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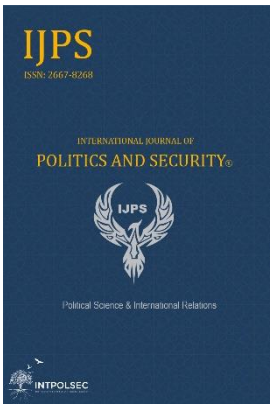

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Author(s) / Yazar(lar) : Necmettin MUTLU

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Digital Silk Road; Is it an Anti-Globalization Backlash? Is it Chinese-style Globalization?

Necmettin MUTLU*

Abstract

Digital activities of the Belt and Road initiative called the "digital Silk Road" in the post-COVID-19 outbreak era and initially introduced in 2015 as the "information Silk Road," have come under fire. Finding out whether China's technical improvement, which has become evident in many areas thanks to the Digital Belt and Road initiative project, is a backlash against globalization or a new wave of it done in a Chinese form is the main challenge of this study. Data centers—the backbone of the Belt and Road Initiative—undersea fiber optic cables, 5-G cellular data networks, and Turkish investments in these sectors have all been essential in this regard. This method explores China's technological development from the four modernization periods to the present through a chronological descriptive description. This study should be viewed as significantly contributing to the literature because it provides a system-level examination of the digital Belt and Road endeavor.

Keywords: *Anti-globalization, Belt and Road, China, Digital Silk Road, Globalisation*

1. Introduction

China's Techno-nationalist, internet balkanization (Splinternet), or the great internet firewall as it is called in the West, has its origins in the Chinese Economic Reform and Four Modernization projects initiated in 1978 under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. The foundations of the internet world which resembles a parallel universe that has become the Golden Shield project as it is called by China were laid in this period. In the field of technology competition, which is defined as techno-nationalism; It has been described as a war of tech titans. The phenomenon that put 8 large companies from China in the top 20 in the World Economic Forum ranking is not only the result of the Belt and Road initiative but also the policies initiated by China half a century ago. More specifically, it can be claimed that China's tech behemoths and social media platforms aren't alternatives; rather, they're part of a ground-breaking sequence that was started under the banners of agriculture, industry, national defense, science, and technology, also known as Deng Xiaoping theory. China's first project of the Internet in the West in the 1970s; The state strategy, the foundations of which were laid with the breakthrough move initiated in the years when the Arpanet was developed, is the breaking point. The free market economy has blended with socialism. Ancient teachings such as

* Dr., Political Science and Public Administration, Nişantaşı University, Istanbul/Türkiye, mutlunecmettin@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0001-5509-4380
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Confucianism have been reformatted by the Internet. With this integration, China has become a strong side of technology competition in the 21st century. China's protectionist projects are named by the West the Great Wall of China, with the Great Wall of China reminiscent of it. Behind the scenes, American politicians explain the internetworking project with information highways that dissolved the Soviets, in other words, Cold War metaphors. The Great Firewall, which is likened to the Great Wall of China, is a term first used in a network security magazine in the West. What is more important than the text in which the digital Silk Road was used for the first time is how it came to be.

China's chronological technical breakthrough adventure begins with the cultural revolution between 1966 and 1976, which Mao initiated against the social class he called the bureaucratic oligarchy. In fact, it is a result of the grand breakthrough plan that he initiated in the 1950s. In the grand breakthrough plan, the farmers were turned into collective cooperatives for the Soviet model of heavy industry development and steel production. As a result of the heavy and dramatic famine after the failure of this plan, Mao liquidated the new bureaucratic hierarchy including Soviet agronomists. Technical experts in the so-called Great Breakthrough Period were dismissed. The promotion and remuneration system, in which the subordinate-superior relationship prevails, has also been stopped. 15 million young intellectuals were sent back to their villages.[1] For example, disciplines such as Social Psychology, which had previously been banned under the nationalized doctrine, have also been included in the modernization process to treat the spiritual damage brought about by the crime, famine, and chaos of the cultural revolution.[2]

The four modernizations of Deng Xiaoping are not only a mechanical development but also a comprehensive plan that will treat the years of destruction of communism in the particular case of Stalinism. Xiaoping calls the period before him obsessed left. This plan wanted to turn China into an industrial giant by the 21st century. Bureaucrats, managers, and technical experts aimed at restructuring the industrial classes, the intellectuals, the peasants, and the army. The primary goal is to reshape the central role of bureaucrats, technical experts, and managers, especially those who had become centralized before and during the Cultural Revolution.

[1] Richard Baum, "A Political Perspective on China's Four Modernizations", *Columbia Journal of World Business* 14, no.2 (1979):33.
[2] C.C.Ching,"Psychology And The Four Modernizations in China", *International Journal of Psychology* 19, no.1-2 (1984):61.

Another goal is to spread the progress of technology and economy in the fields of science-technology, industry, agriculture, and defense. It is also the beginning of a difficult experiment in combining socialism with Chinese values and the market economy.[3] The riskiest aspect of this interesting experiment is the preservation of the long-standing traditions of the Politburo of the Communist Party of China with the transition to a market economy.

Because the internet is a project of development and advancement that is consistent with the values held in the four modernizations. In order to achieve this, China has developed a system regime for the Internet that will allow it to manage content producers, service providers, and the Chinese populace. Accordingly, the Golden Shield system, which has capabilities including keyword screening, content moderation, and website banning, was built in 2002 and 1.2 billion people from China were registered in it through the Ministry of Public Security in 2006. In China, where there are up to 800 million internet users and the use of VPNs is prohibited, the use of WhatsApp, Twitter, Google, and Facebook is also prohibited. Microblogging application Weibo, Messaging application WeChat, one of the oldest social networks, QQ Zone, such as the use of networks with similar features to popular Western social networks are common. China has successfully adapted its Confucianist traditions and other ancient cultural metaphors to the Internet. What all research on China and internet use have in common is the changes caused by China's adapted, idiosyncratic teachings at the system level.

Method

The main problem of this research is whether the Chinese technology progress, which has become visible in many different geographies with the digital Belt and Road initiative project, is an anti-globalization backlash or a new wave of globalization in the Chinese style. A descriptive research method was used in this study. In descriptive research, the data obtained through observation are classified and interpreted in a certain order and presented to the reader. A cause-and-effect relationship is established between facts and findings.[4] This method is used

[3] Victor Nee, "The Political and Social Bases of Chinea's Four Modernizations", *Columbia Journal of World Business*, no.14 (1979):28.
[4] Zeki Karataş, "Qualitative research methods in social sciences", *Journal of spiritual-based social service research*, no.1/1 (2015):70.

when phenomena are to be described directly. It combines data collection, analysis, and re-presentation techniques in an eclectic but plausible way.[5]

In this research, within this framework, the digital Silk Road phenomenon is reinterpreted in an eclectic way by analyzing the data. In this respect, the components of data centers, which form the backbone of the Belt and Road initiative, under-ocean fiber optic cables, and 5-G cellular data network investments carried out in many different continents and Turkey have been critical. In this direction, China's technological progress from the four modernization periods to the present day is examined through chronological descriptive depiction. This research should be considered an important contribution to the literature with its system-level examination of the digital Belt and Road initiative.

