The legitimacy of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in European and American Political and Economic Media
Belt & Road Initiative the European and American Media Response

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Shenyang, China
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Outline

Introduction: Context and contention

Theory: Institutional theory & logic

Methods: Media attention and issue salience: legitimacy

Results: Triangulated (WB, BRI & Media)

Discussion:
- Political vs Economic dominant logic
- Inter-regional dominant logic
Introduction

Context
- 67 countries endorsed (participating)
- 100 countries endorsed the AIIB (members)
- Trillion dollars investment
- Links a large world population and regions
- It has political and economic implications for the region and world

Contention
- The BRI threatens the US’s hegemony
- The US neglects it; it resists it
- The US neglect means BRI lacks legitimacy
- The US sabotage means challenges
- Europe emulates the US, thus partially ignores it.
- Lack of support of the US and Europe means lack of legitimacy, and it means failure or barriers to growth

Questions:
- Does the US and Europe ignore the BRI project in their political and economic discourses? (Political and economic media means institutions)
- Does the European and American attention to political and economic differ differ?
- How does the American media attention differ from the Europe or Chinese attention to the BRI project salience.

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Framework

Institutional theory (Inter-institutional comparison)
- Inter-institutional comparison
- Political vs economic institutions (US vs Europe)

Institutional logic
- Dominant logic and attention
- Primers of decision /decision ecology (contextual elements)

Narratives economics:
- Collective thoughts: Collective actions
BRI’s interest in contextual logic

Institutionalism

- Purpose
- Entities
- Location
- Timing
- Structure

US/EU media response on contextual logic

X: Media attention

Political:
- Logic
- Salience

Economic:
- Logic
- Salience

Y: Legitimacy

+
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic institutions: Logic &amp; narratives</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political institutions: Logic &amp; narratives</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
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<td>Low</td>
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Methods

Data
- Media attention (political and economic media)
- Factiva a database for the globalized integrated media
- Analytics

Media attention
- Political and economic media (Europe & the USA)
- Narratives
- Contextual factors (e.g. regions, timing)
- Inter-issue and inter-regional comparisons

Analysis
- Content analysis
- Descriptive statistics
- High attention means dominant logic, which means importance & relevance.
Results

Inter-institutional comparative analysis

- Political – Economic media comparison
  - Europe
  - The USA
  - China (BRI Report)

- Inter-regional comparison
  - Europe contextual attention
  - American contextual attention
  - Chinese contextual attention
BRI purpose stated in the Report, 2019

The World Bank

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BRI Report and regions/institutions partners

Regions in the BRI Report, 2019

Bilateral, Asia, Regions, Europe, Africa, United Nation, ASEAN, World Bank, Euroasia, East Asia, Pacific, Latin American, CEEC, South Asia, G20, OECD
BRI Report and non-EU partners

Non-EU countries in BRI Report, 2019

Official

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BRI Report and EU partners

EU countries in the BRI report, 2019
BRI Report and sectors/industries

Sectors in the BRI report, 2019


Official

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BRI Report and structures

Temporality: (Past=50%; Future=37%; Event time= 14%)

Official
## Economic Media

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(USA-EU ratio)</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>EU</th>
<th>USA Top 100 entities</th>
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Average: Frequency/Number of items
US/EU > 1) = the US greater than Europe; (US/EU = 1) = equal ; (US/EU < 1) = Europe greater than the US

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# Political Media

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BRI in Economic & Political media

Bars represent US-EU ratio (the greater the bar, the greater the media attention)

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Discussion

Media attention & inter-institutional issues

- The US political media appear more active than Economic Media
- The European economic media appear more active than political media
- The US’ reference to Europe is lower than the European reference to the US in the media
- The European economic media attentions to political issues less than the US Economic Media attends to the Europe
- The Chinese official (report) attends to economic issues

Media attention & Implications

- High media attention means the issue salience = The media
- Media coverage means legitimacy (the minimal condition)
- A large number of weak countries OR a small number of powerful countries? Both types contribute to legitimacy

Q: Does the political discourse signals negative issues, and the economic discourse signals positive issues?
Questions & Comments