



## **The Practical Analysis of Belt & Road Initiative: In the Framework of Seeing Like A State**

LULU JIA

PhD Candidate, NOVA Law School

### **RESUMO**

O Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), um grande projeto iniciado globalmente pela República Popular da China, atraiu a atenção do mundo nos últimos anos. As autoridades chinesas declaram que é uma plataforma internacional de cooperação econômica para promover o desenvolvimento e a prosperidade e para construir uma comunidade de destino humano. No entanto, podemos ouvir vários tipos de pontos de vista de outros canais. Umas pessoas consideram-no como um projeto de ajuda internacional tal como o Plano Marshall dos Estados Unidos, que promoveu a recuperação da Europa Ocidental e ampliou a influência da América na Europa após a Segunda Guerra Mundial; Umas pensam de forma pessimista que este projeto é como se fosse o projeto da União Soviética desenvolvendo a Sibéria,

que precipitou o colapso da União Soviética; enquanto outros consideram-no até como estratégia geopolítica ou diplomática, mesmo que seja um slogan vazio. De fato, atualmente, não é uma tarefa fácil explicar o que o BRI é exatamente para o mundo, dado o fato de que é um conceito novo e ainda está em desenvolvimento. Mas, pelo menos, podemos chegar a um consenso de que é um projeto iniciado pelo estado. No livro *Seeing Like A State*, Scott argumentou que episódios trágicos de projeto iniciado pelo Estado se originam de uma combinação perniciosa de quatro elementos: primeiro, o ordenamento administrativo da natureza e da sociedade que fornece a capacidade de engenharia social em larga escala; segundo, a ideologia altamente modernista que fornece o desejo; Terceiro, um estado autoritário que fornece a determinação de realizar esse desejo; quarto, uma sociedade civil prostrada que não tem capacidade de resistir a esses planos. Este artigo vai analisar o BRI no quadro de quatro elementos para prever se o BRI será bem-sucedido ou não.

Na primeira parte, apresento as informações básicas sobre o BRI, o conceito, a motivação, os objetivos e os resultados. E depois, na segunda parte, descrevo e analiso as situações detalhadas dos quatro elementos que podem impactar o sucesso de grandes projetos iniciados pelo estado na China. Por fim, uma breve conclusão argumenta que os quatro elementos de Scott não correspondem ao BRI, o que pode ter uma boa perspectiva com extensa participação em todo o mundo.

## **PALAVRAS-CHAVE**

BRI; ordenação administrativa; ideologia altamente modernista; estado autoritário; sociedade civil

## ABSTRACT

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a globally big project initiated by the People's Republic of China, has attracted the world's attention in recent years. Chinese authorities declare it is an international economic cooperation platform for promoting development and prosperity and building a community of human destiny. However, we can hear kinds of the different point of views from other channels. Someone treats it as an international aid project like America's Marshall Plan which promoted the recovery of west Europe and enlarged America's influence in Europe after the Second World War; Someone thinks pessimistically it likes the project of Soviet Union developing Siberia, which precipitated the Soviet Union's collapse; while others even regard it as geopolitical or diplomatic strategy, even an empty slogan without actual effect and so forth. Indeed, currently it is not an easy job to explain what BRI exactly is to people concerned, given the fact that it is a new concept and still in developing. But at least, we can make a consensus that it is a state-initiated project. In the book *Seeing Like A State*, Scott argued that tragic episodes of state-initiated project originate in a pernicious combination of four factors: First, the administrative ordering of nature and society which provides the capacity for large-scale social engineering; Second, high-modernist ideology which provides the desire; Third, an authoritarian state that provides the determination to act on that desire; Fourth, a prostrate civil society that lacks the capacity to resist these plans. This article is going to analyze BRI in the framework of these four factors to anticipate whether the BRI will be successful or not.

In the first part, I introduce the basic information about BRI: the concept, motivation, aims and the forth. And then in the second part, I describe and analyze the detailed situations of the four factors which may impact the success of big projects initiated by the state in China. At the last, a brief conclusion argues that Scott's four factors don't match BRI which may have bright prospect with extensive participation worldwide.

