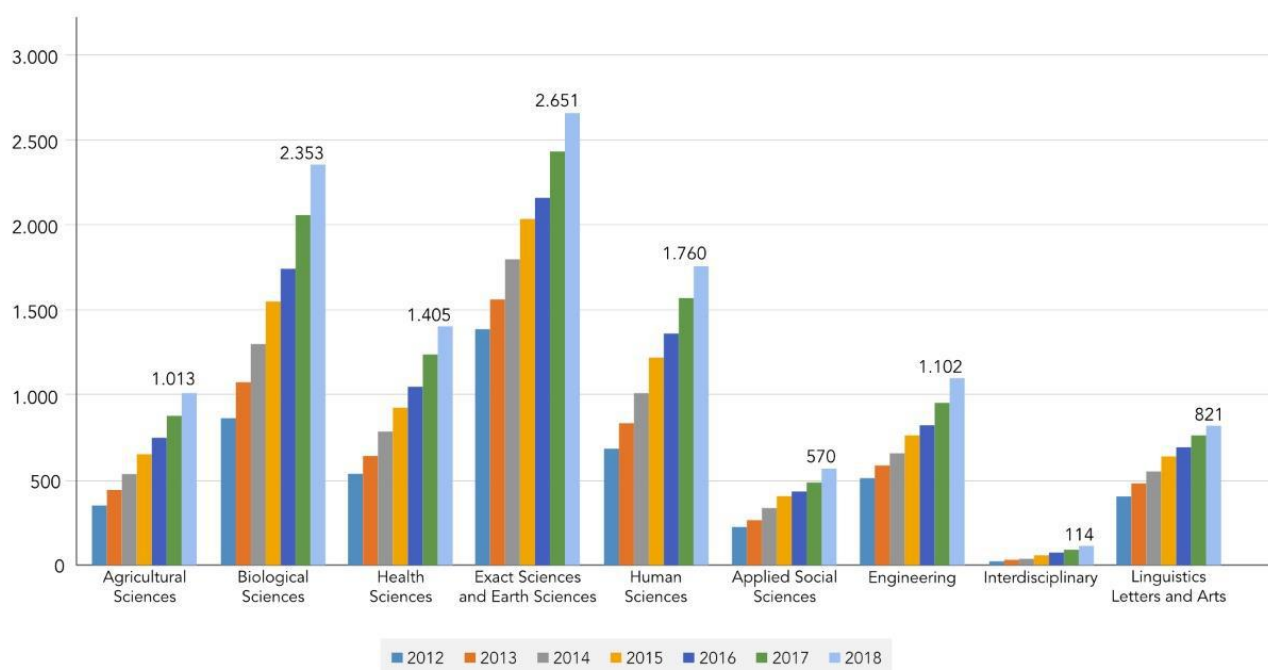
Cultural exchange can represent a type of break in the scholarship holder’s career, as if s/he needed to leave their home country to breathe. It can also function as an absorber of existing practices in the departments where scholarship holders work, specific to countries where the intellectual field is subordinated to the political field, in which the scholarship holder acquires experience capable of enriching practices in Brazil, for example. As pointed out by Weber (1979, p. 89-97 and 98-154), the intellectual works like a missionary, attracted by what s/he understands within a specific vocation, bringing back to his/her country of origin the intellectual baggage acquired while traveling.

It is therefore possible to understand cultural exchange historically from the development of university departments (Arantes, 1994). In 1984, 50% of exchange students in Brazil were the sons and daughters of professors or state employees; 18% offspring of entrepreneurs, and 13% of middle public employees (De Brito, 2000, p. 158). The student who went abroad was considered to be a minority representation of society, as s/he went through a fierce selection process in which having a university

diploma was considered a differential for entry into this so-called power elite. However, there are controversies, not least because the number of unemployed PHDs is still very worrying. However, obtaining a degree does not guarantee the scholarship holder's definitive entry into the elite, but rather an entry into a so-called cosmopolitan habitus, as Bourdieu (2004) points out, almost always driven by an international scientific community, thus determining international career criteria or socialization of international models of science. According to Velho (2011), the historical evolution of Science, Technology and Innovation policies depends closely on the dominant concept of science, that is, when the concept of science tends to be international, policies in S, T, and I also tend to be international (Velho, 2011). Sandwich scholarships were introduced in Brazil only around the 1990s, and they progressively gained importance as an exchange instrument, surpassing doctoral scholarships (DE BRITO, 2000). But the important thing is that there is opportunity for everyone, democratizing access to the possibilities of going abroad, since it is a right of every qualified student.

