

**CHINA'S INFLUENCE OVER SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS THROUGH
THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE.
A CASE STUDY IN VIETNAM.**

THESIS

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Budapest, 2021

BUDAPEST BUSINESS SCHOOL
FACULTY OF INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND BUSINESS
INTERNATIONAL RELATION PROGRAMME
Mode of study Master

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ADB	Asian Development Bank of Japan
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
APT	The ASEAN Plus 3 (ASEAN+3)
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations Asia
BOT	Build-Operate-Transfer
BRI	The Belt and Road Initiative
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
COC	The Code of Conduct in the South China Sea
CPEC	The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
CPV	Communist Party of Vietnam
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FOIP	Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GMS	The Greater Mekong Subregion
GPS	Global Positioning System
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LMC	Lancang–Mekong Cooperation
MFA	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MOFCOM	The Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPAC2025	Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity
MSR	Maritime Silk Road
NDRC	The National Development and Reform Council
NSC	The National Security Council's
OBOR	One Belt One Road
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PLA	People's Army of Liberation
PPPs	Public-Private Partnerships
SCS	South China Sea
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SRF	The Silk Road Fund
TCOB	Two Corridors, One Belt
TPP	Transpacific Trade Partnership
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
VEPPR	Vietnam Institute for Economic and Policy Research

INTRODUCTION

Initially founded by the Chinese President in 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative is one of China's most important post-modern political choices. The Belt represents land-building ventures, such as bridges, railways, or canals. This relationship is intended to connect China via western Asia to Central Asia, Russia, the Persian Gulf, and the Mediterranean. The much-referred 21st-century maritime Silk Road connects many world areas to the Atlantic Ocean from the Chinese coast to the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean. China is vigorously applying the BRI to recruit participating nations, one of which is Vietnam. Whether through the BRI, China can strengthen its impact and influences on South-East Asia, including Vietnam. The influence of BRI would most likely increase, though not to the high degree to create a Central order in Southeast Asia. Indeed, there are formidable barriers to the BRI being a fact, not least because it moves through India and Russia's backyards, two major powers that are ever cautious about their regional prerogatives. Regardless, if the BRI actually became a reality, it will be the mother of all grand schemes that will require the use of finance, politics, and diplomacy to 'win friends and influence people' for China (Khong, 2017).

The BRI has opened up new opportunities in Southeast Asia, most of which has been powered by Chinese investment. China's growing economic importance has led in recent decades to a greater Chinese presence in the region. In that case, there should be no dispute by the same rationale that the BRI would help Beijing consolidate its regional footprint and improve its influence in Southeast Asia. Even though China does not expressly announce the Belt and Road Initiative, most Southeast Asian states expect the strategic implications of this initiative. Therefore, they do not want to see a regional order being formed that leaves China in the center (Gong, 2019). Regional governments, for example, in the South China Sea, worry that financing projects such as seaports, airports, which China may use for military purposes, can expose them to a threat.

Southeast Asian countries face many political and security threats when it comes to BRI projects. The BRI has developed a considerable geopolitical rivalry with other key powers such as India, Japan, and the United States. To balance China's ties to the Belt and Road Initiative, different countries are opting for diversified trade and financial policies and finances as well as improving their financial and monetary relations with China (Gong, 2019). These options also would have an impact on the price of China's infrastructure-building contracts. Moreover, the financial feasibility and environmental effects, and labor conditions will be more closely explored by extensive Chinese infrastructure or industrial investments through these alternative measures.

China desires to control Southeast Asia just as it would under American control. However, the only difference is that the law will include elements of China, such as Southeast Asian countries that must accept a clear hierarchy, not interfere with the internal relations of

other countries, and must accept indisputable supremacy of the hegemon in disputed territories. Any Southeast Asian states with maritime conflicts with China are uneasy with the idea of “indisputable sovereignty” (Gong, 2019). Nevertheless, even after doing the cost-benefit calculus, they are likely to believe that they should or must survive with a China-led geopolitical order for the region in the absence of the United States.

For Southeast Asian countries, BRI is considered as an initiative with great appeal. In this project, Southeast Asia’s connectivity capacity is significant. Trade along the maritime Silk Road played a crucial role in promoting diplomatic ties between China and the Middle East and Europe. Southeast Asia has 650 million inhabitants, with a total of US\$2.4 trillion GDP, hence essential to the global economy (Rocher, 2020). China will benefit from its growth. Additionally, China must defend its influence in the region as a “great power” in world affairs, such as in the South China Sea, extends its global presence, and profiteers geopolitical advantages in the process. In addition, Southeast Asia is home to many Chinese people, bringing the BRI into Southeast Asia will evoke the feelings of the Chinese people living in these countries, creating a great emotional resonance about a responsible national scene. China is encouraging and thus introducing a new form of cooperation, a development that can only help the thriving economies of Southeast Asia “escape the middle-income trap, restructure the industry manufacturing and upgrading to higher-value industries” (Rocher, 2020).

Among Southeast Asian countries, Vietnam is the object that China craves to make the most influence. Today, Vietnam is becoming a low value-added manufacturing hub of China. This means that China is gradually moving low-value-added factories to Vietnam, leaving only the strategic core industries considered important by the government, all located on the Chinese mainland (Gezgin, 2020). It is the opposite of what, for instance, South Korea is doing in Vietnam when it also transfers the development of electronics to Vietnam. BRI would allow Vietnam more access to Chinese high-tech and could force them to reverse direction. On the other hand, because it is impossible to engage with Vietnam without any actual confrontation on the Chinese side, Vietnam is not regarded as a major BRI project destination. Geographical reasons are the most common. Opening a portal through the Indian Ocean is better than opening a portal via Vietnam. The economies of China and Vietnam are now highly interdependent. According to Ulaş Başar Gezgin (2020), the BRI advantage to Vietnam concerning China’s anticipates comparable in the Eurasian and Pakistan Economic Corridors will be relatively small. Which will lower the BRI budget for programs in Vietnam compared to the BRI budget in Central Asia and Western Asia. For Vietnam, it is positive, as China would not pressure Vietnam to implement BRI projects in Vietnam. Even if the Sino-American trade dispute continues, China would also need Vietnam to avoid the country of origin sanctions against Chinese goods. Vietnam has been proclaimed a survivor in the outbreak of this trade war.

So far, there has not been a valid answer to whether BRI is a necessary policy for Vietnam? Or will Southeast Asian countries’ overly deep involvement and dependence on the BRIs create opportunities for China to expand its hegemony and influence over these countries?

Furthermore, what is the forecast scenario for Vietnam if participating fully, not wholly, or even not participating in the BRI so that the ultimate goal is to protect the core values and interests country's independence, autonomy, sovereignty, and national integrity?

This thesis explanation of China's attempts to assert its impact on Southeast Asian countries and their reactions to China's Belt and Road initiative; analysis of the BRI involvement of Southeast Asian countries, including Vietnam; analysis of the Vietnamese government's reaction to this initiative; and analysis of the prospects for the future if Vietnam officially participates, limited participates or even not participates BRI.

The thesis is only limited to the general study of China's Belt and Road initiative in Southeast Asian countries and how these countries react to this initiative. The author will analyze specifically the case of Vietnam. This thesis focuses on what China has been doing in the past five years since the initiative's inception. The study will review the parameters and statistics related to the initiative over the past five years. The thesis will not evaluate various critical external factors that affect Vietnam-China relations or China-ASEAN relations.

Due to the limited time, this thesis is only intended to examine the fundamental Chinese influences on Southeast Asia and to analyze in detail the reaction of the Vietnamese elites to this initiative and the benefits and challenges for Vietnam, if Vietnam fully participates, does not participate or participate limited in the BRI shortly. It will not recommend sector-specific policy recommendations.

Finally, another significant factor is the limited resources for this thesis since China only implemented it in 2013. Simultaneously, the published data of Southeast Asian countries for BRI is also various, making it difficult for the author to synthesize feces. The most significant limitation of the thesis is the access to data. There are many different government reports regarding the BRI project on the same issue. Data on BRI projects conducted in Southeast Asian countries are considered to be the most challenging data for the author in studying the influence of BRI on Southeast Asian countries. Each Southeast Asian country has different reports regarding the number of BRI projects deployed in its territory. This figure is not the same as China's report on the number of BRI projects deployed in Southeast Asian countries. It is difficult for the author to determine which country report has reliable data. Therefore, the author's solution is to choose which reports and data the author believes are credible to illustrate China's influence through the BRI over Southeast Asian countries.

CHAPTER I

OVERVIEW OF CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

1.1. What is China's Belt and Road initiative

The Silk Road was an important trade route in the ancient world, linking the Eurasian plateau to the eastern coast, particularly in the Han dynasty of China. The Silk Road is a network of over 2,000 years old, spanning many ancient regions of China, the roads that came into being under the Han Dynasty and were mainly used for global trading from 130 BC. Historians have seen the phrase "Silk Roads" gradually using the term to refer to the network of interconnected trading routes in Asia from China to Europe in Silk Age times (Mark, 2018).

Baron von Richthofen named the Silk Road in 1877. This historical road has a vast and unique cultural significance since it is one of the links to many countries in the world (Badar.A.I, Mohd.N.R & Shaista.S., 2019). During the Han Dynasty, the Silk Road connected much of the prominent trading routes. This road initially extended from the Xian in the East to the Mediterranean, linking China with the Roman Empire. In the Tang Dynasty, the route reached the highest but began to decline Yuan Dynasty. With the rise of the Ottoman Empire around 1453, the use of the Silk Road ends due to the launch of a sea route for the silk trade (Mark, 2018).

With the brilliant development of the ancient Silk Road, China, a country with the ambition to become the center of Asia in particular and the world in general, wanted to rebuild a route that could connect continent Asia - Europe with the purpose of the economic connection, cultural exchange, and even building influence. China's intent is to have a solid and prosperous society by 2045, achieving the aspirations of the Chinese people, and ensuring the country's great rejuvenation with socialism. China's emergence with its huge Belt and Road Initiative seems charming to many emerging economies that have always been able to welcome China's generous investment packages, albeit threats of strong economic and political dependency on Beijing. On the other hand, the enigmatic dissemination of BRI, from the world's major powers to small and medium countries, has placed extreme threats on many nations. Asian countries are not exceptions as China's neighbors.

The Chinese Secretary-General, Xi Jinping, proposed a "Belt and Road Initiative" during his official visits to both Indonesia and Kazakhstan in 2013. The policy of trying to bind regional economies globally with the Chinese economy. The Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road of the 21st Century are the two main elements. This envisioning Chinese engagement in establishing large ports in the Eurasian rim to facilitate maritime connectivity. China's two Silk Roads constitute a grand vision of Eurasian unification under China's leadership.

The government of Xi has reached a consensus on leadership in China. The Silk Road is the leading economic diplomacy in the next 10 years, with central and municipal authorities integrating it. The lead Chinese political body, the CCP Central Committee, formed a small

leading party in China and abroad in February 2015 to lead the Silk Road (Ye, 2015). It confirmed China's intentions to pursue a long-term connectivity strategy that focuses on infrastructure growth, industrial parks, setting up industrial zones, and encouraging developers and manufacturers to move their operations to these foreign locations.

The BRI co-operation includes five major areas: policy coordination, technology links, trading and investment connections, financial and monetary links, people exchanges with people (Hoa.V.V, Soong.J, Nghia.N.K, 2020)

In addition to establishing the Belt and Road initiative, China has also proposed setting up a lending organization called the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, or AIIB, for short. During its visits to South-East Asia in October 2013, President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Li Keqiang spoke for the first time on Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, prioritizing Asian developing countries and assisting China in implementing its latest "Belt and Road" initiatives. Compared to the post-war "Marshall Plan," some observers interpret AIIB as a battle for financial dominance with the USA. The goal of this document, joined by 57 founding members in the ceremony to sign an agreement in June 2015: (1) help maintain economic growth, generate wealth and improve Asian connectivity infrastructure through investment in infrastructure and other production sectors; and (2) Encourage regional coordination, collaboration, and settlement by solid cooperation with others on development issues. The field areas focus on energy, transport and telecommunications, agriculture and rural infrastructure, water supply, sanitation, conservation of the environment, urban planning, and logistics (Baviera, 2016).

According to various World Bank of (WB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) projections, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Infrastructure Bank is critical, because conventional credit institutions such as WB and ADB would be unable to provide US\$8 trillion in the financing for Southeast Asia (Baviera, 2016). There have been concerns that China would make use of AIIB to manage its neighbor geostategic to China's advantage, likely to the detriment of the United States of America or other rival nations. Some also feel that developing a financial system headed by China would not be an outstanding model because of China's many mischievous governances. It is not an inherently positive version of the Chinese government because central leadership makes certain poor decisions.

Beginning in November 2013, the new Silk Road had gone through four phases of development. Xi's vision preferred the region's peaceful and healthy growth and looked forward to cooperation between China and neighbors focused on equality. At the 18th Work Forum, Xi Jinping issued unique policy advice that boosts the national economy, raises China's cultural impact, strengthens regional security cooperation, enhances the war against terrorism, and increases regional connectivity.

Shortly after the Periphery Diplomacy Meeting, three national ministries – the National Development and Reform Council (NDRC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), and the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China (MOFCOM) – released statements

in favor of the current Silk Route. NDRC has called upon all its associated industrial ministries and local governments to develop ideas under the local levels' current policy. The new Silk Road was affirmed in December 2014 and January 2015 during the 3rd Plenary of the 18th National Party Congress and the annual Government Works (Baviera, 2016).

China officially encouraged the new Silk Road policy to the outside world and local government by fostering leadership and high-level consensus. At the Boao Forum in 2014, a special conference was held to rejuvenate the Silk Road. President Yang Jiechi of Chinese State points out that there were like past and magnificent civilizations on a former silk road in all of Asia. The current Silk Road incorporates restoration of the former Silk Road with the incorporation of Asia. The Silk Road was presented to journalists and government officials from the Arab countries at Beijing's Sixth Ministerial Conference held in June 2014. To put it another way, China is going through its "renaissance era," and is now shifting to a "look to the West" strategy. The Beijing Declaration entered the notes of the conference. The new Silk Road was named a "great strategic thought" by President Xi Jinping, who said in his metaphor, "China's two wings are the Silk Route Economic Belt and Sea Silk Route. When built, the Chinese dragon can fly higher and higher" (Ye, 2015).

An intensive domestic advocating campaign for BRI took place in the summer of 2014. Liu Jianchao, representing the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, clarified that through policy cooperation, road link, trade facilitation, currency exchange, and public opinion contact, China emphasizes its growth through the Silk Road. Observing that the phenomenal increase in China's trade and investment in Central Asia, Minister of Commerce of China, Hucheng opines that the Belt and the Road would expedite growth in the Central Asian zone (Ye, 2015). Zhao Jianping, the Director of the State Council for Development Research, says the new Silk Road enhances the overall economic competitiveness of Asia in the world, combined to enhance sea, central and west China. The NDRC produced an action plan for the growth of the Silk Road, including investment, production, cross-border industrial parks, energy exchange, and buildings for infrastructure.

Beijing organized a media conference at the Great Hall of People in July 2014 on the new Silk Road. Cities and business leaders were present along the planned Silk Road attended. Local leaders in inland China, where growth has lagged coastal regions in recent decades, have been very enthusiastic about investment initiatives, market liberalization, and the development of local infrastructure by the central government. They promised to make themselves liberal, within their limits (Ye, 2015). Kunming's manufacturing hubs and Chengdu's transportation hubs sought to capitalize on the modern Silk Route, forming themselves as significant monuments to trade and transportation in China's Silk Road scheme. Along the coast, in Jiangsu and Zhejiang, the cities made innovative approaches to interact with the modern Silk Road (Ye, 2015).

Not only made a strong impression on localities in China, but BRI has also become very appealing to countries because it develops infrastructure where none exists and links essential

markets in the East and the West (Khong, 2017). In the “Belt and Road Initiative”, “China is exhorting” the “policies and investment activities in the past,” also suggesting China’s economic strength in the earlier part of the last century. The implied message is that the BRI would come to life in ways like the ancient Silk Road project, bringing China and Europe together through land and water. The scope has also been expanded to industrial parks, cultural relations, education, and the digital economy since its inception. The BRI is a long-term vision that aims to encourage a globalization scheme inspired by China; it gives funding to businesses finding benefits along its road.

BRI is considered as a strategic vision of Mr. Xi in supporting the multi-polar world order to enhance China’s growth. As the rest of the world looks at Peking to boost global economic growth, China’s neighbors are increasingly dependent on finance, commerce, and even capital. Chinese President Xi Jinping takes his views on an ambitious geostrategic vision of the long-term integration of the Chinese-centered Asian Order to sustain the growth and development needs of China in his speeches in central leadership meetings and international summit meetings the China Communist Party. The “Chinese Nation’s Great Rejuvenation” in the 21st century, which will equal the ancient glory of the Han and Tang dynasties, should be a significant effort on the so-called Silk Road.

The modern Silk Road was prioritized by the Xi government. The AIIB proposed by China, along with the new Silk Road, would expand on China’s financial capability while meeting Asia’s strong infrastructure growth needs. The AIIB idea evolved from the former East Asian Infrastructure Development Fund, which was initiated by China under the APT scheme and vetoed by Japan (Ye, 2015).

Hard power and soft power are the core features of BRI (Arase, 2015b). Hard power consists of railways, ports, oil pipelines, and industrial zones, while soft power consists of financing institutions, international investment, financing arrangements, multilateral coordination forums, research studies, and cultural exchange. This policy’s success would not require China to handle the multilateral negotiation of treaties or to establish supranational bureaucratic organizations (Arase, 2015b). China provides overall leadership in facilitating dialogue, promoting collaboration plans, lowering knowledge and transaction costs, and supplying them with material incentives such as new technology, credit, investment, and trading opportunities. If their China-Eurasian unification policy is implemented willingly, they will agree to share other countries’ critical interests peacefully. Chinese policymakers aspire to build an economic, political, and military relationship that encompasses and benefits from the infrastructure development of countries who join BRI. Meanwhile, China is expanding new markets in those countries for its products and services.

Although skeptics can argue that multiple Chinese political declarations remain symbolic, the BRI has emerged as a significant policy shift representing China’s foreign aspirations outside the regional influence. The BRI has been the subject of policymakers, businesspeople, media, and analysts worldwide since it was founded by the end of 2013. Their

views on the international ramifications of the BRI are divided. Some believe that the BRI would significantly broaden Beijing's impact globally, especially in China's neighborhood. The majority of the researcher does not agree that BRI is a possible success. They believe several problems and hurdles would plague it (Gong, 2019). The BRI caused serious geopolitical problems with major countries that have influential South-East Asia. Those significant powers recognize the implicit acknowledgment of China's dominance in the region.

