Information support for the New Silk Road project

Sharipa Syzdykovna Nurzhanova¹, Gyulnar Kairollinovna Mukanova², Timurgali Kopbayev³, Nikolay Appolonovich Zykov⁴

¹Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Al-Farabi Avenue-71, Almaty, 050038, Republic of Kazakhstan, ²Ch.Ch. Valikhanov Institute of History and Ethnology, 28, Shevchenko Str., Almaty, 050010, Republic of Kazakhstan ³Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Al-Farabi Avenue-71, Almaty, 050038, Republic of Kazakhstan ⁴Lomonosov Moscow State University, 125009, Moscow, Mokhovaya st., 9, building 1, Russia

Abstract The New Silk Road project is the largest infrastructure project of recent decades. Its successful implementation promises significant economic benefits to participating countries. For the successful implementation of the project, information support is required at all stages of the project. It must be thoughtful and coordinated.

Key words: development of transport infrastructure, economic relations, foreign trade, international projects, information support, China.

Introduction

The most important component of the project is its information support. Media support is intended to explain to the general public the goals and objectives of the project, provide a positive information background, and contribute to the successful implementation of the project. The implementation of the project will significantly shorten the route of delivery of Chinese goods to Europe, strengthen economic cooperation between the countries participating in the project, and promote the development of the regions through which it will pass. In addition to the railway corridor, road transport will also develop successfully. Some countries, for example the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation, have already expressed their interest in developing the project. They discussed a number of joint large-scale projects in the transport sector, including a new highway from Europe through Russia to Asia, and a high-speed railway from Moscow to Kazan. In the future, it will become part of the Moscow-Beijing high-speed highway.

Despite objective difficulties, the project continues to develop. For its successful implementation, an information component is necessary. Recently, many media outlets from different countries have written about the project [9, 10c] The assessment of the project ranges from positive to cautiously critical. It is no secret that the information component of the project contains a certain amount of “sinophobia” or negative perception of everything Chinese [Silver

* Corresponding author: nurgans61@gmail.com
L., Delvin K., Huang C., 2020]. A number of experts insist on the environmental risks of implementing a global project [Mamirkulova G. et al., 2020]. Some shortcomings in organizational aspects were noted. For example, the number of participating countries is still unknown, and the technical details of the project have not been fully worked out. The economic component of the project is not completely clear. The fact is that shipping containers by sea is much cheaper than by rail or road. Some foreign media are wary of the project, justifying this by strengthening the already powerful China if the project is successfully implemented. Despite this, European countries are showing great interest in the New Silk Road project. China's economic interests include expanding markets for its goods. They are already widely represented in Europe. However, the implementation of the project will eliminate the logistics problems of delivering Chinese products to the countries participating in the project.

A number of environmental experts believe that “...Beijing hopes to diversify its energy supplies while increasing its regional and global influence. Expensive financing, interested partners, political miscalculations and the implementation of competing projects are all risks that accompany the project” [Armando E., 2021].

The main part of the project is the development of transport infrastructure, the creation of modern railways and highways. In recent years, the People's Republic of China has been successfully developing high-speed highways on its territory. We have accumulated significant experience in the transport sector. The implementation of the New Silk Road concept will allow the participating countries to obtain modern transport infrastructure and receive significant economic benefits from it. [4.] The road transport corridor through the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation to Europe will improve the transport infrastructure and will contribute to the development of medium and small businesses servicing this route. No less important is the importance of the railway corridor on this route. The countries of Central Asia are showing great interest in it.

As noted by the media, transport and logistics projects proposed by the People's Republic of China are of significant interest to China's neighboring countries and are economically beneficial. The logistics of the project will spread mainly to the territory of Kazakhstan, where transcontinental routes from China will pass, experts assumed several years ago [Cariou, 2018]. In addition to the actual transportation of goods, they ensure the renewal of transport infrastructure, which also seems interesting and economically beneficial for the countries participating in the New Silk Road.

As part of the project, a high-speed highway will be built from Moscow to Kazan. In the future, it will be extended to Tyumen and Yekaterinburg, and then to Irkutsk and Vladivostok. One of the corridors will pass through Kazakhstan, Mongolia to China. Two important projects have been completed - railway and road bridges across the Amur.

According to Xi Jinping, new transport projects will help strengthen regional economic integration, build a unified transport infrastructure, eliminate trade barriers, increase the role of national currencies, and deepen cooperation in the humanitarian sphere.[6, p 45] In addition to creating a unified transport infrastructure, the project implies the expansion of customs cooperation, expansion of financial transactions between countries. This will help exchanges in the fields of culture and science.