An important chart to understand the number of scholarships by area of knowledge is shown in Chart 1:

Chart 1 - Records of scholarships abroad, by knowledge area (2012-2018).



Source: FAPESP Virtual Library (2018).

In the distribution of records of Scholarships Abroad (total of 11,789 records), in the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP) Virtual Library, there is greater concentration in the following knowledge areas: Exact and Earth Sciences, Biological Sciences and Human Sciences. The interdisciplinary areas are the ones that receive the least scholarships, along with the areas of Applied Social Sciences. Agricultural Sciences and Health Sciences receive the greatest number of scholarships and, as of 2018, there has been a considerable increase in the distribution of scholarships abroad, which may be the result of more robust national and international agreements in the educational area, but also greater investment in FAPESP in terms of scholarships for abroad. The most negatively affected areas are Applied and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences, such as Economics, Information Science and areas within the universe of Science, Technology and Society (data up to 12/31/2018). Even though this graph is now quite dated, it is the one that best illustrates FAPESP's dynamics to date and there are no more recent records on the subject.

An important study describes and analyzes the history of Portuguese teaching in Baja California (Mexico), as well as

the implementation of an explicit language policy at the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California (UABC) as an internationalization strategy of a leading university in northwest Mexico. The Portuguese program as a way of disseminating the foreign language under the strategy of promoting internationalization and the plurality of languages, including the Brazil-Portugal and Mexico axis, took Brazilian and Portuguese professionals to Mexico to teach the Portuguese language. Like the CIs, which bring Chinese professionals to Brazil to teach the Oriental language to Brazilian students, as well as Brazilian professionals to teach the Brazilian language to the Chinese teachers of the CIs, it sought to: (i) strengthen the integral education of university students with the learning of more than one foreign language for the purpose of integration and international social mobility; (ii) promote multiculturalism in academic communities along the US-Mexico border; (iii) strengthen collaborative ties between organizations that promote Portuguese language learning in Mexico City and the Calibaja region (California and Baja California), (iv) strengthen foreign language programs and teacher training, (v) strengthen collaboration agreements with Brazilian and Portuguese universities, as well as with other universities in the Portuguese-speaking world; (vi) form a strategic alliance between border universities that teach Foreign Language Plans to build a Portuguese language teaching community on the Mexico-United States border (Toledo-Sarracino & Dos Santos, 2022).

Another important article published in *Research, Society and Development* (2022), is the publication by Galotti et al., 2021, which elucidates international exchanges in the training and performance of nurses through the academic, professional and postgraduate fields. This work deserves to be highlighted, since the internationalization of nursing is a potential differential for nurses, whether still in their training process, as an undergraduate or graduate student, generally having the opportunity to study and experience other teaching methodologies, and even for getting to know and carrying out nursing practices in a country other than their home country, improving their professional skills.

Both publications suggest important elements to think about the case of the Confucius Institutes in Brazil, such as the possibility of truly bilateral cooperation from other experiences such as that of Mexico, or even the possibility of expanding theoretical and methodological horizons within specific areas such as the interdisciplinary and the different areas of knowledge that permeate the Mandarin courses offered by CIs, whether in the human, biological, exact and earth or artistic areas. Furthermore, the Mexican experience demonstrates the need for explicit public policies to encourage international cooperation between countries.

