

CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE HEGEMONY STRATEGY IN BUILDING ALLIANCES IN INDO-PACIFIC

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Abstract

This study analyzes how China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is being used as a strategy to strengthen its hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region and challenge US dominance. Using descriptive qualitative methods that integrate literature analysis and case studies, the study explores the economic, political, and security impacts of the BRI in countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines. The findings suggest that the BRI not only enhances connectivity and economic growth through massive investments in infrastructure, but also Building strong political alliances that shift geopolitical power dynamics in the region. For example, the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed rail project in Indonesia and the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka illustrate how BRI investments can improve local infrastructure. However, increasing economic dependence on China raises concerns about debt sustainability and the potential loss of sovereignty. national interests, such as in Sri Lanka, where a port had to be leased to China due to debt repayment. Furthermore, the BRI has strengthened military and strategic cooperation between China and partner countries, as seen in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which also supports Pakistan's military modernization. The proposed strategic recommendations include enhancing transparency and governance in BRI projects to mitigate concerns about corruption and mismanagement, addressing debt sustainability through mechanisms such as debt restructuring and grants, and balancing economic interests with environmental and social sustainability through rigorous impact assessments. With the right approach, the BRI has the potential to continue playing a significant role in global development and creating new opportunities for partner countries, while supporting regional stability and prosperity.

Keywords: *Belt and Road Initiative, hegemony, Indo-Pacific, economy, geopolitics*

INTRODUCTION

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), often referred to as the New Silk Road, is one of China's largest strategic initiatives launched by President Xi Jinping in 2013. The BRI aims to connect China with countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe through massive infrastructure development. The initiative aims to create new economic corridors that can increase trade and investment and strengthen diplomatic relations between China and partner countries (Beeson & Crawford, 2022). The BRI has two main components: a land route known as the Silk Road Economic Belt and a sea route called the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Both are designed to increase connectivity between China and other countries through the construction of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, ports, and railways. The initiative has attracted global attention due to its extraordinary scale and ambition, as well as its potential impact on global power dynamics (Parvizi Amineh, 2023).

The importance of the BRI can be seen from various perspectives, including economic, political, and security. Economically, the BRI aims to open new markets for Chinese products and investments and reduce dependence on traditional markets. Investment in infrastructure projects under the BRI is expected to stimulate economic growth in partner countries, which in turn will increase demand for Chinese products and services (Rae, 2020). Politically, the BRI is a powerful diplomatic tool for China to strengthen its relations with other countries. Through investment and assistance in infrastructure development, China can build alliances and gain political support in the international arena. This is particularly important for China in the context of its competition with the United States for influence in the Indo-Pacific region (Park & Wisuttisak, 2023). From a security perspective, the BRI also has significant

implications. By building critical infrastructure in various countries, China can enhance its own security as well as regional security. For example, the construction of ports and military bases along the Maritime Silk Road can help China secure vital shipping lanes and enhance its power projection abroad (Li, 2020). While the BRI offers many opportunities, it also faces various challenges. One major challenge is political uncertainty in partner countries. Several countries have experienced regime changes or political instability, which could hamper the implementation of BRI projects. Furthermore, there are concerns about the financial sustainability of these projects, given the high cost of infrastructure development and the potential debt risks borne by recipient countries (Beeso & Crawford, 2022). However, the BRI also offers significant opportunities for economic and social development in partner countries. By investing in infrastructure, these countries can improve internal and external connectivity, which can boost economic growth and create jobs. Furthermore, the BRI can also open access to technology and expertise needed for national development (Parvizi Amineh, 2023).

The BRI is not only important for China but also has major implications for US hegemony in the Indo-Pacific. For decades, the US has been the dominant power in the region, with extensive economic, political, and security influence. However, with the emergence of China as a significant global power, the BRI has become a crucial tool for China to challenge US dominance (Rae, 2020). One key way the BRI impacts US hegemony is through the increased economic dependence of Indo-Pacific countries on China. With massive investments in infrastructure and economic development, China can increase its influence in the region and reduce their dependence on US aid and investment. This could change the power dynamics in the Indo-Pacific, with China becoming increasingly dominant (Park & Wisuttisak, 2023). Furthermore, the BRI also has significant political and security implications. By building alliances and partnerships through the BRI, China can strengthen its position in the international arena and gain political support in the UN and other international organizations. This is crucial for China in facing pressure and sanctions from the US and its allies (Li, 2020). The struggle for hegemony between China and the US in the Indo-Pacific region will almost certainly trigger an arms race. Competing nations will invest in advanced military technology and weaponry to strengthen their positions. This has significant economic implications and could increase the risk of accidents or conflict escalation (Weerakoon, 2017). Increased military budgets and high-tech research will place a significant economic burden on these countries, potentially at the expense of other social and development programs.