2. Chinese Style Globalization

2.1. Blending Technology and Local Culture

The five Confucian relationships—ruler-subject, father-son, brother-brother, husband-wife, and friend-friend—are known as Wu-Lun in China's economic, cultural, and interpersonal relationships, and they influence society. In China's economic, cultural, and individual relations, the five Confucian relations are known as Wu-Lun (ruler-subject, father-son, brother-brother, husband-wife, friend-friend) and shape society. Another element of the concept of guanxi is the concept of Mianzi (face-to-face). The concept of guanxi is based on reciprocity in interpersonal relationships. This concept, which reflects the understanding that the individual is for society, is the collective making of reciprocity. Miami, on the other hand, is the personal image that the individual has to protect to gain prestige in society. As we contribute to the collective spirit, mianzi (facial reputation, self-esteem) is gained. As Mianzi is gained, Guanxis, that is, social ties, are strengthened. In summary, Mianzi is one of the key concepts for the acquisition of roles in the social ties of the Chinese in terms of social status and fame. For example, having a girlfriend with more income than himself can reduce a man's Mianzi.[6]

When viewed in the framework of Confucianism, the social credit system in China presents an image that is easily adaptable to digital networks in comparison to other faiths and

[5] Margarete Sandelowski, "Whatever happened to qualitative description?." *Research in nursing & health* 23, no.4 (2000): 335.
[6] Liang-Hung Lin, “Cultural and Organizational Antecedents of Guanxi: The Chinese Cases”, *Journal of Business Ethics* 99, no.3 (2011):442.

forms of belief. There is no Confucianist barrier to the Chinese Communist Party being able to monitor labor interactions and familial ties in a digitally based network due to collectivism, networking, and collectivism. The relational infrastructure of Chinese society, protected by a golden shield since the introduction of the Internet into China, depicts a new value system in the form of digital guanxi and digital mianzi. These social practices have become concepts that shape every aspect of social life in China, albeit in almost different forms in every geography. It even reaches the dimensions where preliminary research is carried out as the issues to be considered when doing business in China in exports and the business world.

The Confucian Guanxi and Mianzi principles, which explain reputation and social trust, are the foundation of the Chinese social credit system. In order to adapt honest behavior to the economy, and especially to detect and prevent dishonest behavior that will harm the debt economy, it is the subject of applications; In 2007, it was first mentioned in the opinion of the Chinese Council of State. In the statement titled the opinion of the Council of State on the social credit system; It is recommended to urgently introduce the system to detect and prevent behaviors that will harm the collective economic structure by taking advantage of tax loopholes. Identifying practices that harm the socialist market economy, such as tax evasion, malicious loan borrowing, illegal fundraising, and commercial fraud, is a vital issue, according to China's Council of State. Because these are actually social problems, not financial ones, that damaged the foundations of the new era started with Deng Xiaoping, which instilled confidence and peace in society. While the social credit system is being built, its priorities should be determined in line with the four modernization theories. In the 2007 opinion of the Chinese Council of State, how to integrate credit scoring centers and credit records into the socialist market economy is explained concerning the role of communism in determining the social structure of the production and exchange of commodities. Accordingly; in the international financial system; social problems and economic paradoxes are arising from borrowing and gratuitous defaults. Credit and tax payments, contracts, product quality, and SME loans will be recorded. How to use the gold customs and gold finance systems, which are sub-components of the system that started with the Gold Shield project, are conveyed.

Chinese social credit system; An interesting historical threshold is not digitalization alone but essentially designed to control the banking credit system and the knowledge economy based on financial debt, who borrows how much, and how much they can pay. This; a kind of

mixture of communism and Confucianism that seeks to control the credit industry, the credit industry, the credit economy that is the social danger of commodity exchange; is digital Leninism. For this, real-time, identification number-based, information infrastructures should be established to detect dishonest economic behavior. These infrastructures must operate in partnership with credit institutions, collect corporate and personal information, and share it with all government agencies.[7] The social credit system, which was launched in China within this historical and economic framework, was put into effect in 2014 by a document of the State Council titled "Outlines of Planning for the Construction of the Social Credit System". The social credit system project will be fully implemented by 2025, according to Xi Jinping's declaration. The project's initial model includes red lists and black lists for reward and punishment systems. Every Chinese person's electronic ID card will display a score. A system will be implemented where the score can be raised, rewarded, dropped, and punished in accordance with the reward and punishment. The initial system, also known as sesame credit (Zhima Credit), was put into place by Alibaba Group in a shared data pool with Tencent and Baidou. It has been introduced as a system for calculating financial credit ratings, similar to the USA's FICO and Germany's Schufa. Shave has been transformed into a monitoring application that tracks social media activity.

Another implemented social credit system project is the Honest Shanghai practice, which is a practice published by the Shanghai government during Chinese Honesty Week. (Shanghai Honesty Application) It was implemented in Rongcheng, a district similar to the county status of Shandong Province. There are scoring statuses between 599-849-1050 points and scoring statuses coded with the letters A, B, C, and D. In another application; There are penalties such as job positions and loss of executive status. The practice in the Dengfeng district of Henan Province, where people who do not pay their debts are exposed on the city's LED screens and large signs, and penalties such as not being able to board an airplane or high-speed train are the most severe. The application of pedestrian crossing and facial recognition systems implemented in Shenzhen can also be shown as an example.[8] The Chinese government is also

[7] Official Website of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, State Council Opinions on Social Credit System, 2007, http://www.gov.cn/zwgk/2007-04/02/content_569314.htm, (08.04.2022).
[8] Larry Cata Backer, "Next Generation Law: Data Drıven Governance and Account Ability Based Regualtory Systems İn The West and Social Credıt Regımes In Chına", *Southern California Interdisciplinary Law Journal*, (2018): 143.

actively using biometric facial recognition systems, which it has introduced with pedestrian crossing systems. China, where the number of nationwide cameras is the highest in the world; According to Compareitech's 2019 data, it is the country with the most CCTV Cameras with 168 cameras per 1,000 people. By the end of 2023, one out of every two people is targeted to have a CCTV camera.[9]

Figure 1 A street sign in Rongcheng displaying exemplary citizens[10]