## **KEYWORDS**

BRI; administrative ordering; high-modernist ideology; authoritarian state; civil society

## **1. Introduction of BRI**

On September 7 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping gave a speech entitled “Promoting People’s Friendship for a Better Future” at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan and he proposed to jointly build the “Silk Road Economic Belt”. On October 3 2013, Xi Jinping delivered a speech entitled “Working Together to Build China-Asian Destiny Community” in Indonesian Parliament and he proposed to jointly build the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road”. The “Silk Road Economic Belt” and the “21st Century Maritime Silk Road” are jointly referred to as the “Belt and Road Initiative”. And its basic principles are openness and cooperation, harmony and inclusiveness, market-based operation, mutually beneficial and win-win for all countries. Mainly it includes five directions and areas. Three major directions in the Silk Road Economic Belt: first, from northwest China, northeast China, through Central Asia, Russia to Europe, the Baltic Sea; second, from northwest China through Central Asia, West Asia to the Persian Gulf, the Mediterranean; third, from southwest China through the Central South Peninsula to the Indian Ocean. The two major directions of the 21st century Maritime Silk Road include: first, from the Chinese coastal port through the South China Sea, through the Straits of Malacca to the Indian Ocean, extending to Europe; second, from the Chinese coastal port through the South China Sea, extending to the South Pacific.

Then why do Chinese authorities propose the "Belt and Road Initiative" now? In general, people think it has both economic and political reasons. On the economic aspect, the development of China got a new level which needs more resources and a bigger market in the world so that China wants to exploit new cooperation space and tap into new cooperation potential. In the past 40 years until 2012, China's real GDP grew by an average of 9.5% per year and its GDP per capita rose from 155\$ to just over 8836\$, benefitting from Opening up and Reform policy. But in 2012, GDP growth began to slow down to 7.7% from 9.3% a year earlier and this growth moderation became persistent.<sup>1</sup> On the political aspect, the Foreign Minister of China Wang Yi said in a speech Belt and Road was not a "geostrategic concept" but was part of efforts to build "a community with a shared future for mankind together with countries around the globe".<sup>2</sup> While at the meantime a number of academics hold the opposite opinion. And some experts argue China is the world's largest trading power now and shall participate in the negotiation and formulation of various international trade rules and systems. In the past, the current international order and norms were designed by developed countries led by the United States after the Second World War and internationalization had shaped China, while now it is China's time to shape internationalization instead. Besides, some experts argue China also launch such an initiative for looking for cooperation opportunities in the west, based on existing cooperative institutions and mechanisms in order to response American Asia-Pacific rebalancing strategy which is considered to be to compete with China's rising power and influence in the region.

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<sup>1</sup> National Bureau of Statistics of China, GDP (2018), <<http://data.stats.gov.cn/swf.htm?m=turnto&id=562>>, accessed 26 May 2019

<sup>2</sup> Wang Yi, The Belt and Road Initiative Is Not a "Marshall Plan" but a Vivid Practice of Jointly Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China, (23 Aug. 2018). <[https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1588358.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1588358.shtml)> accessed 26 May 2019

## **2. Combination of Four Factors Analysis**

Considering BRI is a state-initiated project without a doubt, then Scott's theory that four-factor combination may lead to the failure of the state-initiated project may be used to analyze the possibility of failure. What we need to bear mind is that in Scott's point of view, these four factors are an organic integration, once any one of them can't meet the requirements, then the conclusion must be not ensured. In this part, I am going to analyze these factors one by one, and make the real situations in China clear.

### **2.1 The administrative ordering of nature and society**

As we all know, China has a long unitary monarchy tradition. In 221 BC, after defeating 6 other states in the Warring States period, First Emperor of Qin (Ying Zheng) unified China and founded an unprecedented centralized dynasty in Chinese history, and opened the era of imperialism in China. To consolidate and strengthen empire integration, the emperor with his officials, inherited, reformed, and innovated a series of political or legal systems which were used by subsequent dynasties until the end of the monarchy in the early 1910s. Although there were divisions and turmoils at regular intervals in the past 2 thousand years, China still is in a strong centralized system now. People might wonder how it is possible that the Chinese imperial autocratic state can last for more than 2 thousand years? So we have to agree that the state's strong and superb ability of administrative control to nature and society plays a key role.

