

Abstract:*The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched by China in 2013, is a monumental infrastructure project aimed at enhancing connectivity and promoting economic cooperation across Asia, Europe, and Africa. This thesis explores the geo-economic implications of the BRI for South Asia, focusing on the economic, political, and strategic consequences for the region. By examining the impact of BRI projects on South Asian countries, this research seeks to shed light on the opportunities and challenges presented by China's ambitious initiative. The thesis begins by providing a comprehensive overview of the BRI, its objectives, and the underlying motivations driving China's engagement in South Asia. It delves into the historical and geopolitical context of the region, highlighting the strategic significance of South Asia and its potential as a key link in the BRI network. By analyzing the economic potential and challenges faced by South Asian countries, the thesis explores how the BRI can contribute to addressing their developmental needs and unlocking their growth potential. One of the key aspects examined in this research is the impact of BRI-funded infrastructure projects on South Asian economies. By investing in transportation networks, energy infrastructure, and industrial zones, China aims to improve connectivity and stimulate economic growth in the region. The thesis assesses the implications of these investments, analyzing the potential benefits and risks for South Asian countries, including issues of debt sustainability, project quality, and local participation. Furthermore, the thesis explores the geopolitical implications of the BRI for South Asia. China's growing economic influence in the region has raised concerns among other major powers, particularly India, which views the BRI as a potential threat to its own strategic interests. The research explores how the BRI may influence domestic politics, regional alliances, and the balance of power in South Asia. It also examines the responses of South Asian governments to the BRI, including their strategies for maximizing the benefits and mitigating the risks associated with China's economic influence. The thesis concludes by presenting a nuanced assessment of the geo-economic implications of the BRI for South Asia. While the initiative offers significant opportunities for economic development and regional integration, it also poses challenges and risks that need to be carefully managed. Lastly, it offers recommendations for policymakers in South Asian countries, as well as for China and other major powers involved in the initiative, to ensure that the BRI contributes to sustainable and inclusive development in the region while addressing the concerns of all stakeholders.*