

# One Belt, One Road and the process of OBORization

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### **One Belt, One Road**

With reference to the historic Silk Road, the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative refers to the land-based Silk Road Economic Belt and the seagoing 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The routes cover more than 60 countries and regions from Asia to Europe via Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, West Asia, and the Middle East, currently accounting for some 30% of global GDP and more than 35% of the world's merchandise trade. Proposed by the Chinese president, Xi Jinping, in 2013, the OBOR initiative aims to establish connections between China and Central Asia, West Asia, and parts of South Asia through railways, roads, pipelines, and utility grids, thus making it the world's largest development of economic cooperation – if successful – as it includes policy coordination, collaboration through trade and finance, and socio-cultural cooperation.

In 2014, China provided billions of dollars to fund the advancement of foundation projects for the development of six major economic passages: the New Eurasian Land Bridge, China–Mongolia–Russia, China–Central Asia–Western Asia, the Indo-China Peninsula, China–Pakistan, and Bangladesh–China–India–Myanmar. With over 60 countries willing to participate in the enterprise and over 200 organizations expressing interest in cooperation agreements, this will lead to an incredible progression of infrastructure, trade, and government collaborations in all participating OBOR countries. For instance, China has signed bilateral cooperation agreements related to the project with Hungary, Mongolia, Russia, Tajikistan, and Turkey. A number of projects are under way, including a train connection between Eastern China and Iran that may be expanded to Europe. There are also new rail links with Laos and Thailand and high-speed rail projects in Indonesia. China's Ningbo Shipping Exchange is collaborating with the Baltic Exchange on container trade between China and the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and Europe. Recently, OBOR has expanded further south to Australia and east to Mexico. With the tension between the United States and Mexico in terms of trade and border control,

China has tried to increase its influence on Latin America by expanding its OBOR initiative (Myers and Barrios, 2017).

The massive development of the OBOR region's infrastructure and increasing trade, cultural, and government collaborations will speed up economic development in OBOR countries. This suggests that as the separated regions of OBOR countries begin to shrink due to increasing connectivity, it may facilitate the movement of illegal goods and the development of criminal networks. Some of the participating countries are known for their weak law enforcement and rampant corruption. Such vulnerability provides fertile soil for transnational organized crime. In particular, whether the launch of OBOR will be accompanied by the rise of a new "Silk Road of organized crime" is of great interest to policymakers, law enforcers, and criminologists. OBOR provides a great opportunity for scholars to ask questions, such as how we can predict and perhaps avoid the numerous obstacles that emerge in the course of the implementation of the project; how criminological knowledge can contribute to it; and what new trends, markets, and criminal activities could develop as a reaction to the new opportunities OBOR will provide. It is important, therefore, to analyze the situation of crime and crime prevention in specific countries on the OBOR routes in general, and in regard to organized crime activities and corruption in particular.

In this book, we present a collection of studies on corruption and organized crime and the societal and state reaction to them in different OBOR countries. Different sources of crime and corruption statistics, such as the Crime Index, Global Peace Index, and Corruption Perception Index, indicate the high level of crime and corruption in many OBOR countries.<sup>1</sup> As we will see in the upcoming chapters, corruption is the most urgent problem, presenting a great challenge for OBOR. The other obstacle is organized crime activities, especially drugs and human trafficking. This is not the place to review a debate on the definition of organized crime. It is important, however, to emphasize its cross-border, transnational, or even global character. This does not mean that these activities are similar around the globe; however, we can observe specific goods that can reach new markets and clients due to the easier opportunities to transport them and easier communication opportunities among criminal groups that become available with every new economic globalization initiative, including OBOR. Global organized crime follows the usual trade routes and local problems can become global, as has happened in the past (Siegel et al., 2003). The existing knowledge on organized crime, its modus operandi, international networks, and the links between upperworld and underworld in specific OBOR countries is, therefore, crucial for policymakers to deal with the concrete obstacles it may present for OBOR.

In June 2017, a group of experts on organized crime and corruption from different OBOR countries gathered at City University of Hong Kong to share their knowledge and most recent studies and to discuss the possible obstacles

and challenges for OBOR from a criminological perspective. The present book is based on the results of this symposium.