First of all, precocious dominance tools are the technical capability of administrative ordering, which contributes to social communication and integration. Social communication tools are steel that connects social buildings. More than 2 thousand years ago, the First Emperor of Qin unified the language, currency, units of measurement, created the

standardized high-speed public road and so forth. It is obvious that these tools are basic factors to help the state control the whole territory. Those tools look very simple, but until now European Union and even some states still doesn't get the level where China got 2 thousand years ago. What's more, China also has been having the household registration system for more than 2 thousand years, from Qin dynasty (if not longer). It helps the state know its people in order to govern them effectively. Now according to the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Identity Card of Residents, all Chinese citizens who are 16 years old and the elder shall apply for their identity card. The name, sex, ethnic group, date of birth, permanent domicile, identity number, photograph shall be registered on the identity card. The identity number of each citizen is their unique and life-long identity code, which is given by the public security organ according to the state's standards on the identity card of residents. Not difficult to imagine, unified identity card has a great number of self-evident functions in administrative ordering. For example, it can be used as supervising the movements and activities of people to keep the political national stability, income and production of people to assess the national economy and collect taxes and so forth. Without an ID card, people can't take many public transportations; people can't use the private internet and phone card, which will make online shopping, communicating, calling taxi become impossible. Nowadays in the information age, urban people can't live without smartphone and internet which also is the most important source of personal data.

Secondly, the bureaucratic system is an organizational capability of administrative ordering. The effective bureaucratic system which is an execution network can relay the orders of the central government, collect and report the information of local people efficiently. The bureaucratic structure was originally established in Qin dynasty as well, whilst the feudal system had was gradually abolished in China. The emperor obtained the power of appointing officials who were correspondingly responsible to the emperor directly. In Sui dynasty (581-619), Emperor Wen of Sui created the Imperial Examination. Everyone had

the chance to become an official once they passed the examination by their own talent, rather than their lineage, property, status or identity. What's more, the Imperial Examination at the highest level was supervised by the emperor. So the persons who passed the Final Imperial Examination were called as the students of Son of Heaven (Emperor of China). Then, they became professional officials of central or local governments. So whatever in political duties or ethic, they had obligations to be loyal to the emperor to maintain imperial order, govern the imperial territory and people. Now the goals and values of the bureaucratic system have changed according to the Constitution of China, but the functions of the bureaucratic system in maintaining social order and governing the people were more or less succeeded. That is a very significant reason why China has a super stable and super safe society now.

Thirdly, unified ideology is the thought governance tool of administrative ordering. In ancient Chinese philosophy, the emperor was called the Son of Heaven and the power of the emperor was from Heaven, namely "divine right of the emperor" which also was very popular in Europe in Middle Ages. But the different point was that in Chinese society there was almost no concept of religion that could restrict the power of secular authorities. So the emperor's power had no external restriction and also any internal person and agency almost had no legitimate reason to challenge or doubt such absolute power, either. People believe the emperor's absolute power is natural, legitimate and undoubted. For example, the characters of the jade seal of First Emperor of Qin are "power from Heaven and last forever". In the early Han dynasty, Emperor Wu of Han began to implement the policy of Only Respecting Confucianism. From then on the Confucianism became Chinese unified ideology until the end of the monarchy at the beginning of the 20th century. As we all know, Confucianism was used as a kind of autocratic political theory. Its core was loyal to the monarch in the state, and listen to the father in the family. And patriarchal system mainly was just from Confucianism, and that's an integration system of political, social, legal and

moral norms. In short, the emperor was the general father of the big state, the father was the specific emperor of the small family. All the people had the obligation to obey the emperor just as all the kids had the obligation to obey the father. In this meaning, we can say China is a big family and the emperor is the general father who has the natural and undoubtedly power to govern all family members. This patriarchal system integrates political power, ethnic power and teaching power tightly. Of course, the patriarchal system already officially finished in the early 20 century with the end of the monarchy. But being influenced by this tradition, Chinese still thinks highly of the opinions of their parents, the officials, the president very much. When moving our attention to modern China, we can see the situation have no essential change. According to Constitution of China, Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the important thought of Three Represents, the Scientific Outlook on Development, and the Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era is the guidance ideology, which could help to unite the Chinese people and govern the whole state.

