



Ifri–OCP Policy Center Roundtables

**China's Belt and Road:
Towards Globalization with Chinese Characteristics?**

Brief - Agenda - Biographies

Monday September 18, 2017 | 9:30-17:30 | Paris, France

ifri



Seminar Brief

In 2013, Chinese president Xi Jinping first unveiled his broad vision to develop regional connectivity and infrastructure across Eurasia that would later be officially named the Belt and Road Initiative (or yi dai yi lu, One Belt, One Road, or OBOR). The initiative has emerged as a central narrative of Xi's foreign policy, and China has already committed an estimated \$300 billion in financing for infrastructure projects such as roads, railways, ports, power plants and telecommunications hardware across Asia to the Middle East, Europe and Africa. Some estimate the figure could reach \$1 trillion over the next decade. Moving beyond physical infrastructure, China hopes to make OBOR a catalyst for developing the so-called "five connectivities" to include infrastructure, finance, commerce, people-to-people exchanges and policy coordination – in effect taking on a more normative role in shaping the regional economic and social order. By now opening the initiative up to all countries and regions of the world, China is seemingly looking to develop OBOR into a broad-ranging platform for coordinating regional development and, possibly, global governance.

China is clearly seeking to articulate a more proactive stance in regional and global affairs, even staking out a leadership role for itself in a context where Western leadership has been faltering. Offering the promise of long-term economic development and growth, China is uniquely placed to drive the regional economic agenda, or perhaps even a new wave of globalization with Chinese characteristics. But China will not go unchallenged in its efforts, as other regional players such as India, Japan and Russia seek to position themselves in a rapidly changing geopolitical environment. China's own internal challenges, to include a profound economic transformation and rapidly rising debt, help to shape the OBOR narrative, but also risk derailing the initiative.

This conference will explore many of the drivers, challenges and implications of OBOR, analyzing first the project in a Chinese context before delving into the regional implications for South and Southeast Asia, Russia and Central Asia, and Africa.

Agenda

Meeting Venue: Ifri, 27 rue de la Procession, 75015 Paris - France

09:30-09:45

WELCOME REMARKS

Thomas Gomart, Director, Ifri

09:45-11:30

CHINA'S NEW SILK ROADS – DRIVERS AND IMPLICATIONS

More than four years have already passed since China's Belt and Road was launched by President Xi Jinping. When he first mentioned the idea in an autumn 2013 speech in Kazakhstan, questions quickly emerged on the meaning of this general concept, which soon became widely promoted through a large-scale and well-coordinated public diplomacy strategy both in and outside China. But is it just about communication? What drives China, and how is it promoting and implementing OBOR in concrete terms, from a broad economic perspective and in the energy sector in particular?

SPEAKERS

SHI Yan, Assistant Research Fellow, Department of European Studies, CIIS

Alice Ekman, Head of China Research, Center for Asian Studies, Ifri

Françoise Nicolas, Director, Center for Asian Studies, Ifri

John Seaman, Research Fellow, Center for Asian Studies, Ifri

11:30-11:45

Coffee Break

11:45-12:45

PANEL I: EXPLAINING INDIA'S PERCEPTION OF THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

In May 2017, China hosted the high profile Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation. While representatives from about 160 states reportedly attended the forum, one country was conspicuously absent: India. Various factors account for India's opposition to BRI. China stated that its "doors will always remain open". But it remains to be seen whether New Delhi may be amenable to changing its position, especially as its priority so far has been to push its own connectivity initiatives in the Indian Ocean Region.

CHAIR

Françoise Nicolas, Director, Center for Asian Studies, Ifri

SPEAKERS

Isabelle Saint-Mézard, Associate Research Fellow, Center for Asian Studies, Ifri

Ritika Passi, Associate Fellow and Project Editor, ORF

12:45-14:00

Lunch Break

14:00 -15:00

PANEL II: REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS: SOUTHEAST ASIA

Southeast Asia is a primary focus of China's maritime Silk Road. The region is in dire need of infrastructure funding and some countries also welcome Chinese investment as a way of rekindling economic growth. However, the risk of an overreliance on China cannot be excluded, leading some countries to meet China's initiative with suspicion. This ambivalent stance may also be the source of internal tensions within ASEAN.

CHAIR

Françoise Nicolas, Director, Center for Asian Studies, Ifri

SPEAKERS

Sophie Boisseau du Rocher, Associate Research Fellow, Center for Asian Studies, Ifri

WANG Xin, Researcher in Chinese Policies, IDDRI, Sciences Po

15:00-15:10

Coffee Break

15:10-16:10

PANEL III: CHINA'S NEW SILK ROADS: RUSSIA'S INTERESTS AND MOTIVATIONS

After first reactions of mistrust, Russia seems to perceive China's Silk Road initiative as an economic and geopolitical opportunity. In the context of confrontation with the West, the latter dimension has gained particular importance. After launching the idea of the coordination between OBOR and the Eurasian Economic Union in May 2015, Russia is now promoting the concept of "Greater Eurasia". What kind of real benefits is Russia expecting from these new Eurasian projects?

