

CHINA’S BORDER POLICY TOWARDS ITS NORTHERN NEIGHBORS

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ABSTRACT

CHINA’S BORDER POLICY TOWARDS ITS NORTHERN NEIGHBORS

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This dissertation explores China’s border policies towards Mongolia, Russia, and the three Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan from 1991 to 2019. This research aims to understand better how China’s political interests affected its border politics towards the northern periphery. The framework used to organize this research is the English School conceptual framework. China’s foreign policy towards the northern neighborhood has changed since the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991. China’s main focus has been on security and economic interests in the region. After resolving border disputes, China has focused on maintaining stability in its north and northwest regions and combatting separatism. China has also used economic development in Xinjiang-Uyghur as a way to promote stability and opened up borders for trade. Recently, China has also relied on oil and gas from Central Asia to secure its energy supply. China furthers its interests in Central Asia and Mongolia by building friendly relations with each country individually, providing aid and financial support, and promoting the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) as a regional multilateral framework. In addition, China has established good relations with Russia in both foreign and border policy.

This thesis aims to examine how China's border policy towards Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, specifically in the northern region, is shaped by the arrangements of border management such as trade, transportation, mobility (tourism and immigration), and security. The study will provide a generalization of China's border policy in this specific region. The hypothesis being examined is that there is a dialectical and concurrent relationship between China's interests and border policy towards the region. The research findings support the hypothesis and this thesis concludes that the English School framework can effectively explain both the process of formulating China's border policy and the policy itself.

Keywords: China, Mongolia, Russia, Central Asia, border management, English School

ÖZ

ÇİN'İN KUZEY SINIR BÖLGESİNDE YER ALAN KOMŞU ÜLKELERE YÖNELİK İZLEDİĞİ SINIR POLİTİKASI

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Bu tez, 1991-2019 döneminde Çin'in Moğolistan, Rusya ve üç Orta Asya cumhuriyeti olan Kazakistan, Kırgızistan ve Tacikistan'a yönelik sınır politikalarını incelemektedir. Bu araştırma, Çin'in siyasi çıkarlarının kuzeyindeki komşularına yönelik sınır siyasetini nasıl etkilediğini daha iyi anlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu araştırmayı organize etmek için kullanılan teorik çerçeve İngiliz Okuludur. Çin'in kuzey komşularına yönelik dış politikası, 1991'de Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından sonra değişti. Ana odak, bölgedeki güvenlik ve ekonomik çıkarlar oldu. Sınır anlaşmazlıklarını çözdükten sonra Çin, kuzey ve kuzeybatı bölgelerinde istikrarı korumaya ve ayrılıkçılıkla mücadeleye odaklandı. Çin ayrıca, Sincan-Uygur örneğinde olduğu gibi, ekonomik kalkınmayı, istikrarı desteklemek için kullandı ve ticaret için sınırları açtı. Son dönemde Çin, enerji arzını güvence altına almak için Orta Asya'dan gelen petrol ve doğal gaz kaynaklarına itimat etti. Çin, her ülkeyle ayrı ayrı dostane ilişkiler kurarak, yardım ve mali destek sağlayarak ve bölgesel çok taraflı bir çerçeve olan Şangay İşbirliği Örgütü'nü (ŞİÖ) teşvik ederek Orta Asya ve Moğolistan'daki çıkarlarını pekiştirmekte. Ayrıca Çin, Rusya ile hem dış hem de sınır politikasında iyi ilişkiler kurmuştur.

Bu tez, Çin'in özellikle kuzey bölgesindeki Moğolistan, Rusya, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan ve Tacikistan'a yönelik sınır politikasının ticaret, ulaşım, hareketlilik (turizm ve göç) ve güvenlik gibi sınır yönetimi düzenlemeleriyle nasıl şekillendiğini tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, Çin'in bu özel bölgedeki sınır politikasının bir genellemesini sağlayacaktır. Çin'in bölgeye yönelik çıkarları ile sınır politikası arasında diyalektik ve örtüşen bir ilişki olduğu hipotezi irdelenmiştir. Araştırma bulguları hipotezi desteklemektedir ve bu tez, İngiliz Okulu çerçevesinin hem Çin'in sınır politikasını formüle etme sürecini hem de politikanın kendisini etkili bir şekilde açıklayabileceği sonucuna varmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çin, Moğolistan, Rusya, Orta Asya, sınır çalışmaları, İngiliz Okulu



To Reyhan and Buket

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BCP	Border Crossing Point
BTA	Bank Turan Alem
BTC	Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan
CAREC	Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPMM	Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring
DHL	Dalsey Hillblom Lynn
EDB	Eurasian Development Bank
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FEZ	Free Economic Zone
FTZ	Free Trade Zone
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICBC	Industrial and Commercial Bank of China
IGO	International Governmental Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
ITC	International Transport Corridor
JSC	Joint-Stock Company
KATO	Kyrgyz Association of Tour Operators
KSATS	Kyrgyz State Agency for Tourism and Sports
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LLDC	Landlocked Developing Countries
LPI	Logistics Performance Index

MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTC	Ministry of Transport and Communications
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSC	National Security Concept
OBOR	One Belt One Road
OT	Oyu Tolgi
PRC	People's Republic of China
RMB	Renminbi (the official currency of the People's Republic of China)
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SCTSYF	State Committee for Tourism, Sport, and Youth Policy
SEZ	Special Economic Zone
ST-EP	Sustainable Tourism for Eliminating Poverty
TEU	Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit
TIR	Transports Internationaux Routiers
TRACECA	Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia
TREDA	Tumen River Economic Development Area
TREZ	Tumen River Economic Zone
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEP	United Nations Environment Program
UNPEI	United Nations Poverty-Environment Initiative
UNWTO	United Nations World Trade Organization
US	United States
USA	United States of America
USD	United States Dollar
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WB	World Bank
XPCC	Xinjiang Production and Constructions Corporation

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Scope and Objective

The primary focus of this thesis is to examine China's border policy towards its northern periphery, specifically Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The main question of this study arises from the motivation to understand how China's economic growth has affected its border relations with its neighbors and how it aligns with China's interests. As China's economy has grown, concerns have arisen about whether its increased military capabilities will lead to aggressive actions in the region. The study's results indicate that maintaining secure borders and positive relationships with neighboring countries is crucial for ensuring China's peaceful rise.

The five countries are the subjects of the case studies in the dissertation. The theoretical framework is discussed in the second chapter. The country chapters analyzing bilateral border relations will be covered subsequently. The analysis includes the historical background and China's border management arrangements for trade, transportation, mobility, and security for each neighboring country. These arrangements will be the dependent variables for the dissertation, while the independent variables will be the international conjuncture or conditions and relations between China and its five neighbors. The methodology used in this dissertation includes case study and process tracing, which help develop an analytical explanation based on the theoretical framework of the English School.

Before delving into the historical context of the Great Wall of China, the research will first investigate the meaning and importance of the term "border." The Great Wall, built between 246 B.C. and 209 B.C., is the source of inspiration for the study. It was

built to create a blockade between China and its adjacent northern territories, including Mongolia, Siberia, and Chinese Turkistan. This wall had two primary objectives. Firstly, during the early imperial era of China, feudal states-built barriers between each other to protect their borders. Secondly, as northern China settled and civilized, the walls were built to defend against the nomadic and tribal “northern barbarians.” The Great Wall served as a border and symbol of the security concerns of the Chinese people.¹ The dissertation delves deeper into these concepts of border and security in China's northern and northwestern regions.

Definition of the terms Border and Border Management

The term “border” refers to a line separating two countries, regions, or other areas. ² It is used in both natural and social sciences, with synonyms such as “borderlands,” “frontiers,” and “boundaries.” Scholars from various disciplines, including geography, history, economics, anthropology, and politics. Thus, the word ‘border’ is an interdisciplinary concept.³

In this dissertation, I accept The World Bank's definition of border management as a country's set of policies and procedures to regulate the flow of goods and services across its borders. It involves using customs and other administrative procedures to ensure compliance with national laws, protect public health and safety, and prevent the smuggling of illegal goods. Effective border management is critical to facilitating trade and investment while maintaining security and public order.⁴

Border management is a complex and multifaceted process that encompasses a broad range of activities, including customs and immigration control, trade facilitation, and

¹ Owen Lattimore, “Origins of the Great Wall of China: A Frontier Concept in Theory and Practice,” *Geographical Review* 27, no. 4 (1937): 532.

² Fort the definition of the border see “Oxford Dictionary,” accessed January 13, 2017, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/border>.

³ Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, “Theorizing Borders: An Interdisciplinary Perspective,” *Geopolitics* 10, no. 4 (2005): 634.

⁴ See Gerard Mclinden et al., eds., *Border Management Modernization* (Washington: The World Bank, 2011).

border security. Efficient and secure cross-border movement of people and goods heavily depends on the establishment and utilization of legal frameworks, information systems, and physical infrastructure.⁵

This dissertation aims to investigate the concept of border management, which involves the policies and procedures that countries implement to regulate the movement of goods and services across their borders. Specifically, this study will assess the impact of border management on trade interactions and bilateral relations between China's northwestern and northern neighbors from the perspective of the international relations discipline. The analysis will be conducted using two dimensions: The first historical dimension, that considers agreements, limitations, and bilateral relations, and the border management elements dimension, which includes border trade, transportation, visa, immigration, tourism, and border policy. The historical dimension of border management has contributed significantly to understanding border-related concepts, such as the methods used to limit and mark borders and how borders are controlled and maintained. It has also provided insights into international borders. The second dimension of the study will focus on the complex nature of examining borders, which involves dependent multiple variables: trade, transportation, visa and tourism, and security policy.⁶

Every border and the require surrounding regions have unique features, requiring specific and detailed study. Borders have a wide range of material and symbolic uses, and simply increasing the number of case studies or comparisons may not be enough to understand contemporary borders fully. Understanding a specific border's political, social, economic, and cultural factors requires an examination of boundaries in general through theoretical and historical context. Historically, border studies have primarily focused on the historical aspects of borders, such as agreements, limitations, and marking.⁷ Since the formation of the Westphalian system in the 17th century,

⁵ McLinden et al.