The last but not least, according to 2017 Global Governance Index Report by East China University of Political Science and Law, China ranks third in global governance index, which also strongly proved China good ability of administrative ordering. Indisputably, China is quite great at state governance and has a powerful ability to govern natural and social resources. American political economist Francis Fukuyama argues weak or failed states are the source of many of the world's most serious problems, from poverty to AIDS to drugs to terrorism.<sup>3</sup> In conclude, even though administrative ordering is one of the potential risks of the project, the administrative ordering of nature and society reflects the state's governance ability. and good administrative order is a vitally necessary factor for the success of the state-initiated project as well.

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<sup>3</sup> Francis Fukuyama, *State-building* (New York: Cornell University Press 2004), Page IX.

## 2.2 High-modernist ideology

In the context of *Seeing Like A State*, high-modernist ideology is best conceived as a strong, muscle-bound, version of the self-confidence about scientific and technical progress, the expansion of production, the growing satisfaction of human needs, the mastery of nature (including human nature), and above all, the rational design of social order commensurate with the scientific understanding of natural laws.<sup>4</sup>

Without a doubt, there is almost no concept of modernism in China before the First Opium War in 1840-1842. After the failure of the Opium war, China recognised that the implements in the west are better, so China began to study technology from Europe. In 1861-1895, from the end of the Second Opium War to the end of First Sino-Japanese War, China launched a series of industrial movements throughout the country and the slogans and goals have been "study from the western for self-improvement" and "study from the western to seek wealth." At the meantime, China began its modernization in military and civilian industries. With the failure of the First Sino-Japanese War, the public recognized that only studying the technology from the west was not enough and China need the constitutional system. In 1912, Chinese people ended the monarchy and established the Republic of China, one year later than Portugal. But the establishment of the Republic was just at the beginning line of the road of people's freedom and nation's renaissance. Actually, with the aggression and occupation of foreign powers and Civil war, China almost had no peaceful and stable civil and international environment to develop democratic politics, and science, technology. In 1949, the People's Republic of China founded and state adopted a people's democratic dictatorship system and socialist ideology. Owing the urgent desire to change the state of

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<sup>4</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing Like A State* ( New Haven: Yale University Press), Page 4.

poverty and weakness in China for more than a century, the authority launched a series social and political movements to improve people's livelihood and national prosperity. But actually, those movements caused a series of great tragedies.

Afterwards, Given the country's backward situation, Deng Xiaoping, the second generation leader, clearly put forward the argument that "science and technology are the primary productive forces" in 1988. And Deng set forth Four Modernizations to develop the fields of agriculture, industry, national defence and science and technology to save the Communist ideal. But as we all know, Deng is a typical pragmatist. Deng famously said that it doesn't matter if a cat is black or white so long as it catches mice, which reflects the statesman's wisdom rooted in Chinese culture. Besides, in Chinese culture, there is no such thing as unique, eternal, absolute truth, nor does it advocate this pursuit. Concern for secular life is a major feature of Chinese culture. Pursuit of practical results is the Chinese people's code of conduct. Since the 1990s, a group of Chinese and foreign scholars have highlighted similarities between pragmatism and Confucian thinking.<sup>5</sup> And now the Chinese state has still been following pragmatist strategy re-awakened by Deng. So, high-modernist ideology (if exists) is not popular concept in China.

