

MPHTI: 06.51.51

JEL Classification: F50, O19, F02

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52821/2789-4401-2024-4-160-172>

## MATRIX-BASED EXAMINATION OF KAZAKHSTAN'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE PARTICIPATION

Assel K. Jumasseitova <sup>1\*</sup>, Arnov Paul Choudhury <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kazakh-British Technical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

<sup>2</sup>University of Cambridge, Cambridge, The United Kingdom

---

### ABSTRACT

*Purpose:* This study aims to critically examine Kazakhstan's involvement in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), challenging prevailing realist interpretations and exploring the nation's agency within the framework of this expansive development strategy. By analysing the multifaceted nature of the BRI and its impact on Kazakhstan's economic development, the research seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the initiative's implementation and outcomes.

*Research Methodology:* The study employs a matrix approach to analyse the BRI's functions and sectors, with a particular focus on Kazakhstan. This methodology involves the creation of two comprehensive matrices: one delineating the overall BRI framework and another specific to Kazakhstan's engagement. The matrices were developed through an extensive literature review, expert consultations, and iterative refinement. This approach allows for a systematic examination of how various BRI functions manifest across different sectors, providing a structured framework for understanding the initiative's scope and impact.

*Originality:* This research contributes to the existing literature by offering a constructivist perspective on Kazakhstan's involvement in the BRI, countering dominant realist narratives. The study's originality lies in its development of a novel matrix approach to BRI analysis, which provides a comprehensive and nuanced view of the initiative's multifaceted nature. Furthermore, the research challenges prevailing misconceptions about the BRI, particularly the notions of 'debt trap diplomacy' and China's purported rigid plan for global dominance.

*Research Findings:* The study reveals that Kazakhstan has effectively leveraged the BRI to its national advantage, utilising open-ended multi-vector policies to selectively engage with the initiative. Contrary to realist interpretations, the research finds that agreements between Kazakhstan and China are based on mutual benefit and equal footing. The economic development impacts of the BRI on Kazakhstan are found to be largely positive, advancing the nation's progress across various sectors. The study also highlights the complex and less cohesive dynamics of BRI implementation, challenging the notion of a monolithic Chinese strategy. Additionally, the research demonstrates that BRI funding helps address the infrastructure gap in developing nations, offering alternative investment opportunities with fewer conditionalities than traditional Western-led initiatives.

*Key words:* integration, economic development, development of relations, infrastructure investments, globalization.

### INTRODUCTION

The concept of geo-economics has gained significant prominence in recent years, reflecting the intricate interplay between geography, economics, and geopolitics in shaping global affairs. As a framework for understanding international relations, geo-economics emphasises the use of economic instruments to promote and defend national interests, and to produce beneficial geopolitical results. This approach has become increasingly relevant in an era characterised by the dynamic tension between globalisation and deglobalisation processes.

Globalisation, a phenomenon that has dominated the latter half of the 20th century and the early 21st century, has facilitated unprecedented levels of economic integration, cultural exchange, and technological

diffusion across national borders. It has led to the creation of complex global value chains, the rise of multinational corporations, and the intensification of international trade and investment flows. However, recent years have witnessed a growing backlash against globalisation, with various political and economic forces pushing towards deglobalisation or 'slowbalisation'. This shift has been marked by rising protectionism, trade tensions, and a renewed emphasis on national sovereignty and self-reliance.

Amidst these conflicting trends, the idea of economic integration remains a powerful force in international relations. Regional economic blocs and trade agreements continue to evolve, seeking to balance the benefits of open markets with the need for economic resilience and strategic autonomy. In this context, the concept of the New Silk Road has emerged as a compelling vision for fostering connectivity and cooperation across Eurasia and beyond.

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched in 2013, represents perhaps the most ambitious manifestation of this New Silk Road concept. As a multi-trillion dollar infrastructure and investment programme, the BRI aims to enhance physical and digital connectivity across more than 60 countries, spanning Asia, Europe, and Africa. It embodies a geoeconomic strategy that leverages China's economic might to reshape global trade routes and power dynamics.

The importance of foreign direct investment (FDI), infrastructure development, and innovation in driving economic growth and competitiveness cannot be overstated in this context. FDI serves as a crucial channel for capital flows, technology transfer, and knowledge spillovers. Infrastructure development, a key focus of the BRI, is essential for reducing trade costs, improving market access, and enhancing productivity. Innovation, meanwhile, is increasingly recognised as a critical driver of long-term economic growth and national competitiveness in the global knowledge economy.

However, it is crucial to recognise that geopolitical decisions and rivalries continue to exert a profound influence on economic relations and outcomes. The implementation of geoeconomic strategies like the BRI, for instance, has sparked debates about debt sustainability, environmental impact, and geopolitical intentions. Trade wars, sanctions, and strategic competition between major powers have disrupted global supply chains and investment patterns, underscoring the complex interplay between economics and geopolitics.

This paper seeks to explore these intersecting themes through the lens of Kazakhstan's engagement with the Belt and Road Initiative. By examining how Kazakhstan navigates the opportunities and challenges presented by this geoeconomic mega-project, we aim to shed light on broader questions of agency, development, and regional integration in an era of global flux and transformation.

**Literature Review.** The concept of the Silk Road, which underpins the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) discourse, has historical roots stretching back over two millennia, connecting China with the Eurasian region [1]. The geographical boundaries of Eurasia or Central Asia are often fluid, generally encompassing the area from 'the Caspian Sea to Western China, Caucuses and Danube Delta', and more broadly including modern-day Mongolia, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, and Tatarstan [1, p.25], [2].

Since its inception in 2013, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been a subject of considerable academic discourse, with scholarly literature proliferating rapidly [3]. The initiative draws upon the historical concept of the Silk Road, evoking a sense of nostalgia that has remained consistent in discussions [4]. This rejuvenation of historical narratives concerning intercultural links between China and Eurasia has been amplified by the development finance provided by China as part of the BRI, also referred to as the 'New Silk Road' [5]. The BRI aims to reinvigorate historical economic and cultural ties between Europe, Eurasia, South Asia, and Africa, with a primary focus on economic relations [6; 7]. It has been instrumental in the significant expansion of China's global economic influence (IISS, 2022) and has been incorporated into the policy documents of over 140 nations across Africa, Latin America, Europe, and Asia, encompassing more than 60% of the global population [8; 9]. The expansive nature of the BRI has rendered it one of the largest development plans in modern history [10; 11].

