WORKING PAPER

Mapping China's Belt and Road Initiative in the Albanian Media: A Content Analysis Study

Visar Sylaj

Mapping China's Belt and Road Initiative in the Albanian Media: A Corpus Content Analysis Study

Visar Sylaj

Shaanxi Normal University,

Xi'an, China

Abstract

Launched in 2013, China's "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI) is the largest transnational economic and trade cooperation link of the 21st century connecting 138 countries and 30 international organizations through land and maritime routes. International media has constantly covered this remarkable achievement, but the themes and narratives framing the initiative vary from one country to another and from media to media, and are shaped by countries' characteristics. This study draws on the case of the China and Albania partnership under BRI and China-CEEC "17+1" cooperation network and applies the corpus content analysis method on the media coverage of the Belt and Road Initiative and the China and Albania cooperation in Albania. Data composed of online news articles from Albanian public media: Albanian Telegraphic Agency (ATA) and Albanian Radio and Television (RTSH); Albanian private media: Shqiptarja.com, Gazeta Shekulli, Gazeta Panorama, Gazeta Dita, Gazeta Telegraf and Javanews; and international media in Albania: Voice of America (VOA) and China Radio International (CRI) Albania, dated between 2014 and 2019, were selected. The study suggests that the Albanian media and the international media operating in Albania have framed the BRI as a framework of cooperation and development.

Similarities and differences between reports were analyzed in terms of recurrent themes and linguistic expressions used to describe the Albania and China cooperation and the perception of Belt and Road Initiative in Albania. While the Albanian public media RTSH and ATA and the Albanian private media Shqiptarja.com, Gazeta Shekulli, Gazeta Panorama, Gazeta Dita, Gazeta Telegraf, and Javanews focus on topics related to the economic and cultural aspects. The international media operating in Albania offers a different representation of China's BRI. When representing BRI, the American media VOA focuses on political aspects. Instead, the Chinese media CRI Albania focuses on the economic and development aspects of the BRI framework. **Keywords:** *Belt and Road Initiative; China; Albania; News framing; Content analysis; Corpus Analysis.*

Introduction

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is without doubt the most grandiose transcontinental long-term trade cooperation and infrastructural linkage program that the modern world has witnessed so far, connecting over half of the world's population amongst Asia, Europe, and Africa under one big trade and development framework that accounts for more than 1/3 of the world's GDP (OECD, 2018). Together with the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), BRI embodies China's large-scale international investment framework and economic development strategy (Huang, 2016). Being the renown replica of the ancient Chinese Silk Road, the first global trade route in history connecting people and cultures, the initiative seeks to upgrade the world's existing economic landscape by engaging in mutual cooperation, trade facilitation and mutual benefits among the BRI countries (Lingliang, 2016).

Since firstly heralded by the Chinese President Xi Jinping during his prominent speech at Nazarbayev University, Astana, Kazakhstan, in 2013, (Mitrovic, 2018; Sárvári & Szeidovitz, 2018) and subsequently outlined by China's National Development and Reform Commission in 2015 (Huang, 2016), the BRI has been progressively enlarging over the years, including 138 member countries and 30 international organizations with over 200 trade contracts in Asia, Europe, and Africa (Belt and Road Portal, 2019b) and an impressive trade's volume of over $6 trillion in 6 years, from 2013 to 2018, (Belt and Road Portal, 2019a) and reaching a record of $1.34 trillion in 2019 (China Daily, 2019). As economic and strategic cooperation has been rapidly expanding and infrastructure connectivity is smoothly progressing, over 14,000 trade trips has been reported among 50 Chinese cities and 15 European countries by the end of March 2019 (Belt and Road Portal, 2019a).

