
Plan Overview

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Title: The Sino-Localized Approach to Tracking the Development of Belt and Road Initiative Projects: Theories, Applications and Moral Implications

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Project abstract:

Chinese government defines the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in functional terms, supporting any international project that has the potential to become part of the BRI. This opens the door to many possibilities, encouraging interested stakeholders in many parts of the world to justify how their projects can be part of the BRI and thus obtain Chinese investments or loans. Without understanding the internal pulling and drawing of different actors both in China and in potential BRI recipient states, one cannot assume that BRI projects will materialize and even bring the intended benefits to all the actors and societies involved. This research project analyses the interplay of local actors and localized politics in facilitating and/or hindering the realization of BRI projects in Finland and Estonia, where efforts to realize the development of the Polar Silk Road (PSR) have been intensified over the past years in line with China's growing involvement in the Arctic affairs. Based on a premise that domestic actors play an important role in carrying of ideas, ideologies, and identities, and in deciding whether and how BRI can exist in their countries, we create a novel theoretical framework that explains why and how social interaction between Chinese and local actors in some cases make a BRI project a reality in a foreign country, and in some cases not. Inspired by the popular term "glocalization" that looks at the situated local negotiations and adaptations of international influence (e.g., brands, products, consumer practices), we call the new theoretical framework a Sino-localized approach to studying China's global influence and analysing potential risks and normative implications related to those processes. Concerning our empirical analysis, it is worth mentioning that Finland has not officially signed an agreement to be a BRI country. Even so, some Finnish private actors have been eager to link their efforts to build the PSR. Apart from the yet-to-realized cases of Talsinki tunnel and Arctic railway exemplifying how a Sino-localized process is taking place "on the ground", with different stakeholders articulating and negotiating their interests, a Xian-Kouvola cargo train is already in operation by using existing railway and receives Chinese subsidies, thus making the PSR a reality in Finland. Qualitative interviews with stakeholders and qualitative content analysis of policy papers as well as media reports will be employed to explore the cases.

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The Sino-Localized Approach to Tracking the Development of Belt and Road Initiative Projects: Theories, Applications and Moral Implications

Date of the Plan

Date of the DMP

02.09.2020

1. General Description of Data

What kinds of data are collected or reused?

Semi-structured interviews

Qualitative interviews with academics, businessmen and government officials in Finland, Estonia and Norway will be conducted. Interview transcripts will be stored in WORD files for further analysis.

What file formats will the data be in?

Interviews will be transcribed and the data will be stored in Word files.

2. Documentation and Quality

How will the data be documented?

PI is responsible for naming the files consistently so that all team members can identify, locate and retrieve the data easily. PI will also keep a WORD file to list the interview data stored for the project.

How will the consistency and quality of data be controlled and documented?

The data stored in team members' computers are in the University of Helsinki's networked fileservers. Hence, it contains the most updated version of the data. The data temporarily stored on portable devices will be encrypted and updated every month to ensure that it is the same as the one stored in the fileservers.

PI will be responsible for the regular update and keep track of the most updated version of the data.

3. Storage and Backup

How will the data be stored and backed up?

A group folder (network drive for the research group) provided by the University of Helsinki IT will be used to store the data. The group folder is automatically backed up on daily basis and is password protected.

How will you control access to keep the data secure?

Only the three team members including the PI have access to the data in the university's networked fileservers. If any third party is interested in the data, he/she will need to fill out a form to obtain access and sign their names to promise that they only use the data for academic research. Access to anonymised data by external parties during and after the research project can be established via Dropbox.

4. Ethics and Legal Compliance

How will ethical issues be managed?

We will ask permission from interviewees to record the interviews before we conduct the interviews. If recording is allowed, we will show the interviewees the transcripts and have their approval to use them for publications. If recording is not allowed, we will show the interviewees our notes and have their approval to use the notes for publications. Interviewees will decide whether their names will be mentioned or remain anonymous in the final publications.

Interviewees will be asked for their permission to share the data during and after the research, and for archiving the data. If permission is not granted the data will not be shared with third parties and it will be deleted on completion of the project.

How will ownership, copyright and Intellectual Property Right (IPR) issues be managed?

Concerning interview data, the recording and transcriptions belong to the person who conducts the interview and write the transcription/summary. We have three persons on the team. If one of the team members wishes to use the other team member's interview data, she needs to have the direct permission from the data owner and she needs to agree to correctly mention the data owner in her own publication.

Normally, before a paper is published, the authors will sign a copyright agreement with the publisher. We follow the agreement signed with each publisher to manage the ownership, copyright, and IPR issues.

5. Data Sharing and Long-Term Preservation

How, when, where and to whom will the data be made available?

The data in storage will be kept for at least ten years. The University of Helsinki has the rule that published research results are open and available for shared use. The discoverability and citability of research data must be ensured. In order to adhere to this rule, our data will start to be made available for external party when our papers are being under review in international academic journals. This is because journal editor and reviewers might request to view the data in order to evaluate our papers.

In our papers, one cannot find the original qualitative or quantitative data, only the summarized and analyzed version. If any researcher, journal editor or reviewers wish to examine the data, we will ask them to complete a form for confidentiality and they are only allowed to use the data for the purpose that they clearly state in the form.

They will be given a link from our Dropbox to access the requested data, which will be anonymised.

The outcome of the research will be published 'Green', that is, the researchers will self-archive the publications according to the University of Helsinki guidelines on <http://libraryguides.helsinki.fi/oa/eng/green>.

How and where will data with long-term value be made available?

Our data has more contemporary value than long-term value. However, it will be useful for historians who seek to examine China's global role in a long-term perspective.

Data selected for long-term preservation, including a Guidebook for using that data will be submitted to the Finnish Social Science data archive.

Have you estimated costs in time and effort for preparing the data for preservation and sharing?

The use of University networked file servers is paid for by the University. Hence, the cost is low. Regular update and back up of data does take time, yet it is included in the routine research work. It should not be an extraordinary burden for PI.