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The Digital Silk Road and Chiglobalization: A Post-Epidemic Information and Communication Technology Alternative Project

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Abstract— Peper aims to answer how new media, the internet, and BRI projects are related. The second tries to uncover the concept and purpose of the digital silk road. Third, describe how the idea of Chiglobalization initiated by China is in the digital silk road scheme. This type of qualitative descriptive research with literature study methodology. The research results are, first, that the digital silk road concept is a combination of information technology and new media. It was done to support the BRI project focusing on developing digital infrastructure in a New media setting. The two digital silk road initiatives require adequate and equitable internet infrastructure in every BRI route country. Third, Chiglobalization is a project to increase China's influence in producing a new global vision for humanity. To create a new social order model for development that carries socialism, multiculturalism is characterized by the East by adopting Confucian values.

Keywords— *digital silk road, post-pandemic, chiglobalization, internet, new media*

I. INTRODUCTION

The covid-19 outbreak that has hit the world has changed the entire pattern of people's lives. Human mobility that was previously very large and capable of driving economic growth has now stopped. Many countries have experienced economic recessions, and even many countries have had negative economic growth. Just look at how hotels and tourist attractions have closed, sports venues usually filled with spectators and porters have become deserted, shopping centers have gone bankrupt, and even many airlines have lost money.

In the globalization era, the world is considered flat because any part of the world can quickly be heard and seen by all people. It cannot be separated from the internet and new media infrastructure. However, the internet infrastructure as the leading support platform for new media is not entirely even. It is the essential means in the era of information technology to form a new social reality construction. In countries with inadequate internet facilities,

Chinese companies have made many decisions to invest in developing information technology infrastructure within the Belt and Road Initiative [1].

One of the new reality constructions expected to materialize in the Belt Road Initiative framework is forming a digital silk road. Announced in 2015. Digital silk road transforms goods and services as a driving force for economy, culture, and value with digital technology. All parties involved in the Belt and Road Initiative must pursue innovation-driven development, intensify cooperation in artificial intelligence, nanotechnology, and quantum computing, and promote big data, cloud computing, and smart cities, thereby turning them digital [2]. All countries need to build a Belt and Road network for technology transfer and facilitate integrated innovation at the regional level. Innovation-driven intellectual property is essential to accelerating development. Everyone must respect intellectual property rights, protect and use intellectual property effectively, and establish a sound intellectual property protection system [3].

To welcome the digital silk road, China is the most prepared country in all aspects. Both infrastructure, economy, and human resources, as well as geopolitics. In the Information technology Belt Road Initiative project, scientists propose several steps. First, set up a digital silk road that is expected to enable infrastructure to help other Chinese companies go abroad. Besides, digital connectivity is also essential to market China's excess steel by selling it to various countries. Steel is one of the main components of the industry. Second, accelerate the internationalization of the Renminbi currency. With the BRI project that involves many countries, it is better if it can be used to promote Chinese money. So far, most of the international trade finance transactions use the US \$ or Euro. China can form an opportunity to establish a financial institution that has been dominated by the world bank or the IMF, which has been under the shadow of America. Third, building a global internet network infrastructure centered in China. Global internet infrastructure also has strategic importance for

countries to expand their geopolitical influence. The lifeline of the digital economy is currently highly geographically concentrated and primarily dominated by US powers, which has raised serious concerns over the security of their data. Fourth, in the Digital Silk Road, what is also important is the ideological dimension, which is commonly referred to as "inclusive globalization." [4].

More deeply, scientist Wenshan Jia in 2009 proposed the formation of "Chiglobalisation". So far, globalization has always been synonymous with the West and Europe. Chiglobalisation is a shift in the new direction of globalization from west to east. Namely alternative globalization with Chinese characteristics. The concept is in line with what China has been doing since 2013, especially with President Xi Jinping's vision of the Chinese dream and the Belt Road Initiative [5]. Gambaran diatas, usulan mengenai penerapan digital silk road dan gagasan Chiglobalization memang terlalu condong dengan kepentingan China. Ini merupakan sebuah pekerjaan rumah untuk melakukan diplomasi bagi semua negara agar kritik baru yang dikemukakan oleh China dengan gagasannya, tidak hanya sebuah bentuk globalisasi lama versi Amerika tapi hanya dengan pakaian yang baru.

As described above, the proposal regarding the application of the digital silk road and the idea of Chiglobalization is indeed too inclined towards China's interests. It is homework to do diplomacy for all countries. China's new criticisms are bold, not only an old American version of globalization but only in new clothes.