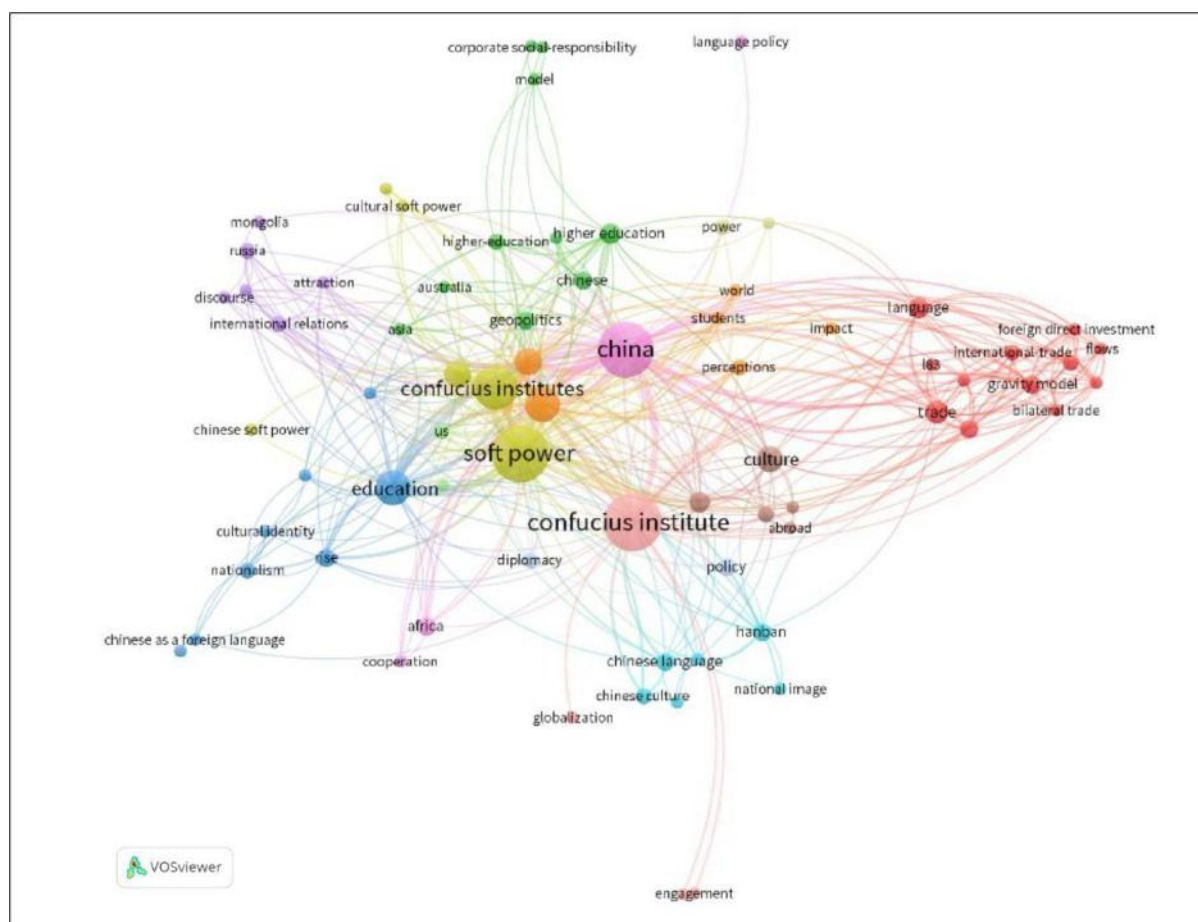
4. Results

4.1 Bibliometric Research

4.1.1 Cluster graphs

Firstly, with the entries related to the Confucius Institutes, the larger the bubble, the greater the number of publications and the colors represent sectoral areas related to the entries:

Graph 1 – Publications referring to words related to the entry “Confucius Institutes” in 2019.

