

The Belt and Road Initiative

An Integrative Subject for Interdisciplinary Studies about China

By Nancy Sowers and Jianfen Wang



Premier Zhu of China and President Clinton. Source: Screen capture from the video, *Welcoming Ceremony for Premier Zhu Rongji w/ Pres. Clinton (1999)*, on YouTube at <https://tinyurl.com/mr37bhww>.

China's economic transformation altered the global economy in unexpected ways. In 2000 when Bill Clinton encouraged Congress to support China's ascension to the World Trade Organization (WTO), his argument centered on the belief that once Chinese society saw the power and the benefits of capitalism, it would demand political and economic freedom, and the power of free markets would propel China to economic prosperity. Twenty-plus years later, China has discovered its own path to economic wellness, one that continues to support the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) with political power largely unquestioned. The economy is the second largest in the world and the largest under standards of purchasing power parity (the exchange rate that would translate renminbi to dollars and allow someone to buy the same basket of goods in either country).¹ China's investment in its own infrastructure and the development of industry in technology, finance, and artificial intelligence make the country a daunting global competitor.

Given China's rise and its explicit resolution to follow its own path, an understanding of China's economic transformation and global strategy is imperative for American students preparing for careers. The vast differences in culture and worldview of Chinese society suggest that simply applying the standard business transaction and replacing US dollars with Chinese renminbi is not enough to promise success when dealing with China. Our students deserve an interdisciplinary approach to what it means to trade in China, within the confines of an authoritarian government, yes, but one that recognizes, from the perspective of Chinese leadership and possibly most Chinese, a different, but rational perspective to economic decision-making.

We show how the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) can be an integrative topic for an interdisciplinary course dedicated to preparing majors in both International Business and Asian Studies for the world landscape they will encounter. Using the BRI as a compilation project at the end, the course allows students to explore and harness the perspectives we spent time developing throughout the semester. By scaffolding perspective through the lens of cultural ethos and policy positions in early writing assignments, students prepare to look from China outward to the rest of the world analyzing the incentives and motivations behind China's global finance model.

A loaded Chinese container ship at the Port of Oakland, CA, the fourth-busiest container port in the US. Source: © Shutterstock.



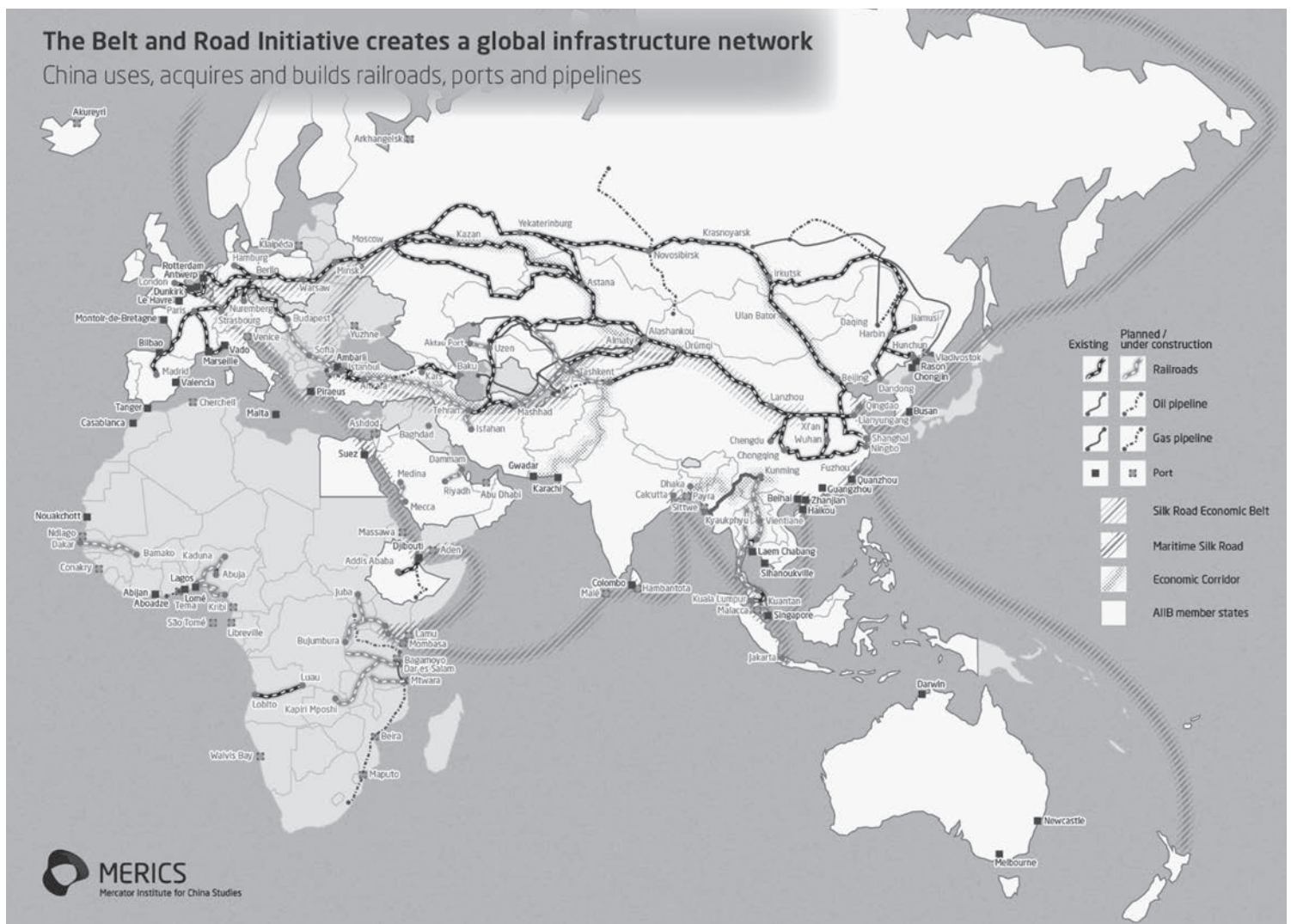
The Economist argues, “The Communist Party is using the BRI to reshape a world order more to its liking.”