⁶ Mohsen Janparvar, Mahdi Hosseinpour Motlagh, and Ali Mehro, "Border Management; as Strategy of States to Maintain Order and Security in the Country," *Geopolitics Quarterly* 9, no. 4 (2014): 59.

⁷ James Anderson and Liam O'Dowd, "Borders, Border Regions and Territoriality: Contradictory Meanings, Changing Significance," *Regional Studies* 33, no. 7 (1999): 594.

demarcating boundaries has been a crucial factor in the global system. As per Anderson and O'Dowd's perspective, the term "borders" can encompass legal boundaries that divide different jurisdictions, or the "frontier area" on both sides of legal boundaries, or a more extensive "transition zone" between diverse societies and hubs of authority.⁸

The concepts of “cross-border cooperation” and “cross-border region” are variations of border-related ideas that are closely related to the single market and supranational entities such as the European Union (EU). These concepts are more closely associated with economic and political economy branches rather than international relations. In this dissertation, I will analyze trade and border trade volume to interpret and compare my case study. It is important to note that borders are not just lines separating states, but they also serve various economic and social functions.⁹

According to Michel Zarnowiecki, a border is a limit of two countries' sovereignty or the point beyond which one country's authority no longer applies. He explains that crossing a border involves the separation of two countries by land, where individuals, vehicles, and goods must follow the regulations of both the exit and entry countries.¹⁰ However, the concept of a border has evolved over time and is no longer limited to the periphery of a country. Borders can also exist within a country, which are divided into internal and external borders, defined by their administrative entity. These borders are also shaped by social boundaries such as national, ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups. When state border agreements are broken between countries, it can result in border disputes and conflicts.¹¹

⁸ James Anderson and Liam O'Dowd, “Borders, Border Regions and Territoriality: Contradictory Meanings, Changing Significance,” *Regional Studies* 33, no. 7 (1999): 594. For more details see Robert Bartlett and Angus MacKay, *Medieval Frontier Societies*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

⁹ See Brunet-Jailly, “Theorizing Borders: An Interdisciplinary Perspective,” 634.

¹⁰ Michel Zarnowiecki, “Border, Their Design and Their Operation,” in *Border Management Modernization* (Washington: The World Bank, 2011), p. 38.

¹¹ Janparvar, Motlagh, and Mehro, “Border Management; as Strategy of States to Maintain Order and Security in the Country”; Robert Bartlett and Angus MacKay prefer to use the term ‘social boundary’ to recognize social groups in anthropology or sociology. For more detail see Angus MacKay Robert Bartlett, *Medieval Frontier Societies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); James Anderson, “Borders, Border Regions and Territoriality: Contradictory Meanings, Changing Significance.”

Borders play a significant role in the bilateral relations between countries, and their importance and contributions cannot be understated. In his article, McCallum, a prominent researcher in the field of the “border effect,” compares the trade between Canadian provinces and the trade between Canada and the U.S. His data shows that trade among provinces is 22 times greater than trade between any Canadian province and the U.S. state. This indicates that borders and their procedures may impede trade in border areas within trade partner countries.¹²

Despite the possibility of expanded trade in border regions between nations, security concerns and policies such as taxonomy often result in the underutilization of this potential. Additionally, insufficient infrastructure contributes to high transaction expenses and delays when clearing imports, exports, and transit goods. Nevertheless, many countries still need to make progress in improving trade facilitation despite challenges like expensive costs and administrative obstacles at borders that hinder advancement.¹³

This thesis examines China's motivations for advancing border management with five northern neighboring countries. A historical overview of China's relations with its neighbors highlights both familiarity and animosity. The China-Mongolia border serves as the boundary between the two countries and extends for a length of 4,630 km from west to east, connecting the tripoints with Russia. The majority of this border traverses the Gobi Desert, and it ranks as the fourth longest international border in the world. The border between Russia and China extends for a length of 4,000 kilometers, and it was officially demarcated and finalized through an agreement (2008) between the two nations. The border between China and Kazakhstan spans a total length of 1782,75 km, consisting of 121,86 km of land border and 566,89 km of the border that follows rivers or lakes. Covering a distance of 1,063 km, the China-Kyrgyzstan border

¹² See John McCallum, “National Borders Matter: Canada-U.S. Regional Trade Patterns,” *The American Economic Review* 85, no. 3 (1995): 615–23. and see Nuria Gallego and Carlos Llano, “The Border Effect and the Nonlinear Relationship between Trade and Distance,” *Review of International Economics* 22, no. 5 (2014): 1016–48.