## **The process of OBORization**

This introductory chapter posits the Belt and Road Initiative (English term) or, in the Chinese term, the One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative, as a process. In the symposium, Lo (2017) offers a working definition, labeled OBORization. Ever since the opening up of the People's Republic of China in 1978, countries around the world have flocked to cash in on the trade with China. Even 20 years later, at the turn of the century, Hong Kong businessmen chasing trade would still quip that any percentage of a population of 1.3 billion is a good market share. Those Hongkongers – and many other mainland Chinese, Asian, and Western business people – were chasing a very different version of the China Dream than that we hear Chinese President Xi Jinping currently elaborating. Today, in 2019, OBOR, with its tens and hundreds of billions in promised infrastructure investments, the promises of win–win development and common prosperity from the new era, China trade have become sweeteners – monetary and otherwise – to lure OBOR countries to accept huge direct investment from China.

Even in the Hong Kong and Macau special administrative regions, which are governed by China under the principle of “one country, two systems”, OBOR has been heavily promoted to attract large investments from the regions and encourage rapid economic, social, and political convergence with mainland China. Lo (2017) argues that OBOR is simply the latest Chinese sweetener to bait Hongkongers, following earlier development projects such as the Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, the Mainland and Macau Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement, and China's massive outbound tourism policies, such as the Individual Visitor Scheme, all of which led to the mainlandization (by mainland China) of Hong Kong's and Macau's systems. For instance, the problem of unanticipated organized parallel smuggling of goods between Hong Kong and the mainland accompanying China's massive tourism outflows to Hong Kong not only facilitated mainlandization but also undermined the social stability of the territory (Garrett, 2017).

Mainlandization is a process whereby Hong Kong and Macau have been made “more politically dependent on Beijing, economically more reliant on the mainland's support, socially more patriotic toward the motherland, and legally more reliant on the interpretation of the Basic Law by China's National People's Congress” (Lo, 2007, p. 179). China's mainlandization – its political integration of Hong Kong and Macau – has been described as a “recolonization” or “sinification” of the territories and the privileging of mainland Chinese interests (one country) over regional interests (the two systems: Hong Kong and Macau) (Lo, 2007, p. 227). Concomitant with the enticement for economic

and other dependence on the mainland has been the Chinese authorities' use of clientelism or state corporatism, leveraging *guanxi* and myriad economic and other inducements in exchange for political subservience and support for Chinese domination from regional business and elite classes. This process has also led to growing corruption in, and of, the "two systems".<sup>2</sup> To this end, though the concept of recolonization<sup>3</sup> remains politically incorrect to use in "polite company" in Hong Kong and on the mainland, "the harsh reality" is that, in the context of accepting Chinese sweeteners, Hong Kong has already become recolonized (Lo, 2007, p. 222). In brief, as Lo (2017) explained during the Symposium on Organized Crime along One Belt, One Road: Hong Kong and Macau are now drug addicts. They took so much Chinese sweet they are totally dependent on China now.

Following the 2008 global financial tsunami that threatened the global economy, many countries around the world similarly became addicted to Chinese sweeteners in the form of immense Chinese foreign direct investment and frenzied state-owned enterprises' overseas buying sprees. As the West staggered under the crisis, China drew on its substantial foreign currency reserves, accumulated since its opening up, and surged forth to the rescue. At one point, Western critics complained China is buying the world. Conversely, Chinese firms grumbled that Westerners and other sellers raised prices when they heard the Chinese were coming. Taking advantage of the strategic opportunity presented by the financial crisis, China's national economic champions did not just buy a skyscraper or two in New York City (as cash-rich Japanese companies had in the 1980s). Rather, they took control of port facilities on long-term lease – for example, Port Darwin in Australia (Garrick, 2018) and Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka (Abi-Habib, 2018) – and other critical infrastructure and natural resources. Notably, OBOR was launched in the heady days of China's post-financial crisis buying sprees when domestic development was peaking, excess capacity burgeoning, and the global recovery weak. The frenzied overseas buying binges continued, lasting nearly a decade until China's expanding domestic economic tribulations, industrial overcapacity, and slowdown intervened, and Beijing authorities began reeling in state-owned enterprises and corrupt officials under Xi Jinping's broadening anti-corruption crackdown (Lo et al., 2020).