1.2. China's Ambitions for the Belt and Road Initiative

China understands that global economic interests would lead to the phenomenal development of their country. At the same time, they are awaiting a shift in their presence and influence in Asia, which is increasingly becoming the global political and economic center. With its current position as the world's largest trade nation, the world's second-largest economy, and the world's most populous country, China has a strong foundation for anticipating these changes. China is determined to be a continental and a maritime nation, a regional and world power. The projects "Belt and Road" are part of this. It runs along a north-south axis, including things like raw materials, investment, and business areas, as well as a supply and value chain, to create links between financial, economic, and people-to-people of China to Europe, Central Asia, East Asia, Atlantic, and Africa (Baviera, 2016). According to Baviera (2016) the economy in China, especially in the "new normal" situation of slow economic growth and low demand in the West on its produced goods, shall depend on domestic consumption and establishing new ties. To facilitate trade, China needs new markets, raw materials, and electricity, infrastructure contracts to absorb surplus labor, equipment already in abundance, and post-hub hubs' need. They will need the ability to protect the Navigator and Supply and Fuel Stations and repairs in the fight against piracy and counter-terrorism at sea. The AIIB will be a valuable tool in these matters. Likewise, the growth of China's naval and air powers is part of China's economic vision.

According to Gong (2019), the geopolitical priorities for China in the region are based on the following expectations: (1) China has peaceful, safe links to the area. (2) China has confidence in regional countries that they see China as a genuinely constructive ally rather than a challenge. (3) The regional countries of China become good trade partners by becoming trustworthy providers of resources to sustain economic development in China. (4) China's political influence in the area is substantial. (5) The region (including individual States) does not seek or approve any diplomatic coalition or circle against China. (6) China should use the region as a strategic springboard for other foreign strategic goals, such as promote global multi-polarization and boost China's soft power.

In China, the current leaders believe that time has arrived for them to advance China's stature among the global leaders by any means necessary, particularly in terms of science and technology (Baviera, 2016). China claims that it must have expanded power characteristics, including capacity, wealth, and the potential and desire to lead, to be a global power. They deploy their navy to the Gulf of Aden to combat piracy, purchase an aircraft carrier that will

eventually become a war group, construct a nuclear submarine base in Hainan, and devote their technological capability to finding ways to circumvent US missile defense systems (Baviera, 2016). With its military power and financial ability, China believes that no one can hinder China from creating an influence on the region and the world. The message that China tries to announce in international forums that China can replace the world order.

China knows that it will only be a great power if it is respected and acknowledged as an equal power by other powers. China's plan for a new form of significant power ties might radically challenge other powers to see them as equal, honor their core interests, and prevent a course of confrontation, which many feel is inevitable once a system-wide transfer of power takes place. With the Chinese party-conventional state's memory of "Hundred Years of Humiliation," many in Chinese politics believe that the US, with the help of its allies, will never grant China equal status, let alone delegate global leadership to China when and if they wish (Baviera, 2016). China can build its institutions if China will not be equal in current global institutions or if the institutions are expected to purposely exclude or threaten China to isolate or obstruct (as the TPP and The US alliances are now considering). The AIIB, The Belt and Road initiative, could be built into alternate arrangements headed by China to remove the United States and countries deemed unfriendly China (Baviera, 2016).

China understands that in order to be a leader, it must develop supporters and allies, especially in ASEAN. China must gain ASEAN's support to move up to a new position as a responsible government. In due course, it is with ASEAN and the rest of East Asia that China will establish a "community of common destiny". ASEAN has spread China's suspicions about China's geopolitical objectives more than any other major regional player. The proximity of ASEAN, economic dynamism, China's diplomatic status, and, to date, its demonstrated neutrality in primary power politics make it a fitting partner for China more than any other group of countries. Moreover, collectively, ASEAN is not sufficiently powerful to oppose or threaten the significant powers of any country, including China. Ten countries share similar values and viewpoints but do not otherwise have a standard strategy for China. China is the largest bilateral trade partner and, for certain countries, an essential source of assistance and investment. However, some ASEAN Member States continue to face longstanding animosities and territorial conflicts that contribute to mistrust. Historical and sociocultural contacts between Southeast Asia and China have contributed to this connection recently.

Regarding territorial and maritime conflicts in the South China Sea, opposition from a few ASEAN countries to the recent pledge of China has driven the entire community to take the whole problem more seriously. The 2 + 7 system of cooperation and dual-track strategy of China bifurcates the economy and defense and dichotomizes, on one side, territorial resolution of conflicts; on the other, foreign cooperation to promote peace and stability (Baviera, 2016). However, the development of China-ASEAN relations has shown that economic and political bonds are inseparable, as also the countries with the most stable trade and ties with China struggle to resolve geopolitical mistrust. Meanwhile, China's reclamation and militarization of

the South China Sea have heightened territorial tensions and elevated the South China Sea to the pinnacle of regional instability capability.

China needs to convince and entice ASEAN member states to follow them. Moreover, China needs to show them that they will receive respect and show loyalty to China. Sustained interactions with ASEAN, committed to building faith, offering security guarantees, and addressing social needs, are needed for China's economic ties to translate into political goodwill and support. Ultimately, the innovative Maritime Silk Road initiative provides financing for transport link programs, proposes collaboration in science and technology innovation, and initiates discussions on education, health, poverty reduction, biodiversity, etc. AIIB will be the funding factor, but policy management and alliances and current bilateral and multilateral frameworks will be required in the project planning and execution. This vision's ambition relies very much on the ability of other countries to embrace and work hard on it. So far, this has proven to be a big obstacle (Baviera, 2016).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

China is emerging as a global force today and has an impact on the world stage. China is a nation that has as its end target the achievement of economic growth coupled with the South China Sea's political influence. Thus, China has been undertaking many "ways" concurrently, such as engaging in infrastructure growth linking the economies between the continents together by railroads, highways, and ports, and offering credit to achieve these objectives.

Hal Brand (2018) estimates that China has the second-largest military budget worldwide and that the PLA is a more advanced modern army that can perform more aggressive activities ever. It can be expected that the Chinese military will expand its interaction with the Indian Ocean, the African coast, and the Persian Gulf to maintain control. The BRI, a major commercial and infrastructure initiative to connect China to Asian and European countries, also aims to accomplish this purpose. China has made its goal clear by providing economic initiative with big defense budget spending to become a maritime force and dominate many critical sea routes.

The most detailed strategy of China listed by Brands (2018) is that of exporting an ideology. The author claims that China is carrying out a two-way assault involving authoritarian government implementation, thus weakening democratic traditions in other countries. If the United States is long trying to secure democracy globally, Chinese leaders want a secure by authoritarianism. The only way for this is to guarantee that China is not the only isolated autocracy in a capitalist environment. The advancement of autocracy becomes an increasingly important aspect of China's foreign policy (Brands, 2018a). Because Xi's advisors fully understand that authoritarianism is on the desired goal, and his policies are moving for that objective. China used many soft tools to extend Chinese thinking and culture worldwide, including the creation of Confucius institutes abroad, the advancement of authoritarian rule, and the threatening of Chinese wealth, language, and people's democratic practices in other countries.

According to Gong (2019), many analysts believe China has always attempted to transform South East Asia into its strategic backyard. It is thought that China has become more influential in Southeast Asia over the last three decades since it is eager to accomplish these objectives. The rise of China's economic strength has resulted in a security divide in the country. China's strong economy means that many states are undergoing economic dependency and are becoming more tightly linked to China. China's South China Sea strategy and geopolitical competition between China and America are said to weaken ASEAN's stability and centrality.

China is trying to change the order of the international institution (Brands, 2018b). China is a member of many international financial institutions. China has been waiting and hoping to gain greater voting rights in the IMF and many other international organizations, but

China increasingly feels international organizations do not allow China's influence to increase. Therefore, China created its institutions. AIIB, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, and the BRI are mechanisms and means for this strategy. Brand (2018) said that Beijing will use its economic partnership and infrastructure to gradually draw surrounding countries of their strategic significance, financial and military capabilities until they become more dependent on China. Intending to change the order of global financial regimes in favor of China, China has established AIIB of scale and nature like the IMF, from China's significant contributions and other members in the world.

China's approach to international integration relies on economic facilitation (Arase, 2015b). It means improving trade and investment by connecting more economies more productively, like by creating more vital trade and investment links between them, increasing the number of roads that connect them, and making communications between two or more sections of the population smoother and more frequent. China is trying to promote transcontinental trade routes and the maritime rim of Eurasia (the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road). As a consequence, trade movements would be channeled to or from China.

Chung (2017) offers descriptions of China's South Asian participation with the launch of its "Belt and Road Initiative" and how it would give China the ability to control different Asian countries along the MSR corridor. In South Asia, he studied the intentions and deployment of China's MSR programs. For the participating countries to agree on whether the intervention will succeed or not, it includes assessing social, economic, and political issues. In South Asia, concerning the BRI, the politicians believe that China will be against India, which is a strategic problem for India.

Chhibber (2017) assesses India's prospects and obstacles as it decides to collaborate with China on the New Silk Road. In the long run, an overall strategy of nurturing commerce and connecting across both land and sea routes to Europe and the Middle East would help the evidence indicates that China's Belt and Road Initiative offers very favorable and cooperative terms. BRI investments clearly provide incentives for further foreign trade and job development in many areas of the world. While "Environmental and social standards" will not be a problem, labor practices will be closely monitored. Even if the Current Silk strategy's maximum effects are not as immense as they are expected to be, it would still be a game-changer in the coming years.

Academics and commentators have discussed how China's "One Belt, One Road" policy would affect the existing international system or the international and regional status quo. With China's BRI, there are three significant schools of thought concerning this strategy's possible effect in the current world. The advocates of the first school of thought rely exclusively on the economic aspect. They prefer to view the Regional Comprehensive Economic Cooperation as a strategic geopolitical effort but regard this as largely non-critical in the region's economic order (Gong, 2019).

Any proponents of the second school state school argue that the birth of the BRI would cause less, if any, disruption to China's regional order and will result in a "strategic overdraft" for China (Lam, 2017). Due to the growing difficulty of the BRI and lack of transparency on BRI ventures, they think that there are dangers along the Belt and Road, along with their unknown funding and lack of progress so far. They also predict a "cul-de-sac" to result from the BRI (Broadman, 2016).

Xue (2016) these China foreign policy activities have from being based on the "keeping a low profile" in the introduction of the BRI plan has changed to "proactively and impressively inspired for accomplishment". There are issues at three levels of the decision-making process: gathering information, selecting of best policy alternative, and decision-making. China aspires to institutional changes in international relations machinery policies and administration structures. First, the belief that no preferential diplomacy for the weak country. Concerning how they deal with their neighbors, the countries should have a long-term outlook and a bold strategic vision. Second, China needs to revamp the National Security Council's (NSC) position in foreign relations, making it more substantial.

Peyrouse and Raballand (2015) note that New Silk Road Plan has economic logic and philosophy. The BRI encourages private investment to secure better transport facilities in the region. Still, the remaining myriad trade barriers, including inadequate administration, pervasive bureaucracy, and developments at borders, are not completely targeted. It means the building of roads does not change traffic counts independently, nor does it indicate any future long-term trading agreements in South Asia (Peyrouse, S., & Raballand, G., 2015). The researchers agree that the Chinese government should concentrate more on pacts with local governments in the mainland to provide infrastructure projects that may not be economically bound to the region. The BRI should not only provide economic support to the people but also offer them a better future.

BRI would affect Russia and China's relationship as it is more focused on China's trade and investment (Gabuev, 2016). The Kremlin finds the BRI a part of its historic area of influence. On the one hand, Russia and China have shown the potential to establish administrative and analytical structures to accommodate mutual interests in Central Asia, including concepts of "linking up" and "integrating". On the other hand, the BRI vision faces challenges with the top-down decision-making mechanism, minimal market representation, and China's bilateral negotiating prerogative.

Irshad et al. (2015) examined how much China's investment affects Pakistan's economy. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has pursued many international challenges and has raised many Pakistani foreign policy challenges. The high degree of China and Pakistan's partnership is multi-faceted, made up of a multidimensional and logistical sort. It is also apparent that the two countries must do away with old stereotypes to shift to a newer perspective on bilateral relationships.

Blanchard (2017) claims China's Belt and Road Initiative would entirely shift the Asian region's political order. China's BRI includes multi-faceted political aspects: soft-balancing Chinese principles and ideas policy promotion, rehabilitating world governance for the Chinese ideals, interests, and standing. The BRI can reshape and reinforce China's ties with its neighbors, as well as urge China to resist encirclement by hostile powers such as the United States and Japan. Overholt (2015) sees the BRI as a tremendous Chinese tactic (reminding global US goals since the Second World War), impacting the new strategic order of the Indian Ocean.

According to Hong (2017a), the Belt and Road Initiative could make China the dominant force in deciding Southeast Asia's future economic landscape. Southeast Asia would likely "bandwagon for benefit" while accepting China's leadership in this region (Khong, 2017). The Belt and Road Initiative shapes how China interacts with other countries, the Chinese nation's great rejuvenated and China-centered Asia rebirth (Arase, 2015b). It may indicate the emergence of a third pillar alongside US-led bilateral partnerships and ASEAN-led multilateralism in Asia in the 21st century. Since the Cold War, geopolitical transition and commerce have been changed. Shukla (2015) addresses the implication of Belt and Road after these changes. The author assumes that the effects of BRI have a geopolitical goal that impacts the Eurasian region as a whole. The goal is to change the balance of power to be spread more equitably among the centuries to come.

Gong (2018a) has stressed that an impartial appraisal of the BRI damages the performance-oriented political environment. In their efforts to demonstrate political allegiance to the top leadership, leaders of numerous Chinese party-state institutions have engaged in the Chinese economy to improve internal factors and maximize external receptivity to the Belt and Road Initiative.

It can be shown that China has been adding some of the fundamental ideas to its diplomatic moves. China is introducing several policies to improve its position in Asia. These strategies include military ones such as the Military Plan, Made in China 2025, and a move toward locating Asia operations (Gong, 2019). The BRI allows the nation to express its priorities, strategies, and plans more officially; mainly, the Belt and Road Initiative demonstrates China's grand ambitions. China's Belt and Road Program is one of Chinese history's most important initiatives. The Belt and Road Initiative is a Chinese plan to foster worldwide sustainable collaboration and joint development. China believes that, under the Belt and Road system, any sovereign state, whether small or large, rich or poor, should equally participate under the framework.

Because of China's proposed Belt and Road Initiative, geopolitical and geo-economic interactions have emerged between China, other major powers, and ASEAN. Geopolitical events are making it difficult for China to extend its political influence in the South China Sea and East Asia. Southeast Asia would recognize China's leadership in exchange for opportunities to expand with China and satisfy its vital geopolitical interests in almost the same

manner that they embraced those of the United States in the heydays of American military-economic supremacy. Southeast Asia's future gradually looks like a Chinese lake, similar to the post-Monroe doctrine of Latin America's "American lake" idea (Khong, 2017).

According to Arase (2015b), the inviolability of its core interest, and the unwillingness to address conflicts by foreign arbitration need to be regarded in three facets of this regionalism. In the first place, reciprocal practices and 'win-win' ties between countries of central and periphery: if others value China, China will reciprocate material advantages. Second, The Chinese government will use pressure, which will almost certainly include its claims of sovereignty, to protect its core interests. Thirdly, since China is not concerned with claims of sovereignty at the United Nations, one must look at the issue of whether or not international law can have any bearing on the battle between China's interests and those of nations. China has turned its policy into a "High-Quality BRI" and created a "Digital BRI," a "Digital Silk Road," since April 2019, under the international debt-distress pressure (Nga, 2020).

BRI is also vulnerable to substantial rivalry from other Japanese and US tactics, according to Nga (2020). Specifically, Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy (FOIP) must be mentioned. The vast majority has seen FOIP and BRI as two contrasting and competitive tactics under which Japan and China have played the game to exaggerate their dominance in the Indo-Pacific region. Indeed, by improving security cooperation with Vietnam and other countries around China and barring Huawei and ZTE from government procurement. It can be interpreted that Japan's motives to work with China were aimed at testing the influence of Beijing and monitoring/supervising its programs. Neither China nor Japan will support or sign the other's initiative, and Japan will undoubtedly turn to the US side and play a confrontational role against China, particularly when it comes to the US factor and given the current friction between the two largest economies.

Rossiter (2018) observed, among ASEAN countries, that Vietnam occupied a unique position in the security participation of Japan in the SEA area. From the viewpoint of Vietnam, through diversifying alliances with other major forces, including Japan, Vietnam has used a hedging tactic toward Beijing to undermine weakness and threats away from China. Vietnam expressed its support for China's BRI, but only diplomatically rather than directly (Hiep L. H., 2018a). Panda (2019) shared his optimistic view of the "triangular" relationship between India and Japan and Vietnam in the Indo-Pacific zone since the cumbersome maritime relationship with China might make Vietnam a "strong prospective candidate".

According to Hiep (2018a), Vietnam is suspicious of BRI because of its distrust of Beijing and concern about the initiative's strategic implications in the South China Sea conflicts; the unattractive business conditions of Chinese loans; and Vietnam's recourse to other alternatives. On the other hand, the high-interest rates on Chinese loans, the need for Chinese technologies, and the choice of Chinese contractors. In contrast, the priority projects of the two sides do not coincide precisely. According to Hiep (2018a), it took two years to negotiate the

BRI memorandum of understanding between Vietnam and China, which is much longer than those with individual other nations, to prove that they have differences.

Moreover, Hiep (2018a) states complaints about Chinese investment in Vietnam. Investors from Japan are seen as easier on terms and conditions and private investment in Vietnam as safer alternatives to the BRI ventures in Vietnam. As the maritime rivalry and past resentment weigh heavier, the Vietnamese public is more optimistic about Japanese investment than Chinese investments. Considering these issues, Hiep (2018a) concludes that Vietnam will be reluctant to embark on the Belt and Road Initiative because it has concerns about some of the expected implications of the BRI and considers alternatives such as Japan to fight China's dominance in Vietnam.

In the end, BRI ventures will support Vietnam, according to Toai et al. (2018). With BRI, infrastructure projects will strengthen Vietnam's foreign ties, stimulating Vietnam's economic growth. In addition to attracting more Chinese investment to Vietnam, the development of ports, railways, highways, energy lines, and the expansion of existing ones would also draw non-Chinese foreign investment to Vietnam (Toai, D. B., Guan, X., & Ghimire, A., 2018). This investment in BRI infrastructure will contribute significantly to ASEAN economic and intra-ASEAN integration of more visitors from China and non-Chinese Asian and non-Asian countries in Vietnam, as the growth of infrastructure would lead to a thriving tourism sector in Vietnam and a vast number of incoming tourists at the moment.

Le et al. (2019) found that in their analysis, Vietnamese respondents expect benefits for Vietnam from BRI in a manner close to what is suggested in the related research. The BRI also has the anticipated adverse effects of increasing competitive strain, a trade imbalance in detriment of Vietnam, increasing government debt, environmental concern, and the potential deterioration of its Sino-Vietnamese maritime conflict. Vietnam, included in the regional framework of the BRI and with a strong need for investment in infrastructure, would benefit from the initiative. However, due to the two countries' diverse diplomatic, fiscal, and strategic ties, Vietnam's responses to the proposal appear ambiguous, apart from several statements supporting the Plan and recommending principles for its execution. The thesis would examine the consequences of the BRI for Vietnam, the initial reactions from Vietnam to the initiative, and the country's prospects.

In short, China's Belt and Road Initiative is considered by many scholars around the world as a policy that can affect the world order, even affect China's role and position in the international relations system. However, besides China's BRI expectations, many scholars are concerned about the BRI's weaknesses for participating countries. In Southeast Asia, there have been many studies on the influence of the BRI on this region and the responses of Southeast Asian countries to China's BRI. As is the case in Vietnam, many studies have examined the BRI's influence on Vietnam's economy and politics. However, very few studies fully assess Vietnam's benefits and challenges if they choose to participate fully, not participate or selectively participate in China's Belt and Road initiative.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Question

This thesis focuses on research questions: To what extent Vietnam is willing to participate in the BRI and what opportunities and challenges BRI will bring to Vietnam?