¹³ Monica Alina Mustra, “Border Management Modernization and the Trade Supply Chain,” in *Border Management Modernization*, ed. Gerard McLinden et al., (Washington: The World Bank, 2011): 23-24.

traces a southwest trajectory across the rugged mountain landscape of the Tian Shan range, beginning at the point where Kazakhstan's border ends and ending at the point where Tajikistan's border begins. Extending for a length of 477 km, the border between China and Tajikistan traverses a north-south course across multiple mountain ridges and peaks of the Pamir range, starting from the point where the borders of Kyrgyzstan and China converge and ending at the point where the borders of Afghanistan and China meet.¹⁴

The overview begins with the Chinese dynasties and continues to the present day, exploring how China's interactions with neighboring countries have evolved. This analysis allows for a comprehensive evaluation of border management strategies and China's influence on its neighbors.

China: Territory, Demography, and History

China's territory has a distinctive geography surrounded by natural barriers and has internal geographic units. Historically, China has two significant geographical regions: the Yellow (Huang He) and Yangtze Rivers. The Yellow River originates in the Qinghai and Tibetan Plateaus, stretching to Inner Mongolia and northern China before flowing into the Yellow Sea. The river is named for the yellowish-brown and fertile soil that is ideal for agriculture.¹⁵

The Yellow River is considered the 'mother river of China' and played a significant role in the birth of Chinese civilization over 2,000 years ago. The Qinling mountain range has traditionally divided northern and southern China. In the south, the Yangtze River is a prominent feature, originating in the Tibetan Mountains and flowing through the Sichuan Basin into the Pacific Ocean. The southern region is suitable for agriculture, particularly rice cultivation, due to favorable weather conditions, resulting

¹⁴ For more details, see "The World Factbook CIA," accessed July 25, 2022, <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/china/summaries/#introduction>.

¹⁵ Candice Song, "Yellow River (Huang He River): World's Muddiest River," 2022, <https://www.chinahighlights.com/yellowriver/>.

in a growing population. However, it's important to note that despite having a smaller population than the south, the north is the origin of Chinese civilization.¹⁶

In ancient times, China's civilization was geographically isolated, but it later established contact with the world through the famous Silk Road and sea trade routes. Technical knowledge was highly valued in China, as irrigation systems required scientific expertise. Some historians believe that irrigation was crucial to the development and preservation of civilization. Karl A. Wittfogel introduced the concept of "hydraulic civilization" to describe societies that focused their social energies on creating and maintaining complex water conservation and management systems. China, like India, Mexico, and Mesopotamia, is considered a "hydraulic" civilization according to Wittfogel. He argues that the emphasis on irrigation over time led to highly disciplined social structures and strictly hierarchical political cultures. China also made numerous technological advancements, including the invention of gunpowder, the first mechanical clock, and the first book printing. These advancements contributed to the country's abundant agriculture, high-quality manufacturing, wealth, science, and technology.¹⁷

China has a vast terrain spanning parts of Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Mongolia, and Siberia. In the past, China has aimed to uphold a unique bond with its adjacent nations, given its powerful dynastic governance. However, in the 19th century, the Qing dynasty lost much of its power and ceded territory to Russia, Japan, and the British. Despite increasing interest in its peripheral territories in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Qing dynasty was unable to retain control over all its vast territories and diverse nations in the 19th century. In the 20th century the People's Republic of China (PRC)

¹⁶ See David Curtis Wright, *The History of China* (California: Greenwood, 2011): 5 ; Arthur N Waldron, "The Problem of The Great Wall of China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 43, no. 2 (1983): 643–63; Gregory Veecek et al., *China's Geography: Globalization and the Dynamics of Political, Economic and Social Change* (UK: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, 2011).

¹⁷ Karl A. Wittfogel, "The Hydraulic Civilizations," in *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth*, ed. William L. Thomas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 64–152; David Curtis Wright, *The History of China*, 97.

was established in 1949. Today, regions such as Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Tibet, and Manchuria are under China's control.¹⁸

As of 2022, China's population is estimated to be around 1.41 billion, making up approximately one-fourth to one-fifth of the world's population. There are 56 ethnic groups within China, with the Han Chinese being the largest, comprising 92% of the total population.¹⁹ According to historian Zheng Qian, the Chinese nation formed around 3,000 years ago through integrating and amalgamating several ethnic groups in the middle reaches of the Yellow River. This core community, known as Huaxia, gradually expanded and absorbed other surrounding ethnic groups. As they settled in flat terrains around the Yangzi and Yellow Rivers in East Asia, they came to be known as the Han ethnic group by others.²⁰