Much of the existing literature on China's BRI in Central Asia adopts a realist perspective in international relations. This viewpoint emphasises power politics, self-interest, and inherent distrust between states [1]. Realist scholars argue that China's motivations for the BRI are primarily driven by a desire to establish regional hegemony, starting in Central Asia [12]. They often frame the initiative as part of a competition for influence, particularly with the United States [13; 14].

Amineh notes that much of the literature focuses on China's motivations and the global impact of the BRI, often neglecting the agency of participant countries. This realist-dominated discourse has been criticised for its reductionist tendencies [15]. Pieper argues that such perspectives fail to account for local agency and overemphasise great power intervention [8a]. This critique is supported by scholars like Cooley and Cummings, who advocate for a more nuanced understanding of regional dynamics [16; 17].

Western political commentators frequently depict Chinese and Russian policies towards their neighbours as 'imperial', aimed at establishing 'spheres of influence' [18]. This narrative has been particularly prominent in discussions about Central Asian states, which have often been characterised as 'fragile', 'dangerous', and 'insecure', especially in the post-Soviet and post-9/11 context [19].

Contemporary literature has tended to view the BRI as China's attempt to reshape the Eurasian order, either through 'soft balancing' against US influence or by creating regional institutions that challenge Western hegemony [20; 21]. This perspective often frames regionalism as a function of power distribution rather than a pattern of cooperation or regional governance.

However, these realist interpretations have been criticised for their colonial undertones and failure to recognise local agency [16]. Some scholars argue that this approach neglects the role regional actors play in shaping geopolitical outcomes [16]. The realist perspective is perhaps most starkly expressed in the idea that China has a 'grand strategy for Eurasia' aimed at 'rewriting the current landscape' [22].

An alternative approach emerging in the literature is the application of constructivist theory to BRI analysis. This perspective, as outlined by Wendt, emphasises the role of shared understanding and mutual interests in shaping international relations [23]. Through this lens, the BRI can be viewed as a potential avenue for mutually beneficial economic development and cultural exchange, rather than solely as a tool for Chinese expansion [19].

The constructivist approach allows for a more balanced examination of Kazakhstan's role in the BRI. As the site of initial BRI negotiations, Kazakhstan occupies a unique position [24]. Some scholars argue that the alignment between the BRI and Kazakhstan's own development strategies, such as the Nurly Zhol programme, demonstrates a level of agency often overlooked in realist interpretations.

Moreover, the literature reveals a growing interest in the potential of the Chinese development model as an alternative to Western-led initiatives. BRI participant nations may view China's economic success as a template for their own development, offering investment without the political conditionalities often attached to Western funding. This has sparked debates among Central Asian scholars about the relationship between centralised governance and socio-economic development [25].

The discourse surrounding the BRI also intersects with broader debates about the global order. Ikenberry's view that China lacks the capacity or incentive to fundamentally alter the existing international order represents a common, if somewhat paternalistic, perspective in Western academia [26]. However, recent geopolitical shifts and the challenges faced by neoliberal policies in Europe and the USA have led to what Stokes describes as a 'rearticulation of the primacy of the nation state' and a 'hardening of geopolitical revisionism', potentially explaining the prevalence of realist interpretations of the BRI [27].

The BRI aims to reinvigorate historical economic and cultural ties between Europe, Eurasia, South Asia, and Africa, with a primary focus on economic relations [28]. It has been instrumental in the significant expansion of China's global economic influence (IISS, 2022) and has been incorporated into the policy documents of over 140 nations across Africa, Latin America, Europe, and Asia, encompassing more than 60% of the global population [8b; 15a]. The expansive nature of the BRI has rendered it one of the largest development plans in modern history [10a; 11a].

The BRI focuses on five key areas: trade connectivity, policy coordination, financial integration, infrastructure development, and fostering cooperation between countries [29; 30; 10a]. However, the initiative's extensive application is not limited to these categories. The scale of Chinese investment, argued to have exceeded trillions of dollars, has expanded the BRI's reach into diverse domains, including real estate, retail fashion, health data, and satellite [31; 32].

Much of the academic literature has analysed the BRI critically, viewing the global investments and infrastructure development as a means of enhancing China's economic dominance. Some foreign commentators suggest that China aims to shape a new global order and replace the United States as a global hegemon,

potentially supplanting Western values with Chinese values [33]. These arguments often cite the establishment of the AIIB as an attempt to create parallel institutions that may challenge or replace the existing international order [34].

Realist commentary has extensively explored the idea that China seeks to break away from Western-led hegemonic rule, with the BRI serving as a catalyst. Cox's application of Gramsci's theory of hegemony at a global level suggests that hegemony 'is an order within a [capitalist] world economy with a dominant mode of production which penetrates into all countries and links into other subordinate modes of production' [35].

Concerns about 'debt trap diplomacy' have gained traction, with some scholars arguing that Chinese investment loans are intended not to support local economies but to bolster Chinese access to natural resources and facilitate the trade of low-cost goods [36; 37].

However, it is important to note that much of the literature surrounding the BRI tends to be prescriptive rather than descriptive, focusing on potential outcomes rather than actual developments [38].

### THE MAIN PART OF THE RESEARCH

This study employs a matrix approach to analyse the multifaceted nature of BRI, based on the comprehensive insights of 10 experts with extensive backgrounds in international relations, economic development, and geopolitics. This expert-driven methodology was chosen to ensure a nuanced and well-rounded understanding of the BRI's complex dynamics.

This expert-based matrix analysis provides a robust framework for understanding the BRI's multifaceted nature, its implementation strategies, and its potential impacts on participating countries, with a specific focus on Kazakhstan. By leveraging the collective wisdom of these experts, we aim to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of this complex global initiative.