The BRI as a Contested Global Issue

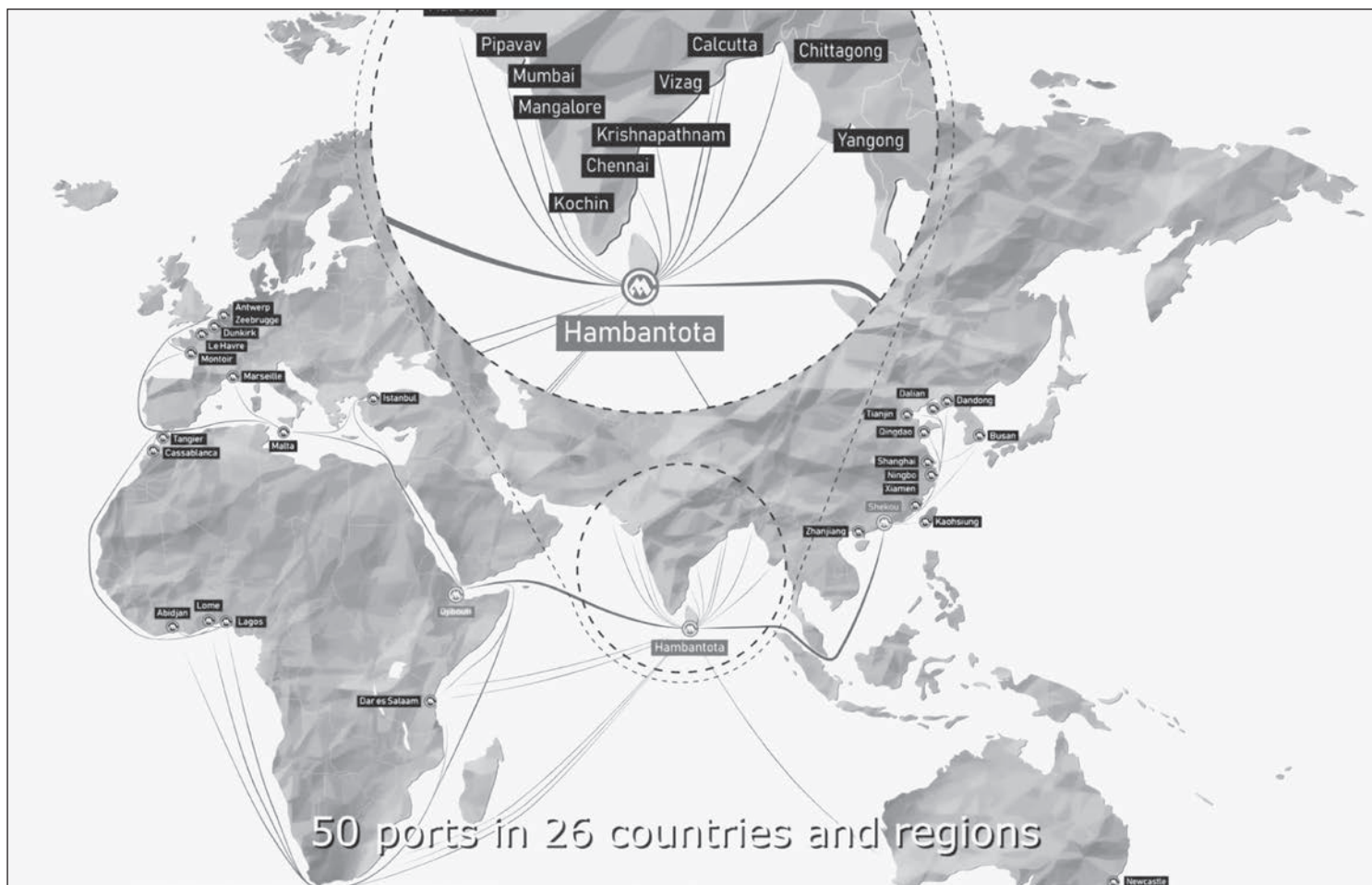
The BRI, also known as the “One Belt One Road” (OBOR), is China’s main international cooperation and economic strategy, put forward by China’s current president Xi Jinping in 2013 and written into the Communist Party’s charter in 2017.² The “belt” and the “road” stand for the “Silk Road Economic Belt” (a network of primarily land-based roads connecting China with Central Asia and Europe) and “the twenty-first-century Maritime Silk Road” (a sea-based route to connect China’s southern coast to the Mediterranean, Africa, South-East Asia, and Central Asia). By July 2022, 149 countries signed BRI agreements, with China investing \$892.36 billion US dollars between 2013 and 2021.³ In the early stages of BRI rollout, Chi-