CHAIR

Thomas Gomart, Director, Ifri

SPEAKERS

Tatiana Kastouéva-Jean, Director, Russia/NIS Center, Ifri

Olivier de Boysson, Head of Emerging Countries Research, Société Générale

16:10-16:20

Coffee Break

16:20-17:20

PANEL IV: IS THE OBOR INITIATIVE SPREADING ACROSS AFRICA?

Africa appears of secondary importance for China's OBOR project, but it is nevertheless causing a stir across the continent. An increasing number of official declarations across Africa highlight the project's attractiveness, but also the risks of dependence and regional competition to join the OBOR wave have already begun. What do these reactions reveal about African and Chinese ambitions and expectations?

CHAIR

Alain Antil, Head of Sub-Saharan Africa Program, Ifri

SPEAKERS

Clélie Nallet, Research Fellow, Sub-Saharan Africa Program, Ifri

El Mostapha Rezrazi, Board member, China-Morocco OBOR Research Group, President, Moroccan Association for Asian Studies

Fathallah Oualalou, Senior Fellow, OCP Policy Center

17:20-17:30

CLOSING REMARKS

Chair and Speaker Biographies

Alain Antil, Head of Sub-Saharan Africa Program, Ifri



Alain Antil is a research fellow and head of the Sub-Saharan Africa Program at Ifri. He teaches at the *Institut d'Etudes Politiques* of Lille and at the *Institut Supérieur Technique Outre-Mer* (ISTOM). Alain Antil obtained his PhD in political geography at the University of Rouen. Prior to that he was associate research fellow at the *Laboratoire d'Etude du Développement des Régions Arides*, collaborated for the International Crisis Group and regularly contributed to the revue *Sciences Humaines*. He was a teacher at the University of Rouen and the University of Versailles Saint-Quentin en Yvelines.

Sophie Boisseau du Rocher, Associate Research Fellow, Center for Asian Studies, Ifri



Sophie Boisseau du Rocher is a senior research fellow specializing in Southeast Asian politics, geostrategic affairs and regional integration. She is the author of numerous books and articles, including *Le Cambodge, la survie d'un peuple* (Belin, Paris, 2011), *L'Asie du Sud-Est prise au piège* (Perrin, Paris, 2009) and *L'ASEAN et la construction régionale en Asie du Sud-Est* (L'Harmattan, Paris, 1997). She also edited the *Annuaire de l'Asie orientale* (Yearbook on East Asia) for the *Documentation française* (2006 – 2012). Dr. Boisseau du Rocher holds a PhD in Political Science from Sciences Po, Paris (1996) and has previously taught at Sciences Po Paris, Sciences Po Le Havre (Asia campus), the *Institut des hautes Etudes de la Défense nationale* (IHEDN), and the *Collège Inter-Armée de défense*. She managed the Observatory on Southeast Asia for the Directorate of Strategic Affairs of the French Ministry of Defense from 2008-2011. She is also a research associate of the GRIP (Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security) in Brussels.

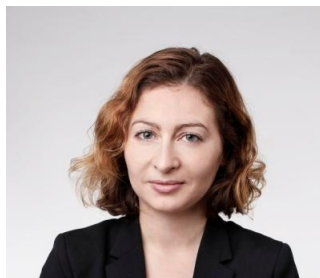
Olivier de Boysson, Chief Economist, Head of Emerging Countries Research, Société Générale



Olivier de Boysson is Chief Economist Emerging Markets at Société Générale Group. He is also deputy head of the Economic Research at the Risk Department, in charge of macroeconomic forecasts and macro financial risk analysis. This includes elaborating the macroeconomic assumptions for business plans and supervising the Country Risk analyses. He is heading a team involved in the investment and credit policies for the various business units of Société Générale.

Olivier de Boysson has a demonstrated history of working in the banking industry with strong finance professional skills in Financial Risk, Risk Management, Corporate Finance, Banking, and Economic Research. Olivier de Boysson started his career at Paribas in the Economic Research Department. He is a member of various groups of experts on international finance. Olivier de Boysson has a degree from École des Mines de Paris. He has been a lecturer in economics at *Sorbonne university*, at *Collège Interarmées de Défense*, and at *Sciences Po*. He is a member of the *Société de Géographie*.