A special importance in the connection between Western Europe and China has taken the relationship with the Central, East and Southeast European (CEEC) countries (Vangeli, 2017). Despite the historical longstanding warm diplomatic relations between China and CEEC countries, in the recent years a reinforcement of relations has taken place (Pavlićević, 2018). Although Xiao, Cheng and Wang (2018) report that CEEC countries have a high sustainable development within the BRI framework, most of CEEC countries are low-performing economies (Musabelliu, 2017) and less developed than Western Europe. Therefore, China and CEEC's cooperation is not much accounted for economical advantages, but mostly because of the geographical strategic position. CEEC countries are commonly considered a gateway to Western Europe (Hackaj, 2018). 'China Europe Land-Sea Express Corridor' (CELSEC) and 'Three Areas Seaport Cooperation' are two important corridors implemented in the region that

connect China to Europe (Pavlićević, 2018). The cooperation between China and CEEC started in Budapest with the creation of the 16+1 Summit in 2011 and with the first meeting in Warsaw, Poland, in 2012, where 16 countries participated (11 EU member states: Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and 5 non-EU countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia) (Vangeli & Pavlićević, 2019) and invigorated in 2016 when President Xi Jinping visited Czech Republic, Serbia and Poland. The summit was also expanded when Greece joined the framework in 2019, now on known as 17+1 Summit.

The CEEC countries are not homogenous. Politically, CEEC countries are divided into EU member states and non-EU member states. The non-EU member states are part of a small group known as Western Balkans (WB). The WB countries economic performance is lower compared to EU member CEEC countries and underperform in many sectors as traditional infrastructure in the transport, energy and information sectors (Holzner & Grieveson, 2018). Characterized by long periods of transitions and conflicts, WB countries are identified as "fragile democracies" (Musabelliu, 2017), however they are also considered to be more close to China in many aspects (Vangeli & Pavlićević, 2019). As Hackaj (2018) notes, "[f]rom the business point of view, compared with many countries situated in-between China and Europe, Balkan countries generally offer: (i) higher political trust to Chinese counterparts; (ii) a better sovereign credit rating; and (iii) safe and decent returns for the money that Chinese bankers may be willing to invest" (4). The WB countries are also considered the natural "bridge" between Western Europe and China and are crucial for extending the BRI cooperation in the Western Europe (Jian, 2018). Therefore, China has invested significantly for the infrastructural and economic development of the area (Jian, 2018).

Being on a strategic position on the Adriatic coast, Albania has the potential of becoming an important member of the Western Balkans in the cooperation with China. In 2017, Albania officially joined the Belt and Road initiative, enlarging the cooperation in the trade, culture, education, healthcare, HR, and many other sectors (Invest in Albania, 2019). Since then the cooperation between both countries has increased. Hackaj (2018) informs that 103 Chinese firms are operating in Albania since January 2017. According to the Albanian Institute of Statistics (2019a), Chinese companies made up 17.4 % of all foreign companies operating in Albania in 2018 and 78,7 % of them are involved in the energy recourses sector. In 2019, China was Albania's third principal trade partner for goods exported (INSTAT, 2019b). Rovena Moçka, director of Tourism Development at Albania's Ministry of Tourism and Environment, claims that the number of Chinese tourists has grown by 65% compared to the last year due to

the Albania's visa-free policy for Chinese nationals (CRI, 2019a). The relations are also intensified on the education and cultural aspects. More and more Albanians are studying Chinese (CRI, 2019b) and there is a significant number of Albanian students that are choosing to study in China (CRI, 2019b).

On February 1st 2019, the Municipality of Tirana celebrated for the first time the Chinese New Year and the Chinese Lantern Festival with decorations and a big ceremony at Scanderbeg Square (Xinhuanet, 2019). As stated by Zhou Ding, Chinese ambassador in Albania, during the celebration of the 70th anniversary of Sino-Albanian's diplomatic relations, the recent bilateral cooperation has started a "new page" of successful cooperation (Albania Daily News, 2019).

With the increased visibility of the Sino-Albanian's strengthened diplomatic relations and there is a need to understand the perceptions of the Albanian media on this perspective. Therefore, this paper seeks to answer the question of how China's Belt and Road Initiative is framed in the Albanian public and private media and to what extent is it represented. To address these questions, this study takes a corpus content analysis approach of media framing on a sample of relevant news items chosen from 10 media online media operating in Albania.

Literature review

Since Chinese President Xi Jinping first presented it, the BRI has increased in visibility in the global media (Mitić, 2017). Several scholars have investigated the effects, the perception and framing of BRI in various countries. Smirnova (2017) reports a raising enthusiasm on BRI cooperation in Russian media and think tank publications during March 2015 and January 2017. By performing a discourse analysis, she argues that, while being tightly pragmatic, the Russian media is however interested in the Chinese investments and optimistic about the China-Russia cooperation.