na’s investments were primarily infrastructure, energy, and mining projects, which caused worldwide scrutiny on ecological grounds. In response, since 2019, China began to emphasize green development in the BRI. Most recently, Xi promotes a new idea called “the Global Development Initiative” with a greater focus on sustainable development and explicit promises to stop financing coal-fired power plants abroad.⁴ Today, while splurges on infrastructure have slowed as profitable opportunities fall away due to the COVID-19 pandemic, drops in the commodity market, and debt distress among developing countries, the BRI still expands to include the Space Silk Road, Polar Silk Road, Digital Silk Road, Health Silk Road, and so on; essentially any investment China makes with the rest of the world gets incorporated as an expansion in the BRI.

Western responses are almost universally wary and pessimistic when looking at China’s investment and development choices around the globe. Indeed, *the Economist* argues, “The Communist Party is using the BRI to reshape a world order more to its liking.”⁵ Here, the argument goes, China wants to change the rules of international trade and economic development established after



Source: MERICS Mercator Institute for China Studies website at <https://tinyurl.com/ywex47ap>. ©Merics Marz 2018



A promotional graphic that demonstrates the geographic importance of the deep water Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka in the overall Chinese BRI strategy. Source: Screen capture from the Hambantota International Port video, *Take a Tour of the Hambantota Port with Us* at <https://tinyurl.com/4btahr8>.

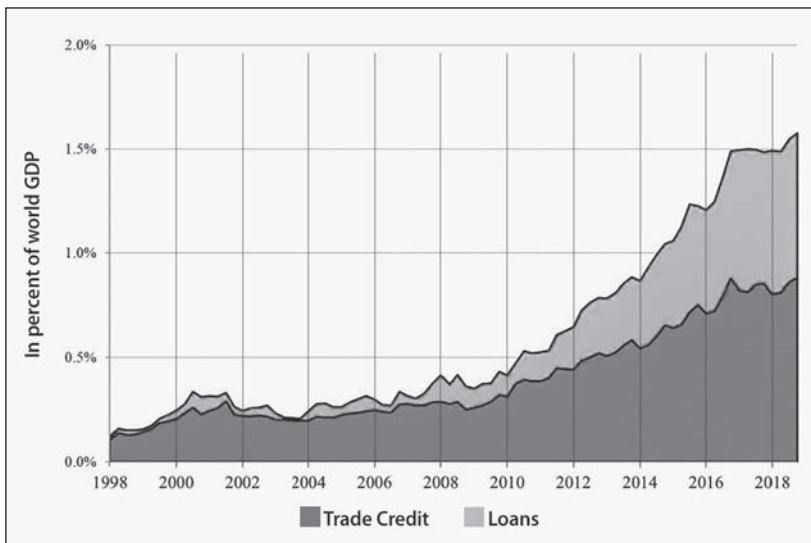
World War II, and institutionalized by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund because they are making a grab for world power and domination. Directors with extensive diplomatic expertise and relevant policy experience, Robert Daly (Kissinger Institute on China and the United States) and Matthew Rojansky (Wilson Center's Kennan Institute), summarize China's intent:

China is in the midst of what it calls a "period of strategic opportunity" resulting from its rapid rise and the slow growth of the West since 2008. For Beijing, the financial crisis ended China's thirty-year economic apprenticeship to the United States and put the lie to the universalist claims of American values and the American-led world order.⁶

One big issue for the West is China's perceived ambition to create an Asian block of trade and power through careful, long-run investment strategy. China chooses its aid partners strategically and seeks to shake up the traditional order of friends and partners, using the places it invests to buy allegiance from recipients and co-opt cooperation and support from them when needed. The real intent is influence through soft power, and China's success in these efforts represent national security risks for Western democracies and perhaps most notably the US. The BRI is a strong signal to the world that China's economic and political power is of great consequence.

