

This project indicates that the proliferation of multiple connectivity projects suggests a qualitative shift in global politics from a trans-Atlantic pivot which dominated most of the post-World War II international affairs to a trans-Eurasian one. In this respect, the main research objective of the project is to assess the ways in which such large-scale connectivity projects have been deployed by both traditional and resurgent major international actors to promote distinct visions and versions of global order. The projected investigation will undertake a parallel assessment of four connectivity projects: (i) the EU's Global Gateway (GG), China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the USA's Build Back Better World (3BW), and the Indo-Japanese Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC). The claim is that these large-scale connectivity projects are not merely about establishing infrastructure or facilitating trade, but also – and primarily – about managing the turbulence of contemporary international relations. As such, these projects are about order promotion.

To this end, the project draws on Complexity Thinking (CT) to develop a multi-dimensional theoretical framework to tackle the research question. The specific aims of this project intend to assist with the effective operationalization of these research intentions by:

- Examining how and why 'connectivity' projects have become the preferred strategy for managing the hyper-social environment of a dynamic and constantly changing global life.
- Exploring whether the growth in and contestation among connectivity projects suggest a new world order in the making and, if yes, what kind of order.
- Explaining the ways in which connectivity projects reorganize polities, publics, and markets
- Demonstrating how distinct connectivity projects reveal different expectations about the rules, norms, and operation of the international system.

The project proposes a novel and comprehensive framework for the analysis of the place and role of connectivity projects in the nascent order promotion trajectories across Eurasia. The claim is that the attention to economic figures and logistical bottlenecks has overlooked the larger framework of relations within which such connectivity projects are located. To address these limits, the project intends to create synergies between existing research strands and bring them together into a unified framework of analysis. The project identifies the EU's GG, China's BRI, the USA's 3BW, and the Indo-Japanese AAGC as the main order-promoting initiatives across Eurasia.

The study of the order-promotion of large scale connectivity projects will be operationalized through the examination of three distinct taxonomies: (i) power; (ii) governance, and (iii) context. While distinct and clearly specified, the taxonomies are mutually reinforcing and overlapping into a coherent and comprehensive research framework for the explanation and understanding of struggle for influence underpinning the EU's GG, China's BRI, the USA's 3BW, and the Indo-Japanese AAGC across Eurasia. This research design presages four distinct work packages (WPs), each of which will focus on a distinct connectivity project and outlines explicit tasks. The effectiveness of such approach is backstopped by the general methodological orientations of abduction and transdisciplinary. Such orientation is operationalized through a mix of specific qualitative and quantitative methods such as case studies, process tracing, comparative cross-case analysis, semi-structured interviews, documentary analysis of primary and secondary sources, and workshops. This comprehensive framework facilitates the examination of the full spectrum of causal sequences that shape, frame, and direct the trajectories of order promotion undertaken by the EU's GG, China's BRI, the USA's 3BW, and the Indo-Japanese AAGC. The approach unchains the investigation from viewing connectivity project as merely economic grand schemes or logistical networks, and allows the project to undertake a robust and meaningful analysis of the dynamics of order promotion across Eurasia and the complexity of interactions between the actors promoting and participating in such large-scale connectivity projects.