The social credit system, which China initially announced that it would implement to prevent malicious loan borrowings, has turned into a 'social credit system laboratory' where each province tests different practices. The basic Marxist dynamics in which the commodity exchange inherited from Mao's failed breakthrough determined the social structure shaped the view that financial misuse adversely affected collective functioning. The legacy of the Four Modernization Periods initiated by Deng Xiaoping in Science and Technology has made 'digital social life surveillance' a case in China, although it may seem like financial pursuit blended with Technology. China, which holds the leadership in adapting its industrial and financial infrastructures to Blockchain technology, has also launched a Blockchain-based unsecured loan application for SMEs in 2020. With over 800 million users, it has the world's heaviest internet user base. Because China has built a unique internet network with web networks it has built according to its own social and economic practices.[11]

[9] Paul Bizchoff, Surveillance camera statistics: which cities have the most CCTV cameras?, 2022, https://www.comparitech.com/vpn-privacy/the-worlds-most-surveilled-cities/, (09.04.2022)
[10] Sımına Mıstrenau, “Life Inside China’s Social Credit Laboratory”, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/04/03/life-inside-chinas-social-credit-laboratory/, (09.04.2022).
[11] Xinyuan Wang, Social Media in Industrial China, (University College London: UCL Press, 2016), 25.

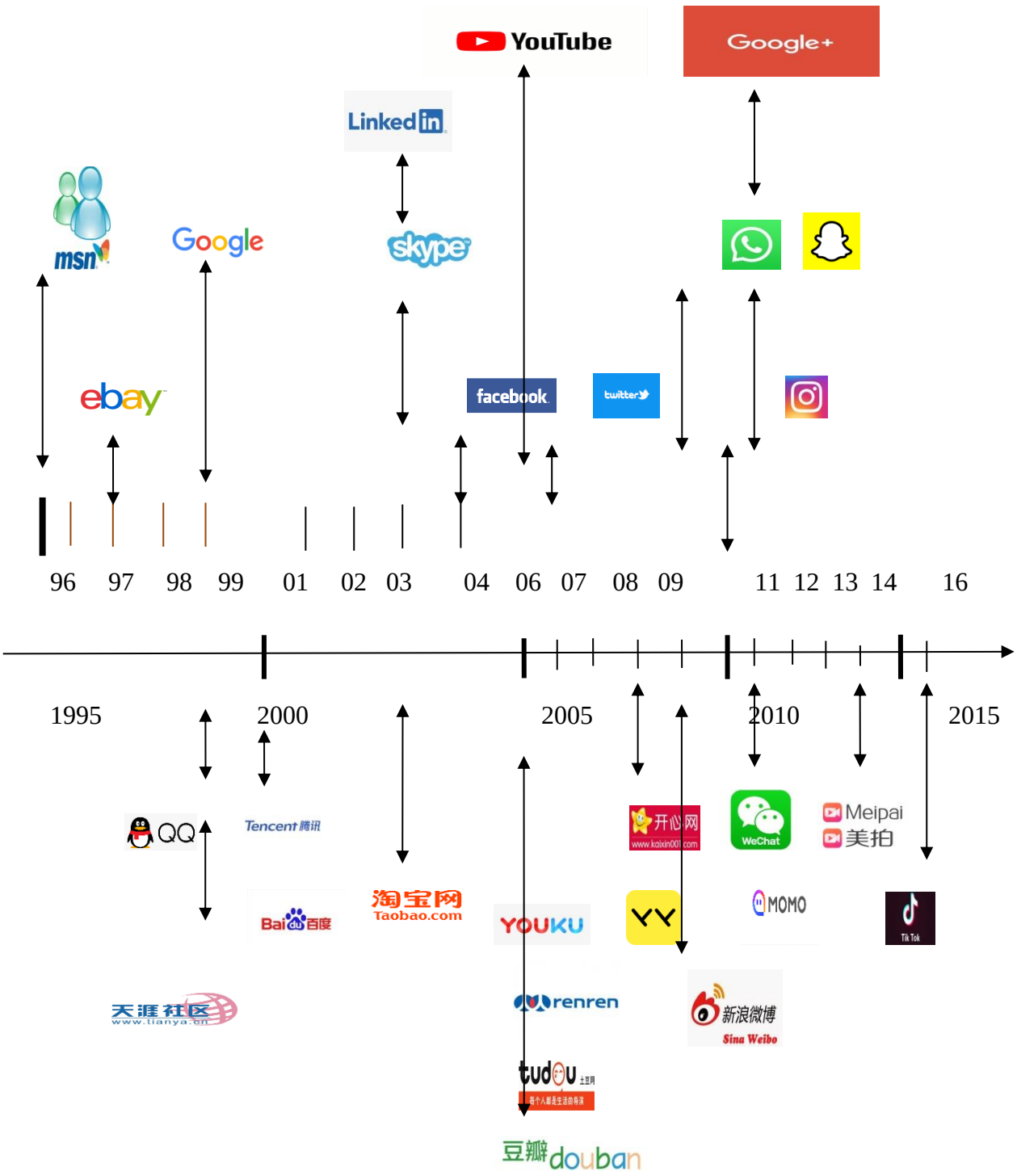

Table 1. Comparative timeline of social networks in China and the West [12]

[12] Ibid, 26.

The general opinion is that social networks and internet-based applications started and continue with applications that are heavily used in the West. But the fact that QQ, China's most used social network, launched 5 years before Facebook proves that the Chinese tech giants are not an alternative or another version of the West, but a parallel internet universe similar to balkanization. China, which started with four modernizations, has successfully applied its breakthrough strategy to social networks. Together with the great firewall (Golden Shield Project), it has tested the information technologies that will provide a data pool to the social credit system by combining it with Chinese culture. According to data from the China Internet Connection Information Center, there are 846 million mobile internet users in China as of 2019.[13] China has used the Internet as a tool in line with the goals of Four Modernizations and then Made China 2025, and has become the hub of fintech firms and new technology trends.[14]

China's national borders are carried out in Europe and other continents; surveillance and supervision activities based on the social network-based social credit system have led to accusations of technological fascism. With 5G technology, which requires higher bandwidth in shorter transmitter ranges than the US, China, and Huawei aim to listen to the world by placing a transmitter on almost every phone pole. The war of tech titans has taken on a new dimension that has led to the ban on Huawei and the TikTok app in the US. In this process, China performed brain surgery remotely. With the speed it offers, it presents 5G technology as a new communication ideology. 5G (Generation) technology, which is reported to be used in hologram technologies and hologram video calls, is a harbinger of new social habits. The 0G technology was used in 1946 when the first mobile radio was invented, as can be seen in the years when 3G was used in analog mobile phones in the 1990s; With new technology, new sociological and psychological habits emerged. China has reported that it is also working on 6G while 5G is still a topic of discussion. Steve Bannon, who adapted the Cambridge Analytics case to Trump's election campaign described China's technology moves as the biggest security threat and existential problem ever encountered. The release of the film "Claws of the Red Dragon" in 2019 reveals the latest dimension of technology competition.