Control of key shipping lanes in the Indo-Pacific will become a key strategic focal point in the competition for hegemony. Nations that control these sea lanes will possess significant economic and military advantages. Fierce competition for access and control over these vital sea lanes will be a key aspect of geopolitical strategy in the region (Rolland, 2017). Sea lanes such as the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea are vital routes for global trade and the projection of military power, making them highly contested areas. The location of military bases and access to military facilities will be crucial strategic considerations in the Indo-Pacific hegemonic competition. Countries will seek to secure strategic locations to expand their influence and project power (Park & Wisuttisak, 2023). A military presence in strategic areas not only serves as a deterrent against threats but also strengthens political and economic claims in the region. To better understand how the BRI impacts US hegemony in the Indo-Pacific, it is important to examine several case studies of countries participating in the initiative. Indonesia is one of the key Indo-Pacific countries receiving significant Chinese investment under the BRI. Projects such as the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed railway and a port in North Sumatra have improved infrastructure and connectivity in Indonesia. However, these projects also face challenges such as environmental concerns and concerns about transparency and financial sustainability (Beeson & Crawford, 2022). Sri Lanka is another interesting example in the context of the BRI. The Chinese-built Hambantota Port has become a symbol of China's significant investment in the country. However, this project has also sparked controversy, as Sri Lanka had to hand over the port to China after defaulting on its debt. This has raised concerns about potential debt traps facing recipient countries of BRI investments (Parvizi Amineh, 2023). Pakistan is a key partner of China in the BRI, with projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) aimed at improving connectivity and economic development. These projects have provided significant economic benefits to Pakistan, but have also raised concerns about economic dependence on China and potential environmental and social impacts (Rae, 2020). The Philippines is another country receiving significant investment from China under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Projects such as toll roads and power plants have helped improve the country's infrastructure. However, relations between the Philippines and China are also affected by territorial disputes in the South China Sea, which adding complexity to bilateral relations (Park & Wisuttisak, 2023).

THEORETICAL BASIS

Hegemony Theory in International Relations

The theory of hegemony in international relations refers to the dominance of one country over another in economic, political, and military terms. According to Gramsci, hegemony is not only physical or military dominance but also encompasses ideological aspects, where the hegemonic state influences global values and norms (Gramsci, 1971). In the context of the BRI, China uses investment and infrastructure development as tools to strengthen its position and challenge US hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region.

Geoeconomics

Geoeconomics is the study of how economics and geopolitics interact. According to Blackwill and Harris (2016), geoeconomics is "the use of economic instruments to promote and defend national interests, and to produce beneficial geopolitical outcomes." The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a clear example of a geoeconomic strategy, in which China uses its economic power to strengthen its geopolitical influence. Through infrastructure investments in various countries, China not only enhances economic ties but also strengthens political and strategic alliances (Blackwill & Harris, 2016).

Alliances and Coalitions

Alliance theory explains how nations form partnerships and coalitions to achieve common goals. Walt (1987) stated that alliances form in response to perceived threats, with nations seeking allies to strengthen their positions against stronger adversaries. In the context of the BRI, China is building alliances with countries in the Indo-Pacific through infrastructure investment and economic aid, aiming to strengthen its position in competition with the United States (Walt, 1987).

BRI's Economic Influence

The economic impact of the BRI can be seen in various aspects. Massive investments in infrastructure projects under the BRI have driven economic growth in partner countries. For example, projects such as ports, highways, and railways have improved connectivity and reduced transportation costs, which in turn has increased the economic competitiveness of these countries (Hurley, Morris, & Portelance, 2019). Furthermore, the BRI also increases partner countries' economic dependence on China. This gives China significant political leverage in bilateral and multilateral relations. Research by Dollar (2017) shows that countries involved in the BRI tend to be more supportive of China's position in international forums, indicating China's increasing political influence.