Alice Ekman, Head of China Research, Center for Asian Studies, Ifri



Dr. Alice Ekman is Head of China Research at the Center for Asian Studies of the French Institute of International Relations (IFRI) and also teaches at Sciences Po in Paris. She specializes in China's domestic and foreign policy, Taiwan and the Korean peninsula. Her research interests also include regional and global governance restructuring, the practice of diplomacy and the evolution of think tanks. Fluent in Mandarin Chinese, she regularly undertakes research fieldwork in China and East Asia and exchanges with public and private institutions working in the region.

Dr. Ekman was formerly Visiting Scholar at Tsinghua University (Beijing), at National Taiwan Normal University (Taipei), and more recently at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies (Seoul).

She is currently a member of the EU committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP). She holds a PhD from Sciences Po in International Relations, an MA from the London School of Economics, and is the author of the *La Chine dans le Monde*, to be published by CNRS Editions in November 2017.

Thomas Gomart, Director, Ifri



Dr. Thomas Gomart is Director of Ifri. He previously was its Vice President for Strategic Development (2010-2015) and the director of its Russia/NIS Centre (2004-2013).

His academic and professional background has been closely related to post-Soviet space, but also to wider international issues (security, energy, and digital governance). He is currently working on Russia, country risk, and think tanks. He recently published "The Return of Geopolitical Risk - Russia, China and the United States", *Études de l'Ifri*, Apr. 2016, *Notre intérêt national. Quelle politique étrangère pour la France ?*, (ed., with Thierry de Montbrial),

Editions Odile Jacob, Jan. 2017, as well as "Foreign Policy Challenges for the Next French President", (ed., with Marc Hecker), *Études de l'Ifri*, Apr. 2017.

Tatiana Kastouéva-Jean, Director, Russia/NIS Center, Ifri



Tatiana Kastouéva-Jean holds a degree from the State University of Ekaterinbourg, a Franco-Russian Master in International Relations from the University of Sciences Po/MGIMO in Moscow, and a DEA (Diplôme d'études approfondies) in International Relations. Among her research areas: evolution of Russian domestic and foreign policies, soft power, Ukraine, education and human capital. She directs the *Russie.Nei.Visions*. Recent publications include: « Pourquoi la société russe soutient-elle la politique actuelle du Kremlin ? », *Les Études du CERI*, Sciences Po, n° 228-229, *Regards sur l'Eurasie*, février 2017 ; « La Russie après les crises

ukrainienne et syrienne », *RAMSES 2017*, Ifri/Dunod, 2016 ; « Le système Poutine : bâti pour durer ? », *Politique étrangère*, n°2, 2015 and « Russia's Domestic Evolution, What Impact on its Foreign Policy? », *Russie.Nei.Visions*, n° 84, April 2015.

Clélie Nallet, Research Fellow, Sub-Saharan Africa Program, Ifri



Clélie Nallet is a Research Fellow with the Sub-Saharan Africa Program at Ifri. Her research focuses on African socio-economic transformations and urban dynamics. She holds a PhD in political science from Sciences Po. Bordeaux, where she devoted her thesis to the study of Ethiopian “middle classes”. She has conducted numerous surveys on living standards and lifestyles, mainly in Addis Ababa, Niamey and Kinshasa. Clélie is also an expert on issues related to the private sector in the South and was deputy editor in chief of Private Sector & Development magazine.

Françoise Nicolas, Director, Center for Asian Studies, Ifri



Françoise Nicolas has been with Ifri since 1990. She is also an assistant Professor in international economics at the University of Paris-Est (Marne-la-Vallée), and teaches at Langues' O, Sciences Po (Paris) and Sciences Po (Lyon).

In the past she has taught at the Graduate Institute of International Studies (GIIS, Geneva – 1987-90), at the *Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées* (1991-95), as well as at the HEC School of Management (2000-02). She has also worked as a consultant to the Directorate for Financial, Fiscal and Enterprise Affairs of the OECD (1997-99 and 2010-11).

Françoise Nicolas holds a PhD in international economics (1991) and a MA in political science (1985) from the Graduate Institute of International Studies (Geneva, Switzerland). She has also studied at the University of Sussex (1980-81) and has spent some time as a visiting fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) in Singapore (1999) and at the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP) in Seoul (2004).

Fathallah Oualalou, Senior Fellow, OCP Policy Center, Former Minister of Economy and Finance



Fathallah Oualalou was born in 1942 in Rabat. He graduated with a degree in economics from Mohammed V University in 1964 and obtained a diploma in economics in 1966 in Paris. He was appointed Minister of Economy in 1998 and Minister of Finance in 2002. He is professor at Mohammed V University and chairs the Association of Moroccan Economists and Union of Arab Economists. After over 20 years as member of the Municipal Council, he was Mayor of Rabat from 2009 to 2015.