[13] China Internet Connection Information Center Official Website, “Statistical Report on Internet Development in China”, 2019, https://cnnic.com.cn/IDR/ReportDownloads/201911/P020191112539794960687.pdf,(09.04.2022).
[14] Wang, Social Media, 34-35.

2.2. From the Four Modernizations to Techno-Nationalism

The globalization style exported by China described up to this chapter, is based on four modernization periods. This narrative inherited from this period will appear in another form in the next chapter.

The intensive internal migration due to the industrialization of the cities during the four modernization periods led to the formation of urban villages (ghettos). China's family registration system, hukou, and Xiaoping's one-child policy, which was particularly sensitive during the breakthrough period, limited the state's ability to monitor. The strategy of closing the gap in the level of development in the inner regions through the Internet will be conveyed in the second part and will emerge as state-supported private enterprise companies in Chinese globalization. The activities to close the development gap through the Internet have prepared the ground for trade wars outside China's borders. The most severe of the trade wars between the US and China was experienced by Tencent after Huawei and WeChat. In the era of Donald Trump, no practice with ties to Chinese companies has been given room to act. Information on common data and security protocols from companies associated with Tencent was collected during this period.[15]

Although it does not yet have a company that produces surveillance technologies such as "Hikvision" and a network that plans artificial intelligence and social credit systems such as "Senstime", it has managed to develop a global positioning system in Russia with the navigation system Glonass as an alternative to the GPS systems of Europe Galileo and America. China's Move in the Global Positioning System Unlike Russia's Glonass, the BeiDou navigation system occupies space in digital Silk Road writing. This is because BeiDou has become the second working system in the world after GPS. Forbes has announced Yandex as Russia's most valuable technology company. Alphabet (Google), Yandex, and Baidu are fighting the ongoing titans, as the World Economic Forum calls it; It is an issue related to China's techno-nationalist practices, which will be touched upon in the following section.

Data on the 20 most valuable technology companies, in particular, demonstrate how Techno-Nationalism, which has gained popularity in China, particularly in the Huawei-US

[15] Jorge Malena, "The Extension of the Digital Silk Road to Latin America: Advantages and Potential Risks." *Brazilian Center for International Relations*, (2021): 5.

trade wars, manifests itself not only in the field of digital communication technologies and the dominance of telecommunication networks, but also in many industries such as energy, transportation, tourism and lodging, and e-commerce. The biggest difference between China from Japan, which inspired the newly industrialized countries of the 1990s, is that it carries out its strategy in technological competition within the framework of a larger plan with a budget of 65 trillion dollars covering 55 countries; The "Made in China 2025" strategy, of which the New Silk Road project is a component, aims to be a leader in many sectors, including the pharmaceutical and automotive industry, robotics, IT, information technology, agricultural machinery. While countries in the world are moving to 5G at the speed of telecommunications as of 2020, China's announcement of 6G proves that its strategy in the Technology plan is much more aggressive. In the technology political literature, the concept of Techno-Nationalism is associated with China's aggressive policies in a technology competition. The U.S. response to China's shattering of the United States' decisive position in the world economy by successfully blending the four modernizations with digitalization must also be identified with techno-nationalism. Techno-nationalism was conceptually used by Robert Reich in 1987 to describe Japan's post-war breakthrough in consumer technology products. Richard Nelson, in his study of Japan, described this phenomenon in 1993 with the sentence "There is a soul of something called techno-nationalism in the air."

In the wake of this techno-nationalist adventure, more than a billion people have connected to the internet in China by June 2022. It is one-fifth of the total number of internet consumers in this world.[16] At this point, the critical point to be evaluated is that at least one-fifth of the internet users in the world are connected to the internet in a parallel network within the balkanization.

One of the important stages that China has reached in technology competition is undoubtedly the Belt and Road Initiative announced in 2013. The One Belt, One Road Initiative aims to connect Asia, Europe, and Africa along five routes. The Silk Road Economic Belt focuses on the following topics; (1) Connecting China to Europe via Central Asia and Russia; (2) Connecting China to the Middle East via Central Asia; and (3) bringing together China and Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Indian Ocean. The Maritime Silk Road focuses on using

[16] Number of internet users in China from 2012 to June 2022, 2022, https://www.statista.com/statistics/265140/number-of-internet-users-in-china/,(20.12.2022)

Chinese coastal ports to (4) connect China to Europe via the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean, and (5) connect China to the South Pacific Ocean via the South China Sea. Focusing on the five routes above, One Belt One Road will take advantage of international transport routes, as well as major cities and major ports, to further strengthen cooperation and build six international economic cooperation corridors. These are the New Eurasian Land Bridge, China-Mongolia-Russia, China-Central Asia-West Asia, China-Indochina Peninsula, China-Pakistan, and Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar. [17]In the past period, 195 management agreements have been signed between China and more than one hundred and sixty countries and international organizations, and the United Nations, the G20, and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) have been included in the Belt and Road Initiative. In addition to this stage reached in the Land and Sea Silk Road, the Digital Silk Road Initiative announced in 2015 has taken on a new shape in the Belt and Road literature. This new situation; information and communication technologies are changing the digital economy in China and its connection with it in the world. State-sponsored technology startups such as WeChat, JD.com, Taobao, and Alibaba have changed the way business is done in China. This phenomenon has changed the gap between rural and urban development within China and has allowed China to try this social and technological experiment with a new concept in undeveloped regions and geographies beyond borders. [18]

3. Digital Silk Road; Anti-Globalization Backlash

The digital Silk Road was first introduced as the 'Information Silk Road' in the 2015 official draft of the Belt and Road Initiative. [19] The Digital Silk Roads project, which was launched in 2001, and is an unusual UNESCO research project, was also carried out under the title of the ontology of caravanserais in Central Asia.[20] The question of what happened in the history of the Silk Road at the stage of commercialization is of interest to researchers. Because a similar Silk Road project of the USA was brought to the agenda during the Hillary Clinton period.

[17] European One Belt One Road Institute for Economic and Cultural Cooperation and Development, 2019, http://www.euobor.org/index.php?app=OBOR , (20.12.2022)
[18] Gong Sen et al.,The Digital Silk Road,31.
[19] Chih Yuan Woon, "'Provincialising'the Belt and Road Initiative: Theorising with Chinese narratives of the 'Digital Silk Road'(数字丝绸之路)." *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 62, no.3 (2021):288.
[20] Kinji Ono, et al. "Progress of the digital silk roads project." Progress in Informatics, (2005):94.