During this same time frame, China, seeing itself as a strong country under Xi Jinping's leadership, became more aggressive in asserting its perceived political and territorial prerogatives. China sought to impose its mode of political orthodoxy on recipients (actual and potential) of Chinese largesse, just as it had with Hong Kong and Macau, who had gorged on Chinese economic sweeteners to the point that they became addicts to the China trade. In this sense, OBOR, or the process of OBORization, can be understood as a modified type of mainlandization that is exported to OBOR nations that are attracted by the lucrative business opportunities and massive capital investment. In exchange, they are likely to adopt the Chinese culture and business practice, which may open the

floodgate to using *guanxi* for soliciting business opportunities and corruption to smooth the operation. The free-flowing economic outflows from China to the world under OBOR, or to Hong Kong and Macau, it turned out, were not free, let alone without cost or consequence. Desperate to get on the Beijing OBOR gravy train dispensing billions in investments and building much needed infrastructure in developing states with seemingly few strings attached, many countries did not bother to care or think about the potential or real costs or consequences of accepting OBOR sweeteners.

Though predominantly framed in development and economic terms, the role of OBOR in social and cultural exchanges and the implications for corruption and economic and organized crime and trafficking appear to have been overlooked by China and other countries in most discussions on the project. These present potentially existential dangers, not just to recipients of OBOR sweeteners, but also to the success of the OBOR policy itself. Likewise, because globalization involves importing and exporting not just commodities but the expanded exchange of many other intangible and tangible goods, services, and values (good and bad), little discussion has occurred in terms of what this new phase of globalization, or OBORization, will do for, or to, China (other than export its excess industrial capacity and safeguard its economic development gains and momentum). Similarly, besides money and infrastructure, what would China export to, or import from, the OBOR countries during the process of OBORization? Unfortunately, this is not just an academic exercise, or notional problem: OBORization processes are occurring right now, and China and the OBOR nations are unprepared. Both are moving and transforming so quickly that no one really knows what the OBORization process may consist of in five or ten years.

### **OBORization: a working definition**

OBORization involves the securitization of Communist China's economic development gains, momentum, and trajectory (national rejuvenation) over the last 40 years (1978–2018) through the attainment of its centennial goals of creating a moderately prosperous society by 2021 (the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party [CCP]) and making China a fully developed nation by 2049 (the 100th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China). Unlike Globalization 1.0, this new Globalization 2.0 is driven by China instead of the West. Hence, Chinese Communist and Soviet-era cultures of corruption and ideology are more informative and operative registers or indicators of OBOR's future trajectory than perhaps Western Enlightenment values and the history of capitalism that shored up the globalization of the 20th century. As with Communist China's earlier economic development, its approach of "crossing the river by feeling the stones" suggests that the OBORization process is an amorphous, living concept that, though already being put into action, continues to be "filled in" stone by stone. In

other words, any definition of the OBORization process seeks to hit a moving target – a target whose characteristics and nature may change depending on the perspective from which they are viewed. Moreover, today we are just barely five years into what will likely be a generational phenomenon of massive economic, political, and social change and upheaval. Nevertheless, the authors and editors of this volume have sought to offer an exploratory investigation of the OBORization process.

Broadly, OBORization has two meanings. It refers to the process of the massive development of infrastructure in the OBOR region that helps increase trade, cultural exchanges, and government collaborations led by China for the purpose of speeding up the economic development in the region. It also refers to the process of using economic and other development alternatives to attract OBOR countries and make them more economically dependent on China's financial support, more accepting politically and supportive of Chinese policies and global leadership, and legally more subject to the alternative modes of arbitration, governance, and globalization processes constructed and administered by China. It involves a subtle (and at times not so subtle) process where various aspects of foreign economic, legal, and political systems of the OBOR countries converge with and are assimilated by Chinese interests, practices, and perspectives. This process is arguably heavily influenced by the Chinese Communist ideology, value system, economic understanding, and worldview. Its aim is not simply to securitize the gains of China's economic revolution of the last 40 years and outsource its industrial capacity or, more altruistically, to save the world. Rather, it intends to create a community of shared destiny of its own making.<sup>4</sup> OBORization is characterized by the circulation of exports and imports and contains both negative and positive dimensions and implications.