Sub-question: What is Southeast Asian countries' reaction in general and Vietnam in particular to China's Belt and Road initiative?

How does China influence Southeast Asian countries through the BRI?

Which scenario is appropriate for Vietnam when it chooses to join, opt-out, or selectively participate in China's Belt and Road initiative?

3.2. Hypothesis

The research hypothesis is through the policy of the belt and road initiative, China gradually becomes a country with significant influence over Southeast Asian countries.

The second hypothesis is that the division of Southeast Asian nations in joining the BRI facilitates China's strategy of influence and divide towards the ASEAN community.

The final hypothesis is that the BRI is becoming a double-edged sword for the Vietnam-China relationship, especially economic interests and territorial interests. Forecasts about possible scenarios for Vietnam if participating fully, participating selectively, or not participating in China's belt and road initiative

3.3. Methodology

3.3.1. Scoring Matrix method

This chapter presents the approaches used to address study questions. This method of study generalizes the response of the countries of Southeast Asia including Vietnam. To establish precise parameters, this approach utilizes historical records, aggregated reports from primary and secondary sources, and creates a scoring matrix to rate the involvement of BRI countries in Southeast Asia, including Vietnam.

The author used two data types to evaluate the BRI support from SEA countries and scored with different values.

The first is the groups of gestures and behaviors. These indicators are representative of each country, but their assigned value will be lower than action and policy indicators. Includes three sub-indicators. The first indicator is the voice of the state leader. If the leader of the country supports BRI projects, it is rated 1 point, otherwise 0 points. The second indicator is participation in the BRI Summit. If the country participates in the BRI Summit, it will be graded 1 point; if not participating, it will be graded 0 points. The third indicator relates to national participation in the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Joint Statement. If the Nation participates in LMC is rated 1 point, if the Participant does not participate, then it is rated 0 points.

The second is the group of indicators related to specific actions and policies. This group of indicators is valued higher than the group of behavioral indicators because the specific

dynamics of the country are directly involved in the BRI and are practically and directly influenced by the BRI. Includes seven sub-indicators.

The first index relates to the “Signing of an Intergovernmental Partnership Agreement.” If the country signs any intergovernmental documents linking the BRI to its development policy, it is rated 3 points. If that country only claims to support the above policies, it will receive 1 point. If none of the above is true, it will be rated 0 points. Laos and Cambodia signed a bilateral cooperation agreement with China related to the Belt and Road project; meanwhile, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Singapore have signed MOU on BRI cooperation with China. Except for the Philippines, the remaining Southeast Asian countries have expressed their willingness to sign cooperation with China through the BRI. (China’s ministry of foreign affairs, 2017).

The second indicator concerns action to allow China to establish industrial zones or special economic zones on that country’s territory. If the country allows China to establish industrial zones in its territory, it is rated as 3 points. Otherwise, it is rated 0 points. All Southeast Asian countries have allowed China to establish industrial zones or special economic zones on its territory (Ping, 2017).

The third indicator relates to the number of major BRI projects under construction or planned to be completed. Beijing rates this number of projects as evidence of the BRI’s success in Southeast Asia. Each implemented project is rated 3 points. List of BRI projects deployed in Southeast Asia includes Brunei (1), Cambodia (5), Indonesia (5), Laos (3), Malaysia (3), Myanmar (2), Thailand (1) (Appendix 2).

The fourth indicator is related to the delayed BRI projects. If the country has BRI projects being delayed, it will be graded as minus 3 points because they are still pessimistic about Chinese projects. Otherwise, it is 0 points. The China-Thailand Railways, the China-Myanmar Railway, and the Jakarta-Bandung High-Speed Rail have all been delayed (Chen, 2018).

The fifth index relates to the signing of the BRI Financial Guidelines Concept. If the country signs this document it will be rated 1 point; otherwise rate 0 points. A total of 6 Southeast Asian countries signed this document including: Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand.

The sixth index concerns founding members of the AIIB. If the country is a founding member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, it is rated 3 points. If not, rate 0 points. Currently, All Southeast Asian countries are founding members of AIIB.

The author generates a related score matrix (Table 1) for China’s Belt and Road Initiative participation rate in Southeast Asian countries by Synthesizing the data gathered by the above metrics.

Table 1: Scoring matrix to rate the involvement of BRI countries in Southeast Asia

	Voiced support	Attendance summit	Joint declaration on LMC	Sign any inter-governmental partnership document	Set up any industrial park or special economic zone	The number of substantial projects under construction	Big projects are delayed	Signing the BRI Financing Guideline Concept	Founding member of AIB	Total
Brunei	1	0	0	1	3	3	0	0	3	11
Cambodia	1	1	1	3	3	15	0	1	3	28
Indonesia	1	1	0	1	3	15	-3	1	3	21
Laos	1	1	1	3	3	9	0	1	3	22
Myanmar	1	1	1	3	3	6	-3	1	3	16
Malaysia	1	1	0	3	3	9	0	1	3	21
Philippines	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	8
Singapore	1	1	0	3	3	0	0	0	3	11
Thailand	1	1	1	1	3	3	-3	1	3	11
Vietnam	1	1	1	1	3	0	0	0	3	10

Source: created by the Author

Based on the Score Index, the higher-score nation would support the BRI. Based on their score (Table 1), Southeast Asian countries can be classified into three levels. As shown in Table 2, with a total value of more than 20, Group 1, including Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, and Indonesia, are the countries with strongly support for China's BRI. Conversely, Group 3 are groups of countries with a total value of less than 10, including Philippin, deemed less involved and do not wish to participate in the BRI. Countries such as Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Brunei, and Singapore are classed as group 2, BRI supporters but are vigilant, or countries with high reservation requirements with a total value between 10 and 19.

Table 2: Response of Southeast Countries to China's BRI

Degree of support	Countries
Strongly Support	Group 1: Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, and Indonesia
Cautiously Support, or high reservation requirements	Group 2: Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, and Brunei
Less Support	Group 3: Philippines
Source: created by author	

3.3.2. Qualitative Analysis

The technique of study is a qualitative method of analysis. This research will concentrate mainly on documentary studies. Primary and secondary sources are the material sources for this research. The primary references include speeches by politicians from the countries concerned and interviews with affiliated senior officials from the Member States,

international organizations, or scholars. Essential data from ASEAN and international organizations will also be analyzed in order to assess BRI performance. The secondary references include literary papers and news, journals, and blogs. It also includes similar experiments or research papers.

It covers the related records' contextual study, the passive evaluation, and analysis of previous and current affairs utilizing event-specific behavioral analyses. The study will also review knowledge, Chinese government documents, online newspaper articles of economic analysts, professional perspectives, and authors' evaluation, including strategic objectives. China's policy in implementing the initiative, China's benefits and weaknesses in the implementation of this initiative, and potential BRI implementation forecasts. In Chapters 4 and 5, the research question will also be addressed and evaluated using the above estimation method to forecast the three hypothetical Vietnamese cases: full participation in the BRI, non-participation in the BRI, and restricted participation in the BRI. Because of the essence of China and Vietnam's relationship, as illustrated in Chapter 6 and the key national priorities of Vietnam, this study suggests three potential alternatives for Vietnam's involvement in the Belt and Road Initiative.

CHAPTER IV

THE INFLUENCE OF CHINA ON ASEAN COUNTRIES THROUGH THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

4.1. China's Belt and Road Initiative for Southeast Asia

China aims to become a world power with global economic interests. To do that, China demonstrates leadership determination and preparation even at the high cost of a reputation to claim its rights. China craves other countries to recognize its influence as an equal power, something China has always longed for but never had and wished to achieve. Meanwhile, China cultivates strategic followers and friends through persuasive instruments and offers of public goods, particularly in the ASEAN region. As mentioned before, however, more coercive diplomatic methods are also an option if persuasion fails. The BRI is a multifaceted attempt to create a “shared destiny community”; there are also geopolitical goals behind economic and political rapprochements.

Premier Li Keqiang launched China's 2 + 7 Plan at the 2013 China-ASEAN summit. The two fundamental values of China's contribution to ASEAN are joint stability and economic cooperation. Prime Minister Li Keqiang said at the 2014 ASEAN-China Summit in Naypyidaw that In enhancing practical cooperation in all areas, China will join other ASEAN countries, deepen integration based on the 2+7 mechanism for both sides, and create a more united culture of the community of common destiny between ASEAN and China. A similar message was conveyed at the 2015 ASEAN-China Summit in Kuala Lumpur that China is willing to cooperate with ASEAN countries to reinforce common faith in politics, enhance concrete cooperation in economics, culture, and other areas, and work towards a more substantial relationship of common destiny between ASEAN and China. China proposes seven proposals based on these principles: New China-ASEAN Good Neighborhood and Partnership Treaty; Annual China-ASEAN Defense Minister Meeting; a \$1 trillion trade target for 2020; an Asian Fund for Investment for Infrastructure; expanded reliance on RMBs in central bank reserves, trading invoicing and banking finance; South China Sea maritime cooperation; and cultural exchange. This structure emphasizes the influence of China over Southeast Asia (Rocher, 2020).

Beijing has not attempted to reform this system immediately but plans to shift the strategic attitude progressively with a series of incremental, tangible, and introduce alternatives to the Western system of security. Southeast Asia, in reality, is the ideal place to drive the US security alliance structure down. Indeed, China and Southeast Asian nations have improved their security relations: high-level contacts, arms acquisition, combined drills, humanitarian and disaster relief operations. Despite its compliance measures and challenging position in the South China Sea, Beijing has accelerated military collaboration with region states, challenging any sovereignty claims over these disputed regions to Southeast Asian claimants. In Southeast Asia, China is widely believed to be a revisionist force, attempting to modify the regional order.

China's efforts in the post-Cold War period to improve ties with Southeast Asia have been considerable. Throughout the majority of the 1990s, China strengthened relations with individual ASEAN countries and engaged in several international, multilateral organizations headed by ASEAN. This inclusion strategy propelled China to prominence in South-East Asia in the late 2000s. For several years in the 2010s, China maintained strong commerce, politics, and social-cultural fields with ASEAN countries. Simultaneously, its growing assertiveness in the South China Sea has undermined China's diplomatic and political dominance in the region.

In several ASEAN states, Chinese policies are "dualities," which stop accepting the "Chinese dream" fully (Baviera, 2016). The duality of China's policy can be seen in two ways. On the one side, their actions contradict what they suggest. As a result, neighboring countries' confidence in China is eroding. On the other hand, China continues to convince, entice, and coerce ASEAN countries to cooperate with its policies (Baviera, 2016). Not all ASEAN countries support China unconditionally, so China is determined to divide the ASEAN countries into groups that can support them and condemn them. By wielding its economic might and military potential, China takes an uncompromising stance towards territorial conflicts. China considers increasing military might and meddling in the South China Sea as a determination to achieve the best geopolitical strategy for its "China Dream". China has extended substantial support and investment offers to countries on the Sea Silk Road over recent years and indicated its preparedness to take greater responsibility for the Security Cooperation of the Asian Nation and to work with the other major powers (Baviera, 2016). To this end, they have also agreed to discuss a COC on South China Sea fisheries with ASEAN. In the South China Sea, Beijing has created the Maritime Militarized Fisheries Protection Militia to bolster its assertions of unrivaled domination while grappling with security issues in the area posed by four other ASEAN member states: the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia (Baviera, 2016). Malaysia and Indonesia, including the Philippines and Vietnam, have faced similar tensions from Chinese military presence in recent years, as well as Chinese police force activities in or near the James Shoal, South Luconia Shoal, and Natuna gas fields (Baviera, 2016).

China is looking forward to contributing to ASEAN states' long-oriented development and prosperity while at the same time it maintains security for the region. Nonetheless, ASEAN's kind of multilateralism is different in the connectivity, policymaking, and core-periphery position (Arase, 2015b). First, the practice of reciprocity exists in China's bilateral diplomacy. This cooperation is reimbursed if China is respected by other countries. Nonetheless, if people do not respect China, China will consider ways to discipline them. The Philippines and Vietnam disagreed with the Chinese concepts of history and territory and faced various forms of Chinese retribution including lost market access and diplomatic isolation. Second, a "principled bottom line" means Chinese struggles to achieve "core interests," including the Chinese communist party and Chinese government legislation, Chinese state independence and legitimacy, and China's ongoing stability and development. Finally, China

would not accept international tribunals to resolve sovereignty disputes. Instead, they would decide on any claim that might arise, based on evaluating whether they are equitable. China's concept of the universally accepted rule of law, such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, resolving disputes peacefully, and abstaining from intervening in the affairs of other nations, is encapsulated in the Charter of the United Nations (Arase, 2015b).

China also bars Filipino fishers from accessing the Scarborough shoal fishery and blocked Philippine government resumption and repair missions to Second Thomas Shoal, intending to control Southeast Asian countries or, rather, individual Southeast Asian countries. Ties between China and the Philippines have worsened more after this military clash in 2012. In 2013, China was accused of illegally impeding the Philippines' control over the contested maritime areas under the UN Convention on the Sea Law. China does not take part in the proceedings, or it accepts the validity of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, contending that it enjoyed some historical advantages before UNCLOS came into effect. China also invited the Philippines as part of its "Maritime Silk Road" and AIIB member states, in part, to join it for the upcoming Summits in 2014 and 2015. Most remarkable of all, China has done extensive reclamation in the Spratly Islands, resulting in medical and military hospitals and airstrips that are the largest in the entire region. Despite China's claims that the new facility is for peaceful purposes, other nations are doubtful, and reef destruction is considered very likely, which is bound to lead to irreparable harm. As a counter to China's military strategy to gain dominance of the Asia-Pacific, the United States and Japan have expanded the area of naval activity and support of other maritime stability and defense.

From the viewpoint of Southeast Asian countries, China's dominance in new Asian hierarchies, producing public goods, and countering the rise of other powerful forces, does not pose any problems and may even be widely accepted (Arase, 2015b). Most countries in the southern part of Asia have mostly had favorable trade relations with China and managed to preserve their cultures without assimilating China for thousands of years. Even though ASEAN has yet to make deference and trust to China, it may base its decisions on assurances that the future will be the same. According to China's government officials, the BRI will be initially targeted in Southeast Asian countries like Vietnam and China's neighbors (MOFPRC, 2016). China has affirmed that the ASEAN is a priority for them and announced their intention to strengthen the commonality between them and their nations as part of the neighborhood diplomacy, and has signed an agreement with ASEAN to assist with this goal. Several Chinese sources suggest Beijing is highly expected to succeed in BRI in Southeast Asia (Xue, 2017). Relative to other Asian areas, particularly Southeast Asia, the BRI's potential is thought to be the highest in regards to "jointly building its connectivity." (Gong X. , 2019). Southeast Asian nations such as Brunei, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam lie in the middle of China's Maritime Silk Road regions. Southeast Asia has always held a strategic position in China's diplomatic and economic plans because of its various multilateral mechanisms, bilateral and regional agreements like the ASEAN Plus Three, the East Asia Summit (EAS), and the ASEAN

Regional Forum (ARF). Connectivity initiatives between countries in Southeast Asia are likely to be highly beneficial to China. The ultimate aim of China's future maritime development strategy is to demonstrate to the world the feasibility of its land-sea connectivity program (Chen, 2018).

To be ahead of the bloc in 2019, China has the largest trade partner, which happens to be ASEAN, with a trade value of \$644 billion, while the US ranks second. Between April 2018 and the end of the year, for the first time since 1997, China will overtake the United States as the world's largest trading partner at ASEAN (Medina, 2020). The trade value is double the size of Japan-ASEAN. For instance, Indonesia trades with China almost three times more than the United States. The terms of the China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement were upgraded to facilitate trade and collaboration in October 2018. The same pattern extends to investment: in 1999, China implemented a "Going Out" strategy to ease processes and push its firms to expand abroad. Southeast Asia, where BRI is amplifying, is among the first regions to benefit from this incentive. Indeed, from \$104 million in 1996 to \$1.2 billion in 2013 and \$12 billion in 2018. As for Indonesia, China's FDI rose to \$4.7 billion, second only to Singapore, from \$0.6 billion in 2014 (Jefferson, 2020). All of this ensures that stakeholders are in a position, identify the benefits and disadvantages of each economy, and are prepared to mark their operations with the BRI identity. China has recently tightened its investment relations with ASEAN over the years in the light of the ongoing Sino-US trade war, being the leading destination for Chinese firms.

The BRI seems to have been effectively used by China as an instrument to exert its control on ASEAN countries. The ASEAN countries are divided by how they respond to China's BRI policy (Table 2). As Chinese prudence can promote political prejudice towards authoritarianism, new aspects of confidence and cooperation are being studied. After all, Beijing is involved explicitly in mitigating what it sees as a "democratic risk" or the need for ASEAN countries to escape the so-called debt trap. According to this viewpoint, Chinese practices are affected by the two countries' friendship, which transmits soft power and control, like political ideas and norms. These are known to be very important for the BRI's introduction. The BRI continues to be a favorable situation for countries such as Laos, Cambodia, or Malaysia to build on the country's financial wealth amid the financial debt trap, a harsh lesson that has been inflicted on Pakistan by China. On the other hand, the Group 2 (Table 2) nations, such as Vietnam and Singapore, are skeptical about the BRI investment proposals. China has used the BRI to exert influence over countries in Southeast Asia, such as Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, and Group 1.

Actions such as increased investment in ASEAN and the consideration of ASEAN as a strategic foreign-policy partner for China have helped boost China's political influence in the region. Many observers in Southeast Asia consider this impact of the BRI on the regional order (Rocher, 2020). Another concern is whether China will be able to maintain its regional dominance through the BRI. To put it another way, the BRI is not a new regionalist initiative

for Southeast Asia. Economic collaboration between China and ASEAN has resulted in various joint ventures over the past decades. As projects related to the BRI have already started in the Southeast Asian countries, they are considered successes or even precursors. China's proposals for better inter-regional connectivity were welcomed by Southeast Asian countries favorably but with skepticism. Beijing has built on a long legacy of ties, and Southeast Asian pragmatic leaders have tried to profit. These countries lag behind the expected stage of economic development in the face of significant infrastructure deficits that are now penalizing their growth potential.

4.2. Challenges in implementing China's BRI in Southeast Asia

Implementing China's BRI in Southeast Asia could face significant functional challenges. Analyzing by the BRI's "five-pronged" collaboration, there have been immense difficulties in many areas: policy alignment, connectivity of networks, financial inclusion, and people-to-people partnerships. Commerce is the only sector that can be said to have made much improvement. The modest progress achieved by the BRI has arisen from a variety of realistic problems facing the initiative.

The officials from various Southeast Asian nations stated that the Chinese entities, including the provincial, city, and ministerial authorities, have only signed a huge number of MOUs with Southeast Asian countries over the past two decades. BRI comprises several of these latest MOU agreements. The Indonesian officials have been engaged in negotiations with the Chinese governments on over 100 specific MOUs, with regard to maritime cooperation, but only a small percentage of them have been fully implemented (Gong, 2019). To ensure the success of the BRI plan, China proposed the introduction of a regional office for each nation. Other countries, except for Singapore, did not react to China's proposal. Intergovernmental cooperation mechanisms were established when these organizations were still overlapping and ambivalent and are not currently working because they cannot be identified. According to a Thai official, the newly signed Joint Trade, Investment, Growth, and Cooperation Agreement with China has been more sidelined than anticipated, but the two countries are planning more collaboration in the future (Gong, 2019).