Political and Security Impact of BRI

From a political and security perspective, the BRI has significant implications. By building critical infrastructure in various countries, China can enhance its own security as well as regional security. For example, the construction of ports and military bases along the Maritime Silk Road could help China securing vital shipping lanes and increasing its projection of power abroad (Rolland, 2017). Furthermore, the BRI also enables China to build strong political alliances with partner countries. These alliances can be used to counter pressure and sanctions from the United States and its allies. A study by Ferchen (2016) shows that the BRI has helped China build a broad network of alliances, providing political support on various international issues.

Case Study Example

1. Pakistan

Pakistan is one of China's key partners in the BRI, with projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) aimed at improving connectivity and economic development. These projects have provided significant economic benefits to Pakistan, but have also raised concerns about economic dependence on China and potential environmental and social impacts (Small, 2015).

2. Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is another interesting example in the context of the BRI. The Chinese-built Hambantota Port has become a symbol of China's significant investment in the country. However, this project has also sparked controversy, as Sri Lanka had to hand over the port to China after defaulting on its debts. This has raised concerns about the potential debt trap facing recipient countries of BRI investments (Weerakoon, 2017).

3. Indonesia

Indonesia is one of the key Indo-Pacific countries receiving significant investment from China under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Projects such as the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed railway and a port in North Sumatra have improved infrastructure and connectivity in Indonesia. However, these projects also face challenges such as environmental concerns and concerns about transparency and financial sustainability (Beeson & Breslin, 2014).

METHOD

The method used is a descriptive qualitative method that integrates literature analysis and case studies. Data were obtained from various secondary sources, including books, scientific journal articles, policy reports, and statistical data relevant to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its impact on United States hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region. This study also analyzes several case studies in key countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines to understand how the BRI is used by China to build alliances and strengthen its influence in the region. Data analysis techniques used include content analysis to identify key themes and trends that emerge in the literature and data collected. This study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of China's hegemonic strategy through the BRI and its implications for global power dynamics.

RESULTS

Research result

This study analyzes how China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is being used as a strategy to strengthen its hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region and challenge US dominance. Using descriptive qualitative methods that integrate literature analysis and case studies, the results highlight the economic, political, and security impacts of the BRI in countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines.

Economic and Infrastructure Impacts

The BRI has had a significant impact on the economies and infrastructure of partner countries. For example, the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed rail project in Indonesia and the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka have improved connectivity and facilitated economic growth in the region (Beeson & Crawford, 2022; Parvizi Amineh, 2023). However, increasing economic dependence on China has also raised concerns about debt sustainability and national sovereignty. In Sri Lanka, debt repayment resulted in the Hambantota port being leased to a Chinese company for 99 years, indicating the potential debt trap facing recipient countries of BRI investments (Weerakoon, 2017). In Pakistan, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has catalyzed massive infrastructure development and addressed energy shortages. However, it has also raised concerns about economic dependence on China and its long-term impact on national sovereignty (Small, 2015). Furthermore, increased economic dependence on China could diminish the United States' economic and political influence in the region.

Political and Security Impact

Beyond its economic impact, the BRI also has significant implications for political and security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific. China is using the BRI to build strategic alliances with partner countries, strengthening its position in the international arena (Ferchen, 2016). For example, the strategic partnership between China and Pakistan through the CPEC encompasses not only economic aspects but also close military cooperation. This collaboration strengthens Pakistan's defense capabilities and enhances China's power projection in the South Asian region (Rolland, 2017). In the Philippines, relations with China are strengthened through BRI investments, despite tensions related to territorial disputes in the South China Sea. China's infrastructure development in the Philippines demonstrates how the BRI can be used to strengthen diplomatic ties, despite persistent geopolitical challenges (Beeson & Breslin, 2014).

Arms Race

The struggle for hegemony between China and the United States in the Indo-Pacific region is almost certain to trigger an arms race. Rival nations are investing in advanced military technology and weaponry to strengthen their positions. This has significant economic implications and can increase the risk of accidents or conflict escalation (Weerakoon, 2017). Increased military budgets and high-tech research impose significant economic burdens on these countries, potentially at the expense of social and other development programs.

The Importance of Sea Routes

Control of key shipping lanes in the Indo-Pacific has become a key strategic focus in the competition for hegemony. Countries that can control these sea lanes will have significant economic and military advantages. Fierce competition for access and control over these vital sea lanes has become a key aspect of geopolitical strategy in the region (Rolland, 2017). Sea lanes such as the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea are vital routes for global trade and the projection of military power, making them highly contested areas.

