

# The New Silk Road and the “Idea of the University”

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## 18.1 Introduction

Various authors (Hayhoe and Liu 2011; Kirby 2014; Deng 2016; Yang 2017; Huang 2018; Marginson 2018) have investigated the changing mission of the Chinese university. The argument has been that China is moving from an inward-oriented approach focused on (re-)building its higher education system and developing its knowledge economy to a more outward and more global orientation. Different instruments have been used to fulfill this goal: student mobility, joint research and teaching programs, the Confucian Institutes, and international development aid (van der Wende and Zhu 2016; Kirby and van der Wende 2019; Wu 2019) (see also Chapter 3 by van der Wende in this volume).

In 2013, the Chinese government announced a new plan for the country’s global ambitions, “the Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI), the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Twenty-first Century Maritime Silk Road, or B&R (Qin et al. 2017). This marks the beginning of new approaches to internationalization in higher education (Van der Wende and Zhu 2016).

The 2013 plan continues the goal of putting Chinese universities on the global map of higher education (see the introductory Chapter 1 for details). In this process, public policy, strategy, the changing contract with society, and the overall role of the university as well as underlying values have been subject to continuous shifts toward a more globally visible direction. This chapter investigates this development in more detail and for certain fields of study. First, we present the relevant theoretical approaches and the different models for the university.

## 18.2 Theoretical Background

In line with Olsen (2007), we expect that the university is involved in the dynamics of change and follows the institutional logic of system steering. China’s rise both domestically and globally has the potential to transform its institutional identity,

raising questions about the university's long-term pact with society (i.e., its social contract). While the university as an institution has its own constitutive rules and practices, which can be relatively resilient to changing external circumstances, the university can also be seen as an instrument for achieving predetermined preferences and interests. From such instrumental perspective, the university is involved in a set of social, political, and economic contracts. Olsen presents four visions (ideas or models with respective values and norms) of the university (2005, 9). These are: (1) the university as a self-governing community of scholars, (2) as a representative democracy, (3) the university as an instrument for national political agendas, and (4) as a service enterprise embedded in competitive markets. Olsen (2007, 7) argues that universities face “institutional imperialism” in the sense that its structures, values, and beliefs are challenged and the right institutional forms of governance, accountability, and value for society are sought after. We argue this situation could easily be applied to Chinese universities.

## The Idea of the University and its Social Contract

The role of higher education in society has been interpreted differently in different periods and regions or countries in the world. In the nineteenth century, Cardinal Newman coined “The idea of a University” for England (1852), arguing in favor of a focus on training responsible citizens whose intellectual and emotional background would contribute to the smooth evolution of society as a whole and should not engage in research. In the early nineteenth century and after the revolution, France saw the recreation of universities like Sorbonne and especially the establishment of the *Grandes Écoles* by Napoleon, who put great emphasis on their role in training for professions crucial for serving the state, such as administration, engineering, and the military. French universities were state-dominated with very weak leadership or organizational capacity. Governance in the French system has focused on disciplines and professors. The academics did not identify with the institution but rather with their disciplines. The organization of the university was not seen as an entity. Recent reforms try to revoke the university as an organizational actor driven by the objective to compete globally (Musselin 2018).

This is in contrast with Germany where Wilhelm von Humboldt founded the modern ideal of the German university in 1809—opened in 1810 as the “*Universität zu Berlin*” and named after him in 1949, based on the ideas of enlightenment of freedom and citizenship. He defined the teaching role of the German university solidly in relation to its research mission. This unity of teaching and research, a strong freedom of faculty, “*Lehrfreiheit*”, and the freedom of study for students, “*Lernfreiheit*”, in contrast with the prescriptive curricula of the French system—and a focus on *Bildung* (i.e., the idea of a holistic combination integrating the arts and sciences to achieve both comprehensive general learning and cultural knowledge), have dominated the German university (Krücken 2011). The German model is characterized by

strong state and equally strong academic oligarchy. The university as an organization has hardly any decision-making authority. There are collegial decision-making bodies but the actual power rests with the professor who decides on the core processes of the institution. Top leadership is rather weak. Only recently—triggered also by the “excellence initiative” in Germany—has the university turned into more of an organizational actor (Kehm 2013).

The twentieth-century Soviet model—created after Stalin took power in the 1930s—was known to have specialized institutions for professional training of highly-qualified cadre for administrative, military, technological, and economic roles essential for the State and was thus in many ways predominantly vocational. This was also reflected in the institutional separation of higher education teaching from research (Froumin et al. 2014).

In the US, the research university as established in Berlin by Wilhelm von Humboldt has been hugely influential after the 1870s, and laid the basis for what is now known as the US model of the research university. On that basis, Hutchins (1936) promoted the idea of the university as a knowledge hub and intellectual encounter. Students would train their minds and help to move the body of knowledge forward. For Dewey (1937), the father of the modern American university, the university is a place of vocational training. Students come with a certain idea in mind about their future profession. The university has a role in training students in order to improve their life chances. The steering of the US system has been more market-oriented in the sense of responding mostly to the demands of the labor market, corporate needs, or similar stakeholders (Clark 1986). Universities are organizational actors in the sense of an emphasis on institutional leadership, missions, goals, and identities and a clear competitive spirit. Massification through universal access to education (Trow 2007), and differentiation of institutional forms (there are almost 5000 colleges and universities in the US today) and the concept of the “multiversity” (Kerr 1963) have been the result.

## Values Inherent in Colleges and Universities

The history of higher education shows that universities have developed constituting values that make them unique organizations (Musselin 2007; Sporn 1999). For the purpose of this chapter, we identify three distinct areas: development and dissemination of knowledge in the form of teaching and research; academic excellence based on independent peer evaluation; and freedom of teaching and research.

First, knowledge generation and dissemination is the key driver for universities activities. As the history of universities demonstrates, the collection of discoveries, the development of new ideas, and the relationship between professors and students are key components for knowledge generation. Major prerequisites for success are an independent relationship and institutional autonomy, disciplinary independence as well as an open environment enhancing teaching and research. Connected to this

is the idea of the university to be an engine for social change. Knowledge is meant to increase life expectancy and mobility in social class. As many studies have shown, this is true in societies with strong social divides (Brint 2019).

Second, academic excellence is part of the core of university values (Dill 2012). Higher education has over the decades developed clear standards regarding the quality of academic work, including teaching and research. For research, the system is based on independent—often blind reviewed—peer evaluation. For teaching, it includes the assessment of student and faculty performance.