2 The problem that has arisen so far is the uneven distribution of internet and new media infrastructure in various countries through which the BRI project passes. So, it will complicate the acceleration of the initiative digital silk road project. Besides, the covid-19 outbreak that hit the world has changed the culture and lifestyle of people around the world. The digital silk road project is considered capable of creating a prosperous society and ensuring economic development continues. This idea had existed since before the pandemic began, but to overcome the bottleneck in human interaction, this idea is certainly very relevant and needs to be developed.

Peper wants to answer how the new media, the internet, and the BRI project are related. The second is trying to reveal the concept and purpose of the digital silk road. Third, describe how the Chiglobalization concept initiated by China in the digital silk road scheme.

II. METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. Namely trying to describe the social phonemes related to the development of the digital silk road after the pandemic.[6] Then provide an analysis and interpretation of the meaning of facts, phonemes, and phenomena in the field to find the context of space and time related to the idea of Chiglobalization developed by China. [7] This study intends to explore and clarify the digital belt road initiative's social facts by describing some variables and analyzing each variable's relationship.[8] The variables of this research are Chiglobalization, digital silk road initiative, post-pandemic, new media, internet, society, the culture within the framework of the BRI project.

Meanwhile, the data were obtained by using a literature study. Namely collecting various kinds of literature related to the object under study. [9] Data is sourced from scientific journals, theses and dissertations, mass media coverage, research reports, and various other relevant scientific works.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Several studies have shown that the BRI project discourse tends to rely on the economy. It's not entirely wrong, but it's also not always right because many aspects can cooperate in the BRI project. Such as culture, education, human exchange. Even issues related to the environment. [10]. In his research, Sun saw discussion of topics related to BRI, including politics (19.4%), economy (35.5%), culture (12.9%), and 32.2% others. Meanwhile, Li and Zhang see policy issues as a topic that has a percentage of up to 35%. If we count facilities, trade, and finance in one category, this category increases to 43%. Although not completely aligned, the two sets of results demonstrate the economic importance of the BRI project [11].

Likewise, with projections and portions of media coverage, various pieces of new media coverage can also be seen. If we write on google with the keyword Belt road initiative or One Belt One Road, what will emerge is an infrastructure project in the context of accelerating economic growth. In the case of Albania, the findings show that the Albanian press pays more attention to the financial aspects of the BRI framework. And to a lesser extent, cultural cooperation between China and Albania, development, political affairs, sports, information about China, education, and history. Albanian private media also focuses on the BRI framework's economic aspects (Shekulli 53%, Dita 50%, Shqiptarja 64%, Panorama 50%, Telegraph 44%, Javanews 59%), with Shqiptarja, Javanews, and Telegraph covering cultural and political aspects as well. American media such as VOA focuses on the political part. On the other hand, the Chinese press saw the enhancement of the economic (43%) and development (21%) aspects of the BRI framework [12].

Many studies from scholars and researchers have compared the portion of mass media coverage of the BRI project. And most of them put economic potential first, then politics. Only then did culture, education, environment, etc., even though another side could be developed in the BRI project. Namely, information technology and new media, which have positive and promising prospects.

A. Belt Road Initiative and New Media

BRI has been constructed by some people as a form of new economic hegemony and will also perpetuate the financial oligarchy. The center of globalization has only moved from west to East but with the same substance. Just the clothes changed. However, BRI could be a breakthrough to become the opposition from these two things. BRI can be a breakthrough for new media to enhance cross-cultural dialogue. It is for several reasons. First, the multimedia channel will be adopted. The digital silk road with a new media platform provides a technically convergent artistic platform where text, images, and audio-visual material can be quickly produced, edited, circulated, and consumed. Among them, audio-visual content is increasing in popularity on PC and mobile platforms. Second, to take advantage of

different media channels, other styles can be created. For example, in a society saturated with conventional media, consumers enjoy short videos more than traditional films, TV dramas, and entertainment programs on their mobile gadgets. Third, new information and communication technologies can help find a wider audience on an international scale who can become customers. It has never happened to traditional media that could not detect their audience, especially in the global market [1].

Also, new media can strengthen BRI promotion. The government must increase funding and technology investment in new media, building new media platforms with multilingualism. The media will be deployed to countries along the BRI project to develop new media services with Internet TV, broadcasting Internet, mobile TV, and mobile broadcasting. Using new media technology to strengthen the development and production of BRI programs must be continuously used to enrich content. In this way, a long-term mechanism for media cooperation will be established and can attract the attention and participation of foreign media to take advantage of its benefits. In conclusion, as the most convenient way of disseminating information and communication, the new media will use its characteristics and advantages to convey the concept of mutually beneficial cooperation for countries along the BRI project path [13].