The Importance of Military Bases

The location of military bases and access to military facilities are crucial strategic considerations in the Indo-Pacific hegemonic competition. Countries seek to secure strategic locations to expand their influence and project power (Park & Wisuttisak, 2023). A military presence in strategic areas not only serves as a deterrent against threats but also strengthens political and economic claims in the region.

Discussion

This research shows that China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has become a significant strategic tool in its efforts to strengthen its hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region, while challenging the dominance of the United States. Using descriptive qualitative methods that integrate literature analysis and case studies, the research highlights the economic, political, and security impacts of the BRI in countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines. Massive investments in infrastructure in these countries have increased connectivity and boosted economic growth, but have also created high economic dependence on China, raising concerns about debt sustainability and national sovereignty.

In the context of geoeconomics, the BRI is a key tool of China's geoeconomic strategy, with massive investments in infrastructure and industrial sectors across Eurasia and the Indo-Pacific. Li (2020) explains that the BRI serves not only as a trade route but also as a tool to strengthen China's geopolitical influence. For example, the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed rail project in Indonesia and the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka illustrate how BRI investments can improve local infrastructure and boost economic growth. However, the high economic dependence on China raises concerns about potential debt traps. In Sri Lanka, inability to repay debts led to the Hambantota port being leased to a Chinese company for 99 years, a stark example of the debt sustainability risks faced by recipient countries of BRI investments (Weerakoon, 2020).

From the perspective of hegemony theory, this study reveals that the BRI serves as a powerful diplomatic tool for China to strengthen political and security ties with other countries. Gramsci (1971) explained that hegemony is not only physical or military dominance, but also encompasses ideological aspects, where the hegemonic state influences global values and norms. Through the BRI, China seeks to build alliances and gain political support in the international arena, strengthening its position in competition with the United States. In Pakistan, for example, the strategic partnership between China and Pakistan through the CPEC encompasses not only economic aspects but also close military cooperation. This collaboration strengthens Pakistan's defense capabilities and enhances China's power projection in the South Asian region (Rolland, 2020). Furthermore, the BRI also has significant implications for political and security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific. China is using the BRI to build strategic alliances with partner countries, strengthening its position in the international arena (Ferchen, 2020). In the Philippines, relations with China are being strengthened through BRI investments, despite tensions over territorial disputes in the South China Sea. China's infrastructure development in the Philippines demonstrates how BRI can be used to strengthen diplomatic relations, although geopolitical challenges remain (Beeson & Breslin, 2020).

The struggle for hegemony between China and the United States in the Indo-Pacific region will almost certainly trigger an arms race. Competing nations will invest in advanced military technology and weaponry to strengthen their positions. This has significant economic implications and could increase the risk of accidents or conflict escalation (Weerakoon, 2020). Increased military budgets and research into advanced technologies pose a significant economic burden for these countries, potentially compromising social and other development programs. Realist theory in international relations, as explained by Waltz (1979), emphasizes that nations will always seek to increase their military power as a means of ensuring their security and survival. In this context, the BRI can be seen as China's attempt to increase its strategic advantage through military modernization and development.

advanced technology. Control of key shipping lanes in the Indo-Pacific has become a key strategic focus in the competition for hegemony. Countries that dominate these sea lanes will possess significant economic and military advantages. Fierce competition for access and control over these vital sea lanes has become a key aspect of geopolitical strategy in the region (Rolland, 2020). Sea lanes such as the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea are vital routes for global trade and the projection of military power, making them highly contested areas. According to Spykman's Rimland theory (1944), control of coastal areas and key sea lanes provides significant strategic

advantages, as it allows for broader projection of power and influence. The location of military bases and access to military facilities are important strategic considerations in the competition for hegemony in the Indo-Pacific. Countries seek to secure strategic locations to expand their influence and project power (Park & Wisuttisak, 2023). A military presence in strategic areas not only serves as a deterrent against threats but also strengthens political and economic claims in the region. For example, China's construction of a military base in Djibouti is part of its Belt and Road (BRI) strategy to strengthen its military presence in this crucial region. A military presence in strategic areas not only serves as a deterrent against threats but also strengthens political and economic claims in the region. Previous research dating back to 2020 has shown that China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has significantly influenced security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific. For example, research by Rolland (2020) highlights how the BRI has fueled tensions in the South China Sea through reclamation projects in the Spratly and Paracel Islands, and the deployment of fishing fleets escorted by coast guard vessels. This research also shows that China's BRI policy is a clear demonstration of its rise in the 21st century, impacting the security situation in the regions traversed by BRI corridors. Furthermore, research by Fathan (2020) highlights that China's military upgrades are an effort to strengthen its regional security and political stability, closely linked to its economic revival through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). This research also shows that China is attempting to build and strengthen its military system in response to the United States' presence as a dominant power in the Indo-Pacific region.