Third, the idea of freedom of teaching and research in universities has been pivotal for its development. In von Humboldt's terms, "Lehrfreiheit" and "Lernfreiheit" have been essential values that gave professors protection from influence about classroom performance and research agenda. The unity of teaching and research and the academic freedom to teach and research, are under jeopardy in many countries. This includes the political influence, the managerial coercion, and the definition of freedom in an institutional context. This is the reason why in this chapter we pay special attention to the institutional value system.

### 18.3 The Influence of Western Models on the Development of Chinese Higher Education

Both Chinese institutions and the Chinese system of higher education as a whole have been heavily influenced by the various Western models presented above. This influence is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 by Kirby in this volume.

Since the mid-1990s, reforms have intensified and a series of excellence programs, known as the 211 and 985 projects, were issued with the ambition to create "world-class universities." Success was mostly seen in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields. A further plan was issued in 2017 entitled "World Class Universities and Disciplines" or "Double World Class" project, referring to the aim for some forty universities and 450 disciplines to reach world-class status by mid-century. This is to be accompanied by an enormous investment of resources both at the local and national level.

Clearly, modern Chinese universities have arisen not as uniquely Chinese institutions but along pre-existing international patterns. It is acknowledged that the external influences of these Western models have been mixed with perennial Chinese characteristics, based on traditional Confucian values (Marginson 2011; Lu and Jover, 2019). The authors argue that despite being based on a European model, the Chinese university, in fact, boasts a unique Chinese character that can be traced back to its Confucian learning tradition. The Confucian tradition shapes the relation between the self and the community and the relevance for practice. Hence, education in China has been very impact-oriented and derives from human experience (Deng 2016) (see also Chapter 14 by Marginson and Yang in this volume). Or as said by Yang (2017): "The Chinese university is yet to integrate the Western university with

Chinese thought”. In his view, the fundamental differences between Eastern and Western values have only led to continuous conflicts and greatly constrained the functioning of core Western values that underlie the concept of the university in China. The Western concept has been adopted only for its practicality, he argues, and attempts to indigenize it have had little success, which would explain why achievements in science and technology are so much greater than in the social sciences and humanities.

## 18.4 Shifting Missions and Emerging University Models: a Lively Debate on China

A major concern in the recent reform process in China has been the question of autonomy and freedom of governance at the institutional level, a dual governance structure with CPC (Communist Party of China) representatives in all universities (Huang 2017), a tight control of major strategic areas like student and faculty recruitment, institutional structure and management, location and facilities, and internationalization. With the *Outline of China’s National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development 2010–2020*, that situation started to change toward more autonomy in financial and academic matters and decentralization from central to provincial governments and institutions. Yet acknowledging that governance in China has its own nature and dynamics and a concept of autonomy different from that of the West, it has become quite common for Chinese universities to be more autonomous in acting within the five-year plans, that is, new initiatives and programs that especially are in line with internationally renowned university practices to become more easily implemented (Zhang, Sun and Bao 2017). Accordingly, the five-year plan of 2015 outlined major areas where institutional autonomy could be enhanced to support innovation, entrepreneurship, and global competitiveness. However, the scheme also included measures to tighten the involvement of communist party leadership at the individual university level. In 2017, President Xi Jinping announced at the 19th Party Congress of the Chinese Communist Party that China would have its own distinguished universities, and not copies of Harvard or Stanford, but places guided by Marxism that “serve the rule of the Chinese Communist Party and serve to strengthen and promote socialism with Chinese characteristics” (Xinhua News Agency 2017). Since then, concerns about growing CPC influence, constraining autonomy and academic freedom, especially in the social sciences and humanities, have been on the rise. It will be crucial to see how institutional autonomy will unfold in the continuous reform process of higher education in China.

Recent developments in the higher education sector show that the social contract of universities has been moving toward a closer connection with societal issues, including the academic contribution to economic development. This trend is also clear in China. With its “China 2025” strategy, the country aims to become a

knowledge economy and even a global leader through its New Silk Road Initiative. Thus, China's universities are now also being challenged to contribute to the country's geopolitical aspirations (see also Chapter 3 by van der Wende).

Van der Wende and Zhu (2016) discuss the expectations around the emergence of a Chinese university model within the context of globalization and internationalization. Initially, it was expected that China would embrace the Emerging Global Model (EGM) of the research university, with its universities being subject to the same forces of change as factories, banks, and other state-owned enterprises, that is, dealing with a new set of primarily Western values emphasizing economic efficiency, privatization, individual autonomy, and globalization (Mohrman et al. 2008; Mohrman and Wang 2010). But doubts arose since party leaders expressed that world-class universities in China must have Chinese characteristics (see reference to Xi's 2017 speech in the previous section). Western critics argued that such WCUs with "Chinese characteristics" will not be leaders without greater liberalization, less hierarchy, and more academic freedom, if they were to exist in a politically illiberal system at all (Kirby 2014). Others suggested a hybrid, perhaps "Post-Confucian Model" (Marginson 2011), an East/West hybrid mission (Yang 2017), or a national flagship model for South East Asia (Douglass and Hawkins 2017).

Postiglione (2015) positioned China's search for a balanced model, combining a mission for national rejuvenation and global influence as an "unambiguous paradox of internationalization, institutional autonomy, and educational sovereignty."

The question about how the concept of such a university with "Chinese characteristics" and its expected role with respect to state ideology, politics, and mission to further the "Dream of China" will be implemented in combination with China's "global vision and commitment to solving local problems" (Van der Wende and Zhu 2016), remains so far unanswered. Yet it is even more relevant since China is moving forward on its global mission with the BRI, which is becoming gradually more specific with respect to the role of higher education in achieving its aims (see next section). Another paradox is that rather than suggesting a Chinese model, China has so far actually promoted the US comprehensive research university as the global model for the WCU, both internally serving as a model for Chinese WCUs, as well as around the globe by virtue of its influential Shanghai Ranking (Van der Wende and Zhu 2016).

The success of this approach is obvious but mostly demonstrated in STEM, where China has already confirmed itself as a global player, while its humanities and social sciences are much less internationally visible. This seems to be contributing to yet another paradox; while STEM is increasingly denationalized and less constrained by national borders, the social sciences and humanities seem to be increasingly affected by constrained academic freedom, (Kirby and Van der Wende 2019). These contradictory trends could jeopardize the growth of Chinese universities as truly world-class institutions, especially their ability to generate interdisciplinary research and innovation in balance with sustainable social impact.