In fact, OBORization is a double-edged sword that contains both positive and negative dimensions and implications. In addition to the economic benefits, positive dimensions of OBORization include creating significant opportunities for anti-corruption, counter-drug, and law enforcement capacity-building; education; information exchange; and professionalization of security services among OBOR nations. For example, Hong Kong can export anti-triad experience and knowledge (Kwok and Lo, 2013, 2014). This would be an OBORization export in addition to, and beyond, what it already does in promoting Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption, or its judiciary and rule of law models. Anti-corruption and law enforcement personnel exchanges and joint research centers located in universities or think tanks are emerging and promise future positive OBORization outcomes. Non-former Soviet bloc OBOR countries can import knowledge to other OBOR states regarding the management and remediation of the social consequences of extreme violence associated with economic and organized crime. The collation and dissemination of law enforcement best practices and lessons learned in combating domestic, regional, and transnational corruption and economic and organized crime is another potential product of the OBORization process. A combined, synchronized, and sustained multinational effort to transform Chinese

and former Soviet states' cultures of corruption and peoples' normalization of, and indifferent attitudes toward, corruption and organized crime is another conceivable future output of the OBORization process. This might be a new endeavor, or one that capitalizes on the opportunities provided by an existing security organization of a small subset of OBOR members.

Regarding the negative aspects of the OBORization process, increasing regional connectivity and infrastructure upgrades may foster the cross-border movement of illicit products and the development of criminal networks as well as the exportation and importation of corporate and official corruption, economic and organized crime, criminal actors and groups, extreme violence, and trafficking in illicit markets, services, and goods in, to, and from the OBOR countries. Extreme violence associated with the OBORization process may be the result of the actions of organized crime groups or law enforcement agencies deploying extraordinary security measures (e.g., extrajudicial killings during drug wars, totalitarian surveillance) to combat economic and organized crime and trafficking in illicit goods and services. The normalization and valorization of corruption and organized crime accompanying OBORization as inevitable characteristics and features of economic development serve to inhibit and undermine the strengthening of anti-crime and anti-corruption capabilities, legislation, and policies in OBOR destination countries. Similarly, the prioritizing of economic development over human and societal security and human and civil rights – China's mode of economic development at all costs – reduces incentives and funding resources for research and programs tackling corruption and economic and organized crime, thereby allowing black economies and underworlds to thrive.

## **About this book**

Having established a working definition and frame of reference for the OBORization process, the next section provides brief outlines of all chapters in this edited volume. This book is divided into three parts, the first focusing on crime and corruption in China. The second part includes four chapters on various transnational organized crime activities, and the third presents studies on corruption and crime in selected OBOR countries.

Part A includes three chapters. In Chapter 2, T. Wing Lo describes the revitalization of China's open door policy in the 1990s, which opened the door to copious criminal activities, including prostitution, abduction, illegal drugs smuggling, robbery, firearm-related crimes, corruption, and economic crimes. Law and order were ineffective as many officials were participating in criminal activity through both action and inaction. Despite the localization of criminal activity, the major operators extended their operations nationally and internationally. The study of the Hong Kong triads shows their infiltration under the guise of entertainment rings. The conclusion of the chapter is that if history is doomed to repeat itself, OBOR may be the modern iteration of China's open door policy.

This warning is followed in Chapter 3 by T. Wing Lo, Li Li, and Sharon I. Kwok, who present different cases of grand corruption in China. Recognizing imbalances of power and salary among state officials, businessmen and gang members sought to cheat the system through syndicated corruption while using state functionaries as a protective umbrella. The protective umbrella extends vertically from the lower level to the upper level through syndicated corruption and *guanxi*-making. Numerous senior officials have been disciplined: President Xi is determined to act against corruption among officials and against the flow of corrupt money in order to uproot both the triads and the corrupt officials acting as their protective umbrellas. On the other hand, the political and social instability of OBOR countries will create demands from Chinese investors for protection. If China is no longer a safe haven for triads, the authors pose questions on whether triads will become another form of excess capacity and whether the triads' excess capacity will be transferred and utilized in OBOR nations when the demand for triad services slows down in China because of the series of crackdowns.

In Chapter 4 on China, by Daniel Garrett, briefly discusses mounting backlash in 2018 to the OBOR initiative, signifying a possible inflection point, coalescing around global concerns over Chinese-led state-capture of the United Nations (UN), its development agenda, and OBOR countries arising from China's exportation of corruption, economic and organized crime, and trafficking (the OBORization process). Infamously labeled the "Empire of Bribes" by the United States for alleged OBOR debt trap diplomacy and loan shark-like financing of developing countries' infrastructure projects, China's 2017 and 2018 UN bribes for OBOR scandals involving Communist Party-state actors from the Macau and Hong Kong special administrative regions exposed the pivotal role of United Front actors and government-organized nongovernmental organizations masquerading as private entities in Beijing's OBOR-energized state-capture activities.