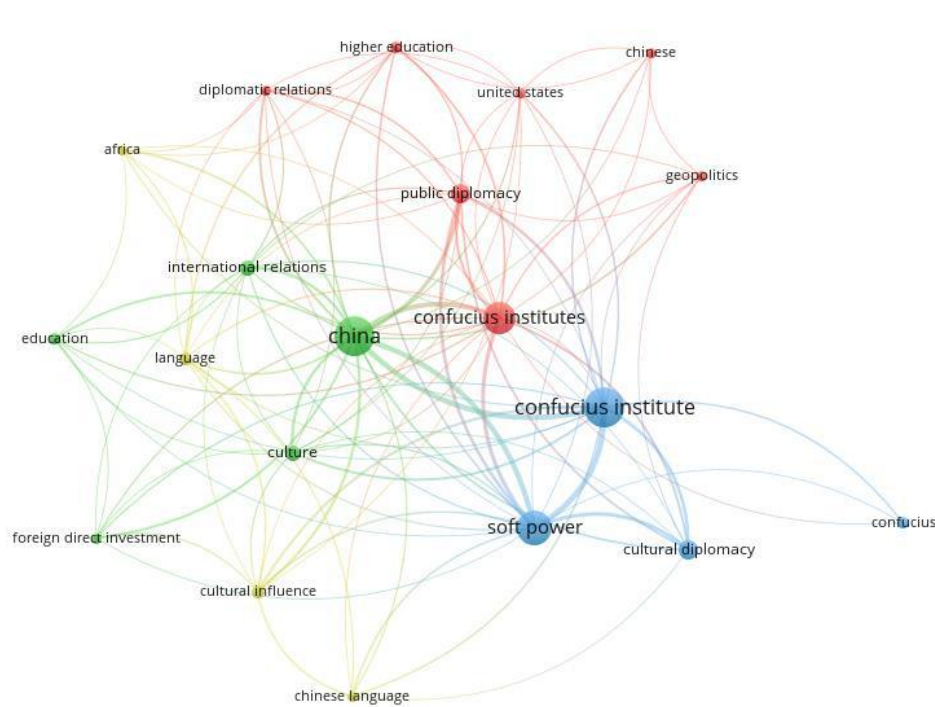


Source:
Web of

Science, through the VOSviewer software. Access: 10/24/2019.

As shown in Graph 1, the greatest number of publications retrieved in the Web of Science (WoS) database, using the search term “Confucius Institute*”, is clustered around the terms “China”, “Soft Power” and “Confucius Institute”. The themes of Education and Culture are also very significant in number. The graph shows mostly that publications on the topic of the Confucius Institutes in the world are almost always linked to the theme of soft power, and given the color of the “soft power” bubble, we are lead to conclude that there has been an explosion of this theme recently, because this color is practically equivalent to the color of “Confucius Institute”. Suffice it to say that in cluster graphs, the clarity of the bubble colors represents the time-frame of the publications: the more recent the publication in question, the clearer the bubbles. Therefore, there is a growing importance of the theme “soft power”, “China” and “Confucius Institutes”, through the clarity of the bubble colors. The theme of “Hanban” is also large and recent, as is the study of Chinese languages. Politics and Diplomacy are the same color which represents that they are intertwined, and not so small. The topic of trade is important, greater than the topic of International Relations, and bilateral trade is also important. The theme of Africa shows a linkage to the Chinese issue, as well as that of Russia, as they have the same color - lilac - which shows an important linkage on issues related to the BRICS, of which both countries are a part, together with China. But Brazil does not appear, which shows that there are not many studies on CIs there. Geopolitics is also an important topic and in relation to the main topics, including China. There are many approaches to the theme of Confucius Institutes, as there are many colors for the same bubble entry. Finally, the theme of cooperation also stands out as a response to the Chinese theme and there is a complex relationship between the themes addressed, as the graph is large and very branched.

Graph 2 - Publications referring to words related to the entry “Confucius Institutes” in 2022.