Issues related to the skewed development of Chinese universities are how this will affect international cooperation, which will become even more relevant than before with China’s BRI. Therefore, and in an attempt to overcome a perhaps exaggerated or oversimplified contradiction between STEM and the social sciences and humanities, we will investigate two specific areas in the latter fields that we expect to play a role in the international engagements of Chinese universities, as they have also done in such processes in the West.

## 18.5 The New Silk Road Initiative and Higher Education

In 2013 during a visit to Southeast Asia, president Xi Jinping proposed the “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI), to jointly build a “Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.” The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council later decided to move forward with the BRI, and quickly afterward, a range of initiatives emerged. Between 2013 and 2019, at least some forty Silk Road or Belt and Road-related projects were initiated (see Table 18.1 and see Appendix 1 for more details).

These are mostly research, development, or consultancy-oriented, focused on the BRI and on related aspects in economics and finance, logistics and transportation, and to some extent, on cultural aspects. A large majority has been initiated by Chinese universities and far fewer in collaboration with European partners (UK, Netherlands, Poland, Hungary—other partnerships include Thailand, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Iran, Arab States). This overview, although not comprehensive, provides a first impression of the higher education response to the BRI, indicating that it has so far mostly stimulated initiatives in social sciences and humanities. This observation is also

**Table 18.1** BRI-related initiatives

Year of establishment	Number	Focus*	Number	Basis/reach	Number
2013	1	General/on BRI	15	Chinese only;	26
2014	8	as such;		Bilateral (incl.	6 (2)
2015	12	Economy, finance,	16	European partners);	
2016	1	transportation,		Multilateral (incl.	5 (4)
2017	6	logistics;		European partners);	
2018	4	Foreign languages,	10	European only	3
2019	8	culture, tourism;			
unknown	2	Law & governance;	5		
		Other	1		

\* Some initiatives overlap in focus

noted in Chapter 2 by Kirby and by other scholars.<sup>1</sup> However, the overall BRI, as the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016–2020) states, has much broader aims: strengthening cooperation in education, science and technology, culture, environmental protection, health, and Chinese medicine. The 13th Five-Year Plan for National Education Development sub-document explains that China’s strategy of constructing an “education community” with BRI countries is to share high-quality education resources, establish a “Silk Road” government scholarship, optimize the mutual recognition mechanism of academic qualifications, promote student and scholarly exchanges, further promote cooperation between higher education institutions, and encourage Chinese universities to establish joint institutions overseas (Wu 2019). But our overview demonstrates that most initiatives are “China only”; just one third includes international partners, and only half of these (15 percent) concern Europe. Also this finding seems to be shared.<sup>2</sup>

The potential of the BRI for higher education internationalization has been acknowledged (Van der Wende and Zhu 2016; Wu 2019). Although it is still too early to look for actual impact, relevant policies are becoming more specific (see also Chapter 9 by Gao in this volume), stimulating Chinese universities to detail in their five-year plans how their internationalization projects feed into the BRI’s overarching strategy. The focus of our case illustrations in the next section is to explore the implementation of such plans in a few institutions that can be seen as “early adopters.” We applied an exploratory approach, aiming to bring some emerging developments to the forefront.

We conducted semi-structured interviews with some twenty leading university administrators, faculty members, and Chinese higher education experts, and eventually picked four Chinese institutions actively engaged in the BRI that could further inform our study. In line with our theoretical framework, special attention was given to perceptions regarding the changing social contract, university values such as academic freedom as a condition for excellence, and institutional autonomy for effective university governance.

The cases were selected as illustrative cases, focusing on initiatives in social sciences and humanities, since these disciplines, which are usually considered as being less internationally visible and performant,<sup>3</sup> seem to be the most responsive to the BRI so far, as was demonstrated in the previous section. The following institutions were chosen:

<sup>1</sup> Susan Robertson notes that “On the academic side of Belt and Road much of the focus—although not all—had been around arts, social science and humanities subjects because of an ‘absolute awareness’ in China that the country needed to bolster creative subjects. There was also a sense that China wanted to ‘present to the world’ the positive contribution it could make to such fields.” THE, May 14 2019. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-boosting-academic-links>

<sup>2</sup> THE, 3 November 2019. Collaboration concerns remain as China shifts focus to arts. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/collaboration-concerns-remain-china-shifts-focus-arts>

<sup>3</sup> Chinese universities would even be declining on measures of internationalization in the social sciences, according to the latest *Times Higher Education* data (THE 2019a). See also: *Engineering Booms, Humanities Declines as China Reshapes Research* (THE 2019b).



- China European International Business School (CEIBS)
- Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Antai College of Economics and Management
- Renmin University’s New Silk Road School at Suzhou
- Beijing Foreign Studies University’s Institute of Silk Road Studies

Additional interviews were conducted with experts at Tsinghua University (Faculty of Humanities and Graduate School of Education), Beijing International Studies University (China Academy of One Belt One Road Strategy), and Renmin University (Economics and Business Studies Department).

This work was carried out between November 2018 and April 2019. Institutional websites were analyzed and on average two interviews were conducted with persons in leadership positions at the level of (vice-)deans or program directors. The interview topics were theoretically informed covering the following areas, followed by some exemplary questions:

- Vision and Mission: for example (how) did BRI change your role in society?
- Values: for example, have values regarding excellence in teaching and research been affected, what is the role of BRI in the research agenda, the curriculum and in national and international collaboration?
- Governance: for example, has BRI affected internal and external governance, or the governance of joint programs in research and teaching?

The selected institutions (some of which are also discussed in Chapter 19 by Huang in this volume) are located in larger metropolitan areas in the Eastern coastal part of China and represent different positions in the educational landscape.

## China European International Business School (CEIBS)

### Implementing BRI

The BRI has been well received by CEIBS and did not cause any major disruption.<sup>4</sup> On the contrary, it was seen as a strategy that helps to focus attention and create synergies between parallel activities. According to the leadership, it is seen as an opportunity “to bring issues together”, and “to help China to explain its functioning to the world”, since “cultural prejudices need to be overcome on both sides” (see Table 18.2).

The BRI fell on fruitful grounds at CEIBS, which had—through its foundation as a Sino–European joint venture—a strong link with Europe and a natural orientation to international issues. For CEIBS, the BRI is born out of the need to increase economic investment in Eurasia through land and sea. The political will in China, with the emphasis on markets, competition, and openness to internationalization, as

<sup>4</sup> CEIBS is also discussed in Chapter 5 by Zheping Xie in this volume.