Furthermore, the China-Vietnam Intergovernmental Coordination Committee for Steering and other coordinating bodies need to work more effectively. Chinese institutional problems remain. Though China established an inter-organizational BRI Leading Group under the State Council, it did not establish a practical central leadership structure to coordinate BRI operations. Several agencies have failed to establish a coherent framework for implementing BRI plans on a global scale. For example, the Ministry of Commerce is engaged in trade and investment operations, while the NDRC primarily focuses on enhancing regional connectivity (Gong, 2019).

China's Belt and Road Initiative implementation is slowed by the lack of inter-organizational and central government coordination, making them unsure who is really in charge of ASEAN. Thus, conflict of interest at various organizational levels causes tension. To

provide another example, Sino-Vietnamese economic cooperation has evolved and is not deeply rooted in governmental institutions. As a result, government agencies and social agencies also compete for the same limited funds, causing a financial conflict of interest between MOFCOM and Guangxi province. Instead of MOFCOM, the Vietnamese economy has a larger and more extensive cooperative arrangement with Guangxi province. However, the government's restricted influence and questionable leadership status are constrained by cross-border collaboration with Vietnam (Nga, 2020).

Some critics doubt the viability of financing for China's BRI ventures. The new loans and funding led by China have not drawn clear and concrete private sector interests. As several countries in Southeast Asia face immense budgetary restrictions, China's task is to convince them to provide support for them. At the same time, China also signed the Belt and Road Construction Investment Priorities, in 2017, highlighting the fact that 70% of the project investment comes from the government, with 20% from the private sector, making up the remaining 10% from multilateral financial organizations (Rillo, A., & Ali, Z., 2017).

The Chinese government's financial viability is also questioned as China splashed over the BRI excessively. China undertook to provide 60 billion RMBs (approximately \$9 billion) of foreign assistance and interest-free loans to the countries adjacent to the BRI and the Silk Road Fund and other bilateral forms of the cooperation fund. During the 2017 summit, China pledged RMB 2 billion for food assistance (approximately USD 300 million), South-South cooperation assistance, and \$1 billion for international aid programs (Gong, 2019). China's almost unlimited assistance gives the impression that it will provide some form of financing for a country's needs, such as housing, education, and even national funding extending beyond the international community.

China's investment in Southeast Asia's infrastructure also is inadequately calculated. Rail infrastructure projects in Laos could not be profitable due to insufficient passenger capacity (Zhang, H., & Li, J., 2016). Despite this, the Laos government's readiness to pay back loans to the Chinese EXIM Bank; however, the Bank is concerned about Laos's repayment capabilities (Tan D. , 2015). In countries such as Malaysia, China has heavily supported the logistics industry. This country may also be responsible for port oversupply location in Malaysia. The Melaka Gateway Construction Company completed the suspended connection on the East Coast of Malaysia, connecting Melaka and Kuantan ahead of China-backed maritime and seaports like Port Klang. It was questioned whether Chinese investment in new harbors and railroads in the Malacca Strait was feasible (Teoh, 2017).

There is little increased trust in China's ability to expand cultural and people-to-exchanges under the BRI (Gong, 2019). Custer et al. (2018) argued that China soon becomes the focus of the host countries' domestic politics. According to a recent poll, 90% of China's Asian political engagement occurs between elites. The President of the Philippines, to improve the Philippines' trading relationship with China by downplaying the territorial conflict. These changes in the host country's domestic politics are being influenced by foreign interests but

remain fluid to some extent because of the country's strategic situation (Gong, 2019). Recently elected Prime Minister Mahathir called for a Malaysian government-backed Chinese investment review under former Prime Minister Najib. Mahathir also decided to cancel three major Chinese projects worth more than \$22 billion in multi-product pipelines, the Trans-Sabah gas pipeline, and the East Coast railway undertakings (France-Presse, 2018). It has been predicted that China's excessive political interference in Cambodia and corruption in Myanmar could cause the same resistance that Chinese investment faced in Myanmar, leading to a suspension of the Myitsone Dam by social opposition (Gong, 2019).

Chinese businesses continue to have little respect for the local community, to the detriment of Southeast Asia's interests (Gong, 2019). Chinese investors do not appreciate the working culture of local workers. They are unwilling to accept local workers because they believe that the projects do not inspire local workers. Thus, they import Chinese labor, which the local people often censure for depriving the locals of their jobs. A lack of understanding about how local syndicates operate is seen by many Chinese businesses investing in other countries and often failing to meet local staff demands adequately. Chinese businesses, too, by not offering local employees contracts or pensions, bypass laws and regulations. These Chinese enterprises depend on government ties and other instruments to solve various problems in the workplace.

China's companies seem not to understand their deficiencies in the outside world that affect the execution of their businesses and their international image. At times, cultural differences and misunderstandings between Chinese and local peoples have led to conflicts that have tarnished China's prestige. In 2017, for example, one Chinese business boss threatened to fire local workers in Indonesia and threatened the trade union leaders, who wanted to change working conditions. The Indonesian labor unions have called for a demonstration in front of the Chinese embassy to protest the Chinese government's treatment of local employees. The dilemma was the main topic in Indonesian newspapers, leading to a riot against the Chinese company in question (Gong X. , 2018a).

4.3. ASEAN countries' responses to BRI

In comparison to the AIIB's rapid acceptance, the ASEAN countries were initially oblivious to the BRI. Though China's funding, expertise, and even leadership can be welcomed in some ways, some ASEAN members are wary of granting China the freedom to enter their economies and territories more aggressively by "connectivity" initiatives. Countries or businesses are cautious because if China were more dependent on its markets, revenues, loans, and assistance, they will have more difficulty deciding what would displease China.

The Belt and Road Scheme is not praiseworthy in many respects. Is China a reliable and stable partner to protect regional security when China is an important party in territorial disputes and power competitions with major powers? China seems to make no effort to reduce its risks in territorial disputes, especially in its operations to construct artificial islands in the South China Sea. Despite the efforts of the ASEAN countries, they opposed the COC agreements or

entered maritime arbitration with the Philippines. The effectiveness of BRI depends on South-East Asian countries' responses. Generally, most politicians, diplomats, and scholars in South East Asia demonstrated increasing interest and support for China's BRI. At the 6th East Asian Summit of Foreign Ministers, the ASEAN Ministers approved China's BRI in 2016. In the 16th ASEAN Economic Ministers, they also urged the BRI to energize with their growth policy.

Since Southeast Asian countries are not unified, their responses to various BRI proposals and implementations can differ. Table 1 shows divided Southeast Asian BRI responses by such factors as the voice of leader; country participation in the ASEAN-China Summit; cooperation between Lancang and Mekong; any more signing between the Member States and Chinese road and rail initiatives; the development on their territories of industrial zones; member of AIIB. As there are no coherent processes and unique routes and procedures for collaboration, even on the South-East Asiatic continent, one of China's six flagship corridors fails in substance. Different systems, including the LMC-led China, the GMS, and the Cooperation on Development of the ASEAN-Mekong Basin, are already operating. These separate procedures may be a significant obstacle to reorganize and restructure (Gong, 2019). Moreover, there was no Chinese effort to resolve the region's institutional overlap. ASEAN is committed to supporting the BRI by reinforcing linkage and collaborating on jointly shared priorities identified by the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 (MPAC 2025) and BRI of China in their current multilateral and regional ventures (Gong, 2019).

However, the ASEAN states face difficulties in promoting the BRI's expansion. The following factors may further prevent China growing economic footprint from turning to regional political and strategic strength. The first concern is that the BRI could jeopardize ASEAN's core and unifying position as a community because China's bilateral policy could undermine the current ASEAN-led regionalist approach since China sees bilateral dialog as the central tool for political cooperation (Gong, 2019). The region is concerned that the Bilateral Policy "splitting and conquering" create China's structural lending advantage by setting criteria and defining South East Asia's economic and political future.

Secondly, the growing trade deficit in China has triggered concerns in Southeast Asia regarding the geopolitical, economic influence of China. Traditionally, China would turn its economic strength into political power to support its geopolitical needs through asymmetric economic interdependency. A China-dominated trading network has appeared in many observers' eyes in Southeast Asia, and the BRI would further extend the trade power of China in the region (Jusoh, 2018). China mainly exports to ASEAN engineering and labor services and imports from ASEAN countries for shipping, banking, and construction. As the ASEAN member states move from subsistence agriculture into industrial production, machinery and materials derived from industrial processing are critical for the overall progress. The potential of BRI cause of Economic imbalances contributes to regional countries' concerns over China's excessive trade deficit. China's growing deficit and economic reliance would affect its domestic economy and independence. For example, Cambodia, one of the countries in Southeast Asia

joint the Chinese BRI, becomes increasingly concerned for Chinese trade and investment, which forced some factories of Cambodia to close as its dependence on China increased (Faulder, D., & Kawase, K., 2018).

The third reason is that China's strategic investments would facilitate "debt-trap diplomacy" relations, which will place the countries in debt and raise their political clout (Baviera, 2016; Gong X. , 2019). The returns on large capital projects are sluggish and risky. According to analysts from ASEAN countries, interest rates on China loans are not low (Hiep L. H., 2018a). Partner countries are mindful that substantial debt loads will contribute to the transition of critical national assets to foreign influence. Too many projects were postponed, halted, or under scrutiny (The Economist, 2018). One example is the East Coast Railway Route latest suspension in Malaysia of the MYR 55bn (\$13.66 billion). It was supposed to be financed with a 3.25 percent Chinese soft loan (Gong, 2019).

Fourth, tensions between the South China Sea hamper the operations of China on the sea. In the region, every ASEAN country concerning its BRI cooperation with China has valid national security issues. Leaders in the region say that BRI maritime cooperation may be a weapon for China to raise its role in South China's contested sea (Palit, 2017). Consequently, most of the networking proposals presented or suggested are land-based, and Chinese maritime cooperation demand has not brought attention to the region. The majority of the South China Sea claimants would rarely accept Chinese investment. There were statements by Chinese interviewees in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Vietnam that maritime claimant states are unlikely to get funds for large-oriented projects that are essential to their national security. Although Vietnam displays diplomatic support for the BRI because of the legacy of mistrust and territorial disputes from the South China Sea region, the government still wary about the economic and geopolitical consequences; the execution of BRI projects has therefore become more tedious and time-consuming (Hiep L. H., 2018a). Indonesia has no competing affirmations of sovereignty in the South China sea crises but they are suspicious of China's economic and political forces (Gong, 2019).

By embracing public/private partnerships (PPPs), China has changed its investment policies. Three Chinese firms have partnered with a Malaysian group to build a new deep seas port in the Strait of Malacca, for example, under the Melaka Gateway Programme. This approach is particularly suitable for the country's geographical rivals, but their national security questions continue to be a matter of importance to China (Mahbubani, K., & Nair, A., 2017). Fears among ASEAN member states have kept China from embarking on major maritime construction ventures with South China Sea claimants. These issues will continue to hamper BRI deployment in other parts of South-East Asia. According to Gong (2019), China will face significant challenges as it becomes a political and geopolitical force to transform its growing economic influence. In comparison with recent decades, the potential effects of Chinese economic power that will produce political strength in Southeastern Asia will very likely become pale.

As the most underdeveloped countries, Cambodia and Laos are serious about escaping hardship into one of the most active supporters of the BRI in China. Laos is a prime example; its goal is to get out of the underdeveloped by 2020. On the one hand, Laos needs to accelerate the construction of domestic infrastructure. On the other hand, the Government of Laos has the ambition to turn Laos from a “Land-lock country” into a “Land-line country” (Pongkhao, 2015). While Laos is the de facto protectorate by Vietnam, it is well aware that only China will help to improve the desired infrastructure. Similarly, Malaysia believes that the BRI of China supports Malaysia’s objective of being a high-income nation by 2020. Najib told Xi that in Malaysia, BRI was not only agreed but adopted as part of the concept of a holistic strategic alliance (Mansor, 2016). Indonesia now sees the BRI as a stimulus to its financial capability. Mr. Joko Widodo Widodo, the president of Indonesia, supports the current debates on the BRI as the Global Maritime Axis and Indonesia’s push to develop trade, banking, and infrastructure and financial collaboration with China (Banyan, 2015). On the other hand, Indonesia is concerned that China is likely to influence the rest of the Southeast Asian economy because of its large presence and maintenance of China’s power position in the Asian economic structure. Indonesia faces a challenge in Southeast Asia because the United States and China are competing for influence. Indonesia should remain very alert in this regard to China’s actions, and Indonesia should not allow China to use itself to persuade others to comply with ASEAN (Banyan, 2015). China’s sovereignty dispute over the Natuna Islands has damaged the Indonesian government’s confidence in China. It was made very clear to the Indonesian people that China’s territorial claims would not be recognized. At the same time, the Philippines felt that joining the BRI might undermine their claims of ownership in the islands.

Group 2 countries face a dilemma when they plan to assist BRI. Some have proposed that the BRI is part of the strategy of China to broaden its presence in the region. The great powers in Thailand must balance themselves. The US, its ally, and Japan, its primary FDI lender, are on the one hand; China, traditionally Thailand’s leading trading partner, is on the other. To enhance the domestic development, the country’s manufacturing, logistic, and training capacities, the leader has formulated a plan to transform Thailand into regional manufacturing, logistics, shipping, and training hub. China’s BRI was considered favorable for this purpose. During his stay in Beijing in 2014, Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-o-cha declared that Thailand was ready to cooperate in agriculture and railway with China and support regional connectivity through the development of the BRI. Nevertheless, Thailand has played a juggling game to prevent the US and Japan’s irritation, as the high-speed railway situation has shown. Japan pledged to provide a 635-km high-speed railway between Bangkok and Chiang Mai, a 319-km railway from Bangkok to Laem Chabang, and 225 km from Bangkok to Sa Kaeo when it signed the MoU with China in 2014 to construct a railway between Bangkok and Nong Khai (Chen, 2018).

In Group 2, countries appear to have contradictory perceptions of the BRI. They have modest confidence in China, even though they hope to gain more from it. They are also more

hesitant to over-depend on China, fearing that their autonomy or geopolitical ambitions could be threatened by such over-dependence. They use hedging tactics to respond, seeking to reap even the lowest results while defending their sovereignty and enticing other great powers. Vietnam is reinvigorating plans to expand military coordination with other forces to counterbalance China. President Rodrigo Duterte prefers to amend the conflict strategy introduced by Aquino III; however, the change to policy does not imply abolishing the Philippines' alliance with Washington. The Philippines will become more vital to manipulate its national interests utilizing this constitutional overhaul. Both Vietnam and the Philippines seem to endorse China's BRI today, but if their relations with China deteriorate due to a squabble over the SCS issue or they do not get what they want from China, they may desert China's BRI (Hiep L. H., 2016).

Group 3 has poor confidence in China and holds conflicting or even opposed views of the BRI resulting from the policy change. Often as their elites prioritized defense strengthening legitimization, they conducted a difficult balancing strategy, fought against the BRI, tried to develop military forces, and even aligned with other powers to restrain China. They also participated less in BRI membership; at the opposite end they acted as countries in group 2.

South-east Asia has different problems and opinions on the BRI. These problems will influence their trust in the BRI of China if they are not solved. The nature of countries at different stages is different. It should be noted that Campaigns such as Chinese commodities and project management productivity affects Cambodia and Laos with a low political nature. At other stages, the SEA countries have joint problems, but the major ones are highly strategic. In particular, Singapore and the Philippines are worried that China's collaboration would weaken their defense alliances with major powers such as the United States and Japan. Indonesia and Myanmar are concerned that their security would be jeopardized. Simultaneously, both Vietnam and the Philippines are worried that China's implementation of the BRI would result in territorial disputes between the two countries. The worries of Group 1 countries are less serious than those of Group 3 countries, which are almost associated with low trust.

In their responses to China's BRI, other domestic political variables in SEA countries often dominate: firstly, the ideology and interests of the leaders also have a significant effect on the international policy of the region, as shown by Cambodia, Malaysia, and Vietnam and the Philippines. The heavy support for the BRI by Cambodia is largely decided by Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cambodia. He sees this as a way to bring about economic development and to ensure peace in Cambodia, amid conflicts between Thailand and Vietnam intervention (Chen, 2018). Hun Sen said that Cambodia would organize and collaborate with China's BRI and integrate the visit of Chinese Trade Minister Gao Hucheng. Starkly different from his predecessor, rather than overly dependent on the US, Duterte seeks to establish more robust diplomatic ties with other countries. Duterte attempted to widen an olive branch to China when preferring China for his first state visit. He has not insisted on the enforcement of the Hague

decision. Duterte shared his wish that the Philippines would join the BRI of China. In particular, he wanted China to supply the requisite resources for infrastructure development to the Philippines. On the other hand, the criticism of Washington about his battle against illicit drugs was extremely unhappy to Duterte. It should be noted that Duterte's cabinet is not coherent. Contradictions of policy are also inevitable. In March 2017, Delfin Lorenzana, Philippine Defense Secretary, accused Chinese vessel vessels of improper entry to their waters for Benham Rise survey missions. Nevertheless, Duterte answered that the entry of these Chinese vessels had been authorized (Chen, 2018). He then turned 180 degrees. President Duterte said on April 6, 2017, that he would fly the flag in Pagasa (Philippines) and erect new barracks for military troops working in the region (Mogato, 2017).

Because of Asia's shifting global order, Singapore must deal with relations with major powers. Singapore hedged itself for decades and pursued a policy that was politically pro-China and militarily pro-US. Since the Trump administration seems to be more inward-looking, Singapore was placed in a more challenging position of defending as its relations with China soured. Beijing was upset that Singapore had begun military ties with Taiwan and publicly favored the Spratly Islands arbitration award. Diversities in Singapore over its foreign policies led to a spat between Kishore Mahbubani and Bilahari Kausikan, both veteran diplomats (Chen, 2018). It reflected some degree two opposing points of view about how to negotiate with China and whether or not Singapore decided to reorganize ties with Beijing, hoping on China's BRI bandwagon happily by understanding China's economic future. Around the same moment, Singapore strives to keep America more attached to Asia.

The BRI can be a barrier for a government to recognize robust and widespread criticism. The BRI has presented Myanmar with a great chance to promote its development, but Myanmar is seriously afraid that it will ruin its security interests when it comes to its implementation. Its society remains highly suspicious of the potential Chinese influence here. After all, many Burmese citizens still remind China of the former military junta's unconditional assistance, which gave Beijing derogatory political and public sentiments. As a result, the BRI affected SEA countries' domestic politics significantly. In addition, because of recent power struggles, public opinions may change. Malaysia has historically supported the BRI under Najib Raz in the general election is expected to be reversed (Chen, 2018). At present, the former opposition party of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad blamed Najib for his policies which have destabilized his country and disturbed the party is nearly six decades of uninterrupted rule (Thomas, F. and Louise, S., 2015).