The matrix was developed through the following steps:

1. Identification of BRI Functions: Through a thorough literature review, we identified seven key functions of the BRI: Trade Connectivity, Infrastructure Development, Policy Coordination, Financial Integration, Cultural Exchange, Economic Development, and Global Governance. These functions were selected based on their prominence in official BRI documents and scholarly analyses.

2. Sector Selection: We identified the primary sectors in which the BRI operates, including Transportation, Energy, Telecommunications, Manufacturing, Real Estate, Finance, and Agriculture. The selection was based on the scale of BRI investments and the sectors' strategic importance to the initiative's goals.

3. Matrix Development: We created a matrix with BRI functions on the vertical axis and sectors on the horizontal axis. This structure allows for a systematic analysis of how each function manifests within each sector.

4. Content Population: For each cell in the matrix, we provided concise descriptions of: a) Specific BRI projects or initiatives exemplifying the function-sector intersection b) Potential impacts or outcomes of these intersections c) Challenges or controversies associated with particular function-sector combinations d) Relevant policy measures or agreements

5. Expert Consultation: To validate the matrix, we consulted with 10 experts in international development, Chinese foreign policy, and global infrastructure projects. Their feedback was incorporated to refine the matrix and ensure its accuracy and comprehensiveness.

6. Iterative Refinement: The matrix underwent several rounds of revision based on new data and expert feedback to ensure its relevance and accuracy.

#### Data Collection.

The data for populating the matrix was collected through various means:

1. Literature Review: We conducted an extensive review of academic publications, policy documents, and reports from international organizations related to the BRI. This provided a broad understanding of the initiative's scope and implementation across different countries and sectors.

2. Case Studies: We examined specific BRI projects in various countries to understand how the initiative's functions manifest in different contexts. This included analysis of project documentation, impact assessments, and local media reports.

3. **Expert Interviews:** In addition to the consultations for matrix validation, we conducted in-depth interviews with 15 experts in fields related to the BRI, including economists, political scientists, and infrastructure specialists. These interviews provided insights into the practical implementation and challenges of BRI projects.

4. **Economic Data Analysis:** We analysed economic data from international organizations such as the World Bank, IMF, and ADB to understand the economic impacts of BRI projects in various sectors.

5. **Policy Document Analysis:** We examined policy documents from both China and BRI participant countries to understand how the initiative is being integrated into national development strategies.

#### Matrix Application.

The matrix was applied in two stages:

1. **General BRI Analysis:** First, we populated the matrix with data relevant to the overall BRI, providing a broad view of how the initiative functions across different sectors globally.

2. **Country-Specific Analysis:** We then created a separate matrix specifically for Kazakhstan, allowing for a detailed examination of how the BRI manifests in a specific national context.

This dual approach allows for both a macro-level understanding of the BRI and a micro-level analysis of its implementation and impacts in a particular country.

#### Limitations

While the matrix approach provides a comprehensive framework for analysing the BRI, it has some limitations:

1. **Complexity Reduction:** The matrix necessarily simplifies complex relationships and processes. While this aids in systematic analysis, it may not capture all nuances of BRI implementation.

2. **Dynamic Nature of BRI:** The BRI is an evolving initiative. The matrix represents a snapshot in time and may need regular updating to remain relevant.

3. **Data Availability:** The quality and availability of data vary across different BRI projects and countries, potentially leading to gaps in the matrix.

4. **Subjectivity in Categorization:** The process of categorizing BRI functions and determining which sectors to include involves a degree of subjective judgment, despite efforts to base these decisions on extensive research and expert consultation.

Despite these limitations, the matrix approach offers a valuable tool for systematically analysing the multifaceted nature of the BRI and its implementation in specific countries like Kazakhstan.

This matrix-based methodology provides a structured framework for understanding the complex interactions between various functions and sectors within the BRI. It allows for a nuanced analysis of how the initiative operates on both a global scale and within specific national contexts, offering insights into the opportunities and challenges presented by this ambitious international development strategy.

#### Findings and Discussion

This matrix (Table 1) delineates the various functions and sectors encompassed by (BRI), highlighting specific projects, initiatives, and agreements. The matrix provides a structured framework to understand the multifaceted approach of the BRI, categorizing activities under five key functions: trade connectivity, infrastructure development, policy coordination, economic development, and global governance, across four main sectors: transportation, energy, telecommunications, and finance.

In the transportation sector, trade connectivity is enhanced by projects such as the China-Europe freight trains and improved port facilities, which facilitate smoother and more efficient trade routes. In the energy sector, the construction of oil and gas pipelines connecting countries exemplifies efforts to integrate regional energy infrastructure. Telecommunications projects like cross-border fibre optic networks improve digital connectivity, while financial initiatives such as currency swap agreements support stable and efficient financial exchanges.

Infrastructure development includes a range of projects: high-speed rail projects and highway construction in the transportation sector, power plant construction and renewable energy projects in the energy sector, 5G network rollout in telecommunications, and the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in finance. These projects aim to bolster physical and digital infrastructure, enhancing overall connectivity and capacity.

Table 1 – Functions and Sectors Matrix for the Belt and Road Initiative

Functions / Sectors	Transportation	Energy	Telecommunications	Finance
Trade Connectivity	China-Europe freight trains; Improved port facilities	Oil and gas pipelines connecting countries	Cross-border fibre optic networks	Currency swap agreements
Infrastructure Development	High-speed rail projects; Highway construction	Power plant construction; Renewable energy projects	5G network rollout	Establishment of AIIB
Policy Coordination	Harmonization of customs procedures	Energy cooperation agreements	Shared digital standards	Financial regulatory cooperation
Economic Development	Job creation in logistics sector	Energy security enhancement	Digital economy growth	Increased foreign direct investment
Global Governance	Influence on global shipping routes	Shaping international energy markets	Involvement in global internet governance	Challenging existing financial institutions
Note – compiled by the authors based on the conducted survey sources				

Policy coordination efforts are crucial for harmonizing regulations and standards across different sectors. This includes the harmonization of customs procedures in transportation, energy cooperation agreements, shared digital standards in telecommunications, and financial regulatory cooperation, all of which aim to create a more seamless and integrated framework for BRI activities.