On the other hand, by taking into analysis the presence of BRI in the Slovak media, Kironská and Turcsányi (2017) argues that while the neutral image is prevalent, China is yet to some extent negatively framed in the Slovak media. However, they show that there is an increasing trend of the BRI mentioning in TV, radio, print, online media and that the overall perception of the BRI cooperation is positively framed.

Zhang and Wu (2017) compare China and BRI's framing in China's China Daily and UK's Financial Times on a data sample of news headlines issued from March 2015 to March 2016. By using a corpora content analysis, they evidence the contrast between the two media.

While China Daily's keywords offer a positive framing of China as a "peace-loving nation, an international co-operator, and an emerging global economic and responsible power" (Zhang & Wu, 2017:29), Financial Times keywords are partly positive and partly negative. China and BRI's images in the Financial Times coverage are both framed as having a significant positive impact on the global economy and as a negative obstructive force and geopolitical threat. Anunne, Thuy, Yan and Yan, (2019) reports a similar conclusion. They researched a large sample of 200 newspapers, published from May 2017 to March 2019 in Nigeria, Malaysia, and Vietnam and found both optimistic and pessimistic framing.

Arifon, Huang, Yue and Melo (2019) reports their findings on the perception of BRI in the European media's. By using a content analysis of media framing, they compare the articles published in the Chinese and European media. While they show that the Chinese media emphasizes the importance of the mutual cooperation and unrestricted trade, the European media is shown to share political, economic, and strategic concerns.

Inversely, investigating on a large sample of the Middle East countries' media perception, Qian (2018) reports an overall optimistic image of China and BRI. However, he points out that bias concerns exists in the Western media on the account of China's BRI and due to their interests in the region they explicitly or implicitly frame some misunderstanding and wrong perception of China in the Arabic countries. Therefore, he argues that a major understanding of BRI countries' media reports is needed to ensure the transmitting of correct information on the BRI framework and avoid misunderstandings and misconceptions. Similarly, Mitić (2017) analyzes the perception of BRI and 16+1 framework on 120 news items in Serbia from 2014 to 2017. Within his analysis, he points out that there is a prevalence of positive framing of 87.5% on BRI and 16+1 cooperation in the Serbian media and BRI is increasingly framed as "opportunity", which is in contrast with the international representation of "threat" on the account of Serbia-China's cooperation, as framed New York Times' article of 2017. Matura (2018) performs a discourse analysis study on the BRI and China media articles in Hungary and Slovakia from 2013 to 2017 and argues that the overall perception on the BRI is mostly neutral, but he warns that both Hungarian and Slovakian public and private media are politically oriented. The media in both countries is short of an understanding of the BRI and risk to give an imprecise coverage of it.

The results taken from the literature show mixing views on the overall media perception on BRI cooperation and points out the necessity and importance to increase media studies in order to ensure the correct understanding of the Initiative (Matura, 2018).

Methods

Sample

In this study a randomized sample of 462 articles dated between 2014 and 2019 were selected from 10 online newspapers' archives, including Albanian public media: Albanian Telegraphic Agency (ATA) and Albanian Radio and Television (RTSH); Albanian private media: Shqiptarja.com, Gazeta Shekulli, Gazeta Panorama, Gazeta Dita, Gazeta Telegraf, and Javanews; and international media operating in Albania: Voice of America (VOA) and China Radio International (CRI) Albania. The online newspapers selected vary on the typology of readers, quality of tabloids and relevance. The diversity of the sample ensures the generalizability of results and covers a representative sample of any readership.

