

Review of: "The Strategy of Russia in the Trans-Eurasian Connectivity"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I am pleased to see the author making an original contribution, while there are many studies of the bilateral impact between China and other countries in the context of the BRI, there are far fewer studies of other countries. How does the BRI impact relations between non-China countries? What connectivity strategies are other countries pursuing?

Russia is an important case study given its geographical proximity and long rivalry with China, the current geopolitical competition between China and Russia over influence in Central Asia (an area of traditional Russian influence), and various other reasons. The author could have spent more time introducing the Russia case study and explaining why it was interesting and important.

The INSTC is discussed frequently but the long-form of the acronym is never given nor is the idea explained/ introduced.

The introduction should contain a clear research question and an explanation of why this question is both important and how it makes an original contribution to our academic understanding.

The author uses very little concrete evidence - data on trade, investment, economic growth etc - and makes frequent references to other work to back up the various claims. There is no methodological discussion - how does one measure the gains or impact from big transport investment? The author doesn't distinguish journalistic claims, forecasts, and rigorous evidence, all three seem to be treated as being equally 'true'.

The discussion of transport connectivity doesn't distinguish hard (roads, rail) from soft infrastructure (tariffs, customs facilitation etc). The reader is often not clear what aspect of connectivity is being discussed.

The focus of the article is too often confusing with the discussion jumping back and forth between different countries (Iran, US, China, Russia, and others) and different transport links.

The US-led sanctions on Russia are described as both crippling and not having had the expected negative impact - which is it?