

Representation of Belt and Road Initiative in US Media Outlets: A Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

This article uses Corpus-Assisted Discourse analysis to examine the image construction of the One Belt, One Road Initiative in the United States media outlets. A sample of news reports by “The New York Times” and “Associated Press,” between 23rd, 2015 to August 31 2019, were collected from LexisNexis Database. Corpus Discourse Analysis was applied to discover the Belt and Road Initiative's representation by using corpus AntConc software. Keywords examination rejoiced a complete inclination of the Media in the representation of the initiative. This study investigated the themes in the selected corpora after that concordance lines linked with the Belt and Road were compared. New York times construct negative attributes as a new military & regional threat, a new imperialist communist state, a militant & obstructive force. In contrast, Associated Press gives more vitality to the debt concerns, bribing to get the different infrastructure projects, aggressiveness, and new obstructive force in the form of Belt and Road. The paper concludes with the recommendation that China should develop globally-minded media practice to present its stance over BRI.

Keywords: CDA , United States, China, The New York Times, , image construction, US Newspapers, One Belt One Road Initiative,

Introduction

In the 21st century, China set its mind on financial expansion and transformed into one of the fastest-growing economies. China has progressively involved in economic globalization, focused on the economic stratagem to tie and organize the trade in the African, Asian, European financial sectors into one economic zone. In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping announced a strategic and cooperative initiative to encourage the domestic economic expansion with “Peaceful” amalgamation of the worldwide economy, called “Silk Road Economic Belt”. BRI infrastructure projects worth approximately US\$4tn (Djankov 2016) up to US\$8tn (Hurley, Morris, and Portelance 2019). The Belt and Road initiative is deemed as concrete foreign policy and infrastructural investment of China(Huang 2016). However, the Chinese government is promoting it as an immersive narrative, rooted in the historical context of ancient silk road spanning across Europe, Asia and China (Vergeron 2018).

The international community's stance to BRI is quite mixed. Several countries encourage Chinese efforts for regional cooperation (BRI), although some nations are also worried about the possible negative implications (Starr 2019; Huang 2016). Nevertheless, some researches denounced BRI projects as “new colonialism”(Hornby 2018) “debt-trap diplomacy” (Chellaney 2017), “economic dependency”(Fulton 2016) as it will allow China to gain geopolitical goals by economically binding BRI participating countries(Cai 2017). Even the United States' concerns are ambivalence; it deliberates that this initiative directly influences Washington's interests and leading position in Eurasia (Tung, 2018). The Institute of China-American studies (United States-based Think Tanks) raises numerous concerns regarding actual motives of “Belt

and Road”, either this project sustain the standards that it acknowledges in the global economic competition or not.

Meanwhile, will China act as neutral and transparent while bidding for infrastructure projects and see itself as the incomparable nation after getting stouter economically and militarily from above the rules that apply to the smaller countries? (Chance, 2017). Although, US secretary of state Mike Pompeo also cautious “Belt and Road” as a non-economic offer in which infrastructure and connectivity projects are the security threat to the United States and his allies. He also included that it has an element of national security, and we are working diligently to make sure everyone in the world understands that threat (IANS, 2019). It is crucial to analyze the media coverage of the BRI from the US media's perspective of how the US constructs global trade route led by China.

However, After the inauguration of BRI, “China image,” “Chinese soft power,” and “Belt and Road” become the hot topics in the communication research(Xiang 2013). A numbers of investigations have been conducted on the media representation of China Belt and Road Initiative(Hollihan and Zhang 2016; Li 2019; D. Wang 2019; Tung 2018; Hatef and Luqiu 2018a; L. Zhang and Wu 2017; Garcia-Herrero and Xu 2019; Liang 2019; Özsu and Binark 2019; Dagtas 2019). While recognizing the richness and diversity of academic research, we currently know a little about the BRI media representation in The United States media. Nevertheless, as per our knowledge, very few studies were conducted on the media representation of BRI in the US media(Starr 2019; L. Zhang and Wu 2017; Jan, Mehmood, and Hussain 2018). This research project explores The United States media narratives drawn from the two elite media outlets, “The New York Times,” and “Associated Press,” focusing on the news coverage of One Belt, One Road from March 23, 2015, to August 31, 2019. Exactly what are the images The United States has been trying to project and how it perceives the initiative? This present study examined these questions and designed a better understanding of how the United States media outlets distinguish and address BRI.