## 2.3 Authoritarian state

In general, authoritarian state that is the opposite of democratic state encompasses all forms of undemocratic rules. It has two main characteristics: limited political participation; and lack of respect for fundamental human rights. Article one paragraph one of the Constitution of

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<sup>5</sup> Wang Cheng bing, "Approaches to the Study of Pragmatism in Today's China", *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, Volume 49, Issue 10,2017

China rules that China is a socialist state under the people's democratic dictatorship, which means that the CPC always represents the fundamental interests of the overwhelming majority of the people and the people's democratic government under the leadership of the CPC implements democracy within the people, gradually expands socialist democracy, develops socialist democratic politics, and exercises dictatorship over hostile forces and criminals inside and outside the country and the authoritarian method can only be used to treat hostile forces in order to maintain people's democratic political regime .

In 2014, at the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the National People's Congress, General Secretary of CPC Xi Jinping pointed out: People's democracy is the life of socialism. Without democracy, there is no socialism, socialist modernization and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.<sup>6</sup> Specifically, China has the system of people's congresses marked by electoral democracy, the multi-party cooperation and political consultation system marked by deliberative democracy, and the system of grassroots mass autonomy at the grassroots level marked by direct democracy; on another hand, human rights have been extensively respected and constantly developing.

First of all, according to the Constitution, all power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people and the National People's Congress and the local people's congresses at various levels are the organs through which the people exercise state power. The people's congress system which reflects the principle of people's sovereignty is the fundamental political system of China. The National People's Congress and the local people's congresses at various levels are constituted through democratic elections. They are responsible to the people and subject to their supervision. All administrative, judicial and procuratorial organs of the State are created by the people's congresses to which they are

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<sup>6</sup> Speech by Xi Jinping at the Celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Founding of the National People's Congress, The National People's Congress of People's Republic of China (5 Sep. 2014) <[http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc/xinwen/2014-09/06/content\\_1877767.htm](http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc/xinwen/2014-09/06/content_1877767.htm)>, accessed 26 May, 2019

responsible and by which they are supervised. What's more, according to Electoral Law of the People's Republic of China for the National People's Congress and Local People's Congresses, representatives to the National People's Congress and to the People's Congresses of provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Central Government, cities divided into districts, and autonomous prefectures shall be elected by the people's congresses at the next lower level; representatives to the people's congresses of cities not divided into districts, municipal districts, counties, autonomous counties, townships, nationality townships, and towns shall be elected directly by their constituencies. All citizens of the People's Republic of China who have reached the age of 18 have the right to vote and stand for election, regardless of ethnic status, race, sex, occupation, family background, religious belief, education, property status or length of residence, except persons deprived of political rights according to law.

Second of all, The multi-party cooperation and political consultation system under the leadership of the Communist Party of China is a basic political system in China, which is conducive to maximizing people's democracy. It is different from the bipartisan or multiparty competition system, and it is also different from the one-party system. This system was formed and developed in China's long-term revolution, construction, and reform practice. It is a basic political system suited to China's national conditions, a socialist political party system with Chinese characteristics, and an important part of China's socialist democratic politics. It means: The CPC is in a leading and ruling position; the democratic parties are the participating parties of China; the CPC and the democratic parties have formed a new type of political party that unites and cooperates; the CPC and the democratic parties supervise each other. First, the Communist Party of China conducts political consultations with the democratic parties on major principles, policies, and important issues, and implements mutual supervision. Second, members of the democratic parties occupy an appropriate number in the organs of state power and perform their functions in accordance with the law.

Third, members of the democratic parties serve as the leading positions of the state and local people's governments and the judiciary; the people's governments at all levels communicate with the democratic parties through various forms and play their role in participating in the administration of state affairs. Fourth, the democratic parties have participated in the consultations on major national issues through the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). Fifth, the Chinese Communist Party supports the democratic parties to participate in reform, opening up, and socialist modernization.