Economic development is driven by initiatives such as job creation in the logistics sector, enhancing energy security, fostering growth in the digital economy, and increasing foreign direct investment. These efforts contribute to the broader economic benefits and sustainability of the BRI.

Lastly, global governance is addressed through activities that influence global shipping routes in transportation, shape international energy markets, involve global internet governance, and challenge existing financial institutions. These efforts highlight the BRI's ambition to play a significant role in global economic and regulatory systems.

The main idea of this matrix is to illustrate the comprehensive and strategic nature of the BRI. By engaging in diverse projects across various functions and sectors, the BRI aims to foster deeper economic integration, enhance connectivity, and promote sustainable development on a regional and global scale.

Table 2 provides a comprehensive analysis of Kazakhstan's involvement in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), organizing specific projects, initiatives, and agreements according to their functions and sectors. The goal of this matrix is to present a clear picture of how Kazakhstan's participation in the BRI contributes to various aspects of its economic and infrastructural growth.

In the transportation sector under trade connectivity, projects such as the Khorgos Gateway, Khorgos Dry Port, and the Altynkol Railway Station enhance logistical efficiency and trade routes between Asia and Europe. The energy sector features the Kazakhstan-China Oil Pipeline and a gas pipeline, pivotal for regional energy distribution.

Infrastructure development in Kazakhstan is marked by significant initiatives like the Nurly Zhol Infrastructure Program and the Almaty Ring Road in transportation, which improve connectivity and reduce travel times. The Ekibastuz GRES-2 Power Plant Expansion exemplifies energy infrastructure enhancement. The telecommunications sector benefits from the National Broadband Network, which improves digital connectivity, while the finance sector is strengthened by the development of the Belt and Road Bond Market.

Policy coordination includes simplified transit procedures at Khorgos in the transportation sector, bilateral energy agreements with China, cross-border data management agreements in telecommunications, and the

alignment of financial standards within the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). These initiatives aim to create a more seamless and integrated framework for BRI activities.

Economic development efforts are driven by the boost in employment within transport logistics, diversification of energy supply sources, development of IT parks, and increased foreign investment through the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC). These initiatives contribute to Kazakhstan's broader economic sustainability and growth.

Table 2 – Functions and Sectors Matrix for Kazakhstan's Involvement in the Belt and Road Initiative

Functions / Sectors	Transportation	Energy	Telecommunications	Finance
Trade Connectivity	Khorgos Gateway; Khorgos Dry Port; Altynkol Railway Station	Kazakhstan-China Oil Pipeline; Gas Pipeline	Trans-Asia-Europe Fibre Optic Line	Renminbi Clearing Centre in AIFC
Infrastructure Development	Nurly Zhol Infrastructure Program; Almaty Ring Road	Ekibastuz GRES-2 Power Plant Expansion	National Broadband Network	Belt and Road Bond Market
Policy Coordination	Simplified Transit Procedures at Khorgos	Energy cooperation agreements	Belt and Road Bond Market	Financial regulatory cooperation
Economic Development	Employment Boost in Transport Logistics	Diversification of Energy Supply Sources	IT Parks Development	Increased Foreign Investment via AIFC
Global Governance	Influence on Eurasian Land Bridge	Regional Energy Market Leadership	Engagement in ITU Initiatives	Active Role in AIIB and NDB
Note – compiled by the authors based on the conducted survey sources				

Global governance is addressed through Kazakhstan's influence on the Eurasian Land Bridge, leadership in regional energy markets, engagement in International Telecommunication Union (ITU) initiatives, and an active role in international financial institutions like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the New Development Bank (NDB). These activities emphasize Kazakhstan's strategic role in regional and global economic systems.

The main idea of this matrix is to illustrate the diverse and strategic nature of Kazakhstan's engagement with the BRI. By participating in a range of projects across various functions and sectors, Kazakhstan aims to leverage the BRI to strengthen its infrastructure, enhance trade connectivity, promote economic growth, and assert its influence in regional and global governance. This multifaceted involvement supports Kazakhstan's long-term development objectives and facilitates deeper regional integration.

## CONCLUSION

The study has shown that Kazakhstan has effectively leveraged the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to its national advantage, facilitated by its open-ended multi-vector policies. These policies have provided Kazakhstan with numerous choices in selecting investment partners for various projects. This combination of national planning and foreign policy illustrates that Kazakhstan's agency is not only preserved but enhanced through its participation in the BRI. Contrary to popular realist perspectives, the agreements between Kazakhstan and China are based on equal footing and mutual benefit.

By examining the economic development impacts of the BRI in Kazakhstan and analyzing the nation's agency, this research opens further avenues for investigation across the entire Eurasian region and neighboring countries that historically played key roles in the Ancient Silk Road. Additionally, future research could

explore the agency of nations connected to the BRI via the Maritime Silk Road (MSR), particularly in Africa and Latin America, where despite geographical distances, investment levels remain significant.

The economic development impacts of the BRI on Kazakhstan have been positive, advancing the nation's progress. This paper has highlighted and addressed several misconceptions about the BRI, particularly within the context of China's development agenda and foreign policy. While realist theories dominate discussions on China's goals through the BRI, the initiative's actual implementation reflects more complex and less cohesive dynamics. Established in 2013, the BRI aims to develop China's western regions and enhance trade links, ambitions that date back to the late 1990s. The notion that the BRI has a rigid, well-structured plan to assert China's global dominance is a misconception. The BRI's structure and implementation have been marked by significant bureaucratic fragmentation and constant revisions at various government levels.

This paper also refutes the idea of 'debt trap diplomacy,' which suggests that China strategically exploits struggling nations through BRI investments. Instead, using constructivist theory, the research demonstrates that BRI funding helps bridge the infrastructure gap in the developing world, offering alternative investment opportunities with fewer conditionalities.