In summary, Based on the score matrix (Table 01) and the responses of Southeast Asian countries (Table 02), we can see the divide between Southeast Asian countries in responding to the initiative China's Belt and Road. Because of many reasons related to economic development and poverty, Laos and Cambodia are two countries that almost entirely support the BRI. Meanwhile, although also in emerging countries, Indonesia and Malaysia are two countries that want to rely on AIIB's capital to accelerate their country's development. In

contrast, the Philippines is the only country in the third group - least supportive of the BRI because it worries that China's BRI will affect the territorial dispute resolution process between China and the Philippines. Finally, countries in group 2, including Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, and Brunei, are also divided into two subgroups. Although Vietnam and Thailand, Singapore, although selectively support the BRI, only on the diplomatic aspect, the confidence of these three countries in the BRI of China is not high because of concerns about territorial disputes or China's influence on free trade. Although very actively promoting the BRI in Southeast Asia, intending to significantly influence the region or finding a close ally for itself, China's efforts have not paid off deserved because Southeast Asian countries are deeply divided. Simultaneously, lessons from Pakistan and China's so-called "Debt Trap Diplomacy" have diminished China's growing confidence in many countries.

CHAPTER V

VIETNAM'S PERSPECTIVE FOR CHINESE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVES

5.1. China's BRI Projects in Vietnam

According to the score matrix results in Chapter 3, Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Brunei and Singapore are very conservative countries supporting Chinese BRI projects. Meanwhile, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, and Indonesia are the countries that strongly support China's BRI policy. Ghiasy (2018) names Vietnam as South East Asia's most BRI-skeptical when he mentions the BRI's strong response in Vietnam and strong relations between them. The Sino-Vietnamese maritime dispute presents a significant problem for the execution of BRI ventures in Vietnam and Southeast Asia and, in general, for Chinese foreign relations. It partly describes Vietnam's ambivalent, ambiguous approach to BRI (Hiep, 2019b). As a result of the Chinese BRI initiatives to increase China's internal infrastructure, regional connectivity, and Vietnamese projects, the Chinese-Vietnamese trade will be expected to increase, leading to Chinese goods and services pouring into Vietnam. If additional Chinese and Vietnamese trade through BRI focuses mainly on Chinese electronic goods and China's mining activities in Vietnam, the trade deficit issue will exacerbate the disadvantage of the Vietnamese national budget. From the point of view of Vietnam, therefore, careful, cautious planning and measures are needed (Hoa.V.V , Soong,J , Nghia.N.K, 2020).

Since China has discovered a new road to the oil regions of South-West Asia through Pakistan, both Vietnam and China have tacitly agreed that the South China Sea conflict could not be settled quickly based on mutual exploitation. The so-called "Malacca problem" in China is focused on concerns that China's maritime trade oil supply lines will be practically interrupted in a worse scenario in the South China Sea Sino-American military dispute. China, therefore, favors an alternative shortcut articulated as a landmark for the BRI system in China Pakistan Economic Corridor (Gezgin, 2020). The maritime conflict contributes to China's negative view of BRI ventures in Vietnam. Vietnam, on the one hand, is one of AIIB's leaders. Gezgin (2020) proposes that, whatever the maritime dispute, Vietnam must be prepared to accept BRI ventures in Vietnam. Chinese investment in Vietnam, on the other hand, stands for other problems, such as risks above initial cost estimates, tendency, and Chinese monetary uncertainty. The Vietnamese government's readiness to diversify financial flows is bolstered by existing agreements with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, which help Vietnam cope with Chinese venture capital streams. The biggest three areas in Vietnamese foreign investment are manufacturing, followed by water, power, and real estate, for almost all of these investments in Binh Thuan, Tay Ninh, and Bac Giang (Gezgin, 2020).

Gezgin (2020) described Vietnam's vital characteristics as a 'costs-competitive labor force' and a 'significant need for infrastructure improvement and growth'. The BRI projects are expected in Vietnam to benefit primarily from the growth of clothing and consumer electronics. The second project would include the development of electricity and transport

infrastructures (PWC, 2019). Labor costs are projected to increase at a lower rate in Vietnam compared to China and Thailand. The official planning of Vietnam shows that for the second phase, only 1/6 of the roads operate. For power generation and usage, comparable projections are made. Better mobility would contribute to a larger number of vehicles, leading to a much higher amount of vehicle purchases and rising revenue numbers in Vietnam. In that way, BRI will theoretically alter the traditional “landscape” of Vietnamese traffic where motorbikes rather than cars are a high proportion of vehicles on the roads. After Thailand, Vietnam has the largest number of motorcycles per capita globally (Poushter, 2016). As in China, bicycle users would turn to economically evolved automobiles from motorcycles and drivers. Vietnam has a much lower rate of penetration than China now (PWC, 2019). South Korea, Japan, and Malaysia are the top countries in the region (PWC, 2019). The introduction of Vinfast also followed this proposed transformation, the first national car in Vietnam, which is more economical than imported cars for the market in Vietnam (Hiep L. H., 2019).

BRI loans are attractive to Vietnam, they are an essential prerequisite for Vietnam’s development momentum. However, in the last five years, Vietnam has been cautious with the loans and concessional conditions (loans and credits) that BRI gives it. The Vietnamese government is cautious about the consequences of the Initiative for the region. Two years were required for both countries to discuss the MOU, suggesting that the two sides disagreed, particularly concerning their focus areas (Hiep L. H., 2018a). Also great is the name of the MOU that underlines the promotion of the ties between the two programs, as Vietnam states that the TCOB should be seen as a distinct initiative instead of the BRI. It appears that the two now act as two parallel planes. In other words, Vietnam wants to monitor this region’s system policy and rejects approval as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. Such a reservation can be understood in the light of continued distrust between the two countries and growing anti-China feelings in Vietnam, especially after the 2014 oil rig crisis. Though Vietnam has shown its support for the Belt and Road Initiative as diplomatic proof of China’s intent to take its part in the program, its actual implementation is challenging for the Vietnamese government. Tran Dai Quang’s endorsement of the UN Charter and his apparent position on fiscal and foreign policy points prove that Vietnam is conservative in implementing the Belt and Road Initiative in both fields. Foreign policy experts have warned that the BRI would disadvantage the long-term interests of Vietnam. Researchers suggested that reliance on China could occur due to Vietnam’s participation in the BRI, and Vietnam’s maritime dispute in the South China Sea was also threatened. Not surprisingly, many Chinese enterprises would have a poor environmental record and fail to comply with the country’s simple dispute resolution procedures. Since South East Asia is a mission area of the BRI, Vietnam must look at the overall gains rather than the results from merely promoting the project.

While China is eager to fund building projects, Vietnam intends to reserve financial assistance for more strategic use, such as irrigation projects that would enable farmers to grow crops vital to the country, rather than steel mills, coal-fired power plants, high-speed railways,

and highways. On the contrary, borrowing from China is very difficult, not only expensive but also complicated, and at the same time, the interest rate is not cheap. VEPPR researcher Dr. Pham Sy Thanh has reported that getting them will create many difficulties and be very costly, citing a rise in Vietnam's nominal GDP (Thanh, 2016). That is to be predicted, given the current interest rate in Chinese loans. Also, the Thai government rejected China's 2.5% interest rate for the high-speed rail line that connects Bangkok to Nakhon Phom because it felt the project was too costly and was not prepared to borrow money at that rate (Global Times, 2016). Although the US is more prepared to provide concessional loans with lower limitations in general, China tends to apply much more binding loan terms including technologies, workers, and Chinese contractors than loans from the United States or Japan. Vietnam needs to pursue alternatives to the BRI contracts in order to support its infrastructure programs. Thailand may also be exploring its options. One proposal that the Thai government has explored is the issuing of domestic debt from Foreign Development Assistance. The Vietnamese government has indicated that BRI loans are usually not as attractive to less-developed countries as local government-led or aid-driven ventures.

The Vietnamese were not averse to Chinese technology because they may have used the Chinese camera and signal recorder since the sixties. Still, they favored the Japanese satellite, sensors, and GPS technology since the Japanese have proven more trustworthy. Furthermore, while China requires Vietnam to use Chinese subcontractors and suppliers, Vietnamese citizens have more faith in Japanese structures. Some other options include the Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) contract and the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model (Hiep L. H., 2018a). PPP projects continue to be an integral part of Vietnam's development networks, the unique in-the-box solution for rapid economic growth and, most notably, large-scale ones, which would relieve government incentives and international commitments, despite inevitable delays and inevitable resistance from the economist.

Thus, so far, although supporting China's belt and road initiative and having participated in signing a memorandum of understanding on joining the BRI. However, due to disagreements from the issue of territorial sovereignty, to the conditions for BRI's capital deployment for Vietnamese projects, as a result, no BRI projects have been implemented in Vietnam since this country voiced its support for the BRI diplomatically.

5.2. The perception of Vietnamese political elites relevant to China's BRI

Vietnam is located within the China-Indochina Peninsula Axis, one of the five economic corridors within the BRI. Vietnam has a significant strategic presence geographically in the BRI, with land borders of 1,406 km and proximity to China's competitive development zones. Vietnam seems to have the advantages that BRI tries to offer. However, since the project's inception, the Vietnamese have been wary of China's aim to economically and politically challenge Vietnam (Soong, J.-J., & Nguyen, K.-N., 2018). At the same moment, there is also a reluctant understanding of the likelihood that the program provides a strong economic growth chance in Vietnam. In other words, it is a combination of suspicion and eagerness that is

nuanced and ambivalent. In Vietnam's dynamic policies, such as strengthening its military capabilities while fostering extensive and deeper ties with China, these contradictory and reluctant views find their respective manifestations. Vietnam is active in international and regional bodies where China still has a presence and reinforces ties with significant powers worldwide. Such tactics for Vietnam may be viewed as attempts to engage and tie China together. From the point of view of Vietnam, China's BRI could offer prospects and rewards for more infrastructure improvements in Vietnam and obstacles and threats such as debt traps and project efficiency (Hoa . V . V, Soong . J, Nghia . N . K, 2020). Also, China's increasingly growing assertiveness in the South China Sea has strengthened national stability and prompted the government to foster multilateralism with significant countries, primarily through partnerships with Japan. However, Vietnam avoids taking sides and leaning too far in either Japan or China or any Sino-containment blocs/initiatives, similar to other ASEAN countries that rely heavily on China in several aspects.

It is difficult to deny that Vietnamese leaders are still alerted to any political and national security implications of Chinese fiscal, political, and security policies, like the BRI, for Vietnam. However, the leaders of Vietnam continue to believe that bilateral relationships are the basis of friendship and collaboration, despite their unsettled feelings towards their neighbors (Nhan Dan, 2020). Since the 6th National Congress of the Communist Party in Vietnam, this view of foreign political leaders has undergone drastic shifts (CPV). Vietnam no longer holds a two-pole view of capitalist and socialist affairs, or only allies or enemies, in the sphere of foreign relations. In the eyes of the Vietnamese leaders, China is seen both as a collaborator and an object: a partnership of friendship and the "object" of combat (Thayer, 2017). Nevertheless, in China-Vietnam bilateral relations, the "object" aspect is intentionally maintained as somewhat dominant. The view of Vietnam's political elites is heavily influenced by Chinese expansionism, as they live near a giant neighbor like China. Thus, the Vietnamese leaders believe that the BRI is a way of expanding China's sphere of control and recovering its hegemonic strength and influence. Throughout human history, China has retained its status as a world leader as a genius civilization throughout the past. China needs to steadily exercise its dominance economically and strategically globally through its commercial and technological, and military strength after 40 years of economic change. A visionary leader such as Xi Jinping and the China Dream, the dream "of the Chinese nation's great rejuvenation," reinforces this impression more (Hoa .V .V , Soong .J , Nghia .N .K, 2020).

Vietnamese people also have pessimistic perceptions of China. Eighty percent of the people in Vietnam see China badly and see the power and dominance of China as the biggest challenge, according to a Pew Research Centre survey (Silver, 2017). For over a thousand years, the Vietnamese have waged a war of resistance against China or wars of independence. Many people in Vietnam are haunted by the recent Sino-Vietnamese conflict, in which hundreds of thousands of their family members perished, and it happened just several decades ago. At the same time as this conflict, China has initiated the border conflicts that have been brewing for

over a decade. Furthermore, this program was launched at a time when tensions in the South China Sea were increasing. Therefore, the Vietnamese have reasons to cast doubt upon China's actual plans as a tool for increasing economic and political pressures.

The Vietnamese are generally thought to have learned a long tradition of bloody battles and north-neighbor invasions and modern and ongoing practice negotiating with China. Although Vietnam's politics, the economy, and civil society do not hold precisely the same comprehensive views on China, there is never any disagreement in the belief that China was, and will still be the most critical, most challenging, and most irritating obstacle. The view of the Vietnamese that China is too opposed, chauvinistic, expansionist, and caused the Vietnamese to be afraid and even aggressive toward China is not surprised. China is often considered inefficient and volatiles by the Vietnamese. As a result, the Vietnamese remain wary in some aspects of their ties with China. These assumptions are manifested in Vietnam's strategies to uphold its domestic basic principles and values. Vietnam is also attempting to improve its economic capacity, reinforce its external stance, and, at the very least, tame Beijing's hotheads by strengthening diplomatic, political, and military relations with the world's major powers. Vietnam is a relatively small country around the same time, so the balancing processes are overly complex. Hence, a well-controlled juggling strategy has been tactfully and effectively. Vietnamese hearts have never lost their bitter significance in bloody warfare against China. This kind of rational attitude gives Vietnam's political decision to join the BRI a great deal of thought, even reluctance.

In contrast with China's pessimistic views, Vietnam still sees the past of its relations with China and current circumstances, assertive China with contemporary science, advanced technologies, a developing economy, a prosperous society, and a similar political structure. These realities cannot be pushed down, and in the Vietnamese, they still provoke an expectation of something interesting and meaningful. Therefore, the Vietnamese assume that Vietnam cannot overlook this enticing source of fiscal, technical advantages, and tactical political support. These assumptions translate into the new tactic of bandwagoning that Vietnam is employing very well.

Guo and Luo (2018) have an exciting opinion, with the connectivity through the BRI projects, that China's farm exchange is expanding with neighboring countries, including Vietnam. The Chinese agricultural budget has thus a reversal effect on trade with Vietnam, although the gross budget deficit in China is surplus. This means that the BRI is expanding China's agricultural trade deficit (Gou, Z. & Lou, H., 2018). The BRI will benefit Vietnam from greater access to neighboring export markets for agricultural goods.

Officials in Vietnam always accept that the BRI can also offer an incentive for the country to benefit economically. This initiative's introduction has shown how today's market-oriented and cooperative policies will promote economic growth and collaboration, which is genuinely contemporary and innovative. In banking, technology, and the broad market of over 1,4 billion clients, BRI is projected to provide members enough growth opportunities, while

more development collaboration in recent years has been less fruitful. Therefore, through infrastructure building and market growth, Vietnam welcomes the BRI to bind the world, regional and intercontinental economy. It will also provide a basis for economic growth and close the development disparities between regions countries (Vietnamnet, 2017). In more than 30 years of renovation, Vietnam has achieved remarkable economic growth. However, there have been a host of recent problems that must be addressed: The rising disparity between rich and poor, low GDP per capita, and poor growth efficiency (Hoa .V .V , Soong .J , Nghia .N .K, 2020).

Nevertheless, South China Sea conflict was one of the most acute problems facing China and Vietnam's relationship. China has always used its economic strength to force Vietnam to make compromises in the turmoil in the South China Sea and in other ASEAN countries. Therefore, the comprehensive collaboration of Vietnam with China in the BRI is heavily dependent on Vietnam's willingness to deal with the threats caused by China. It is still a critical challenge to protect the territorial integrity and national unity. If it struggles to achieve this task, the CPV may find it challenging to preserve its political credibility. As for the partnership with China for thousands of years, the relationship needs to be well-managed and maintain a secure climate for growth.

Despite escalating tensions among both countries, the nationalist movement has grown in recent years. A typical example of this is the mass protests against the draft legislation of the Economic Zone Administrative. Although the proposed law does not address China, the vast majority of Vietnamese understand that way. They said it was a 99-year rent agreement for Chinese people to concede that poor and inferior countries can only be rendered. They also cautioned that China's neighbor would benefit from the long-term land rental to allow citizens to move to Vietnam, raising security fears for Vietnam. Protests reached a climax in June 2018 across the region, including Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, especially in Binh Thuan. Faced with conflicting opinions and public pressure, the National Assembly of Vietnam postponed the draft law indefinitely on June 11, 2018, with 85% of National Assembly deputies approved. Vietnamese people worry about China's lending crisis and national security concerns. For them, AIIB is just a great piece of the credit. These loans are not less expensive than most others. China's excessive loans to build critical infrastructure work can be adverse economic and security effects. While the BRI has not financed any projects officially yet, several of Vietnam's significant projects have received Chinese loans from various sources. According to the National Assembly of Vietnam, most of the Vietnam engineering contracts are performed by Chinese contractors (Hiep L. H., 2013). Several urban and highway schemes have also been awarded by Chinese contractors, such as Cat Linh-Ha Dong, Hanoi-Hai Phong, Noi Bai-Lao Cai highways. However, all these crucial programs are becoming a burden on the Vietnamese economy. For example, the Cat Linh-Ha Dong urban railway system has been delayed for five years, increasing 205% compared to the initial investment (Customsnews, 2019).

Importers and exporters with trading relations with China play an unusually optimistic position from a business perspective. No nation may compare the costs or benefits of low-cost and diverse variants of made-in-China goods. They are also ideal for a developed country with low incomes, such as Vietnam. China is an important market for the export of Vietnam, with a population of 1.4 billion. Taking advantage of the low cost of logistics and less time, Vietnamese companies often prioritize the implementation of infrastructure projects such as roads or railways connecting the southern part of China with other Mekong sub-region urine. In fact, very few projects of this type are deployed in the above areas, so BRI will fill these project vacancies.

As trade exchanges between the two countries become broader and more accessible, producers doing business on the domestic market have more negative perspectives than importers and exporters. Though Vietnam's firms are tiny, large-scale Chinese firms with financial depth, advanced technology, and universal adjustment will quickly dominate the industry. Vietnam's businesses also have the challenge to handle them on a level playing field. Lately, the majority of significant projects were built in Vietnam by sizeable Chinese construction companies.

However, the traditional feelings of Vietnamese individuals to the BRI are subject to consideration for Vietnamese companies. It is a certain prejudice, regardless of whether or not they profit from trade with China or not. Vietnamese companies will strive to diversify supplies and the output markets for their goods as public sentiments expose their reservations about the BRI. The explanation is that if Vietnam and China's relations turn poor, they are afraid that their industries will be harmed. For instance, Vietnam's trade and hospitality industries were seriously affected by the China-Vietnam oil rig crisis of 2014. It was then unlikely for agricultural goods to be shipped to China. At that time, the number of hotel bookings plummeted, and cancellations rose because visitors feared that there would be a dispute between the two nations. In 2014, the Vietnamese tourism industry was reported to have lost nearly 1 million Chinese tourists (Hoa .V .V , Soong .J , Nghia .N .K, 2020). So, if they had not had anti-Chinese sentiments before, they would have it indirectly if China adopted policies that jeopardized the two countries' relations.