Procedure

The articles were collected from the newspapers' online archives based on the keywords "Kina" (China), "Një Brez, Një Rrugë" (One Belt One Road) and "Rruga e Mëndafshit" (Silk Road), under the name how BRI is known in Albania. The online media archives were accessed during the period of November and December 2019. A shortcoming to this procedure might be considered the fact that some articles might not have specific reference to the selected keywords. However, this procedure guarantees a large representativeness of articles related to the topic of this research. To examine the news items collected a corpus content analysis was chosen as appropriate method to answer the two questions of this study, how China's Belt and Road Initiative is framed in the Albanian public and private media and to what extent is it represented. This study follows the suggestion of Kutter & Kantner (2012) to combine the corpus linguistic analysis with the content analysis technique. Content analysis is an interpretation technique of textual data widely used in communication studies and social sciences (Macnamara, 2005). The technique operates by coding large amount of text into categories or themes (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1980). Berelson (1952) outlines the content analysis method as a "research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (p. 18, cited in Macnamara, 2005). Content Analysis is, therefore, a useful "research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context" (Krippendorff, 1980).

Kutter & Kantner (2012) defines a corpus as "a collection of texts assumed to be representative of a given language or sub-set of language (e.g. spoken vs. written texts,

newspaper vs. academic texts) or of a thematic focus (e.g. humanitarian military intervention) that has been prepared for computer-aided corpus analysis" (9). Both these techniques are appropriate for the use of computer software to deal with large text analysis. While the corpora analysis requires a large number of texts for getting better evidence, the present corpora is topic-specific and encompass the coverage of the articles related to this topic.

In this study, a content analysis was operated on the news items through a coding process and categorization of the relevant themes of the articles. Secondly, a corpora analysis was performed on the news items using AntConc v. 3.5.8 (Anthony, 2019), a famous software package for the analysis of language data and corpora developed by Laurence Anthony at Waseda University.
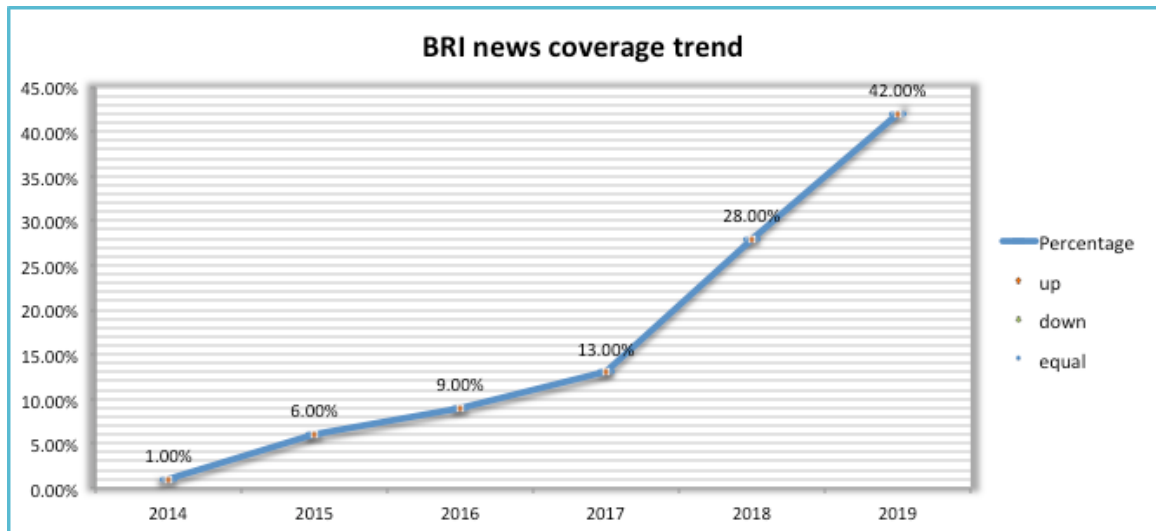
Results

A total of 462 articles covering China and the BRI framework published during the period from 2014 to 2019 were analyzed. Of these articles, 163 (35%) were published in RTSH, 74 (16%) in ATA, 17 (4%) in Shekulli, 24 (5%) in Dita, 28 (6%) in Shqiptarja, 8 (2%) in Panorama, 9 (2%) in Telegraf, 27 (6%) in Javanews, 100 (22%) in CRI and 12 (3%) (Table 1). The majority of articles were published in Albanian public media RTSH, while 237 (51%) were published in Albanian public media, 96 (21%) were published in Albanian private media and 112 (24%) were published in international media in Albania.