Beyond the fear of changes to political power in the world, Western economists, governments, politicians, and academics point at China's so-called "win-win opportunities" around the world as lopsided fairytale deals that only benefit China in the long-run. On one hand, the economic benefits to China are manifold. Chinese loans often are used to pay Chinese companies to do the construction, so Chinese state banks are subsidizing Chinese industry at under capacity to go abroad. At a macroeconomic level, the BRI also provides a pathway for extending China's markets beyond China without relying on the United States or internal consumption rates. Building sea ports and railroads that expand trade helps extend China's resource supply chain and provides support for claims in the South China Sea. On the other hand, developing and low-income countries, desperate for infrastructure, agree to huge loans at market rates with collateral obligations that they cannot afford. The opacity of the terms makes it very difficult to fully know what the state is on the hook for in some cases. Together these benefits to China and the opacity characteristic of the deals look different from the West's aid model and raise concerns.

China's Overseas Lending Boom



Note: This figure represents a subset of outstanding Chinese overseas debt claims as reported in China's BoP Statistics. Trade credit includes short, and long-term trade credits and advances. Portfolio debt investments are excluded. Source: *Journal of International Economics*, "China's Overseas Lending" at <https://tinyurl.com/s8py2t6n>.

China's scale of lending is also unsettling. Based on their recent research, economists Sebastian Horn (World Bank), Carmen Reinhart (Harvard University and the World Bank), and Christoph Trebesch (Keil Institute of World Economy) argue that a lot of China's debt falls below the radar of the West's standard debt collection records, that China is by far the largest creditor to lesser developed countries, and that there have been at least 164 debt restructurings with China since 1950.⁷ The last finding is particularly interesting as concerns of debt-trap diplomacy raged when China assumed an equity stake in Hambantota Port in 2015. Could China be moving to a colonization model when poor countries don't repay? It *appears* that the answer is largely no, they simply extend time on loans when distressed countries can't pay or seek relief. According to *The Economist*, China is also coordinating with other creditor nations to work with debt distressed countries in the face of COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine.⁸

The West's skepticism of China's intentions with the BRI are understandable, but not perhaps productive. Although it is vital that students understand Western perspectives on the issues at the heart of international relations with China, it may be just as im-

portant for future leaders in government, philanthropy, and most of all, business, to recognize and understand the origins of the Chinese perspective for constructive mutual work on at least some critical global issues. By investigating what BRI means for China and the rest of the world, students can gain a deep understanding of China's strengths and challenges from historical, economic, and ecological perspectives and recognize different perspectives on globalization. We build these perspectives throughout the semester.

BRI as a Coherent Trait of China's Identity

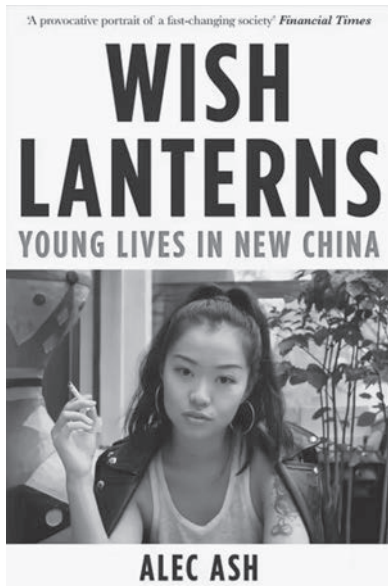
The BRI, as a core strategy for realizing the China Dream, constitutes a coherent trait in China's identity in the twenty-first century. Identity is the "nation-state's *view of itself* (*italics added*), comprising the traits of its national character, its intended regional and global roles, and its perceptions of its eventual destiny."⁹ The construction of this national identity is carefully cultivated, leaving out the more troublesome historical periods of CCP leadership, like the Great Leap Forward (and the famine that followed), the Cultural Revolution, and the Tiananmen Square crackdown. As concerns the BRI, "China sits at the

Suppression of Religious Freedom: Xinjiang "Re-education Camps"

It may be impossible now to discuss Xi Jinping's China without also discussing the Chinese Communist Party's ongoing persecution of Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang Province. According to Freedom House's 2023 Freedom in the World report on China, over a million Uyghurs, in addition to other Turkic groups, have been sent to re-education camps, labeled as "Vocational Skills Education and Training Centers" by the Chinese government. While the CCP claims that these camps are strictly voluntary, and that their policy is aimed at stopping religious extremism, they primarily serve to indoctrinate Uyghurs against their beliefs. Internal documents leaked in 2022 reveal shoot-to-kill orders for people who try to escape these centers, showing just how "voluntary" they are. Freedom House also describes the various methods the CCP has used to exert greater control of Uyghurs. The government uses police checkpoints to restrict travel in Xinjiang; it has forcibly sterilized women, especially mothers of two or more children; it punishes women for wearing headscarves and men for wearing beards; and it separates children from their families to attend Mandarin-only boarding schools, where they are indoctrinated into Party ideology, and punished if they protest. In addition, the Chinese government has been sending more Han Chinese to live in Xinjiang, and thereby reduce the density of Uyghurs in the region. On November 24, 2022, a fire at an apartment building killed ten people in Xinjiang's capital Urumqi, triggering protests across China—the largest since 1989—that blamed Xi's "Zero COVID-19" policy for preventing the residents from escaping.