Ritika Passi, Associate Fellow and Project Editor, Observer Research Foundation (ORF)



Ritika Passi is Associate Fellow and Project Editor at Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi. Her research focuses on issues of connectivity, security and development. She is currently studying various aspects of the Belt and Road Initiative and the International North-South Transport Corridor (economics, local impact, Gwadar port versus Chabahar port, geopolitical value). She has previously written on security and governance in the Indian Ocean region, Indian contribution to UN peacekeeping, India's neighbourhood, and sustainable development. Ritika is the co-editor of the ORF *Raisina Files 2017* and oversees the Global Policy Journal-ORF India Series. She has a Masters in International Security from Sciences Po, Paris.

El Mostapha Rezrazi, Board member, China-Morocco OBOR Research Group, President, Moroccan Association for Asian Studies



Dr El Mostafa Rezrazi is a professor of Crisis Management, and Security Studies. His area of Expertise covers Afro-Asian Affairs, Strategic & Security Studies, Terrorism, Extremism and Deradicalisation, mainly from the view of Criminal; Legal and Forensic Psychology.

He got his Ph.D in Regional & International Affairs from the University of Tokyo in 1998, and later a Doctorate from the University of Mohammed V on the Psychological dynamisms of Suicide Bombers (2014).

He is the executive director of the Moroccan Observatory on Extremism and Violence, Director of the African Center for Asian Studies, Rabat. Currently, he is Visiting Professor at the University Mohammed V Rabat.

In 2017, was appointed a Co-coordinator of the OBOR China-Morocco Research Group, and a member of the Advisory Board of The Euro-African Studies Institute, Hanyang University Seoul, South Korea.

Dr Rezrazi is the president for the second term of the Moroccan Association for Asian Studies.

Dr Rezrazi has served in the past as a distinguished professor in the school of law of Sapporo Gakuin University (Japan), a professor & Deputy Director of the Institute of International Relations in Hagoromo University in Osaka (Japan). A political Analyst at the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research in Abou Dhabi, and was also a Visiting Fellow in Princeton University, USA

Isabelle Saint-Mézard, Associate Research Fellow, Center for Asian Studies, Ifri



Isabelle Saint-Mézard (PhD) is lecturer in the Geopolitics of Asia at the French Institute of Geopolitics, the University of Paris VIII.

She was formerly an analyst on South Asia at the Directorate for Strategic Affairs of the French Ministry of Defence (2006-2011). She was also a research fellow on the China-India Project at the Centre of Asian Studies/ Institute of Humanities, the University of Hong Kong (2003-2006). She holds a Ph.D. in international relations from the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris.

Her research interests are mostly about South Asian geopolitics, with a special focus on India's strategic and security issues. She also teaches at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris, as well as INALCO.

John Seaman, Research Fellow, Center for Asian Studies, Ifri



John Seaman joined Ifri in 2009, where he specializes in the geopolitics and political economy of energy and natural resources in Asia, with a focus on China and Japan. He also conducts research on Chinese foreign policy, the U.S. strategy and policy in East Asia, European perceptions of Asia, international relations and geopolitics in East Asia, and the political economy of critical raw materials (incl. rare earth elements).

Mr. Seaman holds a Master in International Affairs - International Security from Sciences Po, Paris, a Bachelor of Arts in International Economics from Seattle University, and studied as a NSEP David L. Boren Scholar at the Beijing Center for Chinese Studies (2002-03). In the summer of 2011 and 2013 he was a visiting researcher with the Energy and Environment Program of the Canon Institute for Global Studies (CIGS) in Tokyo, Japan and is currently an International Research Fellow with CIGS. He has spent a number of years studying and working in both China and Japan.

Yan Shi, Assistant Research Fellow, Department of European Studies, China Institute of International Studies (CIIS)



Dr. SHI Yan is an Assistant Research Fellow in the Department of European Studies, China Institute of International Studies (CIIS). She studies political economics of foreign direct investment, focusing on regulatory politics and IFDI policy, Belt & Road Initiative and Chinese OFDI, and China-Europe bilateral investment.

She graduated from Shandong University and China Foreign Affairs University, and received her PhD from Tsinghua University. She was a visiting scholar of Harvard Kennedy School from 2011 to 2012.

Xin Wang, Researcher in Chinese Policies, IDDRI, Sciences Po



Xin WANG, research fellow at IDDRI, Ph.D and HDR in economics, works on sustainable development issues with an economic and geopolitical approach. He is associate professor at Beihang University (Beijing, China), non-Executive Director at International Institute for Green Finance, Central University of Finance and Economics (Beijing, China). He is Editorial Board member of the *Climate Policy Journal*, and two Chinese domestic academic journals: *Advances in Climate Change Studies* and *Journal of Environmental Economics*.