The term “Han” refers to a unified ethnic community, with ethnic group names such as Xianbei, Di, and Jie becoming obsolete. The Han ethnic group serves as the core of this unified community. Despite the presence of 56 ethnic groups within China today, well-known Chinese anthropologist Fei Xiaotong argues that these groups have formed an interdependent and indivisible unity. He states that while high-level recognition of these groups is present, it does not necessarily replace or reject lower-level recognition. All levels of recognition can coexist, creating a unity of multiple languages and cultures.²¹

As mentioned, China is a witness to a long dynastic history, which can be addressed in four periods: pre-imperial China (2205 B.C. - 256 B.C), early imperial China (221

¹⁸ Gregory Veecek et al., *China's Geography: Globalization and the Dynamics of Political, Economic and Social Change* (UK: Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, 2011): 84; For more detail see Norton S. Ginsburg, “China's Changing Political Geography,” *Geographical Review* 42, no. 1 (1952): 102–17; Norton S. Ginsburg, “On the Chinese Perception of a World Order,” in *China in Crisis, Volume 2: China's Policies in Asia and America's Alternatives*, ed. Tang Tsau, 1st ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Harry Miller, *State versus Gentry in Early Qing Dynasty China, 1644– 1699* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137334060>.

¹⁹ “The World Factbook CIA.”

²⁰ Zheng Qian, *China's Ethnic Groups and Religions* (Beijing: Chinese International Press, 2010): 32.

²¹ Minglang Zhou, *Multilingualism in China: The Politics of Writings Reforms for Minority Languages 1949-2002* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003): 93.

B.C. -589), middle imperial China (589-1368), and late imperial China (1368- 1912). Chronologically, the Qin Dynasty (221-206 B.C.) unified the country for the first time. This unification had a vast impact. One of the Qin Dynasty's kings (King Cheng) gave China the name we know today and its centralization policy and administrative structures obtained in China over the next two millennia.²² Although the Qin Dynasty was not long, it created a powerful conceptualization for China's international relations.²³ The Han Dynasty (202 B.C. -220 A.D) and the subsequent Qin consolidated the countries' unification. According to Zheng Qian, during the Han Dynasty, the Protectorate of the Western Regions was established in what is now Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. To govern the varied ethnic population, the dynasty also set up seventeen territories.²⁴ The political systems of the Qin and Han Dynasties laid the foundation for a combined China. During the Han time, Confucian public ethics created today's Chinese thinking.²⁵ The Legalist and Confucian philosophical elements started to influence the political life of China from this time.²⁶

During the Tang Dynasty from 618 to 907, the Chinese government created protector generals' offices to control the legislative affairs of the Western Regions, which included present-day Xinjiang. In the southern regions known as the Fu and Zhou, where many small groups lived, the Mongols established the Yuan Dynasty from 1206 to 1368. According to Zheng Qian, during the Yuan Dynasty, the government established the Commission for Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs to administer Tibet and brought it under the control of the Penghu islands and Taiwan. He also noted that many of China's ethnic groups were established during this period.²⁷

²² Christopher A. Ford, *The Mind of Empire: China's History and Modern Foreign Relations* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010):23.

²³ For more information see: Wright, *The History of China*; Ford, *The Mind of Empire: China's History and Modern Foreign Relations*, 2010.

²⁴ Zheng Qian, *China's Ethnic Groups and Religions* (Beijing: Chinese International Press, 2010): 37.

²⁵ For more information see: Michael Szonyi, ed., *A Companion to Chinese History* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017); Christopher A. Ford, *The Mind of Empire: China's History and Modern Foreign Relations* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010); David Curtis Wright, *The History of China* (California: Greenwood, 2011).

²⁶ Michael Szonyi, ed., *A Companion to Chinese History* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017): 55.

²⁷ Zheng Qian, *China's Ethnic Groups and Religions* (Beijing: Chinese International Press, 2010): 37.

In 1644, the Manchu people took control of Beijing in a gradual process, and once they were in power, they worked to integrate the city. The Manchus established the Ili Generalship and Xinjiang Province in the Western Regions. They also appointed a Grand Minister Resident in Tibet, and the central government established a practice of granting honorary titles to two Living Buddhas, namely the Dalai and Panchen. It means Buddhist leaders were given positions in the Qing. Manchus respected local traditions and the culture of minorities. They preserved their identities and Tibetan, Mongol, and Buddhist traditions. The Manchus asserted that their mission was to bring order back to Beijing and the whole of China, thus prompting the Qing court to initiate a range of reforms. According to some historians, the transition from the Ming to the Qing dynasty was not as chaotic as other dynasty transitions in Chinese history. This is attributed to the administrative mismanagement that led to a chaos during the Ming era. Consequently, the Manchus set up the Qing Dynasty. During the Qing era (1644-1911), China was the most affluent, dominant, and densely populated country in the world.²⁸

During the Qing Dynasty, China's territory was almost identical to what it is today. The Qing Dynasty, founded by the Manchus, was marked by corruption and oppression. The Han, the largest ethnic group in China, rebelled against the Manchus as the dynasty declined. The rebellion was successful, partly due to the outdated weapons used by the imperial army.²⁹