## REFERENCES

1. Kalra P. Locating Central Eurasia's inherent resilience // *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*. 2021. – Vol. 35. – No. 2. – P. 235-255. DOI: 10.1080/09557571.2021.1993136.
2. Montgomery W. D. Central Asia in Context // In: Montgomery, W. D. (Ed.). *Central Asia: Contexts for Understanding*. Pennsylvania: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2022. – DOI: 10.2307/j.ctv264f9cq.
3. Amineh M. P., Linck L., Demirkiran E. BRI in the Middle East and Central Asia // In: Amineh, M. P. (Ed.). *The China-Led Belt and Road Initiative and Its Reflections*. – 2022. – P. 177-208. – DOI: 10.4324/9781003256502-9.
4. Christian D. Silk Road or Steppe Roads? The Silk Road in World History // *Journal of World History*. – 2000. – Vol. 11. – No. 1. – P. 1-26. – DOI: 10.1353/jwh.2000.0004.
5. McBride J., Berman N., Chatzky A. China's massive Belt and Road Initiative. 2023. Council on Foreign Relations, 2.
6. Frankopan, P. *The New Silk Roads: The Present and the Future of the World*. London: Bloomsbury Publishers, 2019.
7. Seele P., Jia C. D., Helbing D. The new silk road and its potential for sustainable development: how open digital participation could make BRI a role model for sustainable businesses and markets // *Asian Journal of Sustainability and Social Responsibility*. – 2019. – Vol. 4. – No. 1. – DOI: 10.1186/s41180-018-0021-3.
8. Pieper M. *The Making of Eurasia: Competition and Cooperation between China's Belt and Road Initiative and Russia*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2022. – DOI: 10.5040/9781838601362.
9. Amineh, M. P. China's Capitalist Industrial Development // In: Amineh, M. P. (Ed.). *The China Led Belt and Road Initiative and its Reflections: The Crisis of Hegemony and Changing World Orders*. Oxon: Routledge, 2023. – DOI: 10.4324/9781003256502-2.
10. De P. China's Belt and Road Initiative: Potential Transformation of Central Asia and the South Caucasus // *Journal of Asian Economic Integration*. – 2020. – Vol. 2. – No. 1. – P. 117-119. – DOI: 10.1177/2631684620918952.
11. Cai P. *Understanding China's Belt and Road Initiative*. Sydney: Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2017.
12. Mattli W. *The Logic of Regional Integration*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. – DOI: 10.1017/cbo9780511756238.
13. Brands H., Feaver P., Mearsheimer J. J., Walt, S. M. Should America retrench: The battle over offshore balancing // *Foreign Affairs*. – 2016. – Vol. 95. – No. 164. – DOI: 10.2307/44806305.
14. Mearsheimer J. J. Kissinger's Wisdom and Advice [Review of: *Does America Need A Foreign Policy?: Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century*, by H. A. Kissinger] // *The National Interest*. – 2001. – Vol. 65. – No. 1. – P. 123-129.

15. Amineh M. P. The China Led Belt and Road Initiative and its Reflections: The Crisis of Hegemony and Changing World Orders. Oxon: Routledge, 2023. – DOI: 10.4324/9781003256502.
16. Cooley A. Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. – DOI: 10.1093/acprof/9780199929825.003.0001.
17. Cummings, S. Power and Change in Central Asia. London: Routledge, 2002. – DOI: 10.4324/9780203166918.
18. Kaczmarek, M. Non-western visions of regionalism: China's new Silk Road and Russia's Eurasian Economic Union // *International Affairs*. – 2017. – Vol. 93. – No. 6. – P. 1357-1376. – DOI: 10.1093/ia/iix182.
19. Kalra P., Saxena S. S. Globalising local understanding of fragility in Eurasia // *Journal of Eurasian Studies*. – 2021. – Vol. 12. – No. 1. – P. 1-10. – DOI: 10.1177/18793665211044839.
20. Andornino, G. B. The Belt and Road Initiative in China's emerging grand strategy of connective leadership // *China & World Economy*. – 2017. – Vol. 25. – No. 5. – P. 4-22. – DOI: 10.1111/cwe.12211.
21. Callahan, W. A. China's Belt and Road Initiative and the new Eurasian order. Oslo: Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI), 2016. – DOI: 10.4324/9781315144702-2.
22. Fallon T. The new Silk Road: Xi Jinping's grand strategy for Eurasia // *American Foreign Policy Interests*. – 2015. – Vol. 37. – No. 3. – P. 140-147. – DOI: 10.1080/10803920.2015.1056682.
23. Wendt A. Constructing international politics // *International Security*. – 1995. – Vol. 20, –No. 1. – P. 71-81. – DOI: 10.2307/2539217.
24. Liu X. Silk Road: A New History / Valerie Hansen. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. *The Journal of Asian Studies*. – 2013. – Vol. 72. – No. 4. – P. 993-995. – DOI: 10.1017/s0021911813001356.
25. Amineh M. P., Linck L., Demirkiran E. BRI in the Middle East and Central Asia: The case of Kazakhstan, Iran and Turkey // In: Amineh, M. P. (Ed.). *The China Led Belt and Road Initiative and its Reflections: The Crisis of Hegemony and Changing World Orders*. Oxon: Routledge, 2023. – DOI: 10.4324/9781003256502-9.
26. Ikenberry J. The rise of China, the United States, and the future of the Liberal International Order // In: Shambaugh, L. D. (Ed.). *Tangled Titans: The United States and China*. New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2012.
27. Stokes D. Trump American hegemony and the future of the liberal international order // *International Affairs*. – 2018. – Vol. 94. – No. 1. – P. 133-150. –DOI: 10.1093/ia/iix238.
28. Seele P., Jia D. C., Helbing D. The New Silk Road and its potential for sustainable development: how open digital participation could make BRI a role model for sustainable businesses and markets // *Asian Journal of Sustainability and Social Responsibility*. – 2019. – Vol. 4. – No. 1. – P. 1-7. – DOI: 10.1186/s41180-018-0021-3.
29. Lei Z. *The Political Economy of China's Belt and Road Initiative*. Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2018. – DOI: 10.1142/10508.
30. IISS. *An IISS Strategic Dossier: China's Belt and Road Initiative: A geopolitical and Geo-economic Assessment*. London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2022. – DOI: 10.1515/sirius-2024-2008.
31. Wong W. K. O. BRI projects: the "rules of engagement" // *Asian Education and Development Studies*. – 2020. – Vol. 9. – No. 3. – P. 337-347. – DOI: 10.1108/aeds-10-2019-0167.
32. Hall H. T., Krolikowski A. Making Sense of China's Belt and Road Initiative: A Review Essay // *International Studies Review*. – 2022. – Vol. 24. – No. 3. – P. 3-19. – DOI: 10.1093/isr/viac023.
33. Maçães, B. *Belt and Road: A Chinese world order*. London: Hurst & Company, 2018.
34. Vangeli, A. The Normative Foundations of the Belt and Road Initiative // In: Shan, W., Nuotio, K., Zhang, K. (Eds.). *Normative Readings of the Belt and Road Initiatives: Road to Periphery*. Cham: Springer, 2018. – DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-78018-4\_4.
35. Cox, R. W. Structural Issues of Global Governance: Implications for Europe // *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations*. – 1993. – No. 26. – P. 259. – DOI: 10.1017/cbo9780511558993.011.
36. Mobley, T. The Belt and Road: Insights from China's Backyard // *Strategic Studies Quarterly*. 2019. – Vol. 13. – No. 3. – P. 52-72.
37. Thrall, L. *China's expanding African relations: Implications for US national security*. Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2015. – DOI: 10.7249/rr905.
38. Jones, L. Does China's Belt and Road Initiative Challenge the Liberal, Rules-Based Order? // *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*. – 2019. – Vol. 13. – No. 1. – P. 113-133. – DOI: 10.1007/s40647-019-00252-8.