No	Year	RTSH	ATA	Shekulli	Dita	Shqiptarja	Panorama	Telegraf	Javanews	CRI	VOA
1	2014			2		3					
2	2015	4		2	1	7	2			12	
3	2016	18		4	4	6	2	1	5	2	
4	2017	16		6	4	7		1	6	22	
5	2018	57	34		8	1	2	1	6	20	2
6	2019	68	40	3	7	4	2	6	10	44	10
Total		163	74	17	24	28	8	9	27	100	12

Table 1. Numbers of the media articles sample on the Belt and Road Initiative

The frequency of articles published per years has increased through the 6-year period showing a significant growing interest on the BRI and China cooperation information (Figure 1). A peak of 194 articles occurred in 2019, which is 42% of the overall publications on BRI.

Figure 1. Numbers of the media articles sample on the Belt and Road Initiative

Content Analysis results

The majority of articles 443 (96%) were news reports and only 9 (2%) were opinions and 10 (2%) were interviews. After the analysis of the categories, the category that was majorly covered was the "economic" topic. The findings suggest that the Albanian public media pay more attention to the economic aspect of the BRI framework (RTSH 34%, ATA 42%) and to a lesser degree to cultural cooperation between China and Albania, development, political affairs, sports, information on China, education and history. The Albanian private media are also focused on the economic aspects of the BRI framework (Shekulli 53%, Dita 50%, Shqiptarja 64%, Panorama 50%, Telegraf 44%, Javanews 59%), with Shqiptarja, Javanews and Telegraf covering also cultural and political topics.

Differences of coverage are found in the international media operating in Albania. When representing BRI, the American media VOA focuses on the political aspects. On the other hand, the Chinese media CRI Albania enhances the economic (43%) and development (21%) aspects of the BRI framework (Table 2).

Media	Politics	Economics	Culture	Development	Education	Sports	Information	History
RTSH	18	56	31	29	7	9	8	5
ATA	10	31	14	17	1	0	1	0
Shekulli	2	9	1	2	1	0	0	2
Dita	3	12	2	3	0	0	0	4
Shqiptarja	3	18	6	0	1	0	0	0
Panorama	2	4	1	1	0	0	0	0
Telegraf	2	4	3	0	0	0	0	0
Javanews	7	16	4	0	0	0	0	0
CRI	12	43	17	21	4	0	1	2
VOA	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**71**	**193**	**79**	**73**	**14**	**9**	**10**	**13**

Table 2. Media articles on BRI divided by thematic categories.

Corpora analysis results

The corpora after transcribing comprised 48075 words and 253897 tokens as represented in Table 3.

| Items	RTSH	ATA	Shekulli	Dita	Shqiptarja	Panorama	Telegraf	Javanews	CRI	VOA
Words	9365	6422	4795	6573	3213	2245	1899	5607	5569	2387
Tokens	63093	38804	19911	27521	14825	8249	6081	27717	39064	8632

Table 3. Words and tokens of BRI coverage corpora in Albania.

Following Xiao (2019), only nouns, verbs and adjectives were analyzed, while other functional words that do not provide any description were omitted. This technique is particularly useful for understanding the importance given to a specific word in a corpus. Figure 2 is an overview of all the relation of words used in patterns with the keywords "Kina" (China), "Një Brez, Një Rrugë" (One Belt One Road) and "Rruga e Mëndafshit" (Silk Road).

Analyzing the corpus with the wordlist functionality, a list of word frequencies was obtained. These frequencies show the recurrent words used to frame the BRI framework in the Albania media. The frequency words of the corpus are analyzed in word roots, which is the indivisible part of the morpheme that carries the most significant semantic properties and comprises nouns, verbs and adjectives related to the root morpheme (i.e., bashkëpunoj v. (cooperate), bashkëpunim n. (cooperation), bashkëpunues adj./n. (cooperative), etc). The obtained most recurrent words of the total corpus are: "Bashkëpun*" (Cooperation) 1205 words, "Zhvill*" (Development) 1014 words, "Tregt*" (Trade) 762 words, "Invest*" (Investment) 683 words, Marrëdhën* (Relations) 589 words, "Rajon*" (Region) 454 words.

These frequency words suggests that the general perception of China's BRI is a framework of economic mutual cooperation.

Figure 2. The collocation network analysis framing the Belt and Road Initiative coverage in the Albanian media sample articles.

The word frequencies of the total corpus suggest that "Bashkëpun*" (Cooperation) (2,51%) and "Zhvill*" (Development) (2,11%) are the most recurring words framing the Initiative and that all the recurrent words highlight the understanding of the BRI as a cooperative and development framework.

Results of the corpus word frequency divided by presence in the singular media coverage are showed in Figure 3. From this prospective, the results indicate that the word roots "Bashkëpun*" (5,49%) and "Zhvill*" (4,65%) are majorly used by CRI Albania, while the other word roots as "Rajon*" (1,4%) and Marrëdhën* (1,06%) are less used in their framing of BRI framework. In the same verge with CRI Albania are the usages of ATA ("Bashkëpun*" (4,03%) and "Zhvill*" (2,55%)), Shekulli ("Bashkëpun*" (2,04%) and "Zhvill*" (2,04%)), Javanews ("Bashkëpun*" (2,05%) and "Zhvill*" (1,73%)), Panorama ("Bashkëpun*" (3,96%)) and Shqiptarja ("Bashkëpun*" (2,86%)).

The RTSH's framing of BRI is recounted as "Tregt*" (2,99%) and "Zhvill*" (2,21%) and at a lesser degree to "Invest*" (0,86%). On the contrary, Telegraf uses the word root "Marrëdhën*" (2,11%) and less the word root "Rajon*" (0,05%). Similarly, Dita uses majorly the word root "Marrëdhën*" (0,96%), but uses at the same degree the other word roots. While, VOA associates BRI with the word root "Invest*" (1,26%) and uses less the word root "Bashkëpun*" (0,34%).

Figure 3. The collocation network analysis the media articles sample on the Belt and Road Initiative.
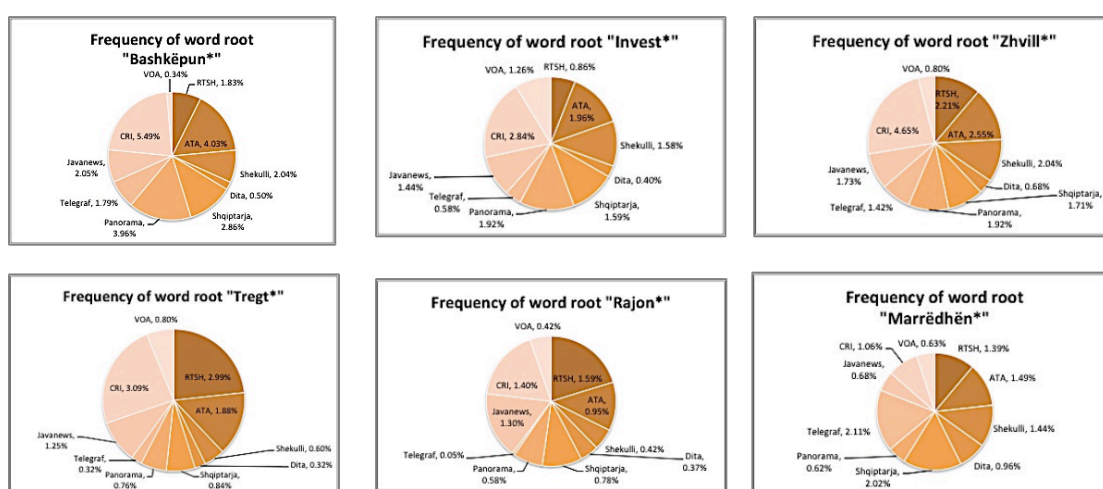
Conclusion