Literature review

China has become the 2nd largest economy by benefiting from the globalization introduced by Europe and the United States. The globalization process has inevitably knotted China with other countries, environment, institutions, culture, and systems. The newly announced project, "Belt & Road initiative" captured the world's attention

(Hollihan and Zhang 2016). Various researches have been conducted on the China future and its representation in the mainstream media. Zhang (2016) researched the Europe China economic relations and discover that the coverage is tented to be positive towards China. However, some newspaper discourses presented China as the competitor, economic threat, and unhealthy environment for E.U. corporations to do business. Overall, newspapers gave significant attention to China's rise and soft power. After the launch of One Belt, One Road Initiative," major media outlets of western countries become highly concerned with the Chinese economy, culture, society, geopolitics, Chinese image, and soft power. It has also attracted scholars' attention, mainly focusing on the cultural, philosophical, and international cooperation that has been made by China (Xiao, Li, and Hu 2019). In the meantime, the researchers worldwide focus on geopolitics, the economic collaboration between Eurasia, economic situation, infrastructure development, geopolitical strategy, financial clout, and manufacturing related to BRI(Blanchard and Flint 2017; Minghao 2016; Xiao, Li, and Hu 2019). The fast-growing power of China is the most crucial reality of today's world.

The global understanding and reception of Belt and Road initiative vary. As research illustrates, some countries see it as worth in worldwide trade connections. Some countries have concerns about China's OBOR plan." Western media attention concerning Belt and Road initiative is negative (Devonshire 2020). However, the launch of "Belt and Road initiative" also attracted the mass communication scholar's attention. Several empirical researches have been conducted on the image construction, representation, framing, discourse analysis, etc. on BRI(Zhang 2017; Li 2019; D. Wang 2019; Tung 2018; Hatf and Luqiu 2018b; L. Zhang and Wu 2017; Garcia-Herrero and Xu 2019). Previous studies mentioned that many countries had expressed enthusiasm, while some countries express concerns over it. D. Wang (2019) investigated Indian public opinion, and corpus analysis regarding BRI. Indian general public opinion has been found negative. This initiative caused worry and fear among the Indian media. As Indian Express (newspaper) points out, countries like Indian, The United States, Australia, and Japan will fight against Belt and Road Initiative(D. Wang 2019). In another empirical study Tung (2018) compare the Voice of Vietnam (VOV) and China Radio International (CRI) news stories. This study found that that Vietnamese media tend to focus on Vietnam's sovereignty, territorial dispute, and territorial waters

disputes that New Silk Road is the move of violating the sovereignty and international laws. Besides, VOV republishes the adverse reports by the global media and raises questions about this initiative. Simultaneously, the CRI Vietnamese version tends to avoid controversial topics and publish positives cooperation opportunities linked with the BRI (Tung, 2018). In comparing Chinese media and Afghanistan media, Hatf and Luqiu (2018) conducted three newspapers' content analysis. This study concluded that Chinese media is constructing the Chinese government's positive image as a hope of future and global leaders and strengthening the Chinese public confidence as a leading regional role. In contrast, Afghanistan's media tend to focus on bilateral plans, country economy, security, culture, economics, politics, and religion, their media-constructed One Belt One Road image positively. Meanwhile, Afghanistan is a participant of the One Belt, One Road, and Geopolitically vital country to China, especially in the stability of Xinjian and controlling illegal immigration, cross border arm, and drug trafficking. Nevertheless, Chinese media tend to focus on the peace talk process and rarely give coverage to domestic security issues.