The economic and technological nationalism that emerged in technical breakthrough moves in different geographies of the world focused on digitalization, which became visible through the digital Silk Road after the Kovid 19 pandemic, brought along the anti-globalization backlash discussions. The uncontrolled growth of globalization has been cited as the reason for this new anti-globalization wave discussed at the World Economic Forum. It was stated that dependency should be increased to prevent the said technology nationalism. [21]

The research addressed on this axis employs numerous novel methodologies. Illiberalism is often used because it contains a critique of socialist modernization. However, the realpolitik of the digital belt and road enterprise cannot be explained by the conceptual boundaries of netpolitik. because realpolitik is opposed to conceptual explanations for netpolitik. As a result, unlike traditional politics, net politics, a new type of diplomacy, places more of an emphasis on unconventional topics like culture, identity, legitimacy, norms, and values. [22] It examines the consequences of digitization of the clear political Belt and Road initiative from a liberalization perspective. Before criticizing this perspective, it is important to determine whether the digital Silk Road is an anti-globalization rebound or a new wave of Chinese-style globalization. Because if globalization comes to an end, netpolitik or liberalism will no longer have a function.

In the fall of 2013, after Chinese President Xi Jinping announced the "Belt and Road" initiative together with the relevant countries, the initiative has been continuously enriched. In May 2017, Xi Jinping officially proposed the Digital Silk Road initiative at the first "Belt and Road" International Cooperation Summit Forum. The Digital Silk Road focuses on promoting the construction of big data, cloud computing, and smart cities by strengthening the cooperation of partner countries in leading fields such as digital economy, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, and quantum computers and jointly building a "community". It combines this goal with the following mission. “Build a shared destiny in cyberspace”.[23] China in cyberspace;

[21]World Economic Forum, Annual Meeting of New Champions, 2019, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/07/the-rise-of-techno-nationalism-and-the-paradox-at-its-core/, (14.12.2022)
[22]Bora Ly "Challenge and perspective for digital Silk road." *Cogent Business & Management*, no.18 (2020):3.
[23] Embracing the Future with the Digital Silk Road, 2022. http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/zw2018/ss/202209/t20220930_800308148.html, (17.12.2022)

It is involved in digital Silk Road initiative projects in 80 countries. It has invested a total of 79 billion dollars all over the world.[24]

With the emergence of the digital Silk Road initiative, China Made China revised its 2025 strategy with the aim of setting international standards, especially in technology products as well as internet governance and revealed a vision for 2035. Xi Jinping highlighted that with 15 more years of work, socialist modernization will be built on the foundation of a robust, wealthy middle class at the Chinese Communist Party Congress in 2017. Xi Jinping has demonstrated the goal of a digital China and a smart society to build on this foundation.[25]

3.1. The standards of the 4th industrial revolution; Surveillance and Inspection Practices

By referring to China's 4th industrial revolution, the ambition to set the standards of the new era has become visible. Digitalization-themed investments in developing or underdeveloped countries form the backbone of these ambitions. Because establishing the infrastructure will set the standards. China's lobbying activities in global standards organizations to achieve this goal have an important place in the literature.[26]It is normal for China to encounter many obstacles such as trade wars in its activities to set new standards for the 4th industrial revolution. China; It was re-elected in 2022 as one of the 48 members of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). China is emphasizing 5G standards in digitalization at every opportunity. The general secretary of ITU is Houlin Zhao, a Chinese citizen. Huawei will join the P2C digital coalition by 2022. [27] China is leading the efforts of developing countries to conduct net politics-based internet diplomacy by influencing and changing standards. He is the coordinator of the World Internet Conference held annually by the China Cyberspace Administration and Zhejiang Province. Chinese architecture Efforts to

[24] Cheney,China's Digital Silk Road,7.
[25] Full text of Xi Jinping's report at 19th CPC National Congress, 2017, https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/19thcpcnationalcongress/2017-11/04/content_34115212.htm,(11.12.2022)
[26] Henry Tugendhat and Julia Voo. "China's Digital Silk Road in Africa and the Future of Internet Governance", Working Paper, No. 2021/50, China Africa Research Initiative (CARI), School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC, (2021):7.
[27] Malena, The Extension of,6.

build the World Wide Web are in full swing. [28] All these are activities in line with the goal of internationalization of Chinese ICT companies on the information Silk Road.[29]

With China's digital Silk Road investments, new metaphors in the international order have not been delayed. Submarine fiber optic cables; submarine has been defined as the Great Wall of China. The satellite internet move has been described as the sky of the Great Wall of China. Even the digital cold war has been attributed. [30]Among these definitions, the most popular one was internet balkanization (splinternet). Accordingly, China's aggressive moves in the International Telecommunication Union, especially in setting international standards, may lead to parallel internet worlds or divided internet. [31] When the effects of technology on the security policies of countries described so far are evaluated, the first phenomenon to emerge will be the divided internet worlds caused by economic wars caused by technology products. The technological cold war is laying the groundwork for technological ecosystems, one driven by the Atlantic and the other by the Pacific. [32] After the Belt and Road initiative, in which Beijing built the infrastructure of international trade, the digital Silk Road moves to build the superstructure of trade; is read as the political intention to export its governance model. With this feature, the digital Silk Road is the soft power-based extension of the Belt and Road initiative. The fact that they were referred to as information highways in early policy documents justifies this view.[33]

The transmission of China's governance model to authoritarian regimes is the main worry voiced at the normative level. It will result in the emergence of a digitally-based, authoritarian new regime. This methodology forms the foundation of research looking at the digital Silk Road under the rubric of illiberalism. The concept of digital authoritarianism describes the use of surveillance technologies for social control. Chinese; It has successfully used the technological legacy it has acquired from the Golden Shield Project and four

[28] Cheney,China's Digital Silk Road,10.
[29] Grzegorz Stec. "The Invisible Silk Road: Enter the Digital Dragon." *European Institute for Asian Studies*, (2018):1630.
[30] World Strategic Insights, Opinion; The Rise of the Digital Cold War, 2022, https://wgi.world/the-rise-of-the-digital-cold-war/, (22.12.2022)
[31] Christiane Heidbrink and Conrad Becker. "Framing the Digital Silk Road's (De) Securitisation." *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, (2022): 5.
[32] Cheney,China's Digital Silk Road,6.
[33] Rebecca Arcesati, The Digital Silk Road is a development issue, Mercator Institute of Chinese Studies,2020, https://merics.org/en/short-analysis/digital-silk-road-development-issue, (14.12.2022)

modernization periods before that, in surveillance technologies. According to some views, there is no other way for China to control its 1.4 billion population. Whichever way one looks at it, the use of the emerging model in 3rd world countries via the digital Silk Road is the first step in an illiberal world. [34]It is now known all over the world how digital surveillance technologies deepen the asymmetric domination between the rulers and the ruled.[35] For example, the provisions of the national intelligence law that China put into effect in 2017, have caused discussions that state-sponsored technology companies have defined intelligence-gathering powers in transnational geographies. The accusations that Alibaba was involved in espionage activities occupied the agenda for a long time. [36]