**Table 18.2** Summary of CEIBS characteristics

Location	Campuses in Shanghai (main), Beijing, Shenzhen, Accra in Ghana, and Zurich in Switzerland
Size	72 faculty; 1200 students
Character	Joint-venture for management education, co-founded by the Chinese government and the EU in 1994
Governance	Shanghai Jiao Tong University and the European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) serve as its executive partners; Management Committee include European and Chinese CPC representatives
Vision and Mission	CEIBS is committed to educating “responsible leaders” based on the motto “China Depth, Global Breadth” in line with “Conscientiousness, Innovation and Excellence”
Programs	MBA, Finance MBA, EMBA, Global EMBA, Hospitality EMBA, Executive Education and PhD programs
Departments	Economics and decision sciences; finance and accounting; strategy and entrepreneurship; organizational behavior and human resource management; marketing
Recognition	Accreditation by EQUIS and AACSB, FT Ranking 2018 Global Executive MBA #5; MBA #8 globally and #1 in Asia

signaled through the BRI, connects well with the mission of CEIBS, that is, the education of managers with a deep knowledge of China and a global orientation. In this sense, CEIBS is in line with the development and did not feel any need to change its mission, governance, or values.

There are several projects at CEIBS connected to the BRI, especially to Europe (i.e., the new campus in Zurich)—CEIBS has been able to become a global player in management education. In general, it sees itself as establishing projects to bridge understanding and to develop globalized talent, because, as the leadership puts it: “It was not enough anymore to be Chinese but to get a global exposure.”

### **Governance and Institutional Autonomy**

The governance and autonomy of CEIBS has not been effected by the BRI. The leadership stated that CEIBS has gained legitimacy through its twenty-five-year tradition of postgraduate management education and became established as an elite school model with special autonomous status. Given its success and status, it does not perceive any threat to its governance or autonomy, helped by its international success as one of the leading Business Schools in Asia.

### **Values**

The BRI is emphasized in the mission of CEIBS, “China Depth, Global Breadth.” Hence, the values of CEIBS and the intention of the NSR are well aligned.

## Social Contract

CEIBS's role in Chinese society is in tune with the BRI and stimulated it to open programs to Chinese students and thus becoming even more international. Rankings and accreditation are a very visible sign of this development.

## Synthesis

According to its leadership, CEIBS's mission and strategy, governance, values, and role in society fit with the expectation of the BRI and builds on CEIBS's strong connection to Europe since its foundation. BRI also seems to support CEIBS's aspiration to be THE Chinese Business School in the world.

## Shanghai Jiao Tong University: Antai College of Economics and Management (ACEM)

### Implementing BRI

The BRI has been well received by ACEM. It fell on fertile ground because ACEM has been internationalizing for decades (e.g., through joint programs and accreditations) and has had a focus on educating qualified business managers, assisting economic development. Through the BRI, the level of student exchange grew even further and provided incentives such as extra funding for new initiatives and scholarships for students from B&R countries (see Table 18.3).

### Governance and Institutional Autonomy

ACEM perceives no limitations of its autonomy vis-à-vis the BRI and presented its initiatives at a meeting of the Central Silk-Road Planning Research Center at SJTU in April 2018.<sup>5</sup> In the view of ACEM's leadership, governance and autonomy have not been influenced in a negative sense, but considers BRI implementation at the College as an emergent strategy.

### Values

Values inside ACEM have only changed in the area of internationalization, which gained even more importance. As a result, the diversity of the student body, the integration of different views in the classroom, and language competence in English have been issues of concern during BRI implementation. In the view of ACEM, the BRI created added value and gave globalization even more meaning. It was a

<sup>5</sup> Testimony on the SJTU website (accessed August 3, 2019) about this meeting states: “SJTU is looking forward to working with the Silk-Road Planning Research Center to bring together professionals, build a platform of communication and cooperate in diverse areas so as to jointly contribute wisdom to the Belt and Road Initiative.”

**Table 18.3** Summary of ACEM characteristics

Location	Antai College of Economics and Management (ACEM) is part of Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU)
Size	4,400 students and 175 full-time faculty: 61 professors, 66 associate professors and 48 lecturers
Character	University-based business school founded in 1918
Governance	Dean and Executive Team including Associate Deans and CPC Committee members; advisory board with international representation
Vision and Mission	<p>Vision To transform the college into a leader among the nation's business schools and a premier business education provider in Asia, and to build a world-class reputation for excellence</p> <p>Mission As a business school rooted in China, Antai strives to promote social progress through creating innovative knowledge in economics and management sciences, and cultivating ethical leaders with a global vision</p>
Programs	Bachelor, Masters, MBA and EMBA, PhD programs
Departments	Economics, Finance, Applied Economics, Marketing, Operations Management, Organization Management, Accounting, Management Science, Management Information Systems, and Innovation and Strategy
Recognition	Accreditation by EQUIS and AACSB and AMBA, FT Ranking 2019 Global Executive MBA #19; MBA #51 globally and #8 EMBA

top-down strategy, but very well received by ACEM as it already met many of the demands. In this sense, the view of an emergent strategy prevailed.

### Social Contract

The role of SJTU and ACEM has become even more visible due to the BRI through which the government emphasizes globalization, exchange of students and faculty, free market competition, and the leadership role of China. ACEM could demonstrate its impact in society because many international programs already existed. Hence, the BRI increased the legitimacy of ACEM's role in society and within the university. ACEM was thus very receptive of the BRI, which enhanced its brand in society and globally even further, and is seen as an opportunity rather than as a threat. SJTU has become a key player in China's strategy and ACEM has played a role in this process by fostering internationalization, although according to the management, in certain regions it "accepted imbalances in some student exchange programs for strategic purposes."

### Synthesis

ACEM uses the BRI for its own purposes in the sense of an emergent strategy approach, thus integrating the BRI into existing programs. ACEM interprets the BRI as an opportunity, since extra funding is connected to implementing BRI at all levels. The challenge is in the details, that is, to manage the diversity in the classroom,

improving English language competence, or accepting imbalances in student exchange. However, it was emphasized, this is not a threat for ACEM.

## Beijing Foreign Studies University’s Silk Road Research Institute

### Implementing the BRI

The Silk Road Research Institute was built by BFSU to “better serve the country’s ‘Economic Belt along the Silk Road’.” Its mission is thus directly related to the BRI. It aims to create a platform for cultural communications between China and countries along the BRI. It aims to build itself into a think tank for BRI, focus on thematic studies, take Chinese culture to the world, carry out joint research on China’s further reform and development, and offer training and advice on relevant issues in this regard (see Table 18.4).