New media can expand the Belt and Road influence with real-time information dissemination. Compared to traditional media, new media can process and publish information anytime and anywhere. It is not limited by time and geography and can realize the rapid sharing of resources in public through various and fast communication channels [14]. Therefore, it is possible to use new media to disseminate multiple information related to The Belt and Road project to countries' people along the route. New media, with its interactivity, can attract more people to participate in developing the Belt and Road. Compared to traditional media flows, where the communication process occurs only one way from the media to the audience, new media uses sophisticated technology to create interactive information flows. It gives the audience more initiative to enjoy a higher level of interactive fun [15].

Therefore, in the Belt and Road initiative's construction, the broader community can freely express their opinions and suggestions for developing the Belt and Road in the new media's comprehensive platform. Simultaneously, the public can also criticize and correct the plans formulated around the Belt and Road. The new media allows the general public to truly participate in development to experience the joy of being a participant rather than just an audience [13].

B. The Internet Is The Primary Support For The Digital Silk Road Initiative

President Xi said the ancient silk route facilitates cooperation and embodies a spirit of peace, inclusiveness, a mutually beneficial learning process. The heart of the Silk Road has been a great legacy of human civilization. Promoting the ancient silk path's spirit and now underway, the modern silk path project calls for a new medium. The Belt and Road Initiative must take advantage of the flexibility of new media to serve the needs of a complex dialogue between different civilizations. But the internet

infrastructure that supports new media is uneven across countries [1]. That is a problem and homework for large and developed countries like China to make it more equitable. It is both an opportunity and a challenge. So it can be said that the new media running under the BRI project scheme can be a means of diplomacy to strengthen mutual trust and brotherhood between countries.

With the widespread use of the internet, mobile phones, and wireless networks, new media, as the most advanced media in the modern era, have broken the boundaries between traditional media, between regions, between administrations, and between communicators and recipients. New media will also be a significant force in promoting economic and cultural exchange and cooperation. BRI inherits ancient Silk Route traditions and will be a path of friendship, culture, and trade. That's the big diplomacy and narrative that China has built to promote the BRI project.

Indeed, the Belt and Road Initiative project covers more than 60 countries and 4.4 billion people from different regions and countries. The exchanges between these countries are becoming more frequent, and cooperation will continue to flourish. The vision and action plan emphasize "Broad cultural exchange, academic exchange, talent exchange and cooperation, media cooperation, youth and women's contacts, volunteer services, etc. Lay a solid foundation for deepening bilateral and multilateral cooperation" [16]. Therefore, media cooperation to support public diplomacy in The Belt and Road Initiative countries is very important.

Some scientists conclude that the new media is very effective as a means of diplomacy in developing the digital silk road project. It has three potential objectives: to attract foreign media's attention, spread active propaganda, and encourage media and communication cooperation between China and other countries. Foreign [16]. Suppose these three things are carried out well. In that case, public diplomacy conducive to people in The Belt and Road Initiative countries will find it easier to understand each other's cultures. Strengthen their cultural identities, deepen mutual trust, further promote economic development and cooperation, and build strategic partnerships [17].

This communication interaction provides a multi-level platform so that public diplomacy can function from single to multiple. Likewise, new media public diplomacy can take place in the Belt and Road Initiative countries. One of the conditions, these countries pay attention to the construction of the internet, and their new media technology is very mature. Countries along the Belt and Road Initiative used new media to mobilize more people, especially young people who have gradually abandoned traditional books, papers, and newspapers. Once again, new media is viral in various countries. Despite the imbalance of economic development among these countries, cell phone users show a fast-growing trend across multiple technology sectors in almost all countries. That is also the case in countries through which the Belt and Road Initiative projects. As such, new media not only provides excellent information for people living along the paths of The Belt and Road Initiative but is also more advanced in the efficient dissemination of information [16].

C. Chiglobalization in Digital Silk Road Initiative

As part of the Belt and Road Initiative, the world's largest infrastructure project, Beijing has launched the Digital Silk Road. The Digital Silk Road has become an essential part of the BRI's overall strategy of providing financial assistance, political support, and other assistance to recipient countries. Digital Silk Road also supports Chinese exporters, including many well-known Chinese tech companies, such as Huawei and ZTE. Silk Road's Digital Assistance aims to improve telecommunications networks, artificial intelligence capabilities, e-commerce, mobile payment systems, surveillance technology, smart cities, and other high-tech areas. The Digital Silk Route, also known as the 'Information Silk Route,' brings advanced information technology infrastructure to BRI participating countries. Digital Silk Road is driven by Chinese tech giants, notably Huawei, Tencent, Alibaba, and ZTE, capable of delivering high-quality fiber optic cables at significantly lower costs than their European and US competitors [18].