The Xinjiang Documentation Project includes further resources on China's anti-Uyghur policy. In particular, it includes official Chinese documents, including English documents justifying or defending them, cadre materials to instruct officials on the ground in Xinjiang, forms used to collect data, materials for schools, academic discourse, and perhaps most eye-opening, media propaganda. One series of videos, "Visiting a Re-Education Camp in Xinjiang," portrays the camps as vocational and lifestyle training centers, with titles like "Trainees Learn E-Commerce," "Husband Learns to Respect Wife," "Woman Unveils Herself and Opens a Beauty Shop," and "Mother Finds Her Daughter Prettier." The Xinjiang Documentation also operates a section aimed at college or secondary-level instructors who would like to teach on the situation in Xinjiang in their classrooms. Instructors can look up art projects, documentaries, syllabi and teaching plans, infographics, articles, and examples of peasant paintings, a Chinese folk art tradition that is turned toward propaganda purposes in Xinjiang. In addition, instructors can look up Freedom House's methodology, data, and further articles on freedom and oppression in China. (*EAA Editorial Office*)

Sources: "China: Freedom in the World 2023," Freedom House, <https://tinyurl.com/4wehk92d>; Xinjiang Documentation Project. "Home - Xinjiang Documentation Project," March 14, 2022; <https://xinjiang.sppga.ubc.ca/>. The XDP was previously profiled in EAA Volume 26: Number 2, <https://tinyurl.com/25jmc7mj>



centre of the world, bringing its wealth and power to bear . . . linking people into the concept of China as a beneficent power and an alternative locus to the West.”¹⁰ This position has been a long time coming in China’s eyes, and reflects a return to its self-perceived rightful position of political and economic power. A discussion about how the BRI is rooted in China’s history and tradition can serve as a quick overview of China’s identity as viewed within several themes: glorious ancient civilization, a century of humiliation, economic transformation, and dream of national rejuvenation, all of which have been featured extensively in China’s national narrative. Though the CCP orchestrates China’s national identity, 89 percent of Chinese surveyed, compared to an average 51 percent of survey respondents from 28 different countries, trusted that their government would “do what is right” in 2022.¹¹ Thus, recognizing that this national narrative prioritizes collective well-being and national glory over individual wants and objectives embodies a worldview fundamentally different from the West, one most citizens indicate that they accept.

To help students develop a concrete sense of the alternative worldview, Alec Ash’s (2017) *Wish Lanterns: Young Lives in New China*¹² follows the lives of six Chinese millennials as they navigate their place in a quickly changing society through education and career, dating and family, struggles, and dreams. The chapters in the book flip between the six characters in the story. Students can read the introductory chapter of each character to gain a sense of their diverse backgrounds, and discussion on the first day of class can circle around common themes and individual differences between them. For the rest of the book, each student focuses on the chapters about one particular character to get ready to role-play the character in class discussions.

A *jigsaw activity* is perfect for engaging students in exploring the elements of each perspective in the story. First, students with the same assigned character explore their character and discuss the character’s experiences in depth. After that, new groups are formed such that each group contains one person representing each character, ready to share that character’s perspective on social issues, such as China’s social credit system, zero-COVID-19 policy, *gaokao* (college entrance exam), immigration to the West, and the “reeducation camps” in Xinjiang. Students are charged to respond in ways they believe the character would respond. This activity is meant to steep students in situations faced by young adults in China today. Asking students to recognize the Chinese perspectives and compare them with their own helps establish a base case for looking at the macroeconomic transformation of the Chinese economy.

BRI and China’s Economic Transformation

To develop some perspective for why the BRI approach to aid looks so different from what has been done by the West, we focus on China’s economic transformation, drawing from before and after the time when China joined the WTO. We want students to see that growth looks different in the cities and the rural areas, that the fast pace of technological and social changes means that wide swaths of society adjust quickly to things, and that a natural next step is for China to extend what they have

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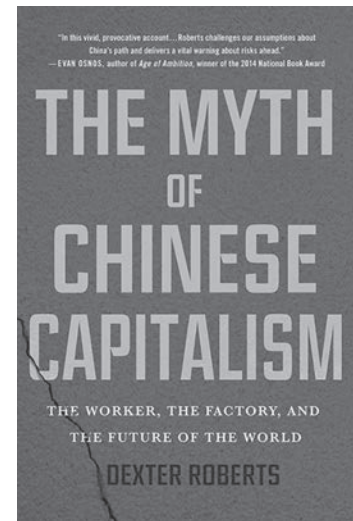
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learned to other nations. By recognizing the experimental nature of China's economy and the amazing adaptability of its society, students may begin to view the BRI as a natural extension of these societal attributes so helpful for the economic miracle of the last forty-plus years.