With the growing importance of the China and China's Belt and Road Initiative in world and locally in the Western Balkans area, the relationship between China and Albania has also steadily increased. Since Albania joined the 16+1 Summit in 2012 and the Belt and Road Initiative in 2017, there was an increase of the economic cooperation between Albania and China and between and the other partner counties in the 16+1 and BRI framework. However, the communication framing of China and the BRI in the international media has encountered mixed interpretations. This has raised a need for more knowledge in the coverage of BRI in various countries. To address this need for research, this study explored the perception and representation of China's Belt and Road Initiative in the Albanian media. The results of this study show that the number of articles covering the China's BRI is still low and mostly represented by news reports, which suggest that the Albanian media and journalists needs to

understand more about the BRI and the China and Albania cooperation and that the Initiative needs more efforts to be promoted in Albania. This suggestion is in line with Matura (2018). However, a growing trend of articles representing BRI in the Albanian public and private media and international media operating in Albania is observed. Through a corpus analysis on the sample articles of the 10 online media operating in Albania was found that there is an emphasis of the word roots "cooperation" and "development" to represent China's BRI.

The findings suggest also that the Albanian media has framed the BRI as a fruitful method of bilateral economic cooperation. While the Albanian public media RTSH and ATA and the Albanian private media Shekulli, Dita, Shqiptarja, Panorama, Telegraf, Javanews focus on topics related to the economic and cultural aspects. The international media operating in Albania offers a different representation of China's BRI. When representing BRI, the American media VOA focuses on political aspects. Instead, the Chinese media CRI Albania focuses on the economic and development aspects of the BRI framework.

This paper has taken an initial step towards understanding China's BRI image covered in the Albanian online news contexts. The evidence collected in this study is however limited to the words chosen by the media to describe China and BRI in the articles. Future studies could examine implicit discourse of opinion articles on the progress of the China and Albania's cooperation.

References

Albanian Daily News (2019) A Shared Dream, a Shared Future. Retrieved on January 15, 2019 from https://www.albaniandailynews.com/index.php?idm=34868&mod=2.

Anthony, L. (2019). AntConc (Version 3.5.8) [Computer Software]. Tokyo, Japan: Waseda University. Available from https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software.

Anunne, U. K., Thuy, P. N. P., Yan, J. T. Y., & Lifeng, Y. Framing Analysis of Belt and Road Initiative Coverage in Major Nigerian, Malaysian, and Vietnamese Newspapers.

Arifon, O., Huang, Z. A., Yue, Z., & Yue, A. (2019). Comparing Chinese and European Discourses regarding the "Belt and Road Initiative".

Belt and Road Portal (2019a) China's goods trade with B&R countries reaches over 6 trln dollars. Retrieved on January 15, 2019 from https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/qwyw/rdxw/863

01.htm.

Belt and Road Portal (2019b) 已同中国签订共建"一带一路"合作文件的国家一览，Retrieved on January 15, 2019 from https://www.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/info/iList.jsp?tm_id

=126&cat_id=10122&info_id=77298.

Berelson, B. (1952). Content analysis in communication research.

Brezina, V., McEnery, T., & Wattam, S. (2015). Collocations in context: A new perspective on collocation networks. International Journal of Corpus Linguistics, 20(2), 139-173.

China Daily (2019) China's trade with BRI countries booms in 2019. Retrieved on January 15, 2019 from https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/qwyw/rdxw/86301.htm.

CRI (China Radio International) (2019a) Shtohen të rinjtë kinezë, turistë në Shqipëri. Retrieved on January 15, 2019 from http://albanian.cri.cn/1501/2019/07/03/65s180 336.htm.

CRI (China Radio International) (2019b) Studentët shqiptarë zgjedhin Pekinin për studimet master dhe PhD. Retrieved on January 15, 2019 from http://albanian.cri.cn/1561/2017 /12/07/23s166350.htm.

CRI (China Radio International) (2019c) Udhëtimi 70-vjeçar - Arsimi. Retrieved on January 15, 2019 from http://albanian.meldingcloud.com/interchange/more/3107/20191203/38 8488.html.

Grieveson, R., & Holzner, M. (2018). *Investment in the Western Balkans* (No. 27). Policy Notes and Reports.

Hackaj, A. (2018). China and Western Balkans. *Cooperation and Development Institute, Tirana*.

Huang, Y. (2016). Understanding China's Belt & Road initiative: motivation, framework and assessment. *China Economic Review*, *40*, 314-321.

INSTAT (Albanian Institute of Statistics) (2019a) Foreign Businesses in Albania 2016-2018, http://www.instat.gov.al/media/6567/foreign-and-joint-enterprises-statistics-2016-2018.pdf.