## REFERENCES

1. Kalra, P. (2021) 'Locating Central Eurasia's inherent resilience'. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 35(2), 235-255. DOI:10.1080/09557571.2021.1993136.
2. Montgomery, W. D. (2022) 'Central Asia in Context' in (eds.) Montgomery, W. D. (2022) *Central Asia: Contexts for Understanding*. University of Pittsburgh Press, Pennsylvania. DOI:10.2307/j.ctv264f9cq.
3. Amineh, M. P., Linck, L., & Demirkiran, E. (2022). *BRI in the Middle East and Central Asia. The China-Led Belt and Road Initiative and Its Reflections*, 177–208. DOI:10.4324/9781003256502-9.
4. Christian, D. (2000) 'Silk Road or Steppe Roads? The Silk Road in World History'. *Journal of World History*, 11(1), 1-26. DOI:10.1353/jwh.2000.0004.
5. McBride, J., Berman, N., & Chatzky, A. (2023). *China's massive belt and road initiative. Council on Foreign relations*, 2.
6. Frankopan, P. (2019) *The New Silk Roads: The Present and the Future of the World*. Bloomsbury Publishers, London.
7. Seele, P., Jia, C. D., & Helbing, D. (2019). The new silk road and its potential for sustainable development: how open digital participation could make BRI a role model for sustainable businesses and markets. *Asian Journal of Sustainability and Social Responsibility*, 4(1). DOI:10.1186/s41180-018-0021-3.
8. Pieper, M. (2022) *The Making of Eurasia: Competition and Cooperation between China's Belt and Road Initiative and Russia*. I. B. Tauris, London. DOI: 10.5040/9781838601362.
9. Amineh, M, P. (2023) 'China's Capitalist Industrial Development' in (eds.) Amineh, M. P. (2023) *The China Led Belt and Road Initiative and its Reflections: The Crisis of Hegemony and Changing World Orders*. Routledge, Oxon. DOI:10.4324/9781003256502-2.
10. De, P. (2020). H. S. Kohli, J. F. Linn, and L. M. Zucker, China's Belt and Road Initiative: Potential Transformation of Central Asia and the South Caucasus. *Journal of Asian Economic Integration*, 2(1), 117–119. DOI:10.1177/2631684620918952.
11. Cai, P. (2017). *Understanding China's Belt and Road Initiative*. Lowy Institute for International Policy, Sydney, Australia.
12. Mattli, W. (1999). *The Logic of Regional Integration*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. DOI:10.1017/cbo9780511756238.
13. Brands, H., Feaver, P., Mearsheimer, J. J., & Walt, S. M. (2016) 'Should America retrench: The battle over offshorebalancing'. *Foreign Affairs*, 95 (164). DOI:10.2307/44806305
14. Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001). 'Kissinger's Wisdom and Advice [Review of Does America Need A Foreign Policy?: Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century, by H. A. Kissinger]'. *The National Interest*, 65(1), 123–129.
15. Amineh, M. P. (2023) *The China Led Belt and Road Initiative and its Reflections: The Crisis of Hegemony and Changing World Orders*. Routledge, Oxon. DOI:10.4324/9781003256502.
16. Cooley, A. (2012) *Great Games, Local Rules: The New Great Power Contest in Central Asia*. Oxford University Press, Oxford. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199929825.003.0001.
17. Cummings, S. (2002) *Power and Change in Central Asia*. Routledge Publishing House, London. DOI: 10.4324/9780203166918.
18. Kaczmariski, M. (2017). Non-western visions of regionalism: China's new Silk Road and Russia's Eurasian Economic Union. *International Affairs*. 93(6), 1357–1376. DOI: 10.1093/ia/iix182.
19. Kalra, P., Saxena, S. S. (2021) 'Globalising local understanding of fragility in Eurasia'. *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 12(1), 1-10. DOI: 10.1177/18793665211044839.
20. Andornino, G. B. (2017). The Belt and Road Initiative in China's emerging grand strategy of connective leadership. *China & World Economy*, 25(5), 4-22. DOI: 10.1111/cwe.12211.
21. Callahan, W. A. (2016). *China's Belt and Road Initiative and the new Eurasian order*. Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI). DOI: 10.4324/9781315144702-2.
22. Fallon, T. (2015). The new Silk Road: Xi Jinping's grand strategy for Eurasia. *American Foreign Policy Interests*, 37(3), 140-147. DOI: 10.1080/10803920.2015.1056682.