China's economic transformation can be traced to the "reform and opening up" in the early 1980s, when a *household contract responsibility system* was widely adopted in agriculture, though slowly at first, releasing labor to the factories in the newly opened special economic zones (SEZs) on the coast. The transformation accelerated after it joined the WTO in 2001 when China started to privatize more sectors of its economy, and foreign direct investment soared. Economist Isabella Weber studies the experimentalism Chinese policymakers used to make it the *factory to the world*, assesses the degree to which reform integrated Western economic ideas, and finds evidence of a deliberate choice to not embrace *economic shock therapy*, the liberalization of markets, the freeing of prices, and securing of property rights all at once.¹³ China's resistance to Western economic prescriptions meant a new economic model, *socialism with Chinese characteristics*, one that facilitated lots of growth, very quickly. Helping students understand what that might look like and feel like for the average citizens from pre-WTO China is a learning outcome we seek. One way to give undergraduate students a concrete idea of the transformation is to have them learn about what life felt like in China before and after the WTO, in cities versus more rural areas. Elisabeth Rosenthal's article in the *New York Times* offers a peek at life in Beijing in the late 1990s—a life that looks a lot like middle-class suburbia in the United States.¹⁴ Filled with fast-food franchises, SUV-like vehicles, and children's soccer leagues, life in big Chinese cities was booming and vital even before trade opened up. But this has not been true in the western and rural regions of the country, where a noticeable wealth gap rivals or exceeds that in America. To see how WTO ascension led to 4x GDP and 5x exports in 10 years, we link Rosenthal's article to *Harvard Business Review* editor Adi Ignatius's 2021 interview with Weijian Shan, the CEO of private equity firm PAG.¹⁵ Comparing capitalism and socialism in the US and in China, Shan points out several ironies about institutions in the two countries that might surprise both sides. Placing students into small groups to brainstorm what they knew about the capitalist and socialist aspects of the two countries, what they want to know, and what they learned from the reading leads to fruitful discussion.

Growth comes with a cost, and China's steep ascent was not immune to social and environmental consequences.



Suppression of Religious Freedom: Christianity in China

Since Mao took power in 1949, the Chinese Communist Party has imprisoned, executed, and muzzled Christians, Catholics and Protestants alike, in the name of Party ideology. The Cultural Revolution brought the worst persecution, forbidding open practice of Christianity, sending believers to labor camps, torturing and executing church leaders, and forcing Catholic priests and nuns to marry. Although the CCP promised freedom of religion in its 1982 Constitution, and President Zhang Zemin later sounded a conciliatory note in 2001 when he said that "religion could act as a stabilizing force in society," the Party still expected conformity from churches. Xi Jinping has since renewed the government's hostility to religion; his "sinicization" policy aims to root out doctrines that contradict CCP ideology. Churches are subject to electronic monitoring through facial recognition software and phone tracking, and can only post material online if they obtain a government license.

Protestants, organized under the China Christian Council (originally the Three-Self Patriotic Movement), are expected to resist Western influence and maintain loyalty to the Chinese State. Members of unregistered house churches, on the other hand, face arrest or execution of their pastors and destruction of their buildings, such as the Golden Lampstand Church, which the government dynamited in 2018. The CCP has also maintained a policy of appointing their own Catholic bishops, to which the Vatican has responded by consecrating

their own. These bishops risk intense persecution by serving in underground churches and speaking out against the CCP. More recently, the CCP and the Vatican have reached an agreement that state-nominated bishops must be approved by the Pope; but the CCP has continued to put some pro-Vatican bishops under house arrest, while others have outright disappeared following their arrests.

The CCP's persecution of Christians has presented a few ironies. The Cultural Revolution's suppression of all religions, including Buddhism and Daoism, made Christianity more attractive to Chinese who were left spiritually adrift. More recent urbanization projects have brought an influx of migrant workers into the folds of various unregistered Protestant Churches. Finally, Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative has made it easier for Christians in other countries to contact their counterparts in China, giving them greater access to books, Bible studies, and discussion forums. Despite its persecution, Christianity continues to grow in China, with between 70 and 100 million believers practicing today, and the potential to grow to 160 million by 2025 and 247 million by 2030. (EAA Editorial Office)

Sources: Elena Vishnevskaya, "The People's Republic of China and Christianity: A Brief Introduction," *Education About Asia* 27, no. 3 (2022):28–36.