Digital Silk Road combines telecommunications, media, and technology to develop BRI projects in various countries. The main components are Chinese telecommunication equipment, Data Center, and Storage Infrastructure along the economic corridor. Finally, Chinese companies are using this to export the interpretation of smart city sensors and data platforms.[19]

Technology is an area that China says can compete directly with developed countries and has leveraged this to create a digital highway of its standards. To this end, China is looking at mobile wireless infrastructure and starting a program by building submarine and terrestrial optical cables and data centers[20]. This program level has allowed China to own or assist in constructing about 30% of Asia's existing cables and 54% of the planned cables. Globally, China owns or supplies 11% of existing cables and 24% of scheduled cables. Thirty BRI countries have now signed up for the BeiDou navigation network. Central to this is the use of a GPS navigation system for surveillance. Instead, China has opted for an information and communication technology network that uses its satellite tracking system. In other words, it is state-led capitalism or what Xi Jinping calls "capitalism with Chinese socialist characteristics"[21]. China's statement and now being exported to other countries in the BRI project speaks differently to western capitalism. Where is western capitalism by China and other countries in a state as modern imperialism?

Capitalism with Chinese characteristics is then called Chiglobalization. According to Jia, Chiglobalization is the increasing global relevance, global presence, worldwide influence, and global leadership of China in producing a new global vision for humanity [22]. To create a new social structure model for economic development, development of science and technology, and create a cosmopolitan culture that indeed carries socialism, multiculturalism, and has Eastern characteristics. Neither America-centric nor Eurocentric. [5] Chiglobalization is a new order of post-modern and post-globalization societies.

The media claims that the Digital Silk Road with the concept of Chiglobalization in it not only promotes the development of the digital service sector, such as cross-border e-commerce, smart cities, telemedicine, and internet

finance [23]. But it is also accelerating technological advances, including computing, big data, the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, blockchain, and quantum computing. This overarching statement implies that all matters related to technology are coordinated through the Digital Silk Road.[24].

Many Belt and Road Projects have clear geopolitical, technological, security, and geostrategic implications. This initiative can be seen primarily to position China as the fulcrum of the induced changes in the dynamics of strategic, digital, and international space, aiming to change the dynamics of the larger world order [25].

Although China's Digital Silk Road can improve digital connectivity in developing countries, that is a solution to overcome physical human connectivity hampered by the pandemic. At the same time, it is feared that China will have the opportunity to spread authoritarianism, limit democracy and curb human rights. It is the point of criticism of some researchers and journalists. China's influence is getting stronger at the international geopolitical level and national data security. However, this has repeatedly been denied by the Chinese authorities themselves. Several experts from China said that the digital silk road project was a project to create mutual welfare by emphasizing Confucius' ideas. Namely, good relations, sincerity, mutual benefit, and inclusiveness [26].

This value is elaborated into four components that are interrelated and focused on technology. First, China is investing in digital infrastructure overseas, including next-generation cellular networks, fiber-optic cables, and data centers. Second, the initiative focuses on developing advanced technologies critical to global economic and military power, including satellite navigation systems, artificial intelligence, and quantum computing. Third, China recognizes the importance of economic interdependence on its international influence. The Digital Silk Route promotes e-commerce through digital free trade zones, which increase international trade by reducing cross-border trade barriers and establishing regional logistics centers. Fourth, China seeks to build an ideal global digital environment through digital diplomacy and multilateral governance. It includes using multilateral agencies to set technology standards related to telecommunications infrastructure and promote cyber sovereignty at UN forums [27]. These concepts are included in China's grand vision to realize globalization with their characteristics, called Chiglobalization.

The digital silk road project, which aims to create a modern society with the concept of Chiglobalization, is ongoing. To assess and ensure that China's offer above can run following the provisions and ideas. It is necessary to have the participation and diplomacy of all countries to guard it. Because if not, then the worries of western globalization have been considered imperialism will only move from America to China.

IV. CONCLUSION

Nobody would have thought that 2020 would be a challenging year for all inhabitants of the earth because of a pandemic. With this pandemic, human mobility was hampered, the economy collapsed, and many other socio-economic problems. To accelerate economic growth and

connectivity is to realize the digital silk road immediately. From the above explanation, it can be concluded: first, the digital silk road is the creation of a digital infrastructure centered on China, which consists of information communication technology infrastructure and new media to create community connectivity, improve welfare, and collaboration between cultures. Both digital silk road projects require adequate and equitable internet infrastructure in each country. Third, the digital silk road is China's means of realizing Chiglobalization. It is a modern capitalistic society based on information and communication technology with Chinese characteristics by exploring the values of Confucianism.

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