For this reason, skeptical approaches have pointed out that the digital Silk Road may be the most functional intelligence-gathering network in history.[37] The influence of Chinese intelligence agencies on state-sponsored technology companies and executives is clear. For example; Claims that Alibaba CEO Jack MA may step down is an example of this situation.[38] The allegations that the network of data centers established in Ethiopia transferred the data that should remain confidential on the network to China were also reported in the media. China's ZTE company has data center investments at strategic points in Africa.[39] At this point, what needs to be understood and analyzed is the question of whether China is testing the order it has established within its borders in the geopolitical power centers in the international system. It is critical to understand whether there is a parallel wave of globalization, not an alternative to the West, but a new style of globalization, which is illiberal, aims at surveillance and control and uses digital tools without being dependent on Western domination. One of the most obvious examples of the post-modern globalization style parallel to the West has been experienced in the International Telecommunication Union. China; proposed to change the TCP/IP protocol, that is, the protocol for connecting to the Internet starting with "www". If the resolution of the

[34] Cheney,China's Digital Silk Road,20.
[35] Gong Sen vd., "The Belt and Road Initiative and the SDGs: Towards Equitable, *Sustainable Development* 50, no.4 (2019): 29.
[36] China Embassy Official Website, Statement by the Spokesperson of the Embassy of China in Belgium on "Suspected Alibaba Project Involvement in Espionage, 2021, http://be.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/sghd/202105/t20210508_8977600.htm , (24.12.2022)
[37] Ngeow Chow-Bing, "China-ASEAN İnformation Harbor: The Digital Silk Road From Guangxi to Southeast Asia", Report, Published Research (Fnedrıch Ebert Stıftung, 2021).
[38] Cheney,China's Digital Silk Road,15.
[39] Malena,The Extension of,8.

disputes on the authority to change the TCP/IP protocol is decided at the ITU, it does not seem difficult to predict the new situations that the new internet protocol will bring.[40]

These other aspects justify doubts about the digital Silk Road. Considering the chain of events discussed for years as a data scandal with the use of the data of approximately 50 million people in the Cambridge Analytica data scandal that shook the West and the whole world deeply; It can be said that Chinese practices use and contain this many times over. Who will shape this large-scale data pool and data sharing policies and according to what standards will be the main discussion topic in the coming years? The digital Silk Road carries great risks with great opportunities.[41] It is an empirical matter of how these post-digitalization practices, which China is testing at its national borders for control over its population, will be welcomed and shaped by the rest of the world.[42] In the digital belt and itinerary program carried out with 19 countries and 7 international organizations in 2016, the goal of "forming climate and security policies by using big data in world observations" was determined. Accordingly, centers of excellence are planned to be established in order to increase agricultural productivity in developing countries, to share the regional effects of climate change through sustainable governance, and to reduce technical differences. [43] In addition, in the digital Silk Road program; working groups named "DBAR big world data (DBAR-DATA), Agriculture and Food Security (DBAR-AGRI), Coastal Region (DBAR-COAST), Environmental Change (DBAR-ENVI), Natural and Cultural Heritage" have been established.[44] In international e-commerce, the transnational transfer of Chinese capital surplus is the main activity. China Minmetals Corporation and Alibaba announced their joint e-commerce platform project for this purpose, in 2015, for the surplus steel supply in China. [45]

[40] Henry Tugendhat vd.,China's Digital Silk Road in Africa and the Future of Internet Governance, *China Africa Research Initiative* (CARI), (2021): 6.
[41] Grzegorz Stec. "The Invisible Silk Road: Enter the Digital Dragon." *European Institute for Asian Studies* (2018):5.
[42] Cheney,"China's Digital Silk Road",5.
[43] Guo Huadong, "Steps to the digital Silk Road." 30.01.2018, https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-01303-y, (25.12.2022)
[44] Guo Huadong vd., DBAR–An international science program for the digital belt and road. *Bulletin of the Chinese Academy of Sciences*, (2018):175.
[45]Minmetals Development is investigated for 'concentration of business undertakings, Global Times, 2021, https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202104/1221480.shtml , (14.12.2022)

3.2. Borrowing a Boat Out to Sea

The phrase "borrowing the boat while sailing" is used to describe Chinese state-sponsored private equity enterprises. While companies grow with government loans, it helps to absorb industrial surplus capacity in the international arena.[46] The Internet Plus plan is one of the strategies put forward with this mission. Internet + is a reform strategy with clear objectives and incentives for the growth of widespread innovation and entrepreneurship in China. The plan places a particular emphasis on e-commerce. E-commerce is actual commerce in the current world, not only virtual commerce. One of these specific objectives is the growth of new sectors inside the e-commerce ecosystem. Accordingly, streamlining e-commerce management, combining supervision and delegation, optimizing services, promoting commercial initiatives, and mass innovation is the ultimate goal. New industrial modes will be integrated, including mass entrepreneurship and innovation, manufacturing, agriculture, energy, finance, and utilities, in the logistics, e-commerce, traffic, biology, and artificial intelligence sectors. [47] Alibaba data centers' cloud product regions and network nodes appear to be quite similar to the theoretical organizational structure described in the Internet Plus action plan. [48] Ali Baba's data storage centers in the Middle East, Indonesia, Asia, and Europe aim to serve different infrastructures for the digital Silk Road. China has made legal arrangements to localize data on the digital Silk Road and store it within the borders it belongs to. China's data localization strategy facilitates lobbying on privacy and surveillance debates at the borders where data belongs. In addition, it also provides know-how to identify critical technologies.[49]

The traditional strategy of Chinese companies, inherited from the Belt and Road initiative, is to enter the target market through local partnerships and gradually settle down after the transfer of technical knowledge. Alibaba's cross-border partnerships are the most successful example of Chinese state-backed private businesses opening up to the world through such flexible partnerships. The model applied by Chinese-style globalization at this point is the export of the Chinese internet to the target market with the unique dynamics of each market.

[46]Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga ve Michael S. Chase, Borrowing a Boat Out to Sea
The Chinese Military's Use of Social Media for Influence Operations, 2019,
https://www.rand.org/pubs/external_publications/EP68633.html , (14.12.2022)
[47] The State Councıl The Peoples Republıc Of Chına, Internet Plus: A driving force of China's, 2015, Economy,
https://english.www.gov.cn/premier/news/2015/08/08/content_281475163721541.htm, (14.12.2022)
[48] Alibaba Cloud's Global Infrastructure, https://www.alibabacloud.com/tr/global-locations , (10.12.2022)
[49] Cheney, "China's Digital Silk Road", 22.