To stimulate critical discussions about the economic transformation's social impact in more rural areas, we read the award-winning writer Dexter Roberts' *The Myth of Chinese Capitalism* (2020), which focuses on the picture that China paints for the world about its economic success versus the experience on the ground of the people making manufacturing profits possible. Students develop the sense that economic opportunity is not equal across China, that labor in China may be accomplished under grueling work requirements, and that the future of inward economic development is not assured going forward. Two useful supplementary resources were Chinese American journalist Leslie Chang's TED talk "The voices of China's workers" and the Youth China Group's founder Zak Dychtwald's YouTube video "China's New Innovation Advantage." Chang's talk reveals the factory girl's perspective, which is informative but not explored in Roberts's book.¹⁶ Dychtwald's podcast brings together Chinese youth resilience, innovation, and technology markets, and serves as a good prompt for students to think through the massive changes faced by the average young person in China and reflect on what that might mean for innovation there in the near future.¹⁷ Essay prompts ask students to use evidence from the texts, videos, and resources in class to support, refute, or modify the Dychtwald thesis to analyze ways to manage competition with China.

The economic transformation offers two lessons that can help us analyze the BRI. First, in reforming their economy China did not accept all aspects of what was prescribed by the West. Second, the economic transformation was an exercise *in crossing the river by feeling for the stones*, meaning it began with experimentation. Chinese policy starts small and expands on success. The rollout of the BRI started slowly, gaining momentum as countries entered memorandums of understanding with China. Today, Xi reiterates a decades long time horizon for partner investments, however the scale of the commitments can hardly be described as experimental any longer.

BRI and "Ecological Civilization"

Growth comes with a cost, and China's steep ascent was not immune to social and environmental consequences. We spend a good part of the semester analyzing both the social and environmental externalities that come from growth without careful regulation. By building on the wealth gap that becomes clear in the economic module, several social impacts are considered: the *left-behind children*, family reverence and local customs, the rise of the super-rich, and village relocation are just a few. Each topic helps to lay the groundwork for students to see the ways that China carries its aspiration of *ecological civilization* into BRI planning.¹⁸

The environmental degradation that comes with too many factories and no established property rights carries tremendous impact on clean air, water, and biodiversity. To prime the pump for looking at these tradeoffs, we read and discussed English social scientist Gregory Bateson's essay "The roots of ecological crisis."¹⁹ Bateson points out that the root cause of the ecological crisis is the failure to balance economic growth, the environment, and human hubris. We use a dialectical notebook with students, a teaching technique commonly used in English and social studies courses to identify key text from an article and explain its significance, to elicit critical thinking about



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Another way to harness student attention to the issues is to show them the twenty-six-minute version of Wang Jiuliang's 2016 documentary *Plastic China*, which was banned in mainland China.



what an ecological civilization might look like. Each student takes two blank pages of an open notebook and creates four columns. In the first column, the student chooses a quote that spoke to them, reflects on the meaning, and poses a question before passing their notebook. The next student considers the first column and tries to answer the question and poses another before passing it forward. In this way, students have a conversation on paper. As a group, we share takeaways out loud. This is a good activity to involve many students in the conversation, especially ones not eager to share through typical discussion.

Another way to harness student attention to the issues is to show them the twenty-six-minute version of Wang Jiuliang's 2016 documentary *Plastic China*, which was banned in mainland China.²⁰ The short version features the massive importation of trash from developed countries to a small village where workers pick through the debris for recyclable plastic using an unregulated process, employing methods that would never be allowed in

the countries of origin. China ships out its exports and imports this refuse, taking advantage of the transportation dynamic.²¹ Articles on air pollution in the cities clarify further environmental realities for city dwellers.

We choose selected excerpts from Professor of Environmental Studies Yifei Li and International Relations Professor and scholar on China's environment Judith Shapiro's book *China Goes Green* to help students understand the complexities of environmental issues in China.²² In response to a number of nations' criticisms about negative consequences for the host state's ecosystem, China's government advocates a "green" BRI, committing to not building coal-fueled power plants abroad any longer. Li and Shapiro's research, however, raises many concerns about China's environmental policies and practices. Exploring the ramifications of growing so much so fast and the implication for future growth helps students develop a more balanced ecological perspective on the BRI.

BRI and Globalization

China touts the BRI as a platform for international cooperation toward achieving "a community with a shared future for mankind." Its five goals include policy coordination, facilities connectivity, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people bonds among the countries. China's BRI vision challenges the current model of globalization based on a more Western economic ideal. How will the BRI impact the future of the globalized world? We ask our students to share their answers.