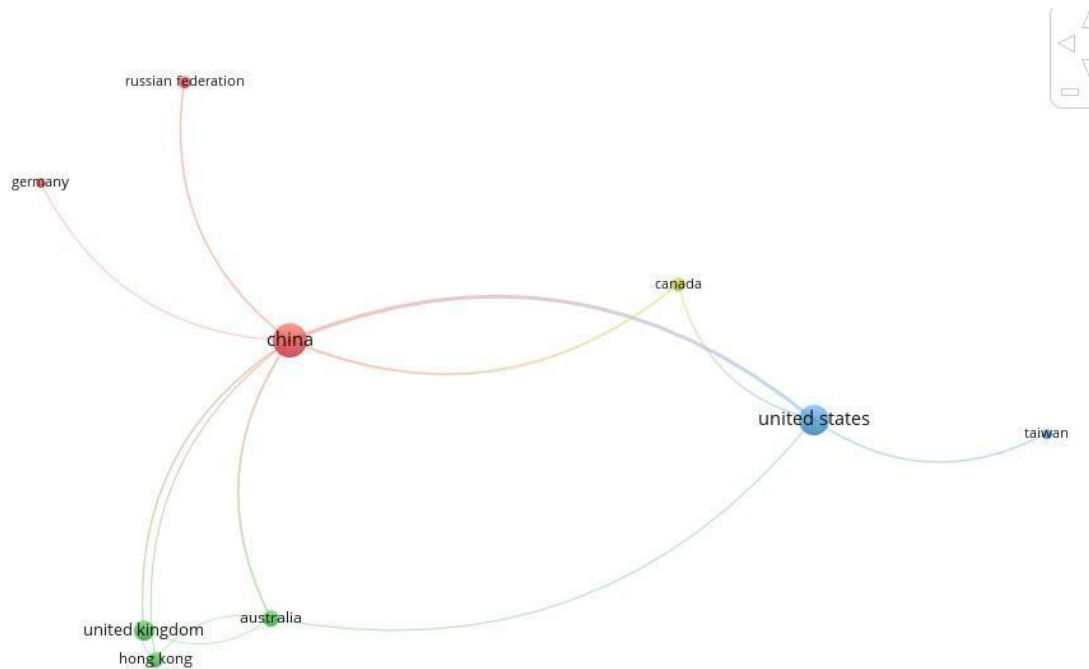
Source: Scopus and Web of Science, through the VOSviewer software. Access: 05/02/2022.

As shown in Graph 2, there is a presence of the Chinese theme, still related to the theme of soft power. It can be seen, above all, that the theme of the Confucius Institutes or the Confucius Institute (in the singular), is fundamental and even more recent, since the red bubble alludes to the most recent publications (in this case, the hot colors); in addition to the word public diplomacy, which is also extremely important, being the focus of researcher attention.

In any case, in relation to the 2019 graph (Graph 1), there is a decrease in the number of themes and a robust transformation in the lines of analysis, much further away from the theme of soft power and more interested in China in particular, that is, in China in a more specific way. Still, we can infer that the importance of the themes “China” and “Confucius Institute” are certainly the same, that is, of the same size of interest in terms of publications, despite a different time horizon; that is, the publications referring to the Confucius Institutes are the most recent and those referring to China, the oldest.

4.1.2 By country

Graph 3 - Publications referring to the entry “Confucius Institute” by country of authorship in 2022.