INSTAT (Albanian Institute of Statistics) (2019b) Foreign Trade in Goods, http://www.instat.gov.al/media/6615/press-releasess-december2019.pdf.

Invest in Albania (invest-in-albania.org) (2019) Albania's Tourism and Energy Sectors Offer Potential for Chinese Investors, https://invest-in-albania.org/albanias-tourism-and-energy-sectors-offer-potential-for-chinese-investors/.

Jian, J. (2018). China in Central Asia and the Balkans: challenges from a geopolitical perspective. In *The Belt & Road Initiative in the global arena* (pp. 241-261). Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore.

Kironská, K., & Turcsányi, R. Q. (2017). Slovak Policy towards China in the Age of Belt and Road Initiative and 16+ 1 Format,". *China-CEE Institute*, (2).

Krippendorff, K. (1980). Validity in content analysis. In E. Mochmann (Ed.), *Computerstrategien fÃ¼r die kommunikationsanalyse* (pp. 69-112). Frankfurt, Germany: Campus. Retrieved from http://repository.upenn.edu/asc_papers/291.

Kutter, A., & Kantner, C. (2012). Corpus-based content analysis: A method for investigating news coverage on war and intervention. *International Relations Online Working Paper*, *1*.

Lingliang, Z. (2016). Conceptual analysis of China's belt and road initiative: a road towards a regional community of common destiny. *Chinese Journal of International Law*, *15*(3), 517-541.

Macnamara, J. R. (2005). Media content analysis: Its uses, benefits and best practice methodology. *Asia Pacific Public Relations Journal*, *6*(1), 1.

Matura, T. (2018). The Belt and Road Initiative depicted in Hungary and Slovakia. *Journal of Contemporary East Asia Studies*, *7*(2), 174-189.

Mitić, A. (2017). Belt and Road Strategic Communication Resilience: Lessons from the SERBIA-BRI Frame Analysis. *China-CEE Institute Working Paper*, *19*.

Mitrovic, D. (2018). China's Belt and Road Initiative: Connecting and transforming initiative. In *The Belt & Road Initiative in the Global Arena* (pp. 17-34). Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore.

Musabelliu, M. (2017). China's Belt and Road Initiative Extension to central and eastern European countries-sixteen nations, five summits, many challenges. *Croatian International Relations Review*, *23*(78), 57-76.

OECD (2018), "The Belt and Road Initiative in the global trade, investment and finance landscape", in OECD Business and Finance Outlook 2018, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/bus_fin_out-2018-6-en.

Pavlićević, D. (2019). A power shift underway in Europe? China's relationship with Central and Eastern Europe under the Belt and Road Initiative. In *Mapping China's 'one belt one road' initiative* (pp. 249-278). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Qian, X. (2018). "One Belt One Road" Initiative and China and the Middle East Media Exchanges. *Journalism*, *8*(5), 239-245.

Sárvári, B., & Szeidovitz, A. (2018). Political Economics of the New Silk Road. In *The Belt & Road Initiative in the Global Arena* (pp. 117-140). Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore.

Smirnova, L. (2018). Ambivalent Perception of China's "One Belt One Road" in Russia:"United Eurasia" Dream or "Metallic Band" of Containment?. In *Communicating National Image through Development and Diplomacy* (pp. 241-260). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Vangeli, A. (2017). China's engagement with the sixteen countries of central, East and Southeast Europe under the belt and road initiative. *China & World Economy*, *25*(5), 101-124.

Vangeli, A., & Pavlićević, D. (2019). Introduction: New perspectives on China–Central and Eastern Europe relations.

Xiao, H., Cheng, J., & Wang, X. (2018). Does the Belt and Road Initiative Promote Sustainable Development? Evidence from Countries along the Belt and Road. *Sustainability*, *10*(12), 4370.

Xinhuanet (2019b). Chinese lantern festival opens in Albanian capital, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2019-02/02/c_137793306.htm.

Zhang, L., & Wu, D. (2017). Media representations of China: A comparison of China daily and financial times in reporting on the belt and road initiative. *Critical Arts*, *31*(6), 29-43.