Whether politics, economy or civil society, Vietnam's aspirations and intentions have always played a leading and influential role in most aspects of the ties between Vietnam and China in many of Vietnam's strategies, particularly in BRI (Hiep L. H., 2018a). In other words, Vietnam has transformed the core views, intentions, and principles of the nation and people very effectively into its pragmatic policies, particularly the hedging strategy. In defense of its national interests. In this hedging tactic, two major forces are used: pulling and pushing, attracting and resisting, the latter being more assertive. This pulling-in relationship will take time to strengthen and represent China's perceptions of the Vietnamese.

In short, The Vietnamese political elite's perception is deep-rooted and comprehensive; the Vietnamese's perception is nationalistic; the business class is pragmatic and rational, and

the Vietnamese people are entirely under the control of the populist mindset. With its unusual place of influence in a one-party state, political leaders' view is the solid base of Vietnam's foreign policy towards China. Of course, Vietnam still takes the views and responses of the industries and the public into account. These views can include some sense of situational inconsistencies and uncertainty, but in the nation's diplomatic actions, they all meet to balance potential challenges and risks from China and exploit the advantages that Vietnam aims to achieve from its ties with the enormous neighborhood (Hoa .V .V , Soong .J , Nghia .N .K, 2020).

CHAPTER VI

VIETNAMESE SCENARIOS WHEN PARTICIPATING IN CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE

While the BRI is not just for neighboring countries, the fundamental objects of the BRI are still China's neighboring region (Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, Central, and South Asia.) Vietnam is an important country in the BRI. Vietnam cannot reject this proposal because of the friendship's essence and the proximity between the two countries. The waterways in both countries form the entrance to the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road"—a significant target of the BRI. Based on the analysis and discussion above, the author gives three options related to Vietnam's participation in China's belt and road projects.

Option 1: The full engagement of Vietnam

Benefits

For diplomatic, Vietnam will obtain good reciprocation from China once Vietnam agrees to participate in the BRI. China supports and assigns considerable significance to persuade and to engage Vietnam to join the BRI. If Vietnam fully engaged in its BRI scheme by improving its political-diplomatic relations with China, Vietnam will have a more conducive atmosphere to extend cooperation with China in many other ways.

In terms of Diplomacy, Vietnam presently supports China's BRI. Implementing the foreign policy of democracy, sovereignty, multilateralism, diversification, constructive, regional integration, Vietnam has successfully participated in "The Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation," held on May 14–15, 2017, in Beijing. At these forums, Vietnam has been a big supporter being BRI deployment. Furthermore, Vietnam's leaders expressed their support for this project regularly and openly. On the 2007 visit, the former Vietnamese president declared the Belt and Road Plan to be welcoming. Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc participated in several events on November 4 and 5, 2018, such as engaging in China's first International Import Expo (CIIE 2018) and meeting with China's Secretary-General of the Party, Xi Jinping. At the meeting with Xi, Nguyen welcomed China's efforts to contribute to peace, security, and development in the country and the world and its Belt and Road Initiative. Ever after Chairman Qin Liqun visited Vietnam, its prime minister, Nguyen Xuan Phuc, presented Chairman Qin with a memorandum that he wants the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank to lend a significant sum of money to Vietnam to finance some facets of infrastructure. If the bond between the two countries remains positive, so it will encourage other problems to flourish.

For Vietnam, developing a unique foreign policy relationship with China has always been the top priority to prevent dynamic diplomatic and political problems close to previous friction and gaps in the bilateral relationship. Vietnam would receive more substantial support from China globally, strengthening Vietnam's status and role. Full participation will encourage Vietnam to create a favorable international atmosphere to foster friendship and cooperation

with other countries in the system. Foreign policy is a considerable development to serve the national interests. As Vietnam is a small country situated in a significant geopolitical position, it makes sense because the SCS is located right above it, which a nation capable of managing maneuvering space knows that the SCS is a strategic place to be in. With many lucrative offers from China, it would be hard for Vietnam to decline. Vietnam would also profit from the Initiative diplomatically. In this situation, it is difficult for Vietnam to stand outside as a society. Furthermore, Vietnam could become isolated from foreign and regional relations. In the same way, the Vietnamese government has also started to lend diplomatic support to the Initiative to improve the overall ties with the Chinese government (Hiep L. H., 2018).

For People-to-people policy: In favor of the Silk Road spirit, China has said, “We should carry along the spirit of people-to-people bond and follow this road of closer cooperation of partnership instead of competition, and bringing closer people with each other to build community as well as break down prejudice and ignorance, and to improve cultural and academic exchanges, people-to-people contacts, and cultural, academic and material cooperation”. Therefore, Over the last five years, China has used extensive information operations in several ways to promote this agenda. The role of the Internet and the digital media to support harmonious and peaceful cultural environments and public sentiment must be enhanced by Vietnam and China in strengthening international exchange and collaboration between culture and media.

The main advantage of this agreement is that China will provide Vietnam with numerous cooperative projects on education, culture, and research, which will assist in meeting Vietnam’s needs to improve the region. Having their rich cultural heritage and literature, the people of Vietnam would understand and interact with the people of China, fostering economic and cultural cooperation. China has founded the many Confucius Institute, too. According to the latest statistics from Confucius Institute Headquarters, China is developing 144 Confucius Institutes and 134 Confucius classes in 53 of 64 countries along the BRI. “Today, Confucius Institutes have been formed in 616 locations in 149 countries and regions, making up 5,000 registered everyday activities of the Confucius Institute Project; while, 1,120 Confucius Classrooms have been founded in 25 countries and regions” (Headquarters, 2018).

Vietnam is accepting the Confucius Institute’s presence in the country, which will increase the research and teaching of the Chinese language. It will lead to strengthening and growing the relationship between the Vietnamese and Chinese. The Confucius Institute at Hanoi was founded in December 2014. It is the first and only Confucius Institute in Vietnam. From Vietnam’s perspective, the establishment of the Confucius Institute is in line with promoting Chinese culture and contributing to strengthening and improving the friendly relationship between Vietnam and China citizens. The relationship between China and Vietnam has the enormous economic advantage of contributing to various industries’ growth. It is in the most beneficial interests of both countries to cultivate bonds of cooperation and rapidly improve bilateral relations.

For Economy: Vietnam will face numerous opportunities for cooperation with China in trade, particularly in the fields of commerce and finance, in the future when joint in China's BRI. Vietnam needs to improve diplomatic, trade, and investment ties with countries outside of the country to grow the country, while China is the second economic force globally. By engaging in the BRI's projects, the two countries will have the ability to enhance and encourage economic cooperation. The Vietnamese economy profits greatly from trade cooperation with China. China, the second-largest economy, remains Vietnam's primary trading partner, a region that is the largest import market of Vietnam and the second-largest export market of Vietnam. If BRI plans are signed, it also marks a way to improve trade proportion between the two nations, such as more excellent market prospects.

The number of Chinese visitors to Vietnam is also heading to rise. Vietnamese tourism's demand is an outstanding opportunity, with more than a billion people and a growing middle class. The number of international tourists to Vietnam continues to be the number in China. China, with about 5 million visitors, is the country with the most tourists to Vietnam. In 2018, China accounted for close to one-third of the overall number of visitors visiting Vietnam globally. Finally, this would be a significant revenue stream for the Vietnamese government and industry, boosting trade and tourism (Trần, 2019).

Vietnam will have more money to devote to the long-term build-out of its infrastructure. The Vietnamese government has many limitations on facilities. Vietnam wants much money to invest in its potential projects to improve economic growth even more. According to forecasts from the World Bank, lasting upgrades to Vietnam's targeted infrastructure will take up to \$25 billion to spend in 2019. In the form of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank from the BRI of China, Viet Nam has an option, besides its traditional assets, such as the World Bank and Asian Development Bank.

Challenges

For Diplomatic: In the long run, the binding political relations with China will grow significantly, making it impossible for Vietnam to enforce domestic and foreign policies as the possibility of reliance on China grows. First, Vietnam should be worried about the "Debt-Trap Diplomacy". During the past five years, many countries have been locked into a thousand-dollar debt by China. Unlike Vietnam, those countries suffered significant national stability setbacks, territorial integrity problems, and damaged diplomatic relations. In Vietnam's case, the maritime claims in the SCS are the best example of this potential issue. China disputes that "debt-trap diplomacy" is not an actual occurrence. However, in fact, Sri Lanka and Djibouti come under this phenomenon's "hotspot". If no one pays heed to this, so Vietnam will get trapped in a debt trap. They have stacked up debts, so both the principal and interest must be paid. If the debtor can not make these contributions, they will be subject to the creditor's "diplomatic" pressure, and their debts will only go up and up and up. They are potential risks to the territory, property, and even sovereignty. In other words, deep integration is expected to bring along its side effects, which could even endanger national security.

Vietnam has insoluble issues with its proposed “Special Economic Zone” in BRI’s projects. Vietnam is not thrilled with how long the deal is and how it does not represent the country’s national strategy. China has created several Special Economic Zones (SEZ) along its BRI across the world, aiming to facilitate trade. As noted, land tenure within SEZs has come out as a stumbling point for the BRI proposal. When a company rents land in another nation for several years, the country is no more from an absolute dictator to the company. In 2015, Vietnam began legalizing the construction of SEZs law, which are land areas where enterprises can be encouraged to be built. There are a total of three zones, and each zone can be rented for 99 years.

However, Vietnam postponed the passage of this law. People have been worried that land leasing for 99 years would compromise Vietnam’s national security, and land leasing would pose difficulties in terms of national security by giving foreign investors control over parts of Vietnam’s territory.

Vietnam has the task of balancing political strategies between significant powers such as the United States and China. In November 2018, at the APEC summit in Da Nang, Vietnam, President Donald Trump declared an “Open and Free Indian - the Pacific Ocean,” Instead of the “pivot” policy that began under President Obama, now President Trump claims the US will now “rebalancing strategy” under the strategy. President Trump picked Vietnam for symbolic purposes. It was an opportunity to draw attention to Vietnam as a strategically important country, essential regionally and to the US’s current global vision under the Trump’s administration. At APEC in Da Nang, the President reaffirmed the Han’s two Women’s history against Han. President Trump described this significant historical occurrence before visiting with the Chinese President, emphasizing the Vietnamese behavior against the Han Dynasty during their war.

Finally, sovereignty in the South China Sea is a severe issue for Vietnam. There are fears that China is using BRI as both an economic initiative and a means to control the South China Sea. If China actively introduces the “The Road” and constructs various ports, SEZs, SCS, and militarizes the islands in the South China Sea, the outcome will be battles over the Spratly Islands. This collision involves numerous regional countries. The two most impacted countries are China and Vietnam. Both of these countries have extensive, contested areas in the Paracel and Spratly islands. These claims conflict throughout the SCS. From a Vietnamese standpoint, this is the most challenging problem with the promotion and involvement of BRI. When full involvement of BRI’s projects would make sovereignty disputes over the South China Sea more complicate diplomatically, tensions may occur more quickly in militarizing islands and possibly ports.

For People-to-people: Although there are undeniable advantages to cultural and educational exchanges, full participation in the BRI may have detrimental implications for Vietnam. If full participation entails the consequences of a cultural invasion, it will trigger Vietnam’s national cultural identity to become weakened. China will use Vietnamese

collaboration to create pro-China forces in Vietnam; this will politicize Vietnam and provide China with more chances to use Vietnam for its political interests. At the same time, this increased presence could pressure Vietnam to maintain its national cultural identity.

Due to cultural and educational constraints, they may be strongly hesitant to accept this initiative in Vietnam. It is now possible to study the Chinese language and seek knowledge about the BRI in Vietnam. Information and misinformation abound on the internet. However, there is no proof that Chinese state-sponsored media are often correct, especially when attempting to manipulate the Vietnamese public. The government fears it would confuse the Vietnamese in receiving all the information that both Vietnam and the whole region will require.

For Security: Vietnam will face many obstacles in maintaining its supremacy over the SCS. As discussed above, China will increase its positions in the SCS and Southeast Asia by introducing the BRI. The reinforced Chinese status has other possible effects, including encouragement to increase the militarization of islands in the SCS and a potential regional arms race by countries to fight this effect. These results are all obstacles for Vietnam.

The increased military presence of China in the South China Sea, further militarisation of South China islands, and increased naval activities by emerging maritime powers will be confronted by Vietnam. Chinese believing that sea power in fighting for domination is not only more effective than land energy but is also less threatening to international Peace (Kaplan, 2012). The PLA Navy will shift its attention from offshore water defense to offshore defense and open sea protection to create a combined, multi-functional, and practical maritime warfare force system to defend China's overseas interests. The BRI of China's naval policy is just a tiny piece of this Strategy for strategic ports.

BRI will trigger a united nation among Vietnam's political, civil, economic, cultural communities. The condition in the SCS will become more and more complex, and knowledge about naval operations and activities in the SCS will no longer be credible. To boost its military capacity, China has exerted its dominance in the region and Vietnam, especially using the BRI. When it comes to the maritime question in the South China Sea, China continues to militarize the String of Pearls and looks to build military bases and ports in countries to the "roads" of the SCS. If the diplomatic channels fail to settle the matter, this allows Vietnam's military still to be ready to fight to defend the integrity of the sea and islands. If further Chinese military intervention in Vietnamese waters triggers complications, it will become more difficult for the United States to defend the sea and islands.

For Economy: The economic impact is already significant if Vietnam fully participates in BRI. Professor Rosecrance wrote that States would increase their influence in two ways: through violent invasion or peaceful trade (Joseph S. Nye, 2017). With many advantages to the benefits of trade collaboration between both countries, China's affect all kinds of cultural and environmental impacts. Therefore, the full engagement would also raise daunting obstacles for Vietnam's strategic policymakers to recognize.

When it comes to Vietnam's economy and politics, the two are interdependent and nuanced. The relationship between the economy and politics has always been the most critical issue of development. Challenges always accompany the international integration process, and the biggest is the national security challenges. As we noticed above, "Debt-Trap Diplomacy" is a complicated, burning topic that is the top priority. Vietnam wants much capital to spend on infrastructure, which will make it impossible for Vietnam to fall into the trap.

Most notably, China's growing economic interdependence will add pressure on Vietnam to become more active in the Chinese BRI project. China most frequently influences Vietnam's import and export situation. The overall import-export turnover from China still accounts for a high proportion of the total import-export turnover from Vietnam. Besides, China will be the national general contractor of several energy projects in Vietnam and will get involved in a variety of many other primary projects. If Chinese contractors withdraw their capital from non-construction programs, hundreds of power projects will be delayed, which will make the projects even more costly. This problem will escalate as Vietnam continues to sign further BRI contracts.

The economic viability of the project is mostly low. Primarily due to the following reasons: Due to worries about national security and intellectual property, most Chinese government side ventures will have to use Chinese infrastructure, facilities, and contractors. As mentioning other countries, Chinese technology is not of the quality that other countries. Even it may be a problem for the quality and durability of their programs. Also, there are some other impacts such as environment and social security (Joseph S. Nye, 2017).

Option 2: When Vietnam doesn't engage in the BRI

Benefit

For Diplomatic: Vietnam would escape China's BRI's repercussions while still preserving its sovereignty and independence. Vietnam has a chance to escape a "Debt-Trap Diplomacy" and other Chinese political intentions. Vietnam will also escape a defense and economic problem between how they view sovereignty in the South China Sea and how they will deal with China's construction ventures. Besides, Vietnam will act unilaterally to protect their freedom against China's hostile attacks, in the same manner, their neighbor to the north did in 2014. Although military intervention is the last resort if the sides cannot settle diplomatic, legal, or bargaining problems, the independence from BRI is an advantage in this situation.

Furthermore, no BRI involvement would make it possible for Vietnam to prevent imbalances in ties with major countries. This situation lets Vietnam retain a level-headed foreign policy that is not excessively driven by one great force. For instance, in terms of its national interests, Vietnam will select the best deal without caring about the effect on participation in the BRI if it receives a reasonable offer for protection or financial help from multiple partner countries.

In the BRI context, Vietnam will restrict the detrimental effects of China's "soft power" policy. In other words, Vietnam would prevent cultural assimilation as well as can control

foreign cultural aggression, particularly from China. Non-participation enables less involvement and restricts the penetration in people's and other groups of Vietnamese society of organizations and individuals, especially students, in propagating misconceptions and opinions. It is easier to avoid psychological aggression, coercion, and cultural assimilation from outside a country's boundaries than within its borders so the defense can be executed from the outside instead of internal borders. Do not Join the BRI would curb China's power to exercise unnecessary control on Vietnam's domestic policy-making.

For Security: Vietnam will not fall into the arms race with China in the SCS. Vietnam may also control the purpose of China to deploy soldiers under the BRI's project. As a result of not attending, Vietnam will not have any disputes or collisions at sea with China. It gives the Vietnamese military great chances of acquiring ample planning time to tackle the most severe challenges. Present evidence demonstrates that the BRI has a military focus (Hai, 2019). E.g., China officially inaugurated the first military base overseas in Djibouti, which is perched on Africa's horn. In general, countries historically tend to convert economic strength into military power, pursuing global dominance and prominence.

For Economy: Vietnam has a strategy to reduce the risk of economic dependency on China, which, in essence, brings Vietnam into a stronger position to establish economic and trade ties with other countries. It also prevents the environmental effects of BRI, as well as the use of old technologies. If Vietnam refuses to collaborate with China on economic contracts in terms of infrastructure on land and on the sea, Vietnam will not face the mismanagement problems comparable to other Chinese-led ventures funded by Chinese loans. Chinese funded programs currently delay building progress. It is not clear to the local public whether the programs will end before they are done. As a result, it is difficult for the Vietnamese people to realize how long it will take for these projects to be completed. For example, the 13 km long railway in Hanoi, which had been originally expected to be finished in 2014, has cost approximately USD 867 million, two-thirds of which were Chinese loans, but it is unclear, after many delays, whether that rail line would serve the public (Vietnamnet, 2019). Avoiding this dissatisfaction would hold the government firm and retain confidence from the public.

Challenges

For Diplomatic: If Vietnam does not participate in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China could isolate Vietnam diplomatically or deliberately weaken Vietnam's influence in other multilateral institutions. If China's diplomatic relationship became dissatisfactory, there would be many other consequences that would affect Vietnamese national security. It has been clear that the most critical short-term effect is a possible trade war with China. In a worst-case situation, armed war terrorizes the local population due to growing tensions between several provinces near China's borders. Vietnam's foreign policy aim has been to foster and strengthen relations with its allies. Non-participation will also be in stark contrast to the stated foreign policy goals of the CPV and Vietnam – promoting and deepening relations with partners. In a

non-participation role, protecting national interests and national stability is challenging due to the SCS conflict.

The Partnership Agreement gives Vietnam the ability to improve relations with other countries. This multilateral support is crucial as Vietnam is faced with regional difficulties. Non-participation requires Vietnam to stand out from the cooperative mechanisms and frameworks of the BRI framework. Even though Vietnam may not take advantage of the BRI infrastructure projects with other countries, it can still cooperate with multilateral relations in regional to growth. Any multilateral trade opportunities and development programs such as roads or railways with other BRI countries may not be available for Vietnam to take advantage of. China might then use other countries to isolate Vietnam, such as in vulnerable fields, such as politics and economics. Due to this, Vietnam would have multiple impacts and problems from countries and regions in Southeast Asia and the Asia Pacific. These effects would lead to a partial breakdown of international diplomatic relations, which will have significant consequences for other Vietnam areas.