The analysis of corruption and crime patterns in China is followed by four chapters on cross-border crime in OBOR countries presented in Part B. In Chapter 5, Roderic Broadhurst focuses on illicit markets and innovations in transnational crime in Asia, which have grown rapidly with the opening up of trade and development of China, India, and ASEAN, boosted by infrastructure development and increased wealth. Traditional crime groups have revitalized and new entrepreneurial crime groups have emerged to capitalize on the illicit market opportunities, contributing to a surge in the distribution and use of narcotics as well as other contraband (counterfeit products and medicines, timber, exotic species, e-waste, weapons, labor trafficking) in Asia and worldwide. The chapter outlines the illicit markets-criminal organizations nexus in Asia and considers how responses to transnational crime can amplify or diminish its hidden power.

Simon Mackenzie and Donna Yates in Chapter 6 further argue that the economic dominance of China within Asia and beyond appears to be having



a parallel effect on the accumulation of cultural capital, with China becoming a site of consolidation for much of Asia's cultural heritage wealth, legal and illegal. The authors suggest that China's internal art market is centered on accumulation of the attributes of class through culture, and it appears to be in the process of changing a criminal market in looted antiquities characterized by a strong international component into a regional inter-Asia trade flow in that continent. In this chapter, the likely consequences of these developments are considered in the context of regional organized crime and the development of OBOR.

Another example of organized crime, presented by Daan van Uhm in Chapter 7 – namely, of the illegal wildlife trade, which has become a global criminal enterprise – shows how criminal groups became involved in the illegal trade of endangered species in traditional Chinese medicine. The chapter shows that this trade has become a lucrative and corrupt black market that increasingly attracts transnational criminal organizations along the Silk Road. In Chapter 8, Rebecca W. Y. Wong, adding to Daan van Uhm's discussion, demonstrates how the increased national connectivity and integration under OBOR can create opportunities for criminal groups to illegally trade and exploit protected wildlife residing in the member states. Based on her empirical study with actors involved in the trade, this chapter shows how tiger parts are smuggled across countries in the region (Myanmar, India, etc.), how the networks employ mechanisms to foster trust, and how the tiger parts are distributed once they reach mainland China.

Part C includes six chapters, each of which discusses organized crime and corruption specificities in selected OBOR countries. The first five chapters are based on European or Eurasian cases, with their common historical and economic past, but with plenty of socio-cultural and political differences. The first case is organized crime in Russia, presented in Chapter 9 by Yakov Gilinskiy and Dina Siegel, who describe organized crime as a form of social organization of Russian society. They highlight that crime, globalization, and social control share characteristics of the postmodern world in which they are situated. The Russian slogan 'all on sale' is realized in both street crime, such as thefts, robberies, and fraud, and white-collar crime, such as corruption and organized crime. Gilinskiy and Siegel outline different periods of historical development of organized crime in the country. From the early 2000s onward, it can be viewed as an amalgamation and union of criminal organizations, businesses (legal and semilegal), power structures, and the police.

Dina Siegel and Zhaniya Turlubekova in Chapter 10 present the example of Kazakhstan, asking whether and how this country can be considered a stable and trustful partner in OBOR in economic and socio-political terms. The specific characteristics of the criminal world of Kazakhstan are analyzed here from cultural and historical perspectives, with a special focus on the dominant position of the *vory v zakone* (thieves in law). This chapter shows how members of transnational organized crime – and in particular those who specialize in

drug trafficking, human trafficking, and smuggling – take advantage of the state’s key geographic position, the long border with Russia, the large natural wild marijuana valleys, and local political and economic problems in transitioning states like Kazakhstan and its neighbors.

Corruption in another former Soviet republic, Lithuania, is analyzed in Chapter 11 by Algimantas Čepas and Aleksandras Dobryninas, specifically anti-corruption efforts and their results. Ability to tackle corruption was one of the major indicators of the readiness of the candidate countries to meet Western European standards of the rule of law, good governance, and civic maturity. Lithuania chose the Hong Kong Independent Commission Against Corruption model, which was praised worldwide as an example of a fast and effective way to tackle corruption at the local level, although later this model met with criticism, mostly due to its political and cultural distinctiveness.