**Methodology**

The authors conducted a study of scientific literature on the topic of the Great Silk Road. The empirical basis of the study was publications in the media of different countries of the world, both economic and general political. Based on the analysis of these publications, conclusions were drawn about the attitude of the international community to this global project. Its assessment of the project allows us to identify the interest of certain countries and international
organizations in the implementation of this large-scale project. Various kinds of objections and negative assessments indicate that certain economic circles may not be interested in the successful implementation of the project. However, all publications note the increased economic potential of China as one of the most powerful economic powers in the world. At the same time, some Western countries tend to treat China with some caution, fearing its increased influence in the world.

The research methodology is aimed at predicting how residents of, for example, Eurasia and Central Asia will perceive the future tourism infrastructure of the New Silk Road, and how this fits into these residents’ ideas about the quality of life. Of course, the study of the relationship between the tourism infrastructure of the New Silk Road and the quality of life of residents of individual regions is mediated by the expected effect of the expected rapid development of international tourism. Accordingly, this study uses a historical-comparative approach to study the specifics and commonalities in the tourism infrastructure of the New Silk Road and the quality of life of the population of the mentioned regions in the previous period.

In October 2023, in the tenth year of the project, an international meeting was held in China with the participation of more than 140 countries. Various measures were outlined to enhance cooperation.

Results

Information support for the New Silk Road project is its most important component. The project promises significant economic benefits for the participating countries. Considering the multicultural nature of the population of the Central Asia region and various kinds of “phobias” that can play the role of a “black swan”, more explanatory work should be carried out with the population to create a positive perception of the beneficial consequences of the project. Its successful implementation requires broad public support. Without this, his goals and objectives may remain unfulfilled.