For People-to-people: Vietnam is currently unable to take advantage of China's strengths in society, education, research, and technology. In other words, it is self-evident that Vietnam chooses to turn down opportunities that would result in an enhancement of international cooperation concerning issues such as intelligence, cultural and educational exchanges. With too many countries joining in the project, this is a massive opportunity to enhance cultural and creative exchanges, educational partnerships, and science and technology cooperation among the countries concerned. However, where there is no Vietnamese presence, the nation will neglect this chance to improve these interactions and miss chances to develop partnerships with countries.

For Security: The expanded military presence of China in SCS is also a problem for Vietnam. No matter whether Vietnam is interested or not, China continues to advance its "21st Century Maritime Silk Road". China will continue militarizing the South China Sea, and China's BRI financial infrastructure would not offer an incentive for resolve disputes with China. Additionally, Military collaboration with China may be jeopardized due to non-participation in BRI. Defense ties are vital to the overall relationship between the two countries and are intricately intertwined. Disputes are settled, shared security and Defense Relations secure future bilateral ties. Vietnam has continued to extend its security cooperation with a wide range of countries, including China, in the spirit of development cooperation and as a credible ally in all international community countries. The probability of this collaboration is diminished by non-participation. Thus, Vietnam would miss the ability to use the favorable circumstances of BRI to establish partnerships between protection and protection. China should concurrently view BRI non-participation as a preference for Vietnam to establish security and defense ties with the US and its regional allies. Then China will step up pressure on Vietnam, rising international tensions rather than reducing them.

For economic: Vietnam would not abuse possibilities for BRI collaboration on economic, trade and investment, while also contradicting the government's policies to encourage international economic affairs. Vietnam does not exploit the resources and favorable conditions to facilitate trade convergence with a broad region with significant economic cooperation potentials.

Vietnam could face China's economic sanctions. Vietnam's exports may be under threat from China. For example, if China refuses to import agricultural products just for a day, China's primary export market in Vietnam will lose millions of Vietnamese farmers. Similarly, China's substantial trade deficit would affect the domestic economy too. The tourism industry is another example. In Vietnam, 28-30 percent of overall foreign arrivals are still accountable to the Chinese market (Hai, 2019). What is essential is the \$106.71 billion in bilateral trade between Vietnam and China, representing 22.2% of Vietnam's value in 2018 (Hai, 2019). Thus, if China uses a strategy to deter Vietnamese traveling firms, it does not leverage BRI's commercial, trade, and investment cooperation opportunities and, at the same time, contradicts the policy of the government to promote international economic relations. Vietnam will not benefit from sending visitors to Vietnam, but this strategy will hurt Vietnam tremendously.

Option 3: Vietnam chooses to join China's BRI selectively

Benefits

For Diplomatic: Selective engagement would strengthen bilateral political ties between Vietnam and China and foster friendship solidarity between them. The decline in Vietnamese engagement would help improve this relationship and demonstrate mutual ties. The strategy of both CPV and the relationship between the two countries are entirely consistent. Furthermore, Vietnam will have the ability to collaborate with several different countries and strengthen bilateral relations within the initiative's framework. Restricted participation is aimed at fighting sovereignty and interests security, encouraging cooperation in the SCS, improving the status of Vietnam, and fostering peace, prosperity, and cooperation in the region.

Vietnam would also increase its partnerships and links with major countries. Restricted involvement indicates an intention to collaborate with China and represents the CPV agenda which is engaged in international economic integration. After Vietnam was admitted to the WTO in 2007, Vietnam's international economic integration has advanced to become more comprehensive and has accomplished a great range of achievements. The proper development of the financial economy is one of the critical guiding forces for global socio-economic development. Selective involvement would allow Vietnam to select appropriate projects to serve diplomatic, external, commercial, and security purposes and establish favorable conditions in the future to improve relations and multidimensional cooperation with other foreign countries. Furthermore, Vietnam will join BRI meetings and discussions in the diplomatic field with relevant projects without being a signature or priority country for the BRI projects.

For people-to-people: In the form of cultural and education exchanges, minimal participation would enhance cooperation between the two countries. There are favorable conditions for extending cultural cooperation, schooling, and training, absorbing science and technology, and contributing to Vietnam's demands in developing the nation at the present moment. Getting this cultural exchange program in Vietnam will allow Vietnam to absorb the cultural essence of humanity from another world and help Vietnam introduce another country's cultural quintessence into Vietnam. Being willing to participate in intercultural interactions tends to discourage nations from slipping into the same conflicts alliances that connect other nations. A perfect example of "ping-pong diplomacy" is the US Table Tennis team and the PRC's team. Following the popularity of the ping pong matches, in June 1972, President Richard Nixon made a landmark visit to China to begin talks on the re-establishment of diplomatic relations. Japan used the cherry blossoms to test the results of international policy, to make allies think. In 1912, 3,020 cherry trees were shipped from Yokohama, Japan, to Washington DC (National Park Service, 2019). Now that spring is in full bloom, and the cherry blossom is famous among America's citizens.

Limited participation will also strengthen cooperation between relevant ministries between the two countries, human-to-human relations, and cooperation in information, culture, and education. Cultural exchanges between different countries help create mutual understanding, reduce stress and suppress the feeling that one country is trying to go to war with another, which helps to remove barriers the belief between the people of the two countries has progressed towards peaceful cooperation and mutual development.

For Security: Vietnam builds its defense posture on the foundation of an all-people defense. Vietnam's security policy maintains that the state should preserve its national independence. The BRI's presence must, therefore, not influence Vietnam's protection in security. Due to Vietnam's little involvement, they have a substantial opportunity to comprehensively review and assess all future proposals, so it is possible to remove projects that are ultimately not in the Vietnamese national interest. This regulation is essential for Vietnam to concentrate its national defense efforts on its armed forces and create a more sustainable security environment.

Selective participation in the BRI contributes to the coordination between the two armies, contributes to the security ties between the two countries, and contributes to the relations between other countries and the two countries. The military collaboration involves sharing ideas about the army, navy, air force, and border patrol. Five border defense exchanges were arranged between Vietnam and China from 2014 to the present. These meetings included exchanging information, cultural interactions, and opportunities to arrange confidence-building steps to address situations in the border areas and gates. Defense cooperation is seen as one of the steps to reinforce political and social legitimacy, strengthen friendship, and encourage reciprocal cooperation in the political and military fields. Therefore Vietnam would be beneficial to preserve these relations with China by selective involvement with BRI's project.

For Economy: The Vietnamese economy is growing because trade and collaboration between China and Vietnam are growing. Vietnam will take advantage of the commercial, trade, and investment prospects in the BRI and will do so in a manner where the benefits are as much as possible while mitigating the risks of being pulled into the BRI. Limited participation will help Vietnam proactively avoid complete economic reliance on China and prevent Chinese policies to impact Vietnam's rightful wishes and needs. Vietnam should also take advantage of the favorable circumstances present in other countries to grow, trade, and invest. For example, other advantageous economic institutions may facilitate trade integration with Eurasia and other external partners. Vietnam should attempt to learn its partnerships better and ultimately use them to obtain more understanding, such as feasibility analyses and careful competition between projects before entering. Due to restricted participation, Vietnam is a beautiful economic space for foreign direct investment for other countries, not only for China.

Challenges

For Diplomatic: Restricted participation also decreases in comparison to full participation in the unnecessary political problems facing Vietnam. Vietnam should restrict certain forms of projects that pose a minimal risk of debt-trap diplomacy (smaller road or rail). Regardless of the negative aspects of the BRI, Vietnam will still face political pressure because of the initiative. As Vietnam signs an infrastructure building deal with China, the Chinese Government is likely to use political leverage to manipulate Vietnamese firms' technical choices and use the Chinese-led company's head and workers. This agreement has the potential to reduce the quality of construction in Vietnam by using outdated technologies, thereby reducing the standards and quality of construction works in Vietnam compared to other countries. Furthermore, inadequate building, lack of change, and societal consequences also affect how small a project is. In the end, restricted involvement will minimize Vietnam's geopolitical risks if China continues to use the BRI as its influence policy in the world.

For People-to-people: Due to less cultural and educational encroachment from China, Vietnam will face fewer obstacles in combating it. The Vietnamese should regulate cultural and educational encroachment and programs since it would entail a thorough screening process from those who may choose to be part of any collaboration. To prevent any profound effect on Vietnam's cultural and educational character, it is more likely that Vietnam will prefer less sensitive, shallow education and cultural cooperation.

However, despite this growth, China's soft power policy's adverse effects on Vietnam's cultural identity are inevitable. In the short term, cultural interactions contribute to cultural assimilation and crossbreeding and thus eliminate the boundaries between cultures. The truth of the matter is that the Vietnamese people are well versed in Chinese culture and history. The explanation is as straightforward as it can be - many famous Vietnamese films are made in China, and they are widely broadcast on Vietnamese television stations. Even limiting access to the BRI thus enables China, while introducing projects in Vietnam, to expand access to soft

power industries such as the television and the media networks. However, selective involvement often decreases risk, at least where the role is more common than full participation.

For Security: Vietnam must continue to facing its Chinese military presence in SCS, regardless of whether there is no participation, full involvement, or minimal participation. Restricted participation removes rising tensions or geopolitical pressure from the ‘no participation’ alternative without exposing Vietnam to the possible consequences of full participation, namely port development and the Chinese pursuit of expanded maritime access. Also, it has helped Vietnam modernize its armed forces and improve the stability of the country’s sovereignty. Since Vietnam is robust and open to collaboration, they can address the SCS problems diplomatically and multilaterally. Restricted intervention helps Vietnam to exploit power for these purposes through BRI cooperation.

For Economy: Vietnam will face losing some economic cooperation, especially port projects’ development, resulting from limited involvement. Vietnam cannot access loans from AIIB or the Silk Road Fund (SRF). The real long-term danger is that Vietnam badly lacks the internal resources for economic growth. Other countries can take on Vietnam’s advantage to obtain investment capital because China spends its infrastructure as a dual-purpose community. As a tactic, China used this power to force Vietnam to engage more deeply in BRI because China prioritized other countries and could not reject Vietnam’s modest involvement. The restricted intervention involves an intelligent political system to update policies and to respond to evolving geostrategic circumstances in a complicated context relevant to SCS.

In this way, the BRI is China’s long-term, global policy to support its state-led establishment of the world leadership. The BRI has a broad spectrum of reach and gives the countries in question advantages and challenges. Therefore, Vietnam needs to have a long-term strategic goal beyond purely economic growth and contingent upon the national policy so that economic reliance would entail unforeseen implications in other national interests. Vietnam needs to consider China’s intentions, steps, and tactics in executing BRI. Vietnam should prepare for the challenges, uncertainties, and dangers of inclusion in the regional economic community. From the analysis of the benefits and challenges of the three scenarios, the author draws some conclusions.

Option one, full participation, would jeopardize Vietnam as a result of the likelihood Vietnam will lose control of its political autonomy and military control, as well as because of the avoidance of tariffs. The national interests of Vietnam have to be significantly affected. It would result in the closing with China relation. If the country does not coordinate in many capital programs, it will carry high public debt and social and diplomatic debt. The project expertise in Viet Nam for construction is not as extensive as it is for other countries. It has a risk that Vietnamese people may be taken advantage of if the infrastructure’s financial burden is not handled by anyone with much expertise in this field.

The second choice is the non-participation, which cannot be possible within the spectrum of Vietnam’s existing levels. It does not foster a cross-border relationship between

the two countries, nor are the communications compatible with the CPV policy; thus, it is not appropriate. The fundamental explanation is that Vietnam cannot reject China, for Vietnam has a good friendship. The country has been on an upbeat track for the past decade, and the country wants to preserve foreign relations and not hide away in isolation. If the need for capital is very high in Vietnam, Vietnam will not hesitate to enter. Vietnam would fail strategically, diplomatically, and economically if it does not engage in BRI in many ways. Vietnam will have a tough time locating trade partners, and international ties will be hard to sustain.

Option three is perceived to be the most realistic of the three because it helps Vietnam improve ties with China and help foster relations with other countries. Participating in a limited way would help Vietnam secure itself while also maintaining the potential to pursue trade with other countries. This strategy highlights Vietnam’s foreign economic strategies and how they strengthen their relationship with other countries worldwide. This plan lets Vietnam earn a good reputation worldwide while also aiding in Vietnam’s global and regional status. Vietnam and China are neighbors. Bilateral links are improving rapidly. There is tremendous potential in the economic cooperation between the two countries, but there are pitfalls, too! Other areas could also adversely impact the two countries, one of which is the territorial dispute on the sea.

In summary, Vietnam can participate in the initiative under the third option, and other choices include no involvement, restricted participation, and full participation. Protecting national interests is of paramount importance as a sovereign government. But, as the late senior man in Singapore Lee said, “a small country must seek as many friends as possible while preserving the freedom to be a sovereign and independent nation” (Jaipragas, 2017a)

Table 3: Summary of Findings

	Full- engagement	Non- engagement	Selective engagement
Benefits	<p>1. Diplomacy + Chinese optimistic reciprocation + China’s support on a global scale</p> <p>2. People-to-people + China’s education, culture, and research cooperation initiatives will be expanded.</p> <p>3. Economy: + Opportunities for commercial, trade, and investment collaboration with China; + Increased of Chinese tourists;</p>	<p>1. Diplomacy + Vietnam is immune to the consequences of China’s BRI</p> <p>2. People-to-people + Vietnam can reduce the negative consequences of the “soft power” of China.</p> <p>3. Security + Vietnam will not fall into the arms race in the SCS</p> <p>4. Economy + Vietnam reduces the possibility of economic dependence on China</p>	<p>1. Diplomacy + Strengthening diplomatic-political ties with China + Maintaining a sense of balance in relations with major countries</p> <p>2. People-to-People + Improve cooperation between the two countries in terms of cultural and educational exchange; + Strengthen people-to-people ties.</p> <p>3. Security</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Capital for infrastructure investment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Avoid mismanagement of projects causing population frustration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Encourage collaboration between the two armies, thus adding to the defense-security ties between the two countries and others. <p>4. Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Vietnam’s economy continues to grow; + Promote collaboration with other countries in BRI project
<p>Challenges</p>	<p>1. Diplomacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The political binding ties with China can increase dramatically + “Debt-Trap Diplomacy.” + SEZs: long-term land leases. + Maintaining sovereignty in the SCS <p>2. People-to-people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Vietnam could be exposed to major cultural and educational encroachment. + Pro-Chinese historical and current affairs myths have the potential to erode national identity. <p>3. Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Protecting sovereignty claims in SCS + China’s increased military presence in the SCS + Regional Arms Race <p>4. Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Successful economic control of capital infusion and cautious borrowing. + Increasing economic dependency on China. + Project economic feasibility. 	<p>1. Diplomacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + China may attempt to diplomatically isolate Vietnam, resulting in the loss of an opportunity to strengthen ties with other countries. <p>2. People-to-people</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Vietnam is unable to capitalize on China’s cultural, educational, scientific, and technological advantages. <p>3. Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + China’s military presence in the South China Sea is growing. <p>4. Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Lose opportunities for economic, trade, and investment cooperation by BRI. + Economic sanctions could be imposed on Vietnam by China 	<p>1. Diplomacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Faces political pressure to accept Chinese loans, building firms, and obsolete technologies, but restricts the risks <p>2. People-to-People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Fewer difficulties in combating China’s cultural and educational encroachment. <p>3. Security</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The strengthening of China’s military presence in the SCS. <p>4. Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Limits access to ample AIIB or SRF loans.

Source: created by author

CONCLUSION

This thesis takes a different perspective from previous works. By analyzing China's presence and the likely impacts of BRI on ASEAN in general and Vietnam in particular, with three alternative scenarios; maximum involvement, restricted participation, and not taking part in BRI in the future. It finds that Vietnam does not participate in BRI and has no consequences on Vietnam shortly. Centered on these debates and analysis, this thesis summarizes the results of China's potential impact on the countries of Vietnam under the three choices above, and at the same time, addresses the question of the influence of China in many Asian countries. Before making suggestions, the author has carefully researched the fundamental factors that can influence policy proposals, especially the Communist Party of Vietnam's policies in foreign relations and economic growth. The "Three No" security strategy and factors impact relations between Vietnam and China, including relations between the US and Vietnam, conflict in the South China Sea, and ASEAN.

Using the matrix scorecard, the author assessed the willingness to participate in the BRI of Southeast Asian countries. At the same time, the matrix scorecard also shows the fact that there is a deep divide between Southeast Asian countries in participating in BRI projects. As well, The BRI faces some real problems in Southeast Asia too. The economic cooperation between ASEAN and China has been met with apprehension if the funding can be available and sustainable as China's vision. Simultaneously, China's BRI must also confront its mistrust of other countries or their comparatively low influence on the region. Even though the Chinese government and Chinese companies try hard to represent as well as they can as their international affairs, much of their increasing influence has not taken place in Southeast Asian countries because many businesses in these foreign countries do not pursue the prescribed social responsibility. Sometimes, BRI is also constrained in upholding its obligations such as integrity and responsibility in the local sector. China's strong relationship with the leaders in the SEA countries has made locals distrust Chinese firms and make themselves vulnerable to the host country's political shifts. The lack of a positive image of Chinese investments in Southeast Asia has diminished the power of Beijing's political and geopolitical impact in the region. Most possibly, China will not see substantial changes in this field until it is willing to turn back the business-government network, make significant reforms in the country's infrastructural growth and grant companies more control.

For China, the Alliance of Southeast Asian Nations is a significant consideration in its policy for the South China Sea conflict. In comparison, because of the separation of ASEAN, Vietnam will lose an endorsement in SCS. The dilemma is that the conflict will become an even bigger issue shortly if it is not addressed with the signing of the COC between ASEAN and China. If the COC has not been signed, the Vietnamese people's benefits at SCS are still threatened.

Southeast Asian countries are considering extending their economic relationships by placing diplomatic pressure on China to steer them away from China and forming connections

with other nations in the hope of limiting the influence of Chinese strength. For instance, the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations are interested in deepening their economic ties, as well as obtaining benefits from the increased competition of international powers. Cambodia is one of China's strongest partners because of its pro-China stand on the South China Sea conflict. Cambodia did improve its strategic relationship with Japan in 2013 (Chheang, 2017). Via BRI-related policies, China's economic activity with other countries in the area, including Southeast Asia, will increase in the coming years.

Beijing's international economic performance is projected to decrease due to financial difficulties and the uncertainty of applying the BRI in regional countries. The BRI, on the other hand, has the potential to create a regional order in Southeast Asia led by China. China can also contribute and support much of Southeast Asia's investment and development programs through other popular activities. But the BRI has lifted the political and geopolitical interest of certain countries in the region to China and the plan has encouraged a counterbalance against China from other significant forces. Based on these two findings, it is possibly fair to suggest that Beijing might have made a strategic error in adopting the BRI and presenting it as an omnipotent policy instrument.

In the short term, China will change BRI to strengthen both credit institutions' activities and the global acceptability of global policies. China will continue supporting and propagating the One Belt, One Road's policy both domestically and internationally. They would improve economic and trade cooperation efficiency, particularly by encouraging investment in infrastructure projects in areas where they are needed most. China will concentrate on finishing tasks carried out within the initiative's context, taking this as a blueprint to draw interest from other countries.

