

IPSA RC34 Quality of Democracy
International Workshop

China's Belt and Road Initiative: Curse or Blessing for democracy in Eurasia?

OSCE Academy in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan,
12-14 March 2021

Event Description

China's New Silk Road Initiative (Belt and Road initiative, BRI) has been spinning its logistical and infrastructural web around the world since 2013. Massive infrastructural investments in tracks and roads as well as in the agricultural and energy sector and logistical centers were made in over 50 countries in Eurasia. BRI is a central component of Chinese investment policies that have affected core public policy areas in over 100 countries in the world. Almost a decade after the official launch of BRI, this workshop will assess its political implications. Contributors discuss the impact that BRI has had, willingly or not, on democratization or autocratization processes in the countries and societies that it invested in, ranging from Europe to the Middle East, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia.

The workshop will be conducted as an online event. Please register to attend. Registered participants will receive log-in instructions via e-mail!

Registration:

<https://forms.gle/vPcudRUKkCRptF3z9>

Organization:

Brigitte Weiffen (Senior Lecturer, The Open University, Milton Keynes, and Chair of RC34), brigitte.weiffen@open.ac.uk

Anja Mihr (DAAD Associate Professor, OSCE Academy Bishkek), a.mihr@osce-academy.net

PROGRAM

The schedule is in Bishkek local time. Please convert to your local time (for example here: <https://www.thetimezoneconverter.com/>)

Friday 12 March 2021

- 14:00-14:30 **Welcome notes**
Alexander Wolters, Director, OSCE Academy, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
- Introductory remarks**
Anja Mihr, DAAD Associate Professor, OSCE Academy, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
Brigitte Weiffen, Senior Lecturer, The Open University, United Kingdom
- 14:30-15:30 **Keynote Lecture: Future Impact of BRI in Eurasia**
Richard Pomfret, Professor of Economics, University of Adelaide, Australia
- 15:45-17:00 **Panel 1: BRI and political and economic transformation**
- The Belt and Road Initiative and Its impact on Human Rights and Democracy – A Mixed-Method Analysis**
Marketa Maria Jerabek, Researcher, NEPEI, University of São Paulo, Brazil
- Road to peace or bone of contention? The impact of the Belt and Road Initiative on conflict states**
Pascal Abb, Senior Researcher, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF), Germany, Rob Swaine and Ilya Jones, Saferworld
- Does the Institutional Environment in the Host Country Matter? Determinants of Chinese Outward Foreign Direct Investment in the Belt and Road Initiative Countries**
Dmitry Erokhin, Research assistant, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Laxenburg, Austria

Saturday 13 March 2021

- 14:00-15:00 **Keynote Lecture: Official visions of democracy in Xi Jinping's China**
Heike Holbig, Professor, Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in East Asia, Department of Political Sciences, Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany
- 15:00-16:00 **Panel 2: Regime change and BRI**
- Black Knight Rising: China's Strategies to Promote Autocracy around the World***
Henoah Gabriel Mandelbaum, University of São Paulo (USP), Brazil, and Brigitte Weiffen, The Open University, United Kingdom
- Chinese surveillance technologies in the Eurasia. A catalysator for authoritarian tendencies or enabler of democratic reform**
Tobias Burgers, Assistant Professor, Cyber Civilization Research Center, Keio University, Tokyo, Japan

16:30-18:00 **Panel 3: BRI and Central Asia**

Hitting Below the Belt: BRI and China's Grand Strategy in Central Asia

Srdjan Uljevic, Senior Lecturer, American University of Central Asia, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

Kazakhstan responses to China's security strategy in Xinjiang

Elzbieta Pron, Assistant Professor, University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland

Chinese foreign aid and Autocratization of Central Asia

Nurseit Niyazbekov, PhD, KIMEP University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

China's Belt and Road Initiative and sustainable urban development in Central Asia: challenges for democratization of Central Asian societies

Artem Dankov, PhD, Director of Confucius Institute and Associate Professor at the Dept. of Global Politics, Tomsk State University, Russia

Sunday 14 March 2021

14:00-15:30 **Panel 4: BRI's impact on Regime Change in Asia and Africa**

Autocratization by Linkage: The de-democratizing effect of Chinese investments in Africa

Eltion Meka, Researcher, University of New York Tirana, Albania

Belt and Road Initiative Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats: Afghanistan Perspectives

Abdullah Zahid, School of Public Affairs, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou, China

Chinese Linkage and Leverage, Democratization, and Regime Change: The Case of Pakistan

Gul-i-Hina Shahzad, Doctoral Research Fellow, New Silk Roads Project, International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Netherlands

Does the Belt and Road Initiative undermine democracy? Evidence from South Asia

Filippo Boni, Lecturer, The Open University, United Kingdom

15:45-17:00 **Panel 5: BRI's impact on Regime Change in Europe**

China in Central Europe: Threat Perceptions, Influence, and Interference

Alica Kizekova, Senior Researcher, Institute of International Relations Prague, Czech Republic

Opportunities and Risks in the Implementation of the "One Belt, One Road" Initiative: A View from Ukraine

Yurii Poita, Head of the Asia-Pacific Section at the Center for Army, Conversion and Disarmament Studies, Ukraine

Is China's New Silk Road Strengthening the Autocratic Apparatus of Belarus?

Prakash Raj, Doctoral Research Fellow, Department of Political Science, University of Hyderabad, India

17:00-18:00 **Keynote Lecture: Varieties of Authoritarianism in Eurasia**

Edward Schatz, Professor, University of Toronto, Canada