### Governance and Institutional Autonomy

BFSU is a public university and hugely influenced by the government. However, autonomy is growing, especially with respect to people-to-people activities. The

**Table 18.4** Summary of BFSU New Silk Road Institute’s characteristics

Location	BFSU is located in the Haidian District of Beijing, divided into two campuses: West Campus and East Campus
Size	Around 8000 students, including some 5000 undergraduates, 2500 graduates, 450 PhD, 1300 internationals. Some 2400 faculty and staff
Character	Established in 1941 as the Russian Language Team of the Third Branch of Chinese People’s Anti-Japanese Military and Political College. In 1994, it became Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU). BFSU is China’s pre-eminent research university specializing in foreign studies, known as China’s “Cradle of Diplomats.” BFSU alumni are well-known in Chinese diplomacy circles and around 400 ambassadors, and over 1,000 counselors, have graduated from BFSU.
Governance	BFSU was affiliated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from its establishment in 1941 to the early 1980s. Since 1980, the Institute was put under the direct leadership of the Ministry of Education.
Vision and Mission	The Silk Road Research Institute (SRRI) of BFSU was founded in 2015. It aims to inform China’s Belt and Road Initiatives and serve as a bridge between China and the rest of the world by taking advantage of the multilingual and cross-cultural teaching and research expertise of BFSU.
Programs	BFSU teaches 98 foreign languages, including 11 recently added which are national languages of very small BRI countries. It offers programs up to doctoral level in foreign languages and literature, Chinese language and literature, journalism and communication, political science, law, management science and engineering, etc.
Departments	23 Schools and Departments
Recognition	BFSU has Double First Class status in certain disciplines.

scope of autonomy in the curriculum has become wider and its depth is increasing. The school can decide what courses to offer, after internal procedures and consultation with the Ministry. Students can spend up to one year at partner schools in the country of the language they study.

## Values

According to the leadership:

Universities have a very important role in the BRI, especially in the people-to-people initiatives. While our original mission was to introduce the world to Chinese people, we now also disseminate knowledge about China to the world, thus creating a more balanced view of the world. We have thus been opening up a range of new language programs, and are also opening up studies on other countries and cultures and comparative research (e.g., comparative politics). Our focus is on Asian countries and (mostly Central and Eastern) Europe. We strongly believe in the multilateral approach, against Trump's unilateralism.

## Social Contract

It was also stated that:

Universities have three main missions; teaching, research and social service. People-to-people exchange could be added to this. In that sense, the BRI initiative represents a fourth mission, especially for this university. There does not need to be a tension between international and local engagement, these are not mutually exclusive. If we have a better understanding of the world, we will also have a better understanding of ourselves.

## Synthesis

This initiative is clearly BRI driven and strongly related to governmental policy. It is naturally embedded in this institution, which historically has always changed along with China's foreign policy. The BRI implies not only a further boost for its internationalization; it also changes it and broadens its approach and academic scope in the field of foreign languages, area studies and comparative social sciences research.

## Renmin University's New Silk Road School at Suzhou

### Implementing the BRI

Renmin's Silk Road school is known as the first educational institution built under the BRI, which was thus of great influence on its mission and activities. It aims to make students from BRI countries more aware of contemporary China, its economic models, and its role in the world in the context of the unfolding BRI. It wants to be a platform and think tank for future professionals from BRI countries and help them

**Table 18.5** Summary of Renmin New Silk Road School characteristics

Location	Located at Suzhou Campus, Dushulake High Education District, Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, China.
Size	78 students (70 international and 8 Chinese) in September 2019. The school aims to enroll 200 students in 2020.
Character	Established in April 2018, the Silk Road School is affiliated to Renmin University, emerging from RUC's main campus program on Contemporary China Studies, which was initiated in 2006 in collaboration with Vrije Universiteit Brussels. It focuses on international master students from BRI countries, with a special requirement of having an interest in the BRI and Chinese culture.
Governance	The Silk Road School is a non-independent secondary school, jointly run by the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies think tank, School of International Studies, and Suzhou Campus of Renmin University of China.
Vision and Mission	“Bringing together global political leaders, business elites and outstanding teaching resources, this program, based on a global strategic perspective, combines competitive professional courses, expert seminars, high-level forums, internship opportunities for well-known enterprises as well as various cultural visits to offer students a well-rounded academic experience in China.”
Programs	English-taught Master program in Contemporary Chinese Studies, including specializations in Chinese politics, Chinese economy, Chinese culture and Chinese law. Optional courses include Chinese language, Internet and big data, BRI seminars.
Recognition	Degrees awarded and administered by Renmin University, which is ranked 30 in the ARWU China ranking 2018 and 700–800 in ARWU Global ranking 2019.

understand the path, model, and experience of China's development. Contrary to the traditional China Studies Programs, which focus strongly on ancient history and culture of China, this program concentrates on contemporary issues, hence the location of the school in one of China's most modern higher education hubs, but near a city which has preserved some traditional and historical traits (see Table 18.5).

### Governance and Institutional Autonomy

The School is affiliated to Renmin University and governed under the authority of the Central Committee of the CPC. It is inspected on a regular basis by the Secretary of the Party Committee of Renmin University and chair of the University Council, and representatives for the President of Renmin. The BRI did not affect the governance structure, or the people in charge, but adds opportunities for students (scholarships) and faculty (project funding in their area of expertise). All activities are administered by Renmin.

### Values

The BRI provides a strong push for research and internationalization and is opening the program up to international students and faculty. The curriculum and academic

community are changing; more use of English (although finding English-speaking staff outside Beijing and Shanghai is still a problem); more focus on modern China, more open to experience from abroad; and more quantitative methods instead of the traditional focus on Chinese philosophy and culture. As stated by the interviewee: “With the Internet, we are now more interconnected, and we can thus learn from others and improve ourselves, while the BRI countries can benefit from us.”

### Social Contract

Renmin and the Silk Road School are strongly connected to the government. The advantage is influence on policies, although the leadership also notes that: “We’re closer to government than to real society. Ivory tower? It is good to open up to international students even more, also from beyond the BRI. But everyone in society should benefit from internationalization, not only international students. The BRI still needs to improve in this respect, building a shared community with common goals for all society.”