After failed uprisings, a successful rebellion near the Yangtze River led to the Revolutionary Army founding a military government and declaring the Republic of China. The interim government was established on January 1st, 1912, with five tribes uniting, but the process was difficult due to uprisings and battles. In April 1920, the Communist Party was established, leading to a power struggle between the Communist Liberation Army and the Nationalist Army. On October 1st, 1949, the Communist

²⁸ For more details see: Ford, *The Mind of Empire: China's History and Modern Foreign Relations*; Michael Szonyi, *A Companion to Chinese History*; Harry Miller, *State versus Gentry in Early Qing Dynasty China, 1644– 1699* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Wright, *The History of China* (California: Greenwood, 2011).

²⁹ X.L.Woo, *Two Republics in China: How Imperial China Became the PRC* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2014): 4.

Party declared the establishment of the People's Republic of China, marking a significant shift in China's balance of power.³⁰

Today, the People's Republic of China asserts that it has a land border that spans 22,000 kilometers. The core principle of the Chinese state is focused on cultural expansion, whereby underdeveloped communities assimilate into Chinese high culture and become an essential part of the nation. However, several regions have been regarded as part of China by different administrations but were not under direct governance until relatively recently.³¹

China's border locations are ambiguous, particularly for those that do not follow natural landmarks such as coastlines and mountain ranges. The sand tracks in the deserts to the north and northwest of China are not permanent as they can be easily erased by the wind. Additionally, the borders defined by rivers are also not as fixed as they may appear. The location of the Heilongjiang/Amur border changes with the changing course of the river, and during winter it becomes a thoroughfare instead of a boundary line. This ambiguity caused a military clash with the Soviet Union in 1969.³²

Since 1949, China has faced immense economic costs due to its efforts to maintain national integrity. These losses include human lives and resources, such as the approximately 900,000 casualties from its involvement in the Korean War, clashes with India and Russia for border issues resulting in China's international exclusion, and expensive self-sufficient economic policies. Additionally, China engaged in various conflicts with Vietnam from the late 1970s to the 1980s, ranging from full-scale war to minor border disputes, further exacerbating its economic burden.³³

³⁰ For more detail see Chapters 2,3,4 X.L. Woo, X.L.Woo, *Two Republics in China: How Imperial China Became the PRC* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2014).

³¹ Diana Lary, "Introduction," in *The Chinese State at the Borders*, ed. Diana Lary (Toronto: UBC Press, 2008): 1.

³² See Mark Galeotti, "Sino-Russian Border Resolution," in Bruce A. Elleman, Stephen Kotkin, and Clive Schofield, eds., *Beijing's Power and China's Borders: Twenty Neighbours in Asia* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2013): 251.

³³ Carla Freeman and Drew Thompson, "China on the Edge: China's Border Provinces and Chinese Security Policy," 2011.

Since the early 1980s, the Chinese economy has experienced remarkable growth, parallel with political developments both within the country and in border areas, as well as social experiences. During the decade between 1991 and 2001, China achieved significant advances in the areas of economic transformation and growth. Then the economy of China began to experience rapid growth. In recent years, China's growth rate has slowed down, known as the new normal.³⁴ The economy has undergone restructuring, moving away from being driven by factors and investments towards being driven by innovation, creating a new strategic opportunity.³⁵

1.2. Literature Review

There is extensive literature on the border. In previous centuries, the study of the border included more historical aspects like arrangements, agreements, demarcations, etc. With the development of the ideas like globalization, free trade, and a borderless world, border management did not get enough attention. However, the situation evolved in border management's favor with the emerging improvement of transportation infrastructures, communication, and the need for order and security. In short, borders came into the center of the agenda for nation-states.

More recently, scholars have started to produce new approaches and criticism for the role of borders in the academic field of International Relations. At present, scholars studying borders often transcend the confines of their own discipline and participate in interdisciplinary discussions and cooperation with colleagues from other fields to obtain a more holistic perspective on borders. However, in the past, borders and boundaries were mainly explored from a particular disciplinary viewpoint.³⁶

³⁴ The "new normal" in the Chinese economy represents a shift away from the rapid growth of the past 30 years. This change is irreversible and includes a transition from high-speed growth to medium-speed growth, as well as an optimization and upgrading of economic structure. Additionally, the economy is shifting from being driven by factors such as investment and resources to being driven by innovation. See Economist Intelligence Unit, "China: Country Report," 2018.

³⁵ Zhang Liqun, "New Features of China's Economic Growth and Its Recent Development," *China Industrial Economics* 8 (2001): 5–11; Yanyun Zhao, "The Rise and Prospect of China's Economy," *Estudios de Economica Aplicada* 36, no. 1 (2018): 277–90.

³⁶ Sergei V. Sevastianov, Jussi P. Laine, and Anton A. Kireev, eds., *Introduction to Border Studies* (Vladivostok: Dalnauka, 2015): 14.