We introduce this question and the project early in the term so students can be thinking about the project throughout the semester. We ask students to create a Human Barometer, a technique popularized by *Facing History and Ourselves*, by lining up across the classroom to measure their current position on: will the BRI impact the globalized world in a positive or negative way?²³ Students choose their location in line to mirror the strength of their convictions, those that see the BRI as negative on one end versus positive on the other. It is not really a surprise when students line up to indicate a negative influence from the BRI. If they have paid any attention to the issues in the news, that will generally be the only perspective with which they are familiar.

To gain insights into the BRI's global impact, students work in teams. Each team chooses a BRI country or region of their interest, identifies evidence of BRI impact, and discusses whether the BRI will bring about a win-win situation for both sides of the BRI transaction. At the end of the presentations, students synthesize the evidence they found and ponder the future of globalization. The same call for a Human Barometer after the last BRI presentation may be one measure of the degree to which we have successfully introduced perspective and perception over the course of the term. At the very least, their answers should be more complex, and the weight in the Barometer is more in the middle.

Conclusion

Student success after college depends on an ability to look at transactions and controversies from alternative angles and siloed disciplinary coverage will not effectively highlight the synergy behind a complex country like modern China. We demonstrated how the BRI serves as a culminating topic for an interdisciplinary course on China, naturally integrating inquiries about China's history, economy, social and natural environments, and global role with respect to the rest of the world. The course materials and activities were designed specially to facilitate an integrative understanding of China's people, markets, and its institutions and how they operate.

By emphasizing perspective throughout the course—historic, economic, and ecological—we offer students a foundation for considering motivations and expectations of the parties actually involved in the BRI agreements. This focus often offers a notably different answer to the question, "Why do this investment?" than many responses typical of Western democracies. Making students aware of biases within both perspectives, including political posturing, reinforces our teaching goal to have them think critically about China's global connections. ♦

NOTES

1. Purchasing power parity (PPP) adjusts GDP for differences in prices between countries, since, for example, a dollar in China can buy more than a dollar in the United States.
2. For research, analyses and information on the policies, economics, environment, sustainability, and green finance of the BRI, visit the Green Belt and Road Initiative Center, visit <https://green-bri.org/>.
3. The countries that signed BRI agreements at listed on China's official website for BRI, "Belt and Road Portal, Yidaiyilu.gov.cn" (<https://tinyurl.com/bdfursny>). The amount of investment is based on data from the Green Finance & Development Center, "Chinese Investments in Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) from 2013 to 2021 (in billion US dollars) (Chart)," February 2, 2022. *Statista*, <https://tinyurl.com/3rur4rpb>.
4. *The Economist*, "The G7 at Last Presents an Alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative," July 7, 2022, <https://tinyurl.com/2p8y37bx>.
5. *The Economist*, "China Wants to Put Itself Back at the Centre of the World," February 2, 2020, <https://tinyurl.com/4nwydd74>.
6. Robert Daly, and Matthew Rojansky, "China's Global Dreams Give Its Neighbors Nightmares," *Foreign Policy*, March 12, 2018, <https://tinyurl.com/2h6tp6pp>.
7. Sebastian Horn, Carmen M. Reinhart, and Christoph Trebesch, "China's Overseas Lending," *Journal of International Economics* 133 (2021): 103539, <https://tinyurl.com/yckdj98y>.
8. *The Economist*, "China Does Not Always Collect Its Debts on Time," February 12, 2022, <https://tinyurl.com/2rs722p9>.
9. Jeannie L. Johnson, *Strategic Culture: Refining the Theoretical Construct* (Washington, DC: Defense Threat Reduction Agency, 2006), 11.
10. *The Economist*, "China Wants to Put Itself Back at the Centre of the World."
11. Edelman, "Level of Trust in Government in China from 2016 to 2022," Chart, January 15, 2023, *Statista*, <https://tinyurl.com/yeynj52t>.
12. A good supplementary resource may be Tingting Yao's (2016) youth romance film *Yesterday Once More*, which provides live illustrations for many of the themes in Alec Ash's book, such as the youth's struggles with family responsibilities and personal dreams.
13. Isabella Weber, "Escaping Shock Therapy: An Interview on the Development of the Chinese Economic Model," *IPPR Progressive Review* 26, no. 1 (2019): 105. Shock therapy in the economic realm meant liberalizing prices, privatizing resources, and setting macroeconomic policy towards efficiency all at once, whatever the ramifications for people.
14. Elisabeth Rosenthal, "Funny, I Moved to Beijing and Wound Up in Pleasantville," *The New York Times*, November, 15, 1998, <https://tinyurl.com/4yueumkm>.
15. Adi Ignatius, "Americans Don't Know How Capitalist China Is: An Interview with Wei Jianshan," *Harvard Business Review*, May-June 2021, <https://tinyurl.com/a9xvtvud>.
16. "Leslie T. Chang: The Voices of China's Workers," YouTube video, posted by TED, September 12, 2012, <https://tinyurl.com/rp8m4r3n>.
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