### Synthesis

The BRI provides an important rationale for this school and adds substantial resources and opportunities for research and internationalization in social sciences and humanities. It stimulates opening up to the world, while the awareness that internationalization needs to be inclusive to all of society, not drawing on local engagement, is growing. Governance and control is fully exercised from the main campus.

## 18.6 Key Findings

For the purpose of illustration of the implementation of the BRI, specific institutions were chosen. Their common feature is a high level of internationalization, a traditionally strong link to the labor market, and an elite position in the hierarchy of HEIs in China. The findings represent only a first attempt to understand the changing idea of universities in China through the BRI. The sample is too small and it is too early to generalize from what has been observed in these frontrunner institutions to the larger scene of Chinese higher education. Insights from our larger series of interviews with Chinese higher education experts have been useful to contextualize these findings in what they may imply for the (near) future. The findings show that the BRI can generate a push for internationalization in China. The institutions in the sample view the BRI as an opportunity to strengthen their efforts for global exposure of students and faculty.

Specifically, this holds true for areas in social sciences and humanities with a focus on business and management studies, international relations, languages, and area studies. Some of these fields were already internationalized, others less so. For such fields, the BRI adds significant opportunities for internationalization through additional funding, scholarships, opportunities to open new institutes, study programs, double degrees, etc.



From the contextual data we learned that institutions implement such BRI projects mostly with a regional focus (i.e., in “Belt & Road countries” mostly in Central Asia and Eastern Europe). This implementation may be path-dependent and resource-driven, that is, institutions try to reinforce existing collaboration or invest in projects that were already on the agenda and became more prominent through the BRI. Yet it may also add a new dimension, as illustrated by the following quotes from interviewees:

- “BRI = an “Opening up 2.0 for China” “more outward than inward”
- “BRI internationalization becomes the 4th mission for the university”
- “Yes it affects the curriculum, but not so much the methods of teaching, apart from a switch to English”

As we know, the impact of the BRI on STEM fields is less pronounced, mostly because these fields were already more globally exposed and networked. Here it seems to be only marginally adding (e.g., more scholarships) to what was already going on. STEM remains focused on the West, although the EU may become more important in comparison to the US. However, this seems to be less influenced by the BRI than by “China 2025” and by joint programming with the EU (see Chapter 3 in this volume by van der Wende for more details).

These findings seem to suggest that despite the significant differences between disciplines, the contradiction between STEM and the social sciences and humanities may indeed often be overstated. In fact, the social sciences and humanities could indeed become more internationally engaged through the BRI, although this might not result so much in global prestige as with STEM (as also argued by in Chapter 2 in this volume by Kirby), but could lead to innovative new programs and partnerships after all.

As it seems that internationalization is the major motivator for and effect of the BRI, then these pathways are very interesting and can be compared with those in other regions, for instance, in the EU.

Table 18.6 summarizes some similarities and differences, such as in the way different disciplines respond to external policies driving internationalization, both in China and in the EU. STEM being more globally networked relates to the often universal character of its academic focus, whereas the social sciences and humanities may need more substantial adjustment to their academic core which can be more bound by national or regional history, culture or language. Similarities are also found in the use of English as the lingua franca, in internationalization as part of the mission, and an emerging tension between global and local missions.

Both Chinese and EU policies in this area are driven primarily by economic rationales, taking higher education as a contributor toward a knowledge economy and global competition (see Chapter 3 in this volume by van der Wende). But their governance approach is substantially different. Whereas in China, policies like the BRI are introduced top-down and focus on bilateral agreements with strong control from the center, EU policies have been bottom-up, with a multilateral networking approach. Both policies include soft power elements, but clearly China’s approach is

**Table 18.6** Some similarities and differences in HE internationalization China–EU

	China	EU
Differences	Top-down; Unilateral & bilateral; Soft power driven by state ideology (“Xi Jinping thought”).	Bottom-up; Primarily multilateral; Soft power democratic—open (pluralistic views on EU citizenship).
Similarities	Disciplinary-specific internationalization pathways: STEM: global orientation, large budgets, strong tradition of international collaboration and co-publication; high level of international mobility. SSC/HUM: regional orientation, modest budgets, weaker/emerging traditions of international collaboration and co-publishing; lower rate of international mobility Internationalization pathway in SSC/HUM i.e., consequent emergence of language & areas studies, study of other systems (in different policy fields in order to understand other countries better), into comparative studies (e.g. comparative education), and (perhaps at some point) global studies. Use of English as lingua franca next to promotion of foreign (second) language learning and promotion of the countries’ own language. Adoption of internationalization as part of the institutional mission. Consequent challenge for institutions to balance global-regional-national-local missions.	

strongly driven by its state ideology, whereas the EU’s is more open, democratic, and (consequently) pluralistic.

Regarding the governance changes due to the BRI, no clear picture emerges. On the one hand, the case study universities experience more autonomy in the BRI’s “peer-to-peer” actions. On the other hand, the CPC control and steering of international engagement has intensified, for instance through the enhanced administrative scrutiny of visitors, intended visits, and partnerships.

## 18.7 Conclusions and Discussion

This chapter focused on the question whether and how the BRI is affecting the “idea of the university” in China. Our findings suggest that the BRI potentially affects Chinese universities by enhancing their internationalization and is also changing the internationalization agenda from previous phases; from being an importer to becoming an exporter of higher education (see also Chapter 9 in this volume by Gao). Chinese universities’ response to this new phase of internationalization i.e., their internationalization pathways, seem to be largely similar with those observed in Europe. These are foremost path dependent and resource driven, that is, institutions use the BRI to enhance ongoing activities and try to optimize their external resource base. Typically, they are characterized by remarkably different behavior of disciplines in the global sphere, as observed across systems globally in the rather distinct

internationalization pathways that the various disciplines (in a STEM–social sciences–humanities spectrum) and professional fields (e.g., business, law, education, diplomacy) demonstrate. In addition, in China, STEM and internationally-oriented disciplines like international trade, or management, especially in research-intensive universities, may enjoy more academic freedom than other disciplines.

The question is, then, whether these forces would affect the “idea of the university” globally alike or in China differently?

With globalization, the model of the university seems to be changing. The global nature and resource base of STEM versus the historically and culturally more nationally bound humanities fields with a much weaker funding base seem to spur the growth of the STEM-centered model of the university globally. Would this then imply that the concept of the broad comprehensive “Humboldtian type” of the research university is becoming more fragmented everywhere and (thus) the “uses of the university” (Kerr 1963) are shifting consequently toward more utilitarian?