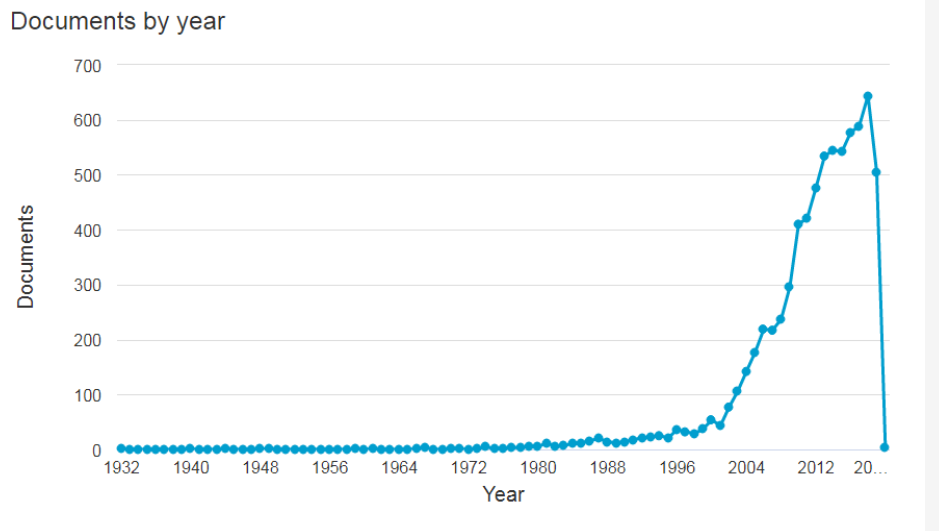


Source: Scopus and Web of Science, through the VOSviewer software, Access: 05/02/2022.

Naturally, China currently publishes more *recently* on the topic of Confucius Institutes than the US, although both are the authors with the greatest amount of publications on CIs in the world. According to Pham et al. (2021), recently, Asia has emerged as a new hub for international students, in addition to traditional hosts such as North America, Europe or Australia. Along with this phenomenon, there has been an increase in the number of international education academics selecting international student mobilities in Asia as objects of research. This is why China has the most recent publications on the subject of exchanges between countries, and why it is one of the most important countries in terms of publications in the area, along with the USA, Russia, Germany, and Canada.

4.1.3 Charts by period and by organization

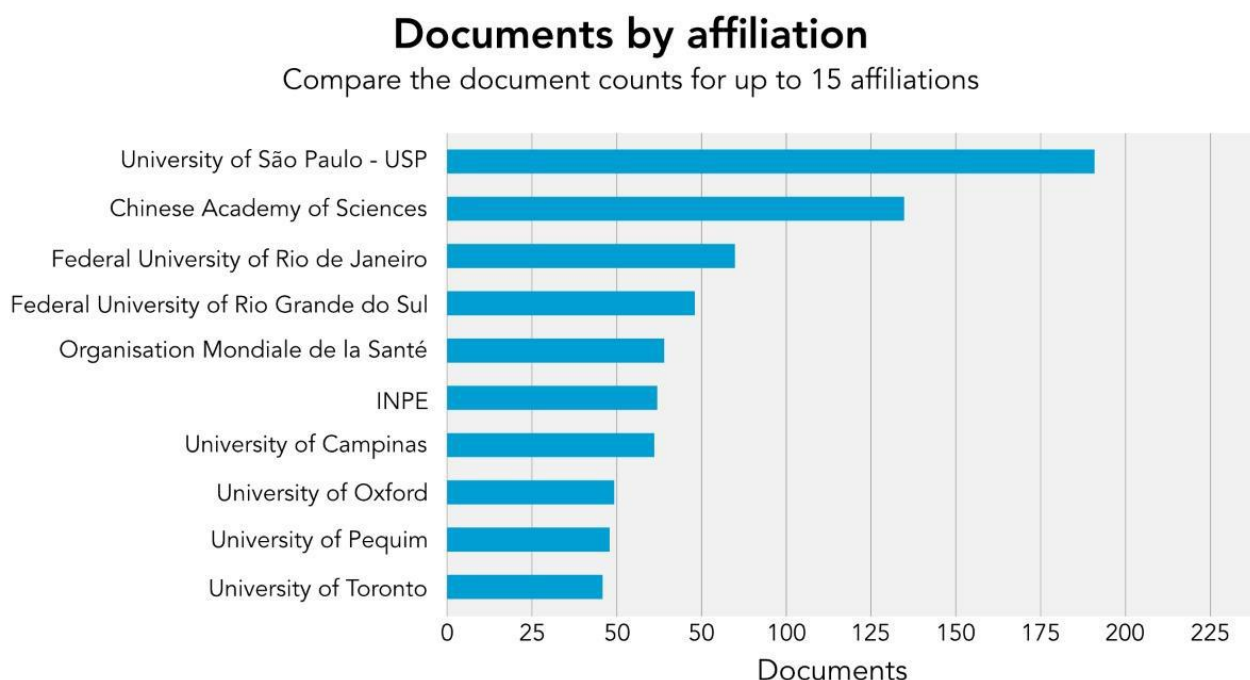
Graph 4 – Publications on the entry “Brazil AND China” by period.