China will be changing its strategy in a balanced fashion to respond to internal needs and the global uncertainties in the medium term. China will respond to its problems in the BRI initiative and evolving geopolitical threats that will arise due to the BRI initiative. China will also pursue ways to reduce the cynicism of developing countries about their influences, particularly regarding its economic-national sovereignty. Finally, they will prepare themselves for a massive BRI program that rests on the foundations of energy and infrastructure programs. Along with China's growing national synergy and power, China can find ways to exploit these favorable results to promote and foster the regional and international integration phase of the BRI plan. China would reinforce the relation with other countries by increasing its investment and trade with them, giving it more economic benefits and political power.

For China, the most potent argument is China's attempts to extend the "21st Century Maritime Silk Road" for strategic purposes. With the development of naval installations, China will become a top-mover within the world's maritime region within the next years. China aims to handle its naval expansion in the Pacific or the South China Sea by developing a commercial foothold in those regions. The ultimate aim is to have absolute dominance of the sea, air, space, and land for a complete and utter global conquest. The thesis realizes while Vietnam wants

infrastructure investment and Vietnam has paid many compliments to the BRI, Vietnam will behave very cautiously in using BRI funds. In Vietnam, the introduction of the BRI is expected to be slower than other countries.

Vietnam's participation in the BRI is likely to proceed. Vietnam should apply for pilot projects on certain BRI cases to better understand the benefits and drawbacks of BRI loans. The Vietnamese government, though, is reluctant to consider government-to-government loans due to increasing public debt. Instead, Vietnam will enable domestic private investors to apply for BRI loans, especially AIIB loans, if they build infrastructure projects under the BOT model. The new measure will restrict the political and economic implications of China's Belt and Road Initiative loans for Vietnam.

The effect the BRI would have on Vietnam's economy depends on the loans' economic terms and the companies participating in the ventures and provided technologies. Vietnam will closely track China-funded projects and other BRI-funded projects that are developed elsewhere. In other words, the problems China faces when it is concluding the first batch of BRI projects derive from the Chinese themselves. The most important thing is for the Chinese to understand that through the BRI, they need to make sure that the Chinese projects fulfill the Chinese and their beneficiaries' standards and that they also meet the international community's expectations.

The regional tensions between China and other countries, including the South China Sea, may affect Vietnam's view of the BRI and its role in it. If the conflict could become more severe and the bilateral relations become under more complicated circumstances, Vietnam will become more vulnerable to its political and strategic effects. By the same token, if a calm situation continues to get the two sides to go ahead with a resolution, such as the conclusion of COC, Vietnam would be more likely to accept the BRI.

There are several aspects that Vietnam and China would have to weigh in their future wars, including their influence factors. Some factors support and harm the relationship and several facets of the relationship. All these factors lead to its overall state of being. Considering the variables that can affect relations between Vietnam and Sino, the author suggests a set of policy recommendations to Vietnam based upon the three participatory choices.

The full engagement of Vietnam

As a partner in China's Belt and Road Initiative, Vietnam must have updated and detailed knowledge and review, predicting important trends and offering realistic solutions. To gain the benefits of BRI, Vietnam needs to speed up the transformation of the economy to allow Vietnam to take advantage of the opportunities and benefits that foreign direct investment will bring to Vietnam.

Any representatives of the Vietnamese community do not favor China's economic plans due to their high potential for damaging Vietnamese society and economy. Therefore, Vietnam needs to promote public and private seminars, official exchanges, and commercial marketing

to build awareness of the economy, which will, in turn, bring about the support of the people, with the private sector also participating keenly in the country's growth.

The more robust economic collaboration with China, the greater the need for Vietnam must strengthen its stability defense tasks and not be caught off balance. To compel China to seriously engage in the negotiated resolution of sovereignty disputes in the SCS, Vietnam needs to take advantage of collaboration and interwoven advantages from multilateral relations. Vietnam also needs to prioritize the creation of naval forces to deal with unilateral and hostile Chinese actions that could disrupt Vietnam and cause casualties.

In the ASEAN countries, big countries, and non-regional countries, Vietnam must improve its external economic ties, and there are several advantages in ensuring secure and sustainable economic growth. If the collaboration ventures of BRI crash, these gains will mitigate pressure and the seriousness of the effects.

When Vietnam doesn't engage in the BRI.

The BRI also will affect Vietnam's stability and interests if Vietnam does not participate. Therefore, Vietnam still must correctly define nature, predict China's intention, predict the effect and impact of BRI projects on Vietnam, and provide adequate solutions to deal with, particularly in the SCS issues.

Vietnam should foster regional and global economic inclusion and enhance multifaceted cooperation with ASEAN countries and major economies such as the US, India, Japan, Korea, the EU, and Russia to be not isolated by China. To draw the venture capital and science and technology of large countries, Vietnam needs to speed up economic restructuring and develop a transparent investment environment.

While Vietnam does not engage in the BRI, it still needs to improve its good neighborly relations, facilitate the extension of cooperation with China and persist in settling peaceful talks with other contested countries to settle conflicts over sovereignty in the SCS. China's purpose, as well as the repercussions and risks of the BRI, is a possible challenge to stability, consensus, the core position of ASEAN's regional structures, and ASEAN's capacity to respond to China's unilateral, unlawful, adventurous, and violent SCS actions. Therefore, Vietnam needs to encourage its active position in the ASEAN Community's development, thus preventing China from exploiting, dividing, and using ASEAN as an instrument to fulfill its ambitions.

Vietnam chooses to join China's BRI selectively

Vietnam also needs diligence and prompt identification of the intentions, measures, and vulnerabilities of Chinese ventures in the BRI if Vietnam has selective BRI involvement. Under the "The Silk Road Economic Belt," Vietnam should sign a small project to get a more in-depth evaluation of the effects and effect of BRI on crucial areas of Vietnam. Also, to draw valuable insights and lessons, Vietnam must study the success of BRI-funded initiatives in other countries and regions worldwide.

Financially, Vietnam should continue to work closely with other financial institutions worldwide to find a source of loans for its growth, thus preventing dependency on a single

partner. Foreign financial institutions, partners of the ODA, in particular Japan, European countries that still have a profound trade alliance with Vietnam, are the best outlets for Vietnam today.

Vietnam's strategic mission remains to be the protection of its sovereignty and interests in the SCS. Therefore, Vietnam must continue to enhance national defense stability and modern arms acquisition, especially for the marines and the air force, to reinforce international cooperation, sea safety, and maritime security.

In brief, policymaking is often complicated and requires versatility, so that the above recommendations are a guide only. Owing to the partnership's essence, under the context of this initiative, Vietnam would almost definitely engage in cooperation with China and maybe at a restricted level to sustain the relationship. Therefore, to provide enough remedies, Vietnam needs to plan diligently and guide the appropriate institutions to successfully execute and prevent unfortunate failures that may adversely affect Vietnam's national interests.

Suggestions for Possible Future Research

The author only analyzed the advantages and obstacles for Vietnam when engaging in the initiative across three scenarios within a short-term for, without analyzing the US aspect of Vietnam's cooperation with China.

Therefore, when Vietnam joins the BRI, a potential analysis might look at the significant impacts on the US and Vietnamese interactions. However, studying the impact of this initiative on Sino-US relations is another matter that needs to be explored. A review of the conflict in the South China Sea after ten years at the Chinese initiative is another important issue that can be analyzed.

In addition, the current COVID-19 pandemic will radically change world affairs and several countries' foreign policy goals. With the pandemic wreaking havoc on so many economies, it is impossible that the BRI will be able to take on its expensive and often divisive infrastructure and overcapacity transition mantle in its early stages. As a result, China is expected to redirect the HSR as a mainstay of the BRI in the coming years, stressing the BRI countries' healthcare infrastructure base alongside the already influential "Digital Silk Road". There should be more studies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on China's Belt and Road Initiative, especially more in-depth research on the impact of the Health Silk Road and China's Long-Running Health Diplomacy on Vietnam.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. TOP 10 LARGEST BRI PROJECT IN ASEAN

1	2017	Kuala Lumpur–Kota Bahru Rail (Construction)	14,300,000,000	Transport	Rails	Malaysia
2	2013	Preah Vihear–Kaoh Kong Railway	9,600,000,000	Transport	Rails	Cambodia
3	2017	Vanke, Hopu, Hillhouse, Bank of China	9,060,000,000	Logistics		Singapore
4	Unclear	Kyaukpyu Deep Sea Port (Construction)	7,300,000,000	Transport	Ports/shipping	Myanmar
5	2015	China General Nuclear	5,960,000,000	Energy		Malaysia
6	2016	Vientiane–Boten Railway Project	5,800,000,000	Transport	Rail	Laos
7	2017	Bangkok to Nakhon Ratchisima High-Speed Railway (Phase 1)	5,352,905,500	Transport	Rail	Thailand
8	2013	Zhejiang Hengyi	3,440,000,000	Energy	Oil	Brunei
9	2017	China Railway Engineering	3,190,000,000	Transport	Rail	Indonesia
10	2017	China Railway Construction, China Railway Engineering	2,690,000,000	Transport	Rail	Thailand
<i>Source: Oxford Economic - The Belt and Road Initiative in Southeast Asia by Jinny Yang (2018)</i>						

Appendix 2. BRI PROJECTS IN ASEAN FROM 2013-2018

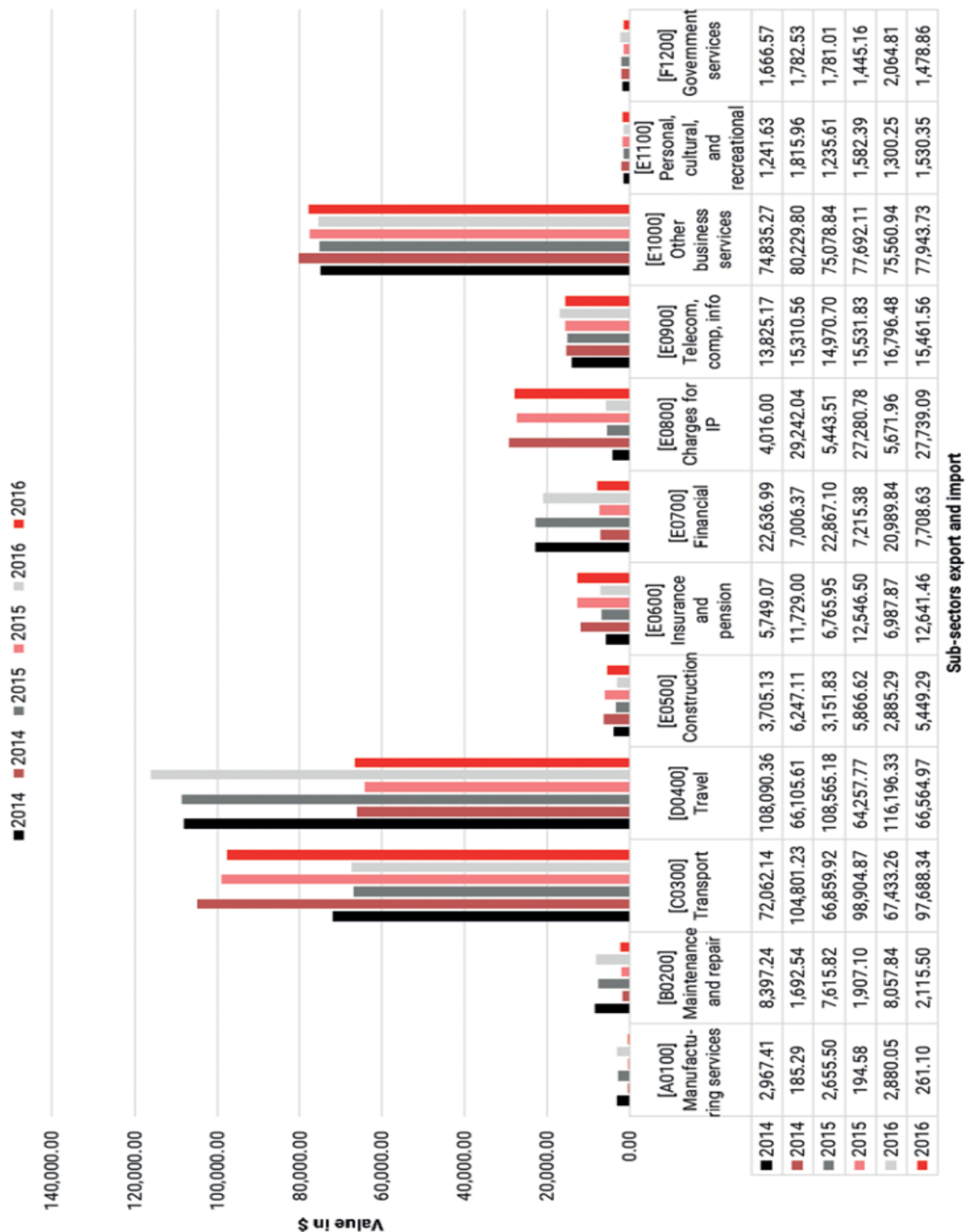
1	Bangkok–Nakhon Ratchasima (Ph. 1)	Railway	2017	2021	Thailand	539mn
2	Vientiane–Boten	Railway	2015	2012	Lao PRD	5.8bn
3	Cirebon–Kroya	Railway	2017	2019	Indonesia	105nm
4	NR 55	Road	2015		Cambodia	133mn
5	East Coast Rail Link	Railway	2017	2024	Malaysia	13.47bn
6	Gemas Johor Bharu Double Tracking	Railway	2016	2020	Malaysia	2.18bn
7	Melaka Gateway	Port	2014	2019	Malaysia	1.96bn
8	Muara Terminal	Port, refinery JV	NA	NA	Brunei	3.4bn
9	National Highway No. 5	Road	2013	2016	Cambodia	160mn
10	Phnom Penh–Sihanoukville Expressway	Road	2017	2020	Cambodia	1.9bn
11	Preah Vihear–Kaoh Kong Railway	Railway	2013	2017	Cambodia	9.6bn
12	KA Purukcahu–Bangkuang Railway, Central Kalimantan (PPP)	Railway	2018	2023	Indonesia	5.3bn
13	National Road 214	Road		Completed	Cambodia	117mn
14	Sumsel 5 Power Plant	Power		Completed	Indonesia	318mn
15	Jakarta–Bandung	Railway	2016	2019	Indonesia	5.5bn
16	Morowali Industrial Park	Industrial steel and power			Indonesia	1.6bn

17	Nam Ou Hydro	Power			Lao PDR	2.8bn
18	Phongxaly–Yunnan	Road			Lao PDR	910mn

*Source: Based on the data from the Center for Strategic and International Studies and Nikkei, Is China's Belt and Road Working? A progress report from eight countries Beijing's infrastructure push clouded by project delays and mounting debt, 28 March 2018 - **The Impact of BRI on Trade and Investment in ASEAN** by Sufian Jusoh (2018)*

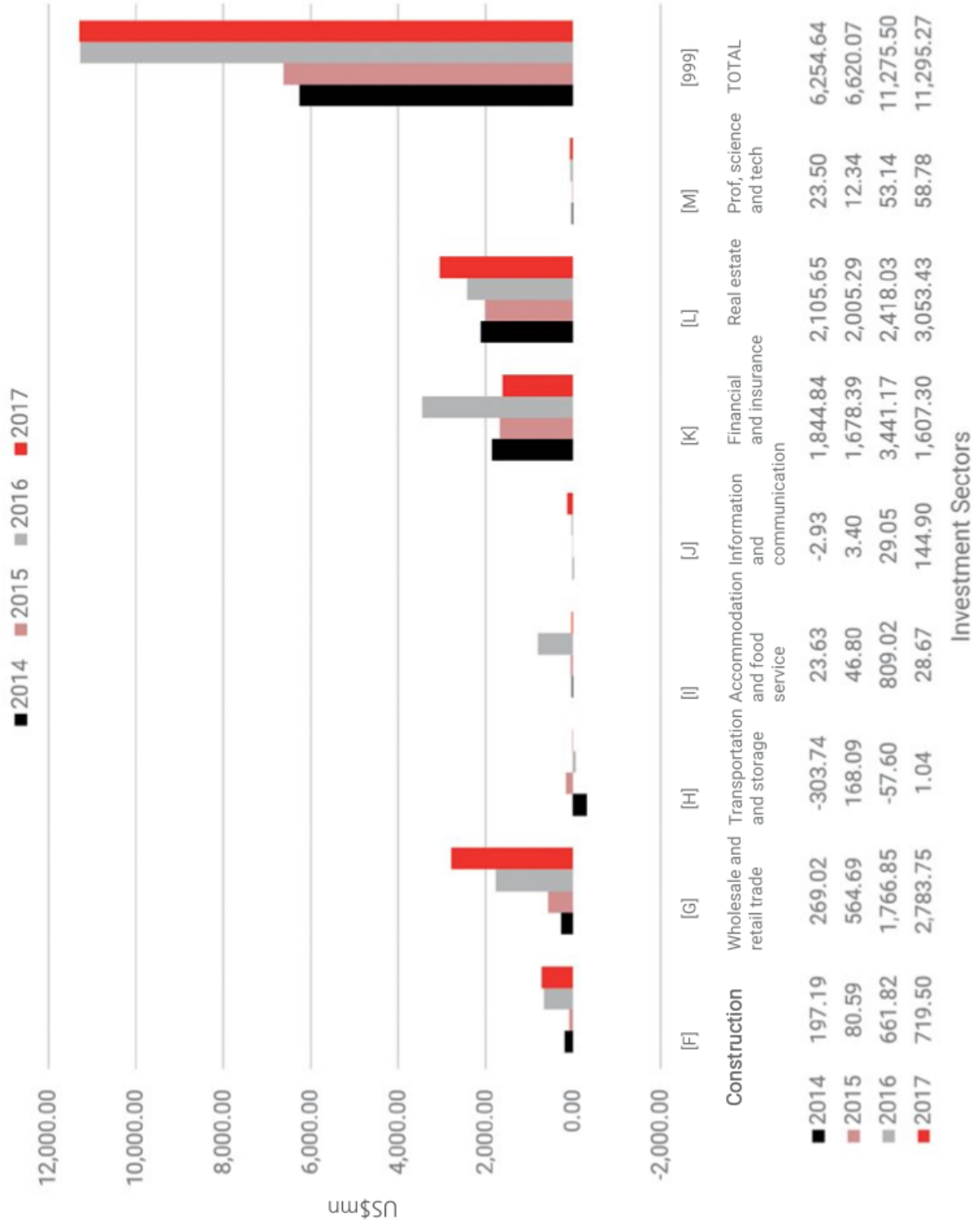
Appendix 3. ASEAN SELECTED SUB-SECTORS IN TRADE IN SERVICES, 2014–2016

Source: ASEAN Stats - The Impact of BRI on Trade and Investment in ASEAN by Sufian Jusoh (2018)



Appendix 4. CHINA FDI INFLOW INTO ASEAN FROM 2014-2017

Source: ASEAN Stats - The Impact of BRI on Trade and Investment in ASEAN by Sufian Jusoh (2018)



DECLARATION

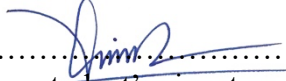
I, the undersigned NGUYEN KHANH DUY THINH aware of my criminal responsibility, I declare that the facts and figures contained in my dissertation correspond to reality and that it describes the results of my own independent work.

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