The first discipline studying borders and boundaries was geography. Georg Simmel (1858-1918), was a sociologist and one of the pioneers of border studies. Simmel's examination of the role of borders in social life was mainly conducted by geographers, with historians playing a lesser role.³⁷

Another pioneer of the study of the border is German geographer Frederick Ratzel (1844-1904). He argues that borders do not have a static structure; they are dynamic and subject to change. According to him, states are like living organisms that have internal organs and external protective boundaries.³⁸

Sir Halford MacKinder, the famous founder of geopolitics, claims that Geographical boundaries can change as a result of imperialism, leading to a constant re-drawing of the world map. MacKinder's well-known thesis regarding the Eurasian heartland suggested that global dominance could be achieved by whoever had control over it, as it represented the strongest natural fortress on earth.

The Treaty of the Westphalia was the beginning of the nation-state era and opened the new term of border studies in political science. The literature highlights the transformation of border studies from the border communities in the buffer zone during the Westphalian era. In the 1960s, the tension on the border and boundaries decreased, and then their functions evolved into another concept. On the other hand, political geography appeared in the mid of the 1970s related to political science and international relations.³⁹ The delimitation process depends on the countries' performance; only some demarcate their border immediately after independence,

³⁷ Vladimir Kolossov, "Border Studies: Changing Perspectives and Theoretical Approaches," *Geopolitics* 10, no. 4 (2005): 607.

³⁸ Ratzel and his arguments will be examined in Chapter 2, for more information see Patricia Chiantera-Stutte, "Ratzel's Stone Guest: The Art of Politics in the Work of Friedrich Ratzel," *Journal of Historical Geography* 61 (2018): 91–96, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2018.04.009>.

³⁹ See John Agnew, "Borders on the Mind: Re-Framing Border Thinking," *Ethics & Global Politics* 1, no. 4 (2008): 175–91, <https://doi.org/10.3402/egp.v1i4.1892>.

while others experience a long process and border conflict with neighbors. There are many examples, like Africa, Central Asia, and the Middle East.⁴⁰

Prescott divides the border function into administrative and positional tasks. Administrative tasks include preventing illegal migration, extracting customs duties, and regulating crossing goods and people, whereas positional tasks include delimitation and demarcation of the border.⁴¹

After discussing the historical context of China's territory above, it is essential to note that the border has a crucial role in providing information about the historical relationship between China and its neighboring countries. This information can aid in managing trade, transportation, mobility, and security measures along the border. While it is important to understand the historical context, the focus of border management remains on practical arrangements that can facilitate cross-border movement and ensure the safety and security of the citizens of both China and its neighboring countries. As such, a comprehensive approach to border management should consider historical and practical considerations.

Border Management

Border management typically refers to the techniques and tools used by individuals and governments to address border-related issues, such as the movement of people and goods, and the efficient utilization of shared resources, in conformity with the legislations of the country. From the security side, border management has more relation to the national security of the country rather than controlling the border, which is supposed to be involved with transferring persons, goods, border resources, and so on. Border management serves as a means to ensure national security along borders and regulate legal movements across them to meet a nation's various needs through cultural, social, and economic interactions facilitated by borders. So, the word border

⁴⁰ George Gavrilis, *The Trouble with Borders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); George Gavrilis, *The Dynamics of Interstate Boundaries* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁴¹ See John R.V. Prescott, *Political Frontiers and Boundaries* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987).

management is a more widespread word that defines the confine of controlling executive affairs of borders, which consists of confidence in preserving their reverence.⁴²

Partially because of the available cross-country comparison data, many developing countries acknowledge the importance of enhancing their border management efficiency and are greatly interested in doing so. Although it is challenging to record cross-country comparison data, today, partial information is now accessible since many developing countries are perceiving the need to enhance border management. So, they are interested in efforts being made to align, simplify, and streamline border management systems and procedures across all border-related agencies, not just customs.⁴³

According to Michel Zarnowiecki, border management means “*the procedures applied to persons and objects crossing the border to ensure they comply with laws.*” He emphasizes the critical measurements for effective border management; everyone and everything can cross the borders in terms of procedures, regulations, and laws; compliance with the regulations is offered facilitations; lawbreakers are identified and stopped.⁴⁴ Tom Doyle claims that public and private systems must collaborate for effective border management. He suggests that collaborative border management utilizes the earliest available information in the transport and supply chain to involve border management agencies. He does not only highlight transport and supply chain but also security and compliance management. Therefore, networking and sharing information are critical factors for collaborative border management. To better understand and evaluate effective border management, it should be analyzed at border trade, transportation, visa, immigration, tourism, and border policy.⁴⁵

⁴² Mohsen Janparvar, Mahdi Hosseinpour Motlagh, and Ali Mehro, “Border Management; as Strategy of States to Maintain Order and Security in the Country,” 61.