Source: Scopus, accessed on: 10/24/2019.

As mentioned earlier, with reference to Graph 4, we see an explosion of publications from 2013 onwards, certainly when the environmental theme acquires importance in national and international publications and when China acquires international economic importance. China, due to its high industrial capacity, is one of the most polluting countries in the world and, therefore, Chinese interest may have grown due to the discovery of this phenomenon in 2013 (Medeiros, 2013; Ferreira, Leila C., Barbi, 2014, p. 2-14).

Graph 5 – Publications on the entry “Brazil AND China” by Educational Institutions in the world.

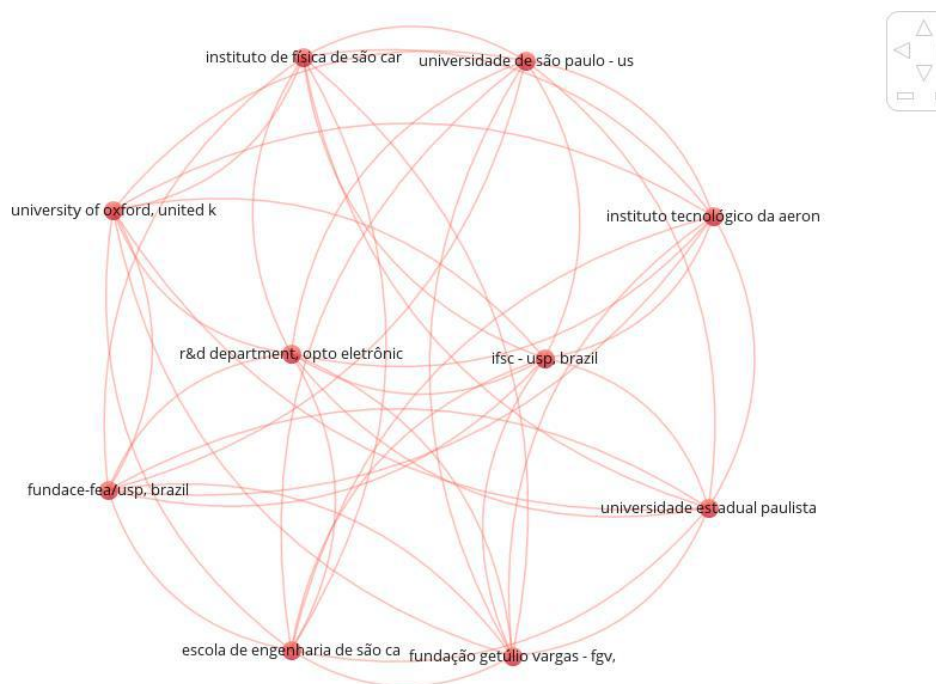


Source: Scopus, accessed on: 10/24/2019.

Graph 5 shows how Brazilian universities are quite productive in this field of study, given the number of articles published by USP and UFRJ, UFRGS and UNICAMP on the Chinese theme. But the Chinese Academy of Sciences is the second most important, after USP. Oxford and Toronto have many publications on the Chinese theme, which suggests a large investment in R&D on China, as well as the others mentioned.