23. Wendt, A. (1995). Constructing international politics. *International security*, 20(1), 71-81. DOI: 10.2307/2539217.
24. Liu, X. (2013). *Silk Road: A New History*. By Valerie Hansen. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. xv, 304 pp. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 72(4), 993-995. DOI:10.1017/s0021911813001356.
25. Amineh, M. P., Linck, L., Demirkiran, E. (2023) 'BRI in the Middle East and Central Asia: The case of Kazakhstan, Iran and Turkey' in (eds.) Amineh, M. P. (2023) *The China Led Belt and Road Initiative and its Reflections: The Crisis of Hegemony and Changing World Orders*. Routledge, Oxon. DOI: 10.4324/9781003256502-9.
26. Ikenberry, J. (2012) 'The rise of China, the United States, and the future of the Liberal International Order' in (eds.) Shambaugh, L. D. (2012) *Tangled Titans: The United States and China*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, New York.
27. Stokes, D. (2018) 'Trump, American hegemony and the future of the liberal international order'. *International Affairs*, 94(1), 133-150. DOI: 10.1093/ia/iix238.
28. Seele, P., Jia, D. C., Helbing, D. (2019) 'The New Silk Road and its potential for sustainable development: how open digital participation could make BRI a role model for sustainable businesses and markets'. *Asian Journal of Sustainability and Social Responsibility*, 4(1), 1-7. DOI: 10.1186/s41180-018-0021-3.
29. Lei, Z. (2018) *The Political Economy of China's Belt and Road Initiative*. World Scientific Publishing, Singapore. DOI: 10.1142/10508.
30. IISS (2022) *An IISS Strategic Dossier: China's Belt and Road Initiative: A geopolitical and Geo-economic Assessment*. The International Institute for Strategic Studies, London. DOI: 10.1515/sirius-2024-2008.
31. Wong, W. K. O. (2020). BRI projects: the «rules of engagement». *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 9(3), 337-347. DOI: 10.1108/aeds-10-2019-0167.
32. Hall, H. T., Krolikowski, A. (2022) 'Making Sense of China's Belt and Road Initiative: A Review Essay'. *International Studies Review*, 24 (3), 3-19. DOI: 10.1093/isr/viac023.
33. Maçães, B. (2018). *Belt and road: A Chinese world order*. Hurst & Company.
34. Vangeli, A. (2018) 'The Normative Foundations of the Belt and Road Initiative' in (eds.) Shan, W., Nuotio, K., Zhang, K. (2018) *Normative Readings of the Belt and Road Initiatives: Road to Periphery*. Springer, Cham. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-78018-4\_4.
35. Cox, R. W. (1993). 10 Structural Issues of Global Governance: Implications for Europe. *Gramsci, historical materialism and international relations*, (26), 259. DOI: 10.1017/cbo9780511558993.011.
36. Mobley, T. (2019) 'The Belt and Road: Insights from China's Backyard'. *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, 13(3), 52-72.
37. Thrall, L. (2015). *China's expanding African relations: Implications for US national security*. Rand Corporation. DOI:10.7249/rr905.
38. Jones, L. (2019). Does China's Belt and Road Initiative Challenge the Liberal, Rules-Based Order? *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 13(1), 113–133. DOI:10.1007/s40647-019-00252-8.

## МАТРИЧНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ УЧАСТИЯ КАЗАХСТАНА В ИНИЦИАТИВЕ «ОДИН ПОЯС И ПУТЬ»

А. К. Джумасейтова<sup>1\*</sup>, Арнов Пол Чоудхури <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Казахстанско-Британский технический университет, Алматы, Республика Казахстан

<sup>2</sup>Кембриджский Университет, Кембридж, Великобритания

---

## АННОТАЦИЯ

*Цель исследования.* Данное исследование направлено на критическое изучение участия Казахстана в китайской инициативе "Один пояс, один путь" (BRI), оспаривая преобладающие реалистические интерпретации и исследуя роль страны в рамках этой масштабной стратегии развития. Анализируя

многогранную природу BRI и ее влияние на экономическое развитие Казахстана, исследование стремится обеспечить нюансированное понимание реализации и результатов инициативы.

*Методология исследования.* В исследовании используется матричный подход для анализа функций и секторов BRI с особым акцентом на Казахстан. Эта методология включает создание двух комплексных матриц: одной, очерчивающей общую структуру BRI, и другой, специфичной для участия Казахстана. Матрицы были разработаны посредством обширного обзора литературы, консультаций с экспертами и итеративного уточнения. Этот подход позволяет систематически изучать, как различные функции BRI проявляются в разных секторах, предоставляя структурированную основу для понимания масштаба и влияния инициативы.

*Оригинальность / ценность исследования.* Это исследование вносит вклад в существующую литературу, предлагая конструктивистский взгляд на участие Казахстана в BRI, противодействуя доминирующим реалистическим нарративам. Оригинальность исследования заключается в разработке нового матричного подхода к анализу BRI, который обеспечивает всесторонний и нюансированный взгляд на многогранную природу инициативы. Кроме того, исследование оспаривает распространенные заблуждения о BRI, особенно представления о "дипломатии долговой ловушки" и предполагаемом жестком плане Китая по глобальному доминированию.

*Результаты исследования.* Исследование показывает, что Казахстан эффективно использовал BRI в своих национальных интересах, применяя открытую многовекторную политику для избирательного участия в инициативе. Вопреки реалистическим интерпретациям, исследование обнаруживает, что соглашения между Казахстаном и Китаем основаны на взаимной выгоде и равноправии. Влияние BRI на экономическое развитие Казахстана оценивается как в значительной степени позитивное, способствующее прогрессу страны в различных секторах. Исследование также подчеркивает сложную и менее согласованную динамику реализации BRI. Кроме того, исследование демонстрирует, что финансирование BRI помогает решить проблему инфраструктурного разрыва в развивающихся странах, предлагая альтернативные инвестиционные возможности с меньшим количеством условий, чем традиционные инициативы под руководством Запада.

