



Universität  
Basel

## Research Project

### Dissertation Banning: Germany's response to China's Belt and Road Initiative: A two level game

#### Project funded by own resources

**Project title** Dissertation Banning: Germany's response to China's Belt and Road Initiative: A two level game

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This dissertation joins a vibrant conversation in political science and economics about the purpose and effects of the ongoing investment in - and delivery of large-scale infrastructure projects on the Eurasian landmass. Within the last decade activities of planning, financing and delivery of connective infrastructure projects in the transport, energy and ICT sector have vastly increased on the Eurasian supercontinent. From an economic development perspective, this trend could lead to a desirable reduction of Eurasia's notorious infrastructure gap and to an integration of Eurasia's fragmented supply chains. The potential economic and social benefits of this trend in connective infrastructure provision are enormous, but so are its risks.

Large-scale engineering projects always come with a string of risks attached: financial, risks economic risks, performance risks, social and environmental risks and, last but not least, political risks. While the risk environment of large-scale projects is already high under normal circumstances, many argue that connective infrastructure projects across Eurasia are delivered under circumstances that make them highly susceptible to political risks. This is the case, because many projects that are incorporated in connectivity initiatives, such as China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), are financed by foreign banks and delivered by foreign state-owned-enterprises (SOEs). This practice produces a host of dependencies (commercial, logistical, technical, financial, legal) between the connectivity provider and its connectivity receiver that can be leveraged into political influence. Especially the Chinese practice of connective infrastructure provision in Eurasia has invited much criticism. It has often been framed as a case of geo-economics, meaning as an attempt to gain access to and control over flows of goods, infrastructures and markets and to attain political influence over connected states.

The study systematically analyzes the Chinese practice of connective infrastructure provision in Eurasia on a project level. Based on a qualitative analysis of project data, it contributes to the ongoing conversation by providing answers to the question, who benefits from such projects? A small number of case studies weighs risks against benefits of China's unilateral practice of connective infrastructure provision. It tries to assess China's performance record in project delivery and to investigate patterns of political leverage that is applied for geo-economic goals. A key task will be to analyze in how far such practice actually produces connectivity that can be converted into economic benefits for participating states.

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**Add publication**

**Add documents**

**Specify cooperation partners**