China and the United States are the prime rivals after the cold war and considered great economic competitors. Xiao and his fellows conducted critical discourse analysis (CDA) to analyze the Belt and Road image construction in the mainstream Chinese and United States media. They found that both media play great attention on the global economy. Chinese media focus on the concrete measure for the Belt & Road with using positive vocabulary to appraise. In contrast, the United States media use explicit negative lexis to concerns of the Trump administration, even throughout the U.S. media-constructed image of BRI as the political influence agent. Though negative comments still exist, the decisive voice has increased (Xiao, Li, and Hu 2019) even though the Western media attention concerning Belt and Road initiative is negative (Devonshire 2020)

Despite objections from the USA, United Kingdom also choose to join "One Road, One Belt." Zhang and Wu (2017) conducted Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with corpus-assisted analysis methods to analyze Financial Times and China Daily. This study found that British newspaper financial time has a mixed and confusing discourse that China is an authoritarian state but having a far-reaching influence on the worldwide economy. In some discourses portrayed China as the obstructive force having the

geopolitical risk prevail. At the same time, Chinese media portray positive attributes with constructing positive images as a peace-loving country.

Furthermore, Herrero and Xu (2019) conducted a big data analysis of the 130 countries' Perceptions of China's B.R.I, with the help of GDELT (DataBase). This study found out that the BRI has a positive image among the members and non-members countries. However, there are noticeable variances at the nation level, with some countries in all regions having very negative views regarding Belt and Road Initiative (Figure 1).

**(Insert Figure 1: Sentiment across 130 countries about belt and road initiative
(Herrero & Xu, 2019))**

Till 2019 more than 100 countries around the Globe got agreed with the One Belt, One Road Initiative, even United States strategic partners because of the rising China soft power. Parag Khanna author of the book "The Future is Asian," argues that this world is multipolar now. No one wants to choose sides instead of taking benefits from both powers to derive maximum benefits. Cold war paradigm has no relevancy anymore (Schuman 2019).

The purpose of this research is to explore how U.S. media projects image of Belt and Road initiative in its reporting. Manheim & Albritton (1983) characterized two main dimensions of the national image -Valence and visibility. Valance refers to available information represented in favourable or unfavourable, and visibility represents the amount of media coverage. Favourable items covered such points as growth, advancements, wealth, properties, strengths, sustainability, security, or reliability, while negative references covered deterioration, weakness, suffering, liabilities, lack of progress, uncertainty, and unreliability. Belt and Road image refers to the events projected by the U.S. newspapers in reporting of the initiative. The image constructs can comprise a collection of positive and negative attributes by examining the news stories' realization and attitudinal meaning. The research questions are as under:

1. How do "The New York Times," and "Associated Press, respectively report the belt and road initiative?
2. What are the different images of China's "Belt and Road Initiative" being projected in "The New York Times," and "Associated Press in the process of news reporting?

This study adopted the integrated approach by combining Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with the corpus linguistics (CL) to investigate stated above questions. Corpus linguistics approach allows us to identify and examine the discourse function, collocational, semantic patterns by analyzing lexical frequency and keywords in the massive language data (Song et al.,2019). Fairclough proposed the theory of critical discourse analysis and classify three-dimensional model i-e text (text analysis), discursive practice (contextual analysis), and social practice (interpretative analysis). It mostly identifies relationships among ideology, society, societal issues, and social problems (Fairclough 2014; 2013; 2003). Furthermore, CDA is always used for the dynamic analysis of restricted content qualitatively. Its weak interpretation ability is criticized for the subjective selection of corpus.

However, corpus linguistics has made an innovative change in categorizing frequencies, concordances, and collocations of the massive language data amount. The corpus-based critical discourse analysis methods have expanded eminence in recent years as a useful tool for discourse analysis among different social dimensions(G. Wang 2018; Feng 2017). Baker et al. (2008) first used critical discourse analysis with the corpus framework. He argues that this method is a balanced approach to quantitative corpus linguistic technique with detailed qualitative Discourse analysis.