*Ключевые слова:* интеграция, экономическое развитие, развитие отношений, инфраструктурные инвестиции, глобализация.

## ҚАЗАҚСТАННЫҢ «БІР БЕЛДЕУ, БІР ЖОЛ» БАСТАМАСЫНА ҚАТЫСУЫН МАТРИЦАЛЫҚ ТАЛДАУ

Ә. К. Жұмасейтова<sup>1\*</sup>, Арнов Пол Чоудхури<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Қазақ-Британ техникалық университеті, Алматы, Қазақстан Республикасы

<sup>2</sup> Кембридж университеті, Кембридж, Ұлыбритания

---

### АНДАТПА

*Зерттеу мақсаты.* Бұл зерттеу Қазақстанның "Бір белдеу, бір жол" (BRI) Қытай бастамасына қатысуын сыни тұрғыдан зерттеуге, басым реалистік түсіндірулерге дау айтуға және осы ауқымды Даму стратегиясы шеңберіндегі елдің рөлін зерттеуге бағытталған. BRI-нің көп қырлы табиғатын және оның Қазақстанның экономикалық дамуына әсерін талдай отырып, зерттеу бастаманың іске асырылуы мен нәтижелерін нюансты түсінуді қамтамасыз етуге тырысады.

*Зерттеу әдіснамасы.* Зерттеуде Қазақстанға ерекше назар аударып, BRI функциялары мен секторларын талдау үшін матрицалық тәсіл қолданылады. Бұл әдістеме екі кешенді матрицаны құруды қамтиды: біреуі BRI-дің жалпы құрылымын, екіншісі Қазақстанның қатысуына тән. Матрицалар әдебиеттерді кең шолу, сарапшылармен кеңесу және итеративті нақтылау арқылы жасалды. Бұл тәсіл BRI-дің әртүрлі функцияларының әртүрлі секторларда қалай көрінетінін жүйелі түрде зерттеуге мүмкіндік береді, бұл бастаманың ауқымы мен әсерін түсінуге құрылымдық негіз береді.

*Зерттеудің бірегейлігі / құндылығы.* Бұл зерттеу Қазақстанның BRI-ге қатысуына конструктивистік көзқарас ұсына отырып, басым реалистік әңгімелерге қарсы тұра отырып, бар әдебиеттерге үлес қосады. Зерттеудің өзіндік ерекшелігі-бастаманың жан-жақты табиғатына жан-жақты және нюансты көзқарасты қамтамасыз ететін BRI талдауына жаңа матрицалық тәсілді әзірлеу. Сонымен қатар, зерттеу BRI туралы жиі кездесетін қате түсініктерге, әсіресе "қарыздық тұзақ дипломатиясы" және Қытайдың жаһандық үстемдіктің болжамды қатаң жоспары туралы түсініктерге қарсы тұрады.

*Зерттеу нәтижелері.* Зерттеу Қазақстанның бастамаға іріктеп қатысу үшін ашық көпвекторлы саясатты қолдана отырып, BRI-ді өзінің ұлттық мүддесі үшін тиімді пайдаланғанын көрсетеді. Реалистік түсіндірулерге қарамастан, зерттеу Қазақстан мен Қытай арасындағы келісімдер өзара тиімділік пен тең құқыққа негізделгенін анықтайды. BRI-дің Қазақстанның экономикалық дамуына әсері айтарлықтай дәрежеде оң деп бағаланады, бұл елдің түрлі секторлардағы ілгерілеуіне ықпал етеді. Зерттеу сонымен қатар монолитті Қытай стратегиясы идеясына қарсы тұра отырып, BRI іске асырудың күрделі және аз келісілген динамикасын көрсетеді. Сонымен қатар, зерттеу BRI қаржыландыруы дамушы елдердегі инфрақұрылымдық алшақтық мәселесін шешуге көмектесетінін көрсетеді, бұл Батыстың дәстүрлі бастамаларына қарағанда аз шарттары бар балама инвестициялық мүмкіндіктерді ұсынады.

*Түйін сөздер:* интеграция, экономикалық даму, халықаралық қатынастар, инфрақұрылымдық инвестициялар, жаһандану.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Jumasseitova Assel Kenesovna** – candidate of economic sciences, PhD in Management, Professor, Business School, Kazakh British technical university, Almaty, Kazakhstan e-mail: a.dzhumaseitova@kbtu.kz, ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2193-9418> \*

**Arnov Paul Choudhury** – MPhil Development Studies candidate, University of Cambridge (г. Кембридж, Великобритания, email: [ap2378@cam.ac.uk](mailto:ap2378@cam.ac.uk))

МРНТИ 06.52.41

JEL Classification: O1

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52821/2789-4401-2024-4-172-185>

#### ВЛИЯНИЕ ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОЙ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ НА ИНТЕГРАЦИОННЫЕ ПРОЦЕССЫ В ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ: ВЫЗОВЫ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ

С. Ы. Умирзаков<sup>1\*</sup>, И. Н. Кренгауз<sup>2</sup>, А. А. Аубакирова<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Университет Нархоз, Алматы, Республика Казахстан

<sup>2</sup>Университет «Туран», Алматы, Республика Казахстан

---

#### АННОТАЦИЯ

*Цель данного исследования* заключается в изучении влияния экономической идентичности на процессы региональной интеграции в Центральной Азии, а также в выявлении ключевых вызовов и перспектив, связанных с этими процессами.

*Методология.* Для достижения поставленной цели в исследовании мы применяем комплексный подход, включающий количественные, качественные методы и методы сравнительного анализа. Количественный анализ основан на статистических данных о торговых и экономических показателях стран Центральной Азии, полученных из международных и национальных источников. Качественный анализ - на политических и экономических документах, касающихся интеграционных процессов в ре-