China builds partnerships with different strategies according to the region and then shapes local investments. How local dynamics will assimilate and shape this technology export will be the subject of future research.[50]

The opposition to Huawei-based Chinese technologies, which started with harsh sanctions on China in the Donald Trump era and increased in severity with the Covid 19 pandemic period, has made visible the outlines of technological clustering and opposition between the West and the countries influenced by China. The investments initiated by the European Union in Africa with the Global Gateway project, similar to the Belt and Road initiative, seem to have increased the EU-China competition in Africa. It can be understood from the Build Back Better project of the G-20 countries brought up under the Joe Biden administration that the US wants the power centers to project their Belt and Road initiatives. Through this, it wants new areas of competition to emerge in parallel with the Belt and Road initiative. In particular, the digital investments of the Global Gateway project are reminiscent of the digital Silk Road. Alibaba, Tencent, Baidu, Huawei, China Mobile, China Telecom, and China Unicom's utilization of state subsidies within the scope of the digital Silk Road will be shaped by this axis.[51]

This viewpoint is supported, for instance, by what transpired between the UK and Huawei following the US sanctions. A center in the UK determines if Huawei technology presents a security concern. [52] The UK-Huawei relations, which have been quite volatile, have also been the subject of a parliamentary investigation. The British parliament has ruled that Huawei has covert relations with China. In addition, two Chinese CCTV companies, Hikvision and Dahua, have banned the sale of their camera equipment in the UK in 2022.

In Malaysia, duty-free goods exports are being tested in the digital trade-free zone established in partnership with Alibaba. In this project, Alibaba serves as a laboratory where the logistics processes of the electronic world trade platform established under the leadership of Alibaba are tested. [53]Türk Telekom is also included in the consortium of the SeaMeWe-5 subsea fiber optic cable project connecting Southeast Asia and Western Europe. This route

[50] Nargıs Kassenova and Brendan Duprey, "Digital Silk Road in Central Asia: Present and future." *Davis: Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies*, (2021):7.
[51] Paul Triolo vd., "The Digital Silk Road: Expanding China's Digital Footprint." *Eurasia Group*, no.8 (2020):1.
[52] Cheney,"China's Digital Silk Road"3.
[53] Stec, "The Invisible Silk Road", 5.

starts from Singapore and proceeds to the Arabian Peninsula, from where it extends through the Red Sea and the Mediterranean to the western coast of Turkey and Marseille. [54]It is stated that the undersea fiber optic investments are preliminary for the BeiDou-2 global navigation system, which aims to have more than 30 satellites. [55]In China, state-backed private equity enterprises have begun to position themselves as suppliers of the fiber optic cable industry. Along with large-scale investments, SMEs have developed that are looking for opportunities for special financing conditions. In other words, in accordance with China's long-standing strategy, foreign investment has triggered domestic investment. [56] Perhaps the most important in foreign investments is the Beidou navigation network, which was developed as an alternative to the global positioning system (GPS).[57] Beidou's involvement in the construction of smart cities such as Smart Dubai and NEOM also provides an important know-how transfer to Chinese companies.[58] As a result of these digitalization investments, optimistic opinions express that the era of globalization 3.0 has begun. According to this idea, the historical Silk Road is the first version of globalization. The Western world started globalization 2.0 with what it learned from the historical Silk Road. The globalization 3.0 period will be initiated by the digital Silk Road initiative carried out by the Belt and Road initiative with internet technologies.

Alibaba's global e-commerce platforms initiative appears to have taken action to achieve its globalization 3.0 goal. E-WTP has 10 cooperation partnerships in 7 countries, including Belgium, China, Ethiopia, Malaysia, Rwanda, Mexico, and Thailand. Capacity building and technology cooperation activities are carried out with a global trade network, global logistics network, global financial services network, and global public services platform. [59]

Huawei's open data lab in Thailand is among the key strategic investments.[60] Huawei also has investments in Myanmar. It is noteworthy that Huawei's regional investments are in countries where China has border problems. Considering that the digital Silk Road includes

[54] SEA-ME-WE 5 Project, https://seamewe5.com/ , (20.11.2022)
[55] Gong Sen, vd.,"The Belt and Road Initiative and the SDGs: Towards Equitable, Sustainable Development." (2019): 11.
[56] Cheney,"China's Digital Silk Road" ,7.
[57] Beidou Navigation Sattelite System, http://en.beidou.gov.cn/ , (08.12.2022)
[58] Sen, vd.,"The Belt and Road Initiative,11.
[59] Electronic World Trade Platforum, https://www.ewtp.org/ , (07.12.2022)
[60] Huawei's Open Lab Bangkok inaugurated to support digital transformation and the "Thailand 4.0" scheme Launched with more than 40 international and local partners , 2017, https://www.huawei.com/en/news/2017/6/OpenLab-Bangkok-Thailand4 , (08.12.2022)

information and communication technology infrastructure, it can be stated that Huawei's investments in regions with regional risks carry surveillance risks. Huawei has investments in strategic regions not only in Asia but also in Africa. [61] One of these strategic activities is the World Internet Conference. The World Internet conference, which started in Wuzhen and has become traditional, is carried out with the theme of Developing an Economy and Building a Joint Future Community in Cyberspace. At the meeting held in 2017, Turkey, Serbia, and Thailand were given special importance in e-commerce. [62] In this meeting, many countries, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia, approved the Digital Silk Road concept and accepted the cooperation. [63] This meeting was shaped by the emphasis on the digital economy and China's data policies. Politburo standing committee member Wang Huning's speech emphasizes China's commitment to common data sharing (the importance of data in the digital economy) and its willingness to set international standards through governance. [64] Data is seen as the breaking point of the digital Silk Road. In addition to paper, printing, gunpowder, and the compass, known as the four great inventions in China's innovation history, the emphasis that the great invention of the modern Silk Road is "data" is the most critical of all the determinations made about digital silk. The production of policies that will extract the great discoveries of the 21st century from Data is China's most remarkable strategy.[65]

China's name for this strategy is state-centered internet governance. China is the country that uses internet data most successfully in surveillance applications. Only in this way can China's willingness to set international standards at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) be understood. [66] The test and improvement site of surveillance technologies in Central Asia has emerged in safe city production projects. The command center for facial recognition technologies opened in Kyrgyzstan is one of them. The Bishkek Safe City Project and the Uzbekistan traffic cameras monitoring system project are the main projects. Hikvision, which offers the ability to