⁴³ Gerard McLinden, “Collaborative Border Management: A New Approach to an Old Problem,” *The World Bank Economic Premise*, no. 78 (2012): 3.

⁴⁴ Michel Zarnowiecki, “Border, Their Design and Their Operation.”

⁴⁵ Tom Doyle, “The future of Border Management” in Gerard McLinden et al., eds., *Border Management Modernization* (Washington: The World Bank, 2011): 11.

Border Trade

Border trade has no standard definition in international trade studies. World Bank's definition of border trade is known to be the nearest to a basic international depiction of border trade phenomena. Border trade pertains to the transportation of goods across borders, generally limited to 30 km on either side, in contrast to regular trade that has a more extensive coverage.⁴⁶

Border trade is categorized as a legal aspect of national import and export activities but differs due to certain unique characteristics. Firstly, the involvement of small traders, often individuals or families, who produce the goods they trade. Such trading is done by local people, who often travel together in groups to magnify their trade. Secondly, the vehicles used in border trade, such as cars, minibusses, and bicycles, are usually small and inexpensive, in contrast to trucks in standard trade. Moreover, border trade is confined to limited area, restricted only to people residing in close proximity to the border-crossing point. Therefore, transportation costs are lower. Thirdly, agricultural products and consumer goods constitute the primary traded items. Still, if there are significant price differences, border trading can also include industrial products such as coal, petroleum, and cement, which are often smuggled into other countries. Fourthly, price differentials play a crucial role in border trade. Traders observe the prices of commodities on both sides of the border to exploit the situation where one side has higher prices by importing cheaper goods from the other side for selling. Finally, the traded quantities and their values are relatively small, often worth only a few hundred dollars. Consequently, customs regulations typically allow duty-free import of certain amounts, and there is usually no need to track these small quantities in statistics. Nonetheless, government interventions that impose financial or time demands on traders can have a negative impact on this type of trade due to the narrow margins involved.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Bartłomiej Kaminski and Saumya Mitra, *Borderless Bazaars and Regional Integration in Central Asia: Emerging Patterns of Trade and Cross-Border Cooperation* (Washington: The World Bank, 2012): 18.

⁴⁷ Kaminski and Mitra, *Borderless Bazaars and Regional Integration in Central Asia: Emerging Patterns of Trade and Cross-Border Cooperation*, 19.

In brief, effective border trade relies on three primary factors: trade-related infrastructure, border processing, and logistical services. Trade facilitation in border areas requires just one or two countries or regional initiatives and/or bilateral/regional cooperation in some cases, like landlocked Central Asian countries, instead of multilateral trade liberalization or international agreements.⁴⁸

Although research on border trade faces limitations due to difficulties in tracking trade activities, it is acknowledged to impact bilateral relationships, as noted above, positively. According to Kaminski and Mitra, border trade can have positive externalities that benefit both countries and improve the overall welfare of the people involved. The trade often involves agricultural and consumer goods and industrial products and promotes friendly relations between neighboring countries. Border trade can also provide income for entire families, especially in rural border regions where border trade markets are small and lack supporting services. Besides, the income generated by border trade benefits traders and those who provide related services, such as taxi drivers and warehouse operators.⁴⁹

China's case of border trade is noteworthy due to its rapid economic growth combined with increasing regional disparities. International trade plays a crucial role in boosting economic growth, and the lack of access to international trade is a major factor contributing to the development disparity between coastal and inland regions. China shares borders with fourteen countries and has a border that spans over 22,000 km. Border trade involves eight provinces (Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang, Inner Mongolia, Xinjiang, Tibet, Yunnan, and Guangxi), including those located in the inland areas distant from the coastline. The regions involved in border trade generally have a lower per capita income than the national average, with Yunnan, Tibet, and Guangxi being among the least developed provinces in China. Border trade has had a positive impact on the local economies by stimulating the growth of local industries and services, generating employment opportunities, and boosting household income. In addition,

⁴⁸ Mustra, "Border Management Modernization and the Trade Supply Chain," 26.

⁴⁹ Kaminski and Mitra: 18.

border trade has fostered closer relationships between communities across borders and facilitated regional cooperation with neighboring nations.⁵⁰

Transportation

Transportation plays a crucial role in border management as it enables the movement of people and goods in the current global context. To ensure effective trade in border regions, it is essential to have a reliable supply chain, which depends on a well-established transportation infrastructure. This is particularly important for landlocked developing countries, where trade corridor infrastructure is critical. Governments have supported the construction of road networks and transport corridors, while development agencies have implemented large-budget projects to improve infrastructure. Governments can reap significant benefits by enhancing trade facilitation, and international trade also stands to gain. Furthermore, development agencies can achieve their goals through such projects.⁵¹

Border transportation comprises four modes: road transportation, rail transportation, air traffic, and sea transport. The use of transport corridors is crucial in the transportation system, as they are primary routes that allow for the utilization of multi-modal technology, