



# Introduction to the special issue: electronic commerce in China's Belt and Road Initiative

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It is my pleasure to introduce ECR's special issue on "Electronic Commerce in China's Belt and Road Initiative" with eight research articles that investigate and analyze what is arguably the most ambitious infrastructure investment effort in history. Announced in 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has initiated development and investments in 152 countries and international organizations in Asia, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the Americas. The BRI offers new import and export options, creating new production chains designed to spur the development of regional and global economies. Our special issue explores the opportunities and challenges provided electronic commerce through this ambitious initiative.

I want to extend my gratitude to the guest editors of our special issue: Rong Du, Jian Mou, Lei Sun and Jin Li, all of Xidian University, and Jason Cohen of the University of the Witwatersrand. Our guest editors were active not just in insuring quality of the published research, but also in promoting new business research on an important but little studied initiative. My guest editors and I also wish to thank Jing Zhao and Zhen Zhu of China University of Geosciences, and the reviewers and participants at the Wuhan International Conference on E-Business 2019 for their contributions towards making this special issue a success.

Our special issue contains eight new research articles that span a broad gamut of topics from machine learning in cross-border, multicultural consumer analytics, to behavioral studies of risk perception of BRI's offerings. Our first two articles present studies in the machine learning analytics of customer feedback and customs classifications. This is followed by two behavioral analyses focused on talent training, search and risk perception respectively. Subsequently, we present a model of B2B cross-border market micro-structure designed for price discovery in BRI initiatives. The next two papers look at business strategy formation with topic modeling of reviews and a valence framework in information systems, respectively. Our final

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article addresses product-logistics bundling in the context of BRI's cross-border trade.

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