

# #1h junge DGO on Web: Micro-politics from a Macro-initiative: Study of Belt and Road Projects in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan

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**Moderation: Valerie Brosch (JDGO)**  
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Foto: Oyuna Baldakova

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has attracted heightened international attention and inspired polarizing interpretations. Critics believe that the initiative could be a 'debt trap' used to extract geostrategic concessions from debtors. Proponents, on the other hand, contend that China, replicating its own success story, can help countries in the Global South overcome their structural bottlenecks and enable them to repeat the trajectory of China's rapid economic growth. This presentation analyses the BRI from the perspective of international development studies. Comparing China's BRI investments in two Central Asian countries – Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan – it argues that proposed BRI projects often reflect China's internal logic of development, but that the extent and quality of implementation vary largely across the BRI countries depending on the interests of local interest groups and broader political economy issues. The presentation addresses the financial setup of projects, which play an important role and are frequently overlooked in the BRI analyses.

Oyuna Baldakova is a PhD Candidate at the Graduate School of East Asian Studies (GEAS) at FU Berlin and a fellow of the DFG. In her research she analyzes China's Belt Road Initiative from the perspective of international development studies on the levels of China's official discourse, its domestic development and external economic policies, and actual financing and implementation of infrastructure projects in Central Asia. Valerie Brosch is studying for a Master's degree in Eastern European Studies at Freie Universität Berlin. Previously, she completed her Bachelor's degree in Russian Culture and Social Science. Since 2019, Valerie has been an active member of Junge DGO and its events team.