Methodology:

(Insert Table 1 Basic Corpus Data)

Data for this research were collected by online database "Lexis Advance" of selected media outlets The New York Times, and The Associated Press (AP), by limiting six key words "BRI," "One Belt, One Road," "OBOR," "New Silk Road," "New Silk Road Initiative," and "Belt Road Initiative." These two media groups were selected because they claim that they are professional with liberal ideology in media reporting. However, the quality of newspapers, media agency circulation, the newspapers' achievement, and the accessibility was measured while selecting the newspapers in this research. However, The New York Times is an internationally recognized US mainstream newspaper, founded in New York City in 1851. It received 122 Pulitzer Prize, and its website ranked 59th by the number of unique visitors in March 2009. The paper is notable for its success among the United States and world elite. However, Associated

Press operates 263 bureaus in 106 countries, and its news stories got published and republished by more than 1300 media outlets (AP 2016). This study extracted news articles relevant to key terms from March 28, 2015, to August 30, 2019. March 28, 2015, was selected because the One Belt, One Road, was finalized as an official government project on this date(Yidaiyilu.com 2019). In this period, The New York Times published a maximum number of news stories as compared to other selected media outlets (See Figure 2).

(insert Figure 2: Year Wise distribution of News Stories)

In this study, two large specialized corpora were built: The New York Times (NYT), and The Associated Press (AP), After the duplication was removed, the result shows that approximately 0.8 million words in 610 articles: NYT (354 news articles; 0.47 million words), and AP (72 news articles; 0.17 million words) (see table 1). The present study utilized the corpus assisted-discourse method to analyze the frequency of the listed words, Concordance, and collocate to examine the discursive patterns. In this analysis, the 20 top common keywords were obtained from the created two corpora. These words frequency only express grammatical meanings and have no other practical meaning. Keywords are statistically significant in a corpus. In Generating keywords in this study, each corpus was compared to "The British National Corpus (BNC) by using AntConc corpus software. The first 100 keywords were subsequently grouped into semantic categories to captured main themes; this procedure is also adopted in previous research on media representations (Baker et al. 2008; Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEneaney 2013). Concordance and collocate examination was also conducted.

(Insert Table 2: The 20 Most Frequent Words of Selected Media Outlets)

Analysis & Discussion

This research's primary objective was to analyze image construction in the two United States media outlets regarding "The Belt and Road initiative." Figure 2 shows the Six search phrases' frequencies in selected media outlets diachronically between 2015 to 2019. These six search phrases "BRI," "One Belt, One Road," "OBOR," "New Silk Road," "New Silk Road Initiative," and "Belt Road Initiative" occur 986 times in total. Overall, NYT has a higher level of frequency as compared to AP. The number of

occurrences of search phrases changed throughout the selected period. After the initiative's launch, the number of news occurrences was too low, but incredibly it becomes soared 76 to 330 in 2017. This phenomenon might be because of the proactive soft power strategy towards China's rise. Meanwhile, the United States sees China as the threat to its global hegemony and its interests (XIA 2005).

High-Frequency Word Analysis

Word frequency statistics are used to examine the discourse semantical representation. In this research, high-frequency terms have been discussed in selected newspapers data. Although the high frequency has no practical meaning as they express grammatical meanings. We used "AntConc" stop list feature to exclude function words. The first 20 keywords retrieved from the two corpora, as shown in Table 1.

Most of the top 20 notional high-frequency words highlight the Belt and Road initiative's news reports' constant themes. "China" appeared as the keyword employed most frequently in the corpus, as well keywords picturizing the salience of One Belt and Road like "trade," "economic," "projects," "initiative," "industry," "companies." The fascinating factor in the NYT and AP corpus is that the personalities XI and Trump are also among the most frequent word list. Words like "belt", "initiative", "projects", "Pakistan", "billion", "Asia", and "foreign", were unique in the associated press reporting data. In contrast, words including "The United States", "American", "companies", and "power" only appeared in The New York Times. The high-frequency words in both media outlets reporting were closely associated with international relationships, that could be the possible changes this initiative brings to global politics.

