

Preface

In the last 10 years, much has been written about the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its flagship project the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The scale of the Initiative and the controversies associated have garnered ongoing scrutiny among academics and researchers. This is the third book of the series initiated by the China Study Centre at the Karakoram International University, Gilgit Pakistan. The previous two books explored the political and economic implications of the CPEC. This book goes beyond the CPEC by including the regional perspectives on BRI and CPEC.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPE) has entered its second phase, building upon the foundations laid during its first phase primarily focused on infrastructure development, energy projects, and transportation networks. The second phase aims to expand and diversify the scope of the corridor, emphasizing industrial cooperation, socio-economic development, agriculture modernization, and the integration of technology. CPEC's second phase represents a comprehensive effort to enhance Pakistan's economic landscape, leveraging Chinese investment. The success of this phase will largely depend on effective management, addressing security and environmental concerns, and ensuring that the benefits are equitably distributed across different regions and communities. However, there have been concerns about the continuation of the CPEC 2.0.

With a multidisciplinary focus, we invited 20 senior and budding academics and researchers to critically scrutinize BRI and CPEC. However, we were constrained to include 13 chapters only. The book has been divided into three parts. The first part of the book includes essays and perspectives on regional political economy. National perspectives have been included in part two. Since the Centre is based in Gilgit-Baltistan, we decided to include essays and perspectives on the local economy in the last part.

Introducing CPEC 2.0., the first chapter sheds light on the positives and negatives of the first phase of CPEC while also addressing its challenges in its second decade. It suggests that despite that the Chinese academia and diplomats have reservations about implementing mega projects under CPEC, they remain committed to working with the Government and people of Pakistan to overcome any obstacles. The success of CPEC in its second decade (2024-2033) is contingent on Pakistan's economic and political stability.

In the second chapter, the authors emphasize the importance of BRI for the development of the western region in China. They suggest the Silk Road Economic Belt presents unprecedented prospects for Xinjiang, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of its strategic significance as it addresses

challenges such as economic underdevelopment, resource integration, and the shortage of skilled professionals in Xinjiang, proposing a roadmap for developing Xinjiang as a core area of the Silk Road Economic Belt to capitalize on the new opportunities for high-quality growth presented by the Belt and Road Initiative.

China has introduced a dual circulation policy that aims at reforming the domestic market in tandem with external market cooperation, particularly with neighboring economies. The third chapter explores the rationale behind the dual circulation policy and its role in bolstering China's status as an independent, developed, and consumer-driven market both domestically and globally. The chapter examines the DC policy as an integrated framework for China's development within the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Since the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) promises all-encompassing social and economic benefits not only to China and Pakistan but also to communities in Afghanistan, the next chapter examines CPEC's dual role as a 'catalyst for regional economic prosperity and as a springboard for geopolitical shifts from traditional geopolitics to geo-economics'. However, it warns about the complex security landscape of CPEC's expansion into Afghanistan. Further, this chapter sheds light on the nexus between various terrorist groups that threaten regional stability. The chapter suggests the need for a robust, collaborative security strategy to harness CPEC's full potential and mitigate the persistent threats.

Chapter five discusses the "China development model" which refers to a combination of state-led development, export-oriented growth, and infrastructure development. The authors delve into the reasons behind China's involvement in promoting peace in Afghanistan and Pakistan and highlight China's contribution to the political and economic stability of its Western neighbor countries through initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The incredible success and profound progress made by China in various sectors, especially in trade & commerce, technology, and the industrial field, has enormous opportunities to learn. The next chapter examines opinions and perceptions from the masses and the experts on economic development and prosperity. It aims to provide an understanding of the nuances of development in China.

Examining CPEC without considering the projects and investments in power generation will remain incomplete as the energy projects carry the major share among the CPEC projects. It has been noted that access to energy services in

many countries worldwide falls short of the necessary goals for human development. Affordable and clean energy access is not only a global objective, but it is also at the core of the sustainable development agenda for 2030. SDG-7 emphasizes the essential role that energy plays in supporting all other goals across sectors. CPEC projects are intertwined with the SDGs for accessible and clean energy. Chapter seven focuses on four sectors - socioeconomic, business, industry, and agriculture - to evaluate affordability, while coal, hydel, solar, and wind is the focus of the analysis of clean energy. It argues that the CPEC energy is a catalyst for socioeconomic development, as energy affordability and economic progress are interdependent, and will provide opportunities for foreign investment inflow and will benefit the common man.

Yet another issue worth investigating is related to agriculture in Pakistan. Chapter eight examines the relationship between the growth of Pakistan's agriculture industry, food security, and the progress of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This chapter has analyzed the interconnected progress that contributes to achieving SDGs, ensuring a more food-secure, economically stable, and sustainable future for Pakistan. It also assesses the effects of these advancements on the environment and society through stakeholder analysis to identify national and international players that can work together to maximize the benefits of CPEC on agriculture as strategic utilization of CPEC can assist Pakistan in achieving SDG targets and goals related to food security.

Given that climate change has the potential to reshape our world in the next 75 years, it is crucial to examine the interconnections between climate change and freshwater reservoirs. In chapter nine, the authors examine the Indus Basin Irrigation System (IBIS) and suggest that the freshwater resources are crucial for food security, domestic and industrial use, and power generation along China- reservoirs Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). However, they are susceptible to the impacts of climatic variability, socio-economic factors, and transboundary issues. As the existing storage capacity is insufficient to accommodate the projected increase in discharge water (inflow), there is a necessity for the construction of 2 to 3 large reservoirs or proposed dams upstream or downstream within the Indus River system, the chapter argues.

Likewise, the next chapter focuses on how mega projects may lead to environmental damages like cutting down of forests, loss of natural habitat of wildlife, effluent, and GHG emissions. The unlimited exposure to toxic effluent and GHG emissions in the environment is due to the huge industries and energy sector of CPEC. The chapter argues that if the issues are not

addressed on time, the region might observe worse consequences of environmental degradation.

The last part of the book includes three chapters on the local economy of Gilgit-Baltistan. The first chapter in this part investigates the socio-economic implications of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. It focuses on investigating the residents' support for the development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the perceived impacts and personal benefits of the CPEC project in Gilgit-Baltistan. The study breaks down subjective well-being into five distinct domains: Health, Material, Community, Emotional, and Educational Well-being. It reports a significant positive relationship between the perceived subjective well-being of residents and support for the CPEC project. The results validate Material Well-being, Community Well-being, Educational Well-being, Health Well-being, and Emotional Well-being, demonstrating that each dimension significantly influences support for the CPEC project.

While highlighting the importance of the second phase of CPEC, the second last chapter of the book emphasizes the need for industrialization in Gilgit-Baltistan to address poverty, unemployment, and regional inequalities. Likewise, it has been argued that the issues with Special Economic Zones (SEZs), such as the one in Maqpoondass, need resolution. Among many important issues, the chapter suggests resolving security, political, and geopolitical challenges and inter-provincial disagreements are essential for the success of CPEC.

Finally, the last chapter of the book examines an important and emergent issue, i.e., Gilgit-Baltistan's susceptibility to Fifth Generation Warfare (5GW), particularly in the context of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). It has been argued by the author that the novel technologies have altered how wars were waged in the past; now, states confront each other by using soft power and disseminating disinformation to achieve their desired goals. He suggests that major fault lines ignite 5GW in G-B, including disputed constitutional status, sectarian conflicts, ethnic divisions, separatist tendencies, and geostrategic significance. The chapter proposes a comprehensive strategy to inculcate media literacy campaigns to mitigate the adverse repercussions of 5GW. It also provides original insights into the importance of understanding local perceptions and national narratives in the region and calls for regional stability and cooperation to counter external exploitation. The study concludes that Gilgit-Baltistan's instability has significant implications for regional and global stability and emphasizes the urgent need for proactive measures to address these challenges.

The discussions in these thirteen chapters delve into various aspects of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), underscoring the intricate interplay between foreign policies and the significance of economic interdependence among regional countries. The contributors adeptly navigate Pakistan's decade-long journey through its political and economic landscape since the inception of the BRI, providing insightful analysis and perspectives.

This book promises to be a valuable resource for a diverse audience, including readers, researchers, academics, policymakers, and practitioners. Its comprehensive coverage and in-depth exploration of the BRI and CPEC offer a nuanced understanding of their impact on regional dynamics and Pakistan's development trajectory.