Furthermore, the 2013 explosion may be related to the profound social and geopolitical transformations related to a pre-pandemic period of COVID-19 and Zika Virus worldwide, exposing Chinese problems to the extreme and increasing the interest of the scientific community on the theme of China. In a recent review, between 2020 and 2022, in Latin America, only 4 publications were found: (1) Carmignano, O. R., 2021; Vieira, Sara S., “Iron Ore Tailings: Characterization and Applications (...)”, published in the *Journal of the Brazilian Chemical Society*, which makes reference to samples from Brazil, China and Australia; (2) Araújo, C. G., and Diegues, A. C., 2022, "Patterns of external insertion in global value chains: a comparative analysis between Brazil and China", published in the *Brazilian Journal of Political Economy*; (3) Ansaneli, S., Moraes, R., Silva, G., 2021, “Environmental impacts of trade between Brazil and China: product life cycle perspective”, published in *International Relations*; and (4) Leal Rinaldi, A. and Soreanu Pecequilo, C., 2021, “The Contemporary World Order, BRICS and the R2P Principle: The Cases of Brazil and China (2005/2017)”, published in *Colombia Internacional*. Publications between 2019 and 2022, during the COVID-19 pandemic, are distributed as follows:

Graph 6 - Publications referring to the entry “Brazil AND China” by Educational Institution in the world between 2019 and 2022.



Source: Scopus and Web of Science, through the Vosviewer software. Access: 05/04/2022.

The growing number of academic publications in the field of higher education such as international student mobility - studies focusing on the internationalization of higher education - has shown an exponential phase in the last two decades. In these efforts, research on international student mobility has been a priority. This current review research uses scientific mapping tools to examine journal publications indexed in the Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus databases, with a focus on international student mobility. In this sense, from 2013 onwards, according to the charts above from Scopus, there was an explosion of publications on Chinese and Brazilian topics, while this new chart reveals that the number of publications is in equivalent terms among institutions in São Paulo, such as USP (São Paulo and São Carlos), ITA, Oxford (United Kingdom), UNESP and FGV, most of them Brazilian in terms of number and time horizon, and UNESP now appearing as an exponent in publications in Brazil.

4. Conclusion

The establishment of cooperation between countries is a topic of relevance for institutions such as the Confucius Institutes, for funding agencies that finance scholarships abroad, for the Brazilian and Chinese Consulates, for universities that host these exchange programs and for students who intend to leave the country, expanding their academic curriculum. There is, therefore, a strengthening of international dialogue between both countries, which contributes to the generation of new Science, Technology and Innovation policy. In addition, the theme of the Confucius Institutes is important for the training of professionals with international experience, especially promoting the areas of Exact and Earth Sciences, Biological Sciences and Human Sciences, which are, according to Chart 1 showing the FAPESP data, the areas that receive the most scholarships for Brazilians studying abroad.

The importance of explicit public policies in the area of academic exchange makes it possible to facilitate access to international mobility programs. The theme of the Confucius Institutes needs, therefore, to be further explored, including through anthropological approaches, so that new policies can be made. In this sense, there is a strong economic and cultural impact on this dynamic of promoting Science and Technology. Universities and the country as a whole acquire a solid return from these

initiatives.

It is therefore necessary that there be more encouragement both for international exchange programs and the generation of professional staff capable of dealing with the complexity of current phenomena through investments in scholarships. It is necessary to create quotas for economically disadvantaged people in order to expand the cultural spectrum of participation, but also to create democratic possibilities of access to the so-called cosmopolitan dynamics.

These exchange programs that take place in Brazil, such as the Confucius Institutes, Science without Borders, Language without Borders and Paraná Fala Inglês programs are references with international prestige that deserve to be expanded because they open up opportunities for new generations of university students, as well as contribute to a type of ascension of these young people and democratization of access to international mobility. In addition, the Confucius Institutes are a very important form of university outreach for the student profile and a real possibility to expand the curriculum through these mechanisms of international mobility provided by the CIs.

Finally, quantitative research, such as that using bibliometric methods, is very important to map the field and quantify publications. In addition, qualitative research, such as through sociological and anthropological approaches, will also strengthen fertile ground. Above all, both qualitative and quantitative interdisciplinary analyses are of paramount importance for the subject of academic exchange between Brazil and China, the Confucius Institutes, and especially demonstrate the importance of the diversified and multicultural theme of economic, social and educational cooperation within the scope of the Brazil-China axis.

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