Third of all, the system of grass-roots mass autonomy reflects the essence of people's democracy. According to the Constitution, The residents committees and villagers committees established among urban and rural residents on the basis of their place of residence are mass organizations of self-management at the grass-roots level. The directors, vice-directors and members of each residents or villagers committee are elected by the residents. The content of grassroots mass autonomy includes democratic elections, democratic decision-making, democratic management, and democratic supervision. As a prerequisite for grass-roots self-government, democratic elections refer to the directors, deputy directors, and members of the villagers (residents) committees elected by the villagers (residents) in the community. No organization or individual can designate or appoint. Each member of the villagers (residents) committee shall serve for a term of three years and must be reelected at the expiration of the term of office. As a key part in the grass-roots self-government, democratic decision-making refers to in matters involving the vital interests of all villagers (residents) in the community, the villagers (residents) conduct collective discussions in accordance with certain procedures and make decisions according to the opinions of the majority. The villagers' (residents') conference and the villagers (residents) representatives' conference are important forms and ways for the broad masses of the people to make democratic decisions. As a fundamental manifestation of grass-roots mass autonomy, democratic management refers to matters involving the immediate

interests of the villagers (residents) in the community are not only decided by the villagers (residents), but also the villagers (residents) committee must listen carefully to the villagers (residents) people's opinions, organise the villagers (residents) to actively participate in community affairs management. As an important part of the guarantee of grassroots mass autonomy, democratic supervision refers to the villagers (residents) in the community supervising the work of the villagers (residents) committee and various public affairs and public welfare undertakings in the community to ensure the implementation of democratic decision-making and democratic management.<sup>7</sup> Last but not least, Chinese people enjoy various of human rights and freedoms protected by laws, mainly including four aspects, namely political rights and freedoms, personal rights and freedoms, freedom of religious belief, economic, cultural and social rights.

In terms of political rights and freedoms, except the right to vote and to be elected that already described in the above, citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, procession and demonstration, and Citizens of the People's Republic of China have the right to criticize and make suggestions regarding any state organ or its functionary. Citizens have the right to make complaints to, charge against and exposures of any state organ and its functionary for violation of law or dereliction of duty. In terms of personal rights and freedoms, Freedom of the person of citizens is inviolable in China. No citizen may be arrested except with the approval by the decision of a people's procuratorate or by the decision of a people's court, and the arrests must be performed by a public security organ. Unlawful detention, deprivation or restriction of citizens' personal rights and freedoms are prohibited. The personal dignity of citizens is inviolable. The residences of citizens are inviolable. Freedom and privacy of correspondence of citizens are protected by law. In terms of freedom of religious belief,

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<sup>7</sup> Peng Haihong, "The Grassroots Mass Autonomy System Reflects the Essence of People's Democracy", Qstheory ( 26 Oct. 2018). <[http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/hqwg/2018-10/26/c\\_1123616940.htm](http://www.qstheory.cn/dukan/hqwg/2018-10/26/c_1123616940.htm)> accessed 26 May 2019

citizens enjoy the freedom of religious belief. No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in or not believe in any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in or do not believe in any religion. Actually, China is a multi-religious country. Chinese religions mainly include Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Christianity. Chinese citizens are free to choose, express their beliefs and demonstrate their religious identity. According to incomplete statistics, there are more than 100 million religious believers in China, more than 85 thousand places for religious activities, about 300 thousand religious faculty members, and more than 3, thousand religious groups. Religious groups also have 74 religious institutions that train religious faculty.<sup>8</sup>

Certainly, I am not planning to defend China's democratic systems are perfect. Actually, China is still on the way of developing its democratic system and rule of law, and China still has a long distance with the highly democratic countries. But China is not an authoritarian state at least.

#### **4. Prostrate Civil Society**

The one of most commonly used definition of civil society was created by Civicus who conceives civil society as the arena outside the family, the state, and the market and it is created by individual and collective actions, organizations, and institutions to advance shared interests, namely, civil society is broad and covers non-governmental organisations, activists, civil society coalitions and networks, protest and social movements, voluntary

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<sup>8</sup> The Status of Freedom of Religious Belief in China, *The State Council Information Office of People's Republic of China(2000)*, <<https://www.scio.gov.cn/zfbps/ndhf/1997/Document/307974/307974.htm>> , accessed 26 May 2019

bodies, campaigning organisations, charities, faith-based groups, trade unions and philanthropic foundations.<sup>9</sup>

The constituent elements of civil society are various non-governmental and non-corporate civil organizations, civil movements, including civil rights organizations, various industry associations, private non-profit organizations, and mutual aid organizations, interest organizations etc. Non-governmental, non-profit, independent, voluntary are the four important characteristics. Italian Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci portrayed civil society as a special nucleus of independent political activity, a crucial sphere of struggle against tyranny. Moreover, in someone analyses this relationship of state and civil society is depicted as a zero-sum game: the stronger the state, the weaker the civil society. In an authoritarian state, it is almost impossible to have a strong civil society.