To explore that question further, it is important to look at the conditions under which Chinese universities are exposed to globalization. In this respect it seems that in China the idea (or model) of the university is being pushed indeed strongly toward the STEM-centered model, as observed in the growth in STEM fields and underpinned by the Double World-class Project and its predecessors.

STEM in China is benefiting mostly from the same conditions in terms of autonomy, international engagement, generous funding, etc., as in the West, plus an unparalleled supply of human talent. Social sciences and humanities may be more restricted in nationalistic frames and seen as potential sources of social unrest, unlike STEM, which may be seen as a way to preserve economic growth and to maintain social and political stability. As said before, these contradictory trends could jeopardize the growth of Chinese universities as truly world-class institutions, especially their ability to generate interdisciplinary research and innovation in balance with sustainable social impact.

Our findings nuance the black and white picture of STEM versus social sciences–humanities in China to some extent, reflecting rather a continuum of internationalization pathways. But how will the technological core that is driving the STEM-oriented university be connected to the social sciences/humanities? Is it on a “buy-in basis”: social sciences and humanities as innovation-oriented and in support of the technological core (e.g., MIT/Stanford/EPFL model)? Or is it on a “legacy basis” with a critical distance, as in the broad comprehensive “Humboldtian” type of the research university? What type of interdisciplinarity will these different types of institutions be able to generate? These are crucial question for research institutions in China and globally. With a view to the fourth industrial revolution and the social challenges of new technologies such as AI and CRISPR in mind, the essential importance of the interconnection between STEM and humanities/social sciences is being realized, also in China: “The swift development of new technologies requires the intervention of humanities and social sciences and a renewed balance between integrity and innovation,” according to Lin Jianhua, the former President of Peking University (THE 2019).

The BRI's impact on the internationalization of social sciences and humanities in China could on the one hand enable them to open up, allowing them to share more a common (global) sphere with STEM and to bring them closer together internally. Such convergence would provide fertile ground for the innovative MIT-type of STEM-centered institution, with an important role for liberal arts at the same time. If so, would this then challenge Rui Yang's (2017, see above) expectation that: "Globalization is Western-led and thus working out more in STEM but does not so much correspond to social sciences/humanities in South-East Asia"? Or would it drive the disciplines further away from each other along their already rather distinct internationalization pathways, toward a more fragmented and utilitarian model? In fact, toward the former Soviet model, which is perhaps more the "default model" than we realize? As also suggested by Huang (2019), who states that: "Obviously, the Soviet influence still exists in China's HE system, re-emphasized and reinforced by President Xi in recent years." The STEM-centered model confirms a utilitarian approach, a model mostly relevant for research universities, which in a stratified system also includes ranges of institutions that are more teaching focused and vocationally oriented.

In any case, it is crucial to understand that enhanced exposure to globalization in China *not* paralleled by the same degree of deregulation as is usually the case in the West. The assumption that with globalization the role of states is diminished and often characterized by deregulation is based on a neo-liberal logic that is (was) key to the Western globalization paradigm. It cannot be taken for granted that this applies always and everywhere, and is challenged notably by China, which seems to be promoting an alternative globalization paradigm, according to which openness could very well be combined with strong regulation or control by the state (state capitalism). Like businesses in the corporate sector, China wishes to expose its universities to global competition and opportunity, while keeping a tight control over their governance.

In terms of Olson's models, it thus seems that China wishes to combine model 3 (university as an instrument for national policy) with model 4 (service enterprise embedded in (global) competitive markets). Or in terms of Marginson's (2018) analytical heuristic of economic and political approaches to higher education, a combination of social democracy and state quasi-market. It seems paradoxical to outsiders, but Chinese higher education policy seems to be able to combine tight internal control with global engagement and exposure, all in order to achieve the overarching goal to reach world-class status. With the rise of China as the second largest economic power, the Chinese university has been changing accordingly, reflecting in pace and style "political leftism plus economic rightism" (Zhang (2013), cited in Deng 2016). Many in China may not see this as a tension but rather as a normal situation; institutions nested in the state but still able to generate creativity and new knowledge.

So far, China's university model seems thus to be mostly unique in its governance; centrally led by a party-state, locally regulated by dual university/state authority, combined with autonomous disciplinary science. As Marginson (2019) notes: "This model may appeal to emerging countries but is hard to import." Or as Kirby states in Chapter 2 of this volume: "Not a readily exportable model, unless your export market is limited to Vietnam, Cuba, and North Korea."

## Appendix 1

### Overview of BRI related research and education Institutes<sup>6</sup>

Name of institute	Collaborating partners	Location	Focus	Starting date
21st Century Maritime Silk Road Research Institute	Sun Yat-sen University	Guangzhou, China	Not specified	June 2014
Agreement to strengthen UAE–China ties in relation to One Belt, One Road Initiative	Hamdam Bin Mohammed Smart University (HBMSU), Shanghai Lixin University of Accounting and Finance, China Islamic Finance Club (CIFC), Dubai Islamic Economic Development Center	United Arab Emirates, China	Islamic Finance, human capacity development, scientific research community service	June 2019
Alliance of International Science Organizations (ANSO) “championed by the BRI”	Chinese Academy of Science (CAS and science and education institutions from over forty countries)	Beijing, China	Research mobility	November. 2018
Alliance of Silk Road Business Schools (spin off from University Alliance of the Silk Road)	Russia, CEEC Western Europe	Ningbo	Strategic cooperation between China and the countries situated along the Silk Road, and the collaboration between industry and education to train highly qualified talents.	2017

*Continued*

<sup>6</sup> Compiled with the help of Mr. David Pho (Twente University).

