

Associazione Italiana di Studi su Africa e Cina (AISAC) and China Room
(Polytechnic of Turin) present

Seminar

Following China's Science Silk Road

Han Cheng, the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science

8 May 2026

9.00 - 10.30

Sala Vigliano, Castello del Valentino

As part of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has launched the "Science Silk Road" program, aimed at investing in science, technology and innovation in countries along this newly envisioned Silk Road. Be it Chinese researchers designing data centers in Southeast Asia and smart cities in Africa, or collaborating with Latin American countries on deep-space exploration, the Science Silk Road has led to the rapid emergence of new science infrastructures and networks with complex implications for the South, North and beyond. However, little is currently known about whether, and how, the Science Silk Road shapes research, society, and development in BRI countries and globally. This talk will introduce a new international research project to fill this gap by mapping out the Science Silk Road's multi-level impacts on BRI countries, established science powers, and international scientific cooperation

Han Cheng is a senior research scholar at MPIWG's Lise Meitner Research Group "China in the Global System of Science" and an adjunct professor at Université Laval's Graduate School of International Studies. He is a human geographer with particular interests in political and development geographies, the geopolitics of territory and infrastructure, geographies of knowledge, and the histories of geographical thought. He has published widely in leading journals, including Progress in Human Geography, Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, Political Geography, and Review of International Political Economy. Han currently serves as a principal investigator for the Volkswagen Foundation-funded project, "China's Science Silk Road and the New Geopolitics of Knowledge Production" (2026-2030), one of the first in-depth analyses of new science infrastructures and networks under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).



Politecnico
di Torino