Research by Weerakoon (2020) highlights the impact of high economic dependence on China due to BRI investments in countries such as Sri Lanka, which resulted in the Hambantota port being leased to a Chinese company for 99 years. The study also shows that this dependence raises concerns about sustainability, debt and national sovereignty of BRI investment recipient countries. In a way Overall, previous research dating back to 2020 provides important insights into how the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) influences security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific. Through massive investments in infrastructure, China has successfully built strong alliances and strengthened its influence in the region. However, this initiative also faces various challenges, including economic interdependence, financial sustainability, and political risks. The struggle for hegemony between China and the United States in the Indo-Pacific will almost certainly trigger an arms race, over control of key sea lanes, and the importance of military bases as strategic focal points. Understanding these dynamics provides important insights for policymakers and academics in developing appropriate strategies to manage the impacts of the BRI and maintain regional stability.

Within the context of hegemony theory and geoeconomics, the BRI serves as a tool to strengthen China's position in the international system and challenge US dominance. This strategy reflects the use of economic power as an instrument to achieve geopolitical goals, consistent with the realist perspective on international relations. By understanding how the BRI is used to build alliances, strengthen political influence, and enhance power projection, we can see how this initiative contributes to changing global power dynamics in the 21st century. The BRI reflects Gramsci's (1971) view of hegemony as encompassing ideological and material domination. China has used economic investment as a tool to shift the balance of power and establish new norms and values that support its interests. The results of this study also show that the BRI enables China. This study shows that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) launched by China has become a significant strategic tool in its efforts to strengthen its hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region, while challenging the dominance of the United States. Using descriptive qualitative methods that integrate literature analysis and case studies, the results of this study highlight the economic, political, and security impacts of the BRI in countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines. Massive investments in infrastructure in these countries have increased connectivity and driven economic growth, but have also created high economic dependence on China, raising concerns about debt sustainability and national sovereignty.

In the context of geoeconomics, the BRI is a key tool of China's geoeconomic strategy, with massive investments in infrastructure and industrial sectors in across Eurasia and Indo-Pacific countries. Li (2020) explains that the BRI serves not only as a trade route but also as a tool to strengthen China's geopolitical influence. For example, the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed rail project in Indonesia and the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka illustrate how BRI investments can improve local infrastructure and boost economic growth. However, high economic dependence on China raises concerns about potential debt traps. In Sri Lanka, inability to repay debts led to the Hambantota port being leased to a Chinese company for 99 years, a clear example of the debt sustainability risks faced by recipient countries of BRI investments (Weerakoon, 2020). From the perspective of hegemony theory, this study reveals that the BRI serves as a powerful diplomatic tool for China to strengthen political and security ties with other countries. Gramsci (1971) explained that hegemony is not only physical or military dominance but also encompasses ideological aspects, where the hegemonic state influences global values and norms. Through the BRI, China seeks to build alliances and gain political support in the international arena, strengthening its position in competition with the United States. In Pakistan, for example, the strategic partnership between China and Pakistan

through the CPEC encompasses not only economic aspects but also close military cooperation. This collaboration strengthens

Pakistan's defense capabilities and enhances China's power projection in the South Asian region (Rolland, 2020). Furthermore, the BRI also has significant implications for political and security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific. China is using the BRI to build strategic alliances with partner countries, strengthening its position in the international arena (Ferchen, 2020). In the Philippines, relations with China are being strengthened through BRI investments, despite tensions related to territorial disputes in the South China Sea. China's infrastructure development in the Philippines demonstrates how the BRI can be used to strengthen diplomatic ties, despite persistent geopolitical challenges (Beeson & Breslin, 2020). The struggle for hegemony between China and the United States in the Indo-Pacific region will almost certainly trigger an arms race. Competing countries will invest in advanced military technology and weaponry to strengthen their positions.

This has significant economic implications and could increase the risk of accidents or conflict escalation (Weerakoon, 2020). Increased military budgets and high-tech research impose a significant economic burden on these countries, potentially compromising social and other development programs. Realism theory in international relations, as explained by Waltz (1979), emphasizes that countries will always seek to increase their military power as a means of ensuring their security and survival. In this context, the BRI can be seen as China's effort to increase its strategic advantage through military modernization and the development of advanced technologies. Control of key shipping lanes in the Indo-Pacific has become a major strategic focus in competing literature and case studies, with research highlighting the economic, political, and security impacts of the BRI in countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines. Massive investments in infrastructure in these countries have increased connectivity and driven economic growth, but have also created high economic dependence on China, raising concerns about debt sustainability and national sovereignty.

In the context of geoeconomics, the BRI is a key tool of China's geoeconomic strategy, with massive investments in infrastructure and industrial sectors across Eurasia and the Indo-Pacific. Li (2020) explains that the BRI serves not only as a trade route but also as a tool to strengthen China's geopolitical influence. For example, the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed rail project in Indonesia and the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka illustrate how BRI investments can improve local infrastructure and boost economic growth. However, their heavy economic dependence on China raises concerns about potential debt traps. In Sri Lanka, the inability to repay debts led to the Hambantota port being leased to a Chinese company for 99 years, a clear example of the debt sustainability risks faced by BRI investment recipient countries (Weerakoon, 2020). From the perspective of hegemony theory, this study reveals that the BRI serves as a powerful diplomatic tool for China to strengthen political and security ties with other countries. Gramsci (1971) explained that hegemony is not only physical or military dominance but also encompasses ideological aspects, where the hegemonic state influences global values and norms. Through the BRI, China seeks to build alliances and gain political support in the international arena, strengthening its position in competition with the United States. In Pakistan, for example, the strategic partnership between China and Pakistan through the CPEC encompasses not only economic aspects but also close military cooperation.

This collaboration strengthens Pakistan's defense capabilities and enhances China's power projection in the South Asian region (Rolland, 2020). Furthermore, the BRI also has significant implications for political and security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific. China uses the BRI to build strategic alliances with partner countries, strengthening its position in the international arena (Ferchen, 2020). In the Philippines, relations with China are strengthened through BRI investments, despite tensions over territorial disputes in the South China Sea. China's infrastructure development in the Philippines demonstrates how the BRI can be used to strengthen diplomatic ties, despite persistent geopolitical challenges (Beeson & Breslin, 2020). The struggle for hegemony between China and the United States in the Indo-Pacific region will almost certainly trigger an arms race. Competing countries will invest in advanced military technology and weaponry to strengthen their positions. This has significant economic implications and can increase the risk of accidents or conflict escalation (Weerakoon, 2020).

Increased military budgets and high-tech research impose significant economic burdens on these countries, potentially at the expense of other social and development programs. Realist theory in international relations, as outlined by Waltz (1979), emphasizes that countries will always seek to increase their military power as a means of ensuring their security and survival. In this context, the BRI can be seen as China's attempt to enhance its strategic advantage through military modernization and the development of advanced technologies. Control of key shipping lanes in the Indo-Pacific has become a key strategic focal point in economic competition as a tool for achieving geopolitical goals, in line with the realist view of international relations. By understanding how the BRI is used to build alliances, By strengthening political influence and increasing power projection, we can see how this initiative contributes to changing global power dynamics in the 21st century. The BRI reflects Gramsci's (1971) view of

hegemony, which encompasses both ideological and material domination. China has used economic investment as a tool to shift the balance of power and establish new norms and values that support its interests. This study also shows that the BRI allows China to continue expanding its influence not only through economic investment but also through soft power and cultural diplomacy. This approach reflects the geoeconomic view that economic power can be used as a tool to achieve broader geopolitical goals (Li, 2020). Meanwhile, high economic dependence on China also poses a number of risks for BRI partner countries. For example, research by Weerakoon (2020) shows that China's massive investment in Sri Lanka has led to significant economic dependence, which in turn raises concerns about national sovereignty. This aligns with Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony, which emphasizes that economic control can be used as a tool to achieve political and ideological domination. Furthermore, the BRI also has a significant impact on security dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region. As explained by the theory of realism in international relations, countries will always strive to increase their military power as a means of ensuring their security and survival. In this context, the BRI can be seen as China's effort to increase its strategic advantage through military modernization and the development of advanced technologies (Waltz, 1979). Research by Rolland (2020) shows that the escalating tensions in the South China Sea are a clear example of how the BRI has influenced security dynamics in the region.