The fact is that the mentality of the inhabitants of Central Asia plays a significant role in the promotion of large projects, since within, for example, the Republic of Kazakhstan, there are such aspects as the daily maintenance of highways. This type of service requires the loyal attitude of residents who can be employed and are interested in the safety of objects. Our earlier research dives into the distant past of the mainland [Mukanova, Nurzhanova, 2016: 15]. Historical sources confirm that in the Middle Ages, the Central Asian routes of the Silk Road were comfortable for traders; Along the way, they could stop here to rest, pray in churches, stock up on water and continue their journey to Europe or, conversely, to China [Mukanova, Nurzhanova, 2016: 29]. Thus, awareness of cross-border highways in local communities plays and will continue to play a key role for builders, employees and clients, especially foreign, commercial projects. The role of public opinion leaders, old-timers, or elders, is very significant, this should be taken into account in order to avoid social conflicts. Domestic political scientists speak out very clearly about the nature of the conflicts in Zhanaozen [Satpaev, Umbetaliev, 2015: 123]. The article focuses on the population's attitude towards public protests and aims to explain why the willingness to participate in protests has been rising. A study on the protests of oil industry workers in the city of Zhanaozen in December 2011 will be presented in order to better understand the causes of the protests, the demands of the protesters and the relationship between state and society. In this regard, the principles of local self-government are important, which in this part of Asia are more effective than business laws or imperative public administration. Negative experience of tsarist imperial practice from 1916: outraged by difficult social conditions, Turkestanis rebelled and destroyed postal services near the large cities of Verny (now Almaty), Przhevalsk (now Bishkek), etc. A positive example from the history of the twentieth century can be the mobilization of Kazakhstan's resources during the Second World War. Then, in the shortest possible time, hundreds of kilometers of inland
railway routes were built and put into operation, along which military cargo and food, warm clothing, and shoes were sent from Kazakhstan to the front of the fight against fascism. These and other examples are given to demonstrate the role of local government; An ordinary resident of Central Asia and Kazakhstan will only agree to participate in the implementation of this or that business model if he clearly imagines real benefits not only for himself and his loved ones (which is also important), but also for the state as a whole. This is an axiom. It is no secret that informing the population in modern conditions of globalization is not an easy task. From the twentieth century, the experience of another Asian state is very valuable. “Freedom of the press, freedom of the media must be subordinated to the overriding needs of the integrity of Singapore.” Singaporean President Lee Kuan Yew justified strict censorship of press content by saying that the newspapers were funded by Singapore's foreign ill-wishers. At the same time, he pursued a policy of bringing together the island’s various ethnic groups, with the aim of creating a new unique identity for the people of Singapore, based on multiculturalism [The Singapore Story, 2000: 560]. It is a fact that Lee Kuan Yew's authoritarian style of government provided the state with information security at the stage of reforms and strengthening of state identity (multiculturalism). In the post-reform period, as part of the “Singapore miracle”, where Lee Kuan Yew was able to demonstrate his extraordinary talent as a manager and designer, the world economy and international relations were bipolar. The post-war trend towards democratization of public life, towards the liberation of the peoples of the “Third World” coexisted with various kinds of autocracies with undoubted leaders who had political charisma (Chiang Kai-shek, Sukarno, etc.) and pro-socialist state formations in Asia. At the same time, Lee Kuan Yew initiated the incubation of a new “caste” of Singaporean patriotic managers, law-abiding first and foremost. Thus, a strong ideological framework was provided as a guarantor of the inviolability of the economic, social, and cultural reforms achieved with great effort. The Singaporean experience certainly serves as a platform for understanding the role of media resources in accompanying transcontinental projects that affect the interests of citizens of many states. According to experts, the Republic of Iran has enormous potential, both in terms of the availability of natural and energy reserves, and in terms of human resources, to actively promote the idea of launching the railway Silk Road. It is curious that even in ancient times Herodotus wrote: “There is nothing in the world that travels faster than Persian travelers.” Obviously, Iranian experts believe that with the expansion of the transport network and efficient communications, Iran can reap real benefits. This is beneficial, for example, for commercial communications between the countries of Central Asia and the Gulf states carried out through Iran. The creation of a free trade zone and monetary commonwealth can also be very effective. Due to the geographical location of Iran, especially the Gilan province, exploiting this advantage can bring many benefits and improve its economic status at the regional and global levels [Alipour, 2018: 68]. The Iranian Republic has a powerful media potential, which today covers both satellite channels and information points abroad, in the countries of Central Asia. Thus, the modern Iranian press is divided depending on its orientation - conservative or reformist. The conservative ones include “Keyhan” “Universe” (the oldest publication), “Iran” (a government body), “Jomhuri-e Islami” (“Islamic Republic”), “Ittelaat” (“News”), “Resalat” (“Mission”), ”Farda” (“Future”), ”Akhbar” (“News”), ”Jam-e Jam”. The main reformist publications: “Etemade Melli” (the press organ of the “People's Trust Party”), “Etemad” (the organ of the same party), “Aftabe Yazd” and “Khambastegi”. Among the centrist publications, Kargozaran (the press organ of the Kargozaran Sazandegi party) is famous. The Hamshahrri newspaper is the press organ of the Tehran City Hall. Under the auspices of the Tehran City Hall, magazines are also published: “Hamshahrri Javan” (youth), “Hamshahrri Khanevad” (family), etc. [Parsian, 2015:17] And if the majority of publications in the interested states welcome the Silk Road project, then most of the law-abiding masses of the population will be imbued with the idea and support it. The position of the government of the People's Republic of China on the issue under study is characterized by patronage and
positive media coverage. Those who are not privy to the details of the “Great Game” in Central Asia will be interested in learning about the past of the region and the history of neighboring societies and states. The book of the Kazakh historian-orientalist K.Sh. Khafizova [Khafizova, 2015] is devoted to the study of the history of relations between the states of East and Central Asia through the prism of the concepts: “Silk Road”, “dialogue” and “civilization”. The idea of the Silk Road as an ancient trade route connecting China with European countries through Central Asia was first voiced by the German scientist, President of the Berlin Geographical Society Ferdinand von Richthofen in 1877, as researcher Xia Shuang writes [Shuang, Halmakshinova, 2021] The idea is active. The Silk Road is used by the Chinese leadership to popularize the project. As a result, since the launch of the “One Belt, One Road” initiative, the degree of attention to the definition of the “Silk Road” has not only not decreased, on the contrary, this concept has become firmly entrenched in modern vocabulary, directories and the global media industry [Jacobs, 2020]. An analysis of the information content of the American and Indian media on the topic “China’s One Belt, One Road Initiative” shows that there is a special abbreviation to denote it. In short, it looks like this: “One Belt, One Road” (BRI) [Niu, RellyView, 2021: 270-287]. News coverage of the BRI initiative in the USA and India plays a certain role in shaping the attitude of the population of these countries towards China as the initiator of the project, and this attitude is predominantly negative, the authors believe [Niu, RellyView, 2021: 270].

It is desirable to have a well-thought-out organizational information structure responsible for covering the project and its various components. It seems that the efforts of the ministries of foreign affairs or other government agencies alone are insufficient for this purpose. Wider participation in the project by media from different countries is necessary. In the modern world, international trade is of great importance as a source of economic development for countries. All parties benefit from increased trade turnover. Issues of logistics and speed of delivery of goods to consumers are of paramount importance. Of course, the cost of cargo delivery also plays a big role. Of utmost importance is the overcoming of various bureaucratic barriers to the movement of goods, the availability of modern transport corridors and warehouse infrastructure.

An example of information support for the New Silk Road project is the website of the main Chinese newspaper People's Daily people.com.cn. It regularly publishes news about China in a number of foreign languages, including English and Russian. He regularly informs the general public about the progress of the project and about international meetings at which the project is discussed. For example, the issue of the “New Silk Road” will be discussed at a meeting with the foreign ministers of the Central Asian states in May 2023. Issues of cultural cooperation will also be touched upon at this meeting.

References