Top 5 discrete Topoi.

The top 100 keywords were subsequently grouped into different semantic categories (following (Jaworska and Themistocleous 2018; Theng Ong and McKenzie 2019). Fine-grained analyses were then carried out to determine their precise meanings. This review ensured that every keyword was categorized into its appropriate category. The top keywords in NYTC and APC were classified into five discrete topoi (see table 3).

(Insert table 3 Top 5 discrete Topoi for One Road & Belt Initiative)

As shown in Table 3, the most frequent top keywords of the three-corpus arranged into Semantic categories: (1) Personalities; (2) Development; (3) Commerce/ Economic; (4) Politics/Warfare/ Defence/Army; (5) Geographic/ proper Names. The most notable semantic categories in AP corpus and NYT corpus is Commerce/ Economic and Politics/Warfare/ Defence/Army, it revolves around the "Belt and Road" and China soft power implications. The number of the keywords are associated with the warfare, political dominations, and concerns (like security, influence, sea, concerns, ties, military, claims, political, power, government, influence, critics). This suggests the AP and NYT were primarily concerned and focused on the economic, trade & political expansion of the "Belt and Road." A closer reading of the usage contexts of keywords indicates that BRI was discussed in terms of unwanted loans, debts traps, controlling the underdeveloped countries, influencing the political process, security threat, economic, military, and geostrategic issues.

Keywords from the semantic category "Geographic," the listed countries included Pakistan, Japan, India Russia etc. India and Japan are considered as the staunch opponents of the BRI because both countries' political leaders think this initiative will expand China's global influence. Chinese Military presence is a threat to the national interests; even the Indian government consider CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) China's colonization plan for Pakistan. A closer reading of the context of keywords Malaysia indicates that Associated Press often used it as the model for the world that the Malaysian government cancelled the rail project deal immensely overcharging and criticized for the overpriced and superfluous projects. Furthermore, The New York Times and Associated Press emphasize The United States' concerns and its allies regarding Belt and Road.

Concordance lines of "Belt and Road."

In the corpus discourse analysis, Concordance is "a collection of the occurrences of a word form, each in its textual environment" (Sinclair 1991). The number of instances of "One Belt, One Road," were collected (See table 4). Therefore, in examining the key terms "Belt & Road Initiative" concordance, The New York Times has higher visibility instances 324 compared to Business Wire and Associated Press corpora. One Belt and One Road keyword incidences frequently in these three corpora. However, these Concordances indicate the media outlet reporting policy on this initiative. After this,

we examine the Topmost co-occurring adjectives, verbs, and nouns with the "New Silk Road," "OBOR," and "One Belt, One Road" keywords with the assistance of two words collects. We analyzed the cataloguing and found differences in the Road and Belt Initiative's representation, with the varying degree of the frequency. The several common adjectives related to copra are "sweeping," "ambitious," mammoth," "enormous," "massive". Collective nouns are "signifies," "projects," "infrastructure," "seeks," "agreements," "hits," "colonialism," "burden," and verbs are "dubbed," "suffering," "praised". The top keywords of AP corpus related to Belt & Road Initiative were trade, plan, infrastructure, ancient, projects, policy, sweeping, desert, associated, reassert. However, The New York Times gave more coverage to Belt and Road initiative about 375 collects were related to the OBOR, Silk Road, some of the top keywords were "Multitrillion," "terminus," "memorandums," "ultimate," "internationalization," "massive" and forth on. In simple, the propaganda tone is remarkably different but has been maintained. The New York time reported that the expansion of the project predatory had dented China's reputation globally, while others criticized the overwhelming numbers of Chinese workers imported for construction.

(Insert Table 4 Number of instances related to Belt and Road).

China & "Belt and Road Initiative in selected Newspapers

China's momentous financial development and greater openness to the world afforded it an extraordinary global status in world politics. On the other hand, the Chinese government has always been targeted and criticized in various aspects like human rights, censorship, media freedom, and freedom of speech and forth on(He 2010). A part of this China is still growing with ambition. In 2013, President Xi Jinping announced an initiative to build a world of shared prosperity through win-win cooperation named 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. China has pledged trillion of dollars for global infrastructure projects with many opportunities worldwide for the sphere to seek joint development from roads, railways, and power plants to ports. Trump administration has several concerns about the Belt and Road Initiative; they criticize it as the trap for the geopolitical purpose to increase Beijing's economic and diplomatic clout. Also, it designated China as an existential threat, revisionist power & strategic competitor(Barkin 2019). Furthermore, the Trump administration *accused* China of predatory lending for a debt trap, acquiring strategic assets, spreading

corruption & authoritarian values (Wong 2019). China is forming different institutions to reshape prevailing economic norms to suit its own needs. Trump accused China for unfair trading practices. Meanwhile, China believes that the United States does not want to see its rise as a global economic hub. It has been two years; trade dispute simmered between the United States and China. Both economic powers are imposing tariffs on one another goods (BBC 2019).

In the NYT corpus, the initiative was treated in a wide range of contexts like "dauntingly complicated", "scandalous mired", "debt trap", "unfathomable in nature", "aggressive expansion", "project predatory", and "military threat". New York Times reporting was related to China's economic plan that it is investing hundreds and billions of dollars for infrastructure projects in more than 60 countries. This investment leads towards the corrosion of nations sovereignty (Glaser 2018). Besides, China is cultivating influence throughout Eurasian countries via aggressive expansion, while some countries complained about unsustainable loans and debts (Perlez 2019). The New York Times associated "Belt and Road" with the debt trap that is pouring the money (low-cost loans) to expands the visionary economic plans by financing infrastructure and other projects worldwide. Expending its political influence in under developing countries and making it beholden by China (AnaSwanson 2019).

Meanwhile, NYT also put forward another concern that China's initiative could become the "new *colonialism*" by taking control of the natural resources like oil, iron, and even food from "*vulnerable countries*" that had trouble paying back the long-term loans (Bradsher 2018). Soaring long term debts in the form of investment is a new form of colonialism (Goodman 2019) and these billion of dollars debts for spates of unnecessary projects (Kauffmann 2019). Malaysia cancelled the rail project, slammed for vastly overcharging under the Initiative (Myers 2019). Some projects have been dogged by the corruption accusations, shady construction and poor decision making (Barry 2018). NYT also portrayed BRI as the Chinese Ambivalence activity, Which has many faces that Some projects might be boondoggles. Some could have economic benefits, some might be effective in reducing poverty, and some might fulfil the corporate interest of the China government(Millward 2018).

China is using so-called *debt diplomacy* to expend Beijing's political and military influence around the Globe. NYT constructed Sri Lanka as the warning model for other

countries that agreed with the Belt and Road program and took a massive debt from the Chinese state-owned companies for building port and had to hand over a port after it fell behind Chinese loans (Stevenson 2019). *Mr. Pence (United States politician)* argued that It might soon become a forward military base for China's growing blue-water navy (Abi-Habib 2018). Like Sri Lanka, Venezuela had trouble paying back the loan to its creditors (Russia and China). The Moscow government bargain on the overdue debts and win the right for warships to visit ports (Bradsher and Londoño 2018). Taking over the defaulter countries' assets is because China wants to expand and exercise their passive power (Thrush 2018).

Retrospectively, China's initiative's growth brought significant attention to worldwide. It brings a dramatic change in the relationship and cooperation between the world. The European community is negotiating possible trade and bilateral cooperation trade under the platform of Belt and Road. Several European nations are United States allies. Italy is one of the most reliable United States allies, and members of the Group of 7 nations became part of the Belt & Road initiative. NYT reported For decades, Italy dominated the global economy and felt the brunt of the Chinese economic juggernaut that the United States argues poses a threat to the financial and political future of the West" (Horowitz 2019; Kauffmann 2019). Moreover, NYT frames Europe as the prey in the great power game among the three nations; its political allegiance with China and its internal division are weakening west (Horowitz 2019). Unsurprisingly, The New York Times shades more coverage to Belt and Road as the debt trap", "military threat," "one-way road," "so-called Belt and Road," "new colonizers," "aggressive project," "political influence," "new geopolitics strategy," "geopolitical threat" and "strategic threat" as compare to other media outlets.

However, the Associated Press" corpus and initiative was treated in a wide range of contexts like "trade", "plan", "infrastructure", "ancient", "projects", "policy", "sweeping", "desert", "associated", reassert and forth on. In 2016, Political issues weighed in the G-20 summit in China themed "*Toward an Innovative, Invigorated, Interconnected and Inclusive World Economy,*" Associated press constructed this summit as the non-conformational and uneventful summit, where despite controversial issues china seems to deliver in the summit. *Meanwhile, China is trying to deepen the trade relations with the neighbouring countries by supporting them finically from AIIB to open new trade and new markets. Leaders in the world's No. 2 economy have long*

felt they do not have proportional influence inside international financial institutions dominated by Western powers (Franchineau 2016) . Even though this initiative is natural to china but Washington, Moscow, Dehli was worrying about this initiative that it might build the political influence, which might undermine human rights, environmental, and freedom standards(Mcdonald 2017).

Conclusion

This study applied the CDA method to explore the image representation of the belt and road initiative based on the New York Times and associated press corpus. Data was drawn from the lexis advance. The media outlet's data contains editorials, opinions, and news articles by various authors.. This study endeavours to investigate the Belt and Road Initiative's diverse perspective conveyed through US media outlets. China and United States relationships have fluctuated from coming closet to open conflict after both countries impose tariffs on imports and exports. Meanwhile, the United States also has concerns regarding Belt and Road initiative. Within this paper's framework, how do selected media outlets report the BRI and the different images of China's "BRI" being projected in reporting?

Major finding of this research shows that both selected media outlets have acknowledged BRI for bringing world opportunities by investing the billion dollars in many countries. The New York times and Associated press focuses on the initiative's specific measures, its political and economic influence on the world. The selected media outlets use explicit negative vocabulary to reflect the US government's doubts and concerns about the initiative. The number of keywords associated with the warfare, political dominations, concerns, security, influence, sea, ties, military, claims, power, government, influence, critics, etc. These concerns might be because of media outlet ownership, ideology, and commercial imperatives(Shoemaker and Vos 2009). However, We also observe that in some stories NYT portrayed "One Belt One Road" as the new way of colonizing the world, especially emerging countries by investing too much in the superfluous development projects. Also represented BRI marshall plan as a new military threat, regional threat, new imperialist communist state.

In contrast, Associated Press portrays a new silk road in the passive terms like give more vitality to the debt concerns, bribing to get the different infrastructure projects, aggressive, new obstructive force. However, finding are in line with (Chellaney 2017;

Fulton 2016; Cai 2017; Tung 2018). According to the Manheim & Albritton (1983) characterized two main dimensions of the national image, this study concluded that the Belt and road image attributes were presented negatively.

In this research the adaptation of the keyword's analysis helped to identify linguistic patterns represented in media outlets about BRI. Furthermore, the CDA-based concept of *topoi* offers further insights into BRI presentation in the US media outlets. Meanwhile, it was quite troublesome to group the keywords into categories. So, prospective studies should refine categorization methods in order to prevent unnecessarily biased classifications. Therefore, in the two self-built corpora's, the number of terms found is different in volume. Based on the exploratory research features of this report, it is proposed that, at a later point, the related research could extend the span of diachronic research, broaden the reach of the corpus, and use various scientific analysis techniques to develop such research continually. This paper has undertaken only a small phase in understanding Chinese Belt and road image construction in US media outlets. There is a great deal more to be done. Future research may gather broader data samples and analyze how other nations, such as China's neighbouring countries, might Countries and regions in their media, perceive and portray the Belt and the Road. Besides discovering more concrete facts of image representation and projection, and learning how image creation interacts with other influences, ethnographic analysis with interviews and case studies should be promoted.

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