Furthermore, control of key shipping lanes in the Indo-Pacific has also become a key strategic focal point in the competition for hegemony. Spykman's Rimland Theory (1944) explains that control of coastal areas and key sea lanes provides significant strategic advantages. In the context of the BRI, shipping lanes such as the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea are crucial as they serve as vital routes for global trade and the projection of military power. Research by Park and Wisuttisak (2023) highlights how countries in the region seek to secure access and control over these vital sea lanes as part of their geopolitical strategies. The location of military bases and access to military facilities are also important strategic considerations in the competition for hegemony in the Indo-Pacific. Research by Ferchen (2020) shows that China's military presence in strategic areas such as Djibouti is part of its efforts to expand its influence and project power. This military presence not only serves as a deterrent against threats but also strengthens China's political and economic claims in the region. This aligns with Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony, which emphasizes the importance of control over strategic infrastructure to achieve political and ideological dominance.

Overall, this study reveals that China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has had a significant impact on global power dynamics in the Indo-Pacific. Through massive investments in infrastructure, China has successfully built strong alliances and strengthened its influence in the region. However, this initiative also faces various challenges, including economic interdependence, financial sustainability, and political risks. The struggle for hegemony between China and the United States in the Indo-Pacific will almost certainly trigger an arms race, control of key sea lanes, and the importance of military bases as strategic focal points. Understanding these dynamics provides important insights for policymakers and academics in developing appropriate strategies to manage the impacts of the BRI and maintain regional stability. The BRI also reflects a paradigm shift in international relations, where economic power is used as a primary tool to achieve geopolitical goals. This strategy aligns with the geoeconomic perspective, which emphasizes the use of economic power as an instrument to achieve broader strategic goals (Blackwill & Harris, 2016). By understanding how the BRI is used to build alliances, strengthen political influence, and enhance power projection, we can see how this initiative contributes to changing global power dynamics in the 21st century.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the BRI not only brings economic benefits but also poses a number of challenges for partner countries. High dependence on Chinese investment can undermine the economic and political sovereignty of these countries. For example, research by Weerakoon (2020) shows that China's massive investment in Sri Lanka has led to significant economic dependence, which in turn raises concerns about national sovereignty. This aligns with Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony, which emphasizes that economic control can be used as a tool to achieve political and ideological domination. Furthermore, rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific region also pose significant security risks. The struggle for hegemony between China and the United States will almost certainly trigger an arms race, with competing nations investing in advanced military technology and weaponry to strengthen their positions. Research by Rolland (2020) shows that the escalating tensions in the South China Sea are a clear example of how the BRI has influenced security dynamics in the region. In this context, the BRI can be seen as China's attempt to increase its strategic advantage through military modernization and the development of advanced technologies (Waltz, 1979).

Recommendation

To enhance the effectiveness of the BRI, China needs to enhance transparency and governance, manage debt sustainability, balance economic interests with environmental and social sustainability, and strengthen international collaboration. Furthermore, leveraging technology and innovation, managing political and security dynamics,

building local capacity, prioritizing maritime security, developing managed military infrastructure, and embracing multilateral diplomacy are also crucial. By adopting a more inclusive and dialogical approach, China can build more stable and mutually beneficial relationships with partner countries, ensuring that the benefits of the BRI are shared across all parties and contributing to regional stability and prosperity.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study shows that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) initiated by China has become a significant strategic instrument in its efforts to strengthen its hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region, while challenging the dominance of the United States. Through a descriptive qualitative analysis integrating literature and case studies, this study reveals the multidimensional impact of the BRI on the economic, political, and security dynamics in the region. Massive investments in infrastructure in countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines have increased connectivity and driven economic growth, but also pose a risk of high economic dependence on China. The BRI serves as a powerful diplomatic tool for China to strengthen political and security relations with partner countries, in accordance with Gramsci's theory of hegemony. The struggle for hegemony between China and the United States in this region has the potential to trigger an arms race, with control of key shipping lanes and military base locations becoming strategic focal points. Overall, the BRI reflects a paradigm shift in international relations where economic power is used as a primary tool to achieve geopolitical goals, in accordance with the geoeconomic perspective.

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