According to general point of view, there is no civil society in ancient China. Even from 1949 to 1978, there is almost no civil society either in China because at that time any non-governmental, independent and voluntary groups are not suppressed by the state, and the majority of people have never heard about this concept. Actually, almost all resources and opportunities in society and every corner of the society was controlled by the state. After Reform and Opening up, new Constitution (1982) admitted the citizens had the right of association. In the 1990s, reform and opening up in various fields of Chinese society had been fully carried out. In 1992, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China formally proposed the establishment of a socialist market economic system which provide the living soil for civil society, and Chinese civil organizations have achieved substantial

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<sup>9</sup> *Civicus*, Who We Are, *Civicus*, <<https://www.civicus.org/index.php/who-we-are/about-civicus>>, accessed 26 May 2019

development. According to the official statistical report<sup>10</sup>, there were 355 thousand social groups in the country, an increase of 5.6% over the previous year. There were 400 thousand private non-enterprise units in the country, an increase of 11.0% over the previous year. By the end of 2017, there were a total of 661 thousand grassroots mass autonomous organizations, including 554 thousand village committees, down 0.9% from the previous year and the number of 106 thousand residents' committees, an increase of 3.1% over the previous year. The number of villagers (residents) registered in the election was 240 million, and the number of participants was 210 million. Besides, according to estimates by the NGO Research Institute of Tsinghua University, the actual number includes small self-help groups that may be close to 3 million.<sup>11</sup> What's more, it needs to be emphasized that civil society in cyberspace has been achieved immeasurable development in present. Owing to internet popularity, the majority of Chinese people can access to instant messaging application. A huge number of civil organizations exist online and play a important role in civil society. Taking an instant messaging app as example, WeChat generates new forms for associational life mainly in two ways. The first is creating new ways for social organizations to engage the public...Second, WeChat enhances associational life by strengthening solidary and common culture and by reconstructing our communities through daily communications in personal networks.<sup>12</sup>

Certainly, the vigorous development of the Chinese civil society in decades of years doesn't mean the civil society has already been developed sufficiently. There are still has many problems. For instance, many civil organizations have a strong sense of bureaucratization.

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<sup>10</sup> 2017 Statistical Report on Social Service Development, *Ministry of Civil Affairs of People's Republic of China* (2 Aug. 2018). <<http://www.mca.gov.cn/article/sj/tjgb/>>, accessed 26 May 2019

<sup>11</sup> Wu Wei & Berthold Kuhn, *Civil Society and the Internet in the P.R. China*, P. 1

<sup>12</sup> Fangjing Tu, WeChat and civil society in China, *Communication and the Public* ( 5 Sep. 2016). <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2057047316667518>> , accessed 26 May 2019

Some organizations like consumer associations, labour unions, they are originally organized and governed by the related governmental organs, so they may be influenced unavoidably by the authorities. But with the development of the economic market and modern democratic and legal system, Chinese civil society has already formed a civil power to express civil interest and determination, which can resist the improper plan.

### **3. Conclusion**

Through the macroscopic and practical analysis above, we can see that the combination of four factors which may lead jointly to the failure of the state-initiated social project is not existent in present China. What's more, Scott has never concluded the combination of the four factors inevitably lead to the failure of the projects. But even though that, China still may not neglect the potential risks Scott has already warned and take positive measures to avoid the possible micro risks with a responsible attitude to Chinese people and the other nations. China may optimize state governance, promote political system reform and implement democratic constitutionalism, improve the development of civil society. Only that, China can realize its economic cooperation and prosperity goals in the future.