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Name of institute	Collaborating partners	Location	Focus	Starting date
Belt & Road Centre Hungary	Pallas Athéné Geopolitical Foundation (PAGEO), Pallas Athéné Domus Mentis Foundation (PADMA), John von Neumann University	Hungary	Coordinate scientific activities, collect research and information related to OBOR Program	April 2019
Belt & Road Cooperation Research Center	Ain Shams University Renmin University	Cairo, Egypt	Economic, Commercial, and Technical Studies projects and cooperation between Egypt and China	January 2019
Belt and Road Cooperation Research Center	Renmin University of China, National Research Council of Thailand	Bangkok, Thailand	Cooperation between Chinese and Thai think tanks	December 2018
Belt and Road Int'l Center	University of Cambridge	Cambridge, UK	Studies of the challenges and problems related to the BRI and their solutions	September 2017
Belt and Road Land Corridor International Intermodal Research and Exchange Center	Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, International Union of Rail ways, China Railway International Co., Ltd., China Railway First Survey & Design Institute Group Co., Ltd., Beijing Jiaotong University, School of Traffic and Transportation	Rotterdam/Beijing	Transportation, logistics	December 2017

Belt and Road Research Center	University of International Business and Economics, Ministry of Finance, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation, China Development Bank, Export and Import Bank of China	Beijing, China	Database construction Overseas investment cooperation	October 2017
Belt & Road Research Platform	Leiden Asia Centre & Clingendael China Centre	Leiden, Netherlands	B&R topics	June 2019
China (Xi'an) Silk Road Research Institute	Xi'an University of Finance and Economics, National Bureau of Statistics, Shaanxi Provincial Government	Xian, China	Economy and statistics	December 2014
China "One Belt and One Road" Strategy Institute	Beijing International Studies University	Beijing, China	Foreign languages, tourism, culture, international trade, business administration and international relations	January 2015
China-Kazakh Belt and Road Research Center	Emerging Markets Institute (EMI) Belt and Road Research Institute (BRRI) of Beijing Normal University (BNU), China and Central Asian Studies Center of KIMEP University of Kazakhstan	Beijing, China	Strengthening the exchange of scholars and students, academic communication and implementation, contribute to the transition of talents from school to society	June 2018
Chinese Studies Center of the People's Republic of China in Tehran	Shanghai International Studies University of China, Allameh Tabataba'i University	Tehran, Iran	Study past and present state of China and Iran, Advice the Iranian government on foreign policy	April 2019

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Name of institute	Collaborating partners	Location	Focus	Starting date
Fudan Institute of Belt and Road & Global Governance	Fudan University	Shanghai, China	Belt and Road Global Governance	June 2017
Fudan-Gansu Institute of Silk Road Economic Belt Coordinated Development	Fudan University, Hexi University, Zhangye City of Gansu Province	Shanghai, China	Economy, West China development	August 2014
Guangdong Maritime Silk Road Tourism and Culture Research Institute	South China Normal University, Guangdong Tourism Board	Guangzhou, China	Tourism	November 2014
Institute of Silk Road Studies	Northwest University	Xian, China	Not specified	January 2014
International Silk Road Think Tank Association	China Center for Contemporary World Studies, the Shenzhen Municipal Government and Fudan University	Shenzhen, China	Think tank	February 2016
Lancaster University Belt and Road Initiative Research Consortium	Lancaster University	Lancaster, UK	Challenges emerging from the regions covered by the Belt and Road Initiative	June 2019
Maritime Silk Road Institute	CASS National Institute of International Strategy, China News Agency, Fujian Provincial Foreign Affairs Office, Fujian Federation of Social Science Circles, Fujian Academy of Social Sciences	Beijing, China	Economic strategies, international politics, cultural exchanges, free trade zone	March 2014
Ningbo Research Institute of Marine Silk Road	BFSU, Zhejiang Wanli University	Ningbo, China		



One Belt One Road Economic Research Institute	Renmin University	Beijing, China	Economy	May 2015
One Belt One Road Law Research Center	Xiamen University	Xiamen, China	Law	June 2015
One Belt One Road Lianyungang Agriculture International Cooperation Research Institute	Jiangsu Polytechnic College of Agriculture and Forestry, Lianyungang City of Jiangsu Province	Lianyungang, China	Agriculture	November 2015
One Belt One Road Research Center	Peking University	Beijing, China	Not specified	May 2015
One Belt One Road Research Institute	Jiangsu Normal University, Xuzhou City of Jiangsu Province	Xuzhou, China	Economy, culture, language	November 2015
One Belt One Road Research Institute	Beijing Language and Culture University, Lincang City of Yunnan Province, Dianxi Science and Technology Normal University	Lincang, China	Language, culture	September 2015
One Belt-One Road Strategy Institute	Tsinghua University, All-China Federation of Returned Overseas Chinese	Beijing, China	Social science	April 2017
Research Center for the Belt and Road Financial and Economic Development	Ministry of Finance of China	Beijing, China	Finance, economic	2017
Research Center of Silk Road	Guoyan Cultural Media Corporation, Beijing Jiaotong University	Beijing, China	Culture (in future: tourism, heritage and scientific innovation)	May 2015

*Continued*

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Name of institute	Collaborating partners	Location	Focus	Starting date
Research Institute of Maritime Silk-Road (RIMS)	Peking University HSBC Business School	Shenzhen, China	Regional Studies & Marine Economy, Investment, Macroeconomics, Global governance and China	2019
Silk Road Art Research Collaborative Innovation Center	Central Academy of Fine Arts, Quanzhou City of Fujian Province, Turpan City of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Datong City of Shanxi Province, and Luoyang City of Henan Province	Beijing, China	Culture, art and heritage	June 2015
Silk Road Economic Belt Construction Research Center	Lanzhou University	Lanzhou, China	Economy	December 2014
Silk Road Economic Development Research Institute	Xidian University, Shaanxi Provincial Academy of Social Sciences	Xian, China	Economy	December 2013
Silk-Road Entrepreneurship Education Network (SREEN)	Guangzhou, Zhejiang and business schools in Austria, Uruguay, Macau, etc.	Guangzhou (China)	Facilitate collaborative initiatives and activities in entrepreneurship development and education among researchers in countries which are part of the Silk Road initiative.	March 2018
Silk Road Research Institute	Beijing Foreign Studies University	Beijing, China	Foreign language studies, intercultural studies	January 2015

Sino–Polish University Consortium under the “Belt and Road” Initiative	Beijing University of Technology, Opole University of Technology and Chongqing Jiaotong University	Virtual Consortium		
Synergic and Innovation Center for “One Belt One Road Cooperation and Development”	Zhejiang University	Hangzhou, China	Economy, culture and law	December 2014
UK–China–BRI Countries Education Partnership Initiative	Peking University, Dalian University of Technology, University of Leeds King’s College London, British Council, British Ministry of Education	UK, China programme	Improve quality and impact of educational collaboration between UK and China	July 2019
University Alliance of the Silk Road	Xian Jiaotong University and over 100 Chinese and foreign universities	Xian, China	Talent education, scientific research, cultural dissemination, policy studies, and medical service etc.	January 2015
University Consortium of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road	Some 60 universities from Europe, Australia, China, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and the US,	Xiamen (China)	Logistics, industrial development, international trade and finance, international law, history and culture, infrastructure construction, maritime environment, and emergency management	June 2018

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