Miroslav Scheinost continues with the assessment of the situation in East Europe in respect of corruption and organized crime in Chapter 12 on criminal activities in the Czech Republic. In this chapter, the domestic and international factors that influence this development are mentioned – partly in comparison with neighboring countries such as Poland and Hungary – and with regard to the possibility of explaining this development using theoretical models of the phenomenon of organized crime. The nexus between economic and organized crime, as one of the characteristic features of modern organized crime, is analyzed.

The East and Central European perspective is presented in Chapter 13 by Emil Pływaczewski, focusing on Poland. This chapter describes the process of creating the system for combating organized crime, including setting up a special task force in the police and providing state agencies with new legal instruments, such as crown (witness immunity) or undercover operations. The most threatening criminal groups in Poland, related to the organized crime of other states, were neutralized. The disruption of the criminal solidarity of many groups is also a serious breach and blow to organized crime. Moreover, the chapter stresses the importance of international cooperation in fighting crime, particularly organized criminal activities.

Chapter 14, the last chapter in this part, presents organized crime and corruption problems in Bangladesh. Najmus Sakib argues that crime statistics in Bangladesh have improved according to the 2017 Corruption Prevention Index, although it was one of the most corrupt countries for five consecutive years (2001–2005). In this regard, this chapter aims to portray the nature of corruption and organized crime in Bangladesh. It depicts the changing forms of and association between corruption and organized crime in the Bangladesh context that are challenging to law enforcement agencies. Implications on OBOR are also discussed.

Part C is followed by concluding Chapter 15 by T. Wing Lo and Daniel Garrett, identifying common issues and problems related to law and order in

OBOR nations. Both negative and positive dimensions and implications of OBORization will be revisited. Against the background of massive economic growth and the ‘China threat’ in OBOR nations, institutionalized corruption and people’s low trust in the government, organized crime and the protective umbrella, convergence and connectivity among criminal groups, and the covert but significant role of Hong Kong and Macau are examined. Positive cases of OBORization from China, Hong Kong, Lithuania, and Poland in the field of legal and police exchange are discussed and the human rights issue is raised.

What is remarkable in this edited volume is that in each of the countries discussed in varying intensities, there are different dynamics affecting organized crime and corruption. On the other hand, the law and order in these countries can present a challenge to the success of OBOR, and their implications for the overarching OBORization process are worth examining.

## Notes

- 1 Crime Index 2017: Numbeo. Retrieved from [www.numbeo.com/crime/rankings\\_by\\_country.jsp](http://www.numbeo.com/crime/rankings_by_country.jsp)
- Global Peace Index 2017: The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). Retrieved from <http://visionofhumanity.org/app/uploads/2017/06/GPI-2017-Report-1.pdf>
- Corruption Perception Index 2016: Transparency International. Retrieved from [www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption\\_perceptions\\_index\\_2016](http://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016)
- 2 For instance, in the case of Hong Kong, former Hong Kong Chief Executive Donald Tsang Kam-yuen was found guilty by a court of misconduct in public office, and his Chief Secretary for Administration, Rafael Hui Si-yan, was convicted of misconduct in public office and found guilty of bribery. Notably, Hui had received large sums of money from a Chinese official connected to the State Council’s Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office to aid him with his debts to avoid his resignation from government service, but this was not prosecuted by the Hong Kong courts. In another case, former ICAC commissioner Timothy Tong Hin-ming, a member of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, faced investigation and severe criticism for lavish spending of public funds, entertaining and giving gifts to mainland Chinese officials.
- 3 The notion of OBOR colonization is relevant here as earlier phases of globalization were perceived by some as a new form of Western colonialization. Hence, it is inevitable – and has indeed already transpired – that OBOR, Silk Route globalization and the OBORization process will be framed by some critics as a form of Chinese colonialization (of both the upper and underworlds).
- 4 As described in a State Council Information Office (May 2017) press release, *The Belt and Road Augurs a Community of Shared Destiny*: “Building a community of shared destiny is at the core of the Belt and Road Initiative, signifying a new path which avoids social disruption and confrontation, leading instead to international economic integration and interdependence”.

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