[61] Stec, "The Invisible Silk Road",4.
[62] World Internet Conference, 4th World Internet Conference, 2017, https://www.wuzhenwic.org/2017-11/09/c_106973.htm , 14.12.2022.
[63] Kwok-Chiu Fung,vd., "Digital silk road, Silicon Valley and connectivity." *Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies* 16, no.3 (2018): 313.
[64] Graham Webster vd., Wang Huning's Speech at the 4th World Internet Conference in Wuzhen, 2017, https://digichina.stanford.edu/work/wang-hunings-speech-at-the-4th-world-internet-conference-in-wuzhen/ , (14.12.2022)
[65] Fung vd., "Digital silk road",314.
[66] Kassenova and Duprey. "Digital Silk Road",7.

distinguish the faces of Uyghur Turks as a technological capability in the international arena, also provides a camera supply to Kazakhstan.[67] One of the pilot programs for the export of surveillance technologies to the 3rd world is the Ecuador project. [68] In the Ecu 911 integrated security service project, unmanned aerial vehicles, night and day vision cameras, and changeable cameras were used to establish a public security surveillance network. The discourse that the digital Silk Road affects authoritarian governments with the export of surveillance technologies is clarified by these projects. [69]

Because, as demonstrated by Zambia, China encourages both direct investments and investment finance.[70]Through investment financing, China successfully fills the gap in the telecommunications sector in infrastructure equipment in developing countries with 5-G networks. [71] Dijital ipek yolu büyük veri platformunda salgın ve afet yönetiminin mekânsal veri analiziyle yönetimi amaçlanır. Bu hedef ancak 5-G yatırımlarıyla mümkün olabilir. Birleşmiş Milletler Sürdürülebilir kalkınma hedeflerine ulaşmak için verinin paylaşımı yalnızca zenginliğin paylaşımı için kullanılmayacaktır. Veriyi elinde bulunduran bununla nüfuz ve hegemonyanın yollarını arayacaktır.[72] As a matter of fact, according to the submarine cable map project, which tracks 530 active underwater fiber optic cables as of 2022, more than 1.3 million km of fiber optic cables have been laid on the ocean floors. The largest investors in networks funded by consortiums of telecom operators are Google, Amazon, Facebook and Microsoft.[73]

China has more than 20 fiber cable connection projects. The fiber optic connection project that will provide the connection between Pakistan and Djibouti is ongoing. In addition, agreements are being executed by China for fiber connectivity in Guinea, Belize, and the Solomon Islands on the African continent. [74]

[67] Bradley Jardine, China's Surveillance State Has Eyes on Central Asia, 2019, https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/11/15/huawei-xinjiang-kazakhstan-uzbekistan-china-surveillance-state-eyes-central-asia/ , (14.12.2022)
[68] Drones ECU 911, https://www.ecu911.gob.ec/drones-ecu-911/ , (14.12.2022)
[69] Triolo vd., "The Digital Silk Road",3.
[70] Tugendhat vd.,"China's Digital Silk Road,5.
[71] Malena, "The Extension of the Digital", 2.
[72] DBAR Big Earth Data Analysis and Decision Support System, http://www.opendbar.cn/ , (14.12.2022)
[73] Submarine Cable Map Project, https://www.submarinecablemap.com/,(14.12.2022)
[74] Cheney,"China's Digital Silk Road",13.

China-owned IT companies that build fiber optic cable networks have the power to control data traffic. This is the main reason for the US-China technology products tension. China protects this data in its centers across the border with the discourse of protecting it from intelligence interference through projects such as Alibaba data centers. Data centers are important 3rd components in addition to fiber optic cable and 5-G. China, which handles the installation and production of fiber optic cable networks, can route data traffic as desired. The information, data, or intelligence gathering activities of the digital silk road, which is formulated under 3 important headings: cell network, data centers, and fiber optic cable network, will occupy the agenda of security policies to a significant extent.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

China has expressed at every opportunity that the ultimate destination it wants to reach is not to change the existing global order in a way that leads to a new hegemony. However, China implies the opposite, with activities that export its model of governance. Data control through the Digital Silk Road is one of the most important factors that will affect the results of this policy. Three main components; data centers, fiber optic cables, and the 5-G network are carriers of this policy The importance of information-gathering technologies in military superiority is increasing. The BeiDou satellite navigation system will enhance China's military and intelligence capabilities. As a matter of fact, China has shown resistance to Elon Musk in the use of satellite internet, which has come to the agenda due to the Russia-Ukraine war. The Starlink satellite internet, which was actively used in Iranian demonstrations, could not be used in China. The introduction of satellite systems, artificial intelligence, and quantum technologies into the focus of the digital Silk Road is the basis of China's claim to become a world leader.

The same collaboration approach that China has been using with its Belt and Road initiative projects is being used in digital commerce. Local businesses are partnered for this reason, and advanced collaborations are created when the local culture is observed. This is demonstrated by the fact that the biggest technology firms in China are digital trading firms. The postal telegraph organization in Turkey should be restructured with this model as an old and deep-rooted institution. E-commerce will be at the center of data-centric power struggles. China puts e-commerce at the center of practices that encourage innovation. Because e-commerce facilitates the discovery of new markets in new regions. The desire to expand e-commerce-free zones and mobile payment systems to developing countries should be evaluated

in this context. In addition, this strategy ensures the expansion of the Chinese national currency. The most important development trap of the digital Silk Road is the risk of using digital technologies, that is, data, for surveillance and supervision purposes. How the experiences experienced during the zero COVID policy in China will be shaped in the remaining countries will directly affect human development. Unlike income, digital applications that reinforce social and political inequalities carry risks. However, fiber optic ocean cables and 5-G networks can be a serious opportunity for developing countries to connect to the Internet and close the physical infrastructure gap. However, at this point, the potential effects of debt trap diplomacy should be considered by countries. In addition, internet balkanization will be one of the main discussions of the future. It is also important to how the historical Silk Road will be carried to the rope. In the digital Silk Road, it is important how the data will be transported and in whose hands it will be stored. Whoever holds the data, as well as stores and processes it, will be more important than the transporter.

China's interest in storing data, which is expressed as the fifth great invention after the paper printing press gunpowder, and the compass, stems from this. Confucianism in social values The practices based on digital Leninism in the financial order are the main elements of socialist modernization. With this viewpoint, a new process is emerging in which China transforms the advantages of globalization and digitalization into globalization in the Chinese way. Economic nationalism, vaccine nationalism, and food nationalism emerging in the post-COVID-19 era after technological nationalism show that the anti-globalization backlash will gradually increase. Chinese-style globalization gives important clues for progress at this point. The most important lesson to be learned from this process is not to follow China-style globalization but to turn the anti-globalization backlash into an opportunity by examining China's consistent practices within itself. This opportunity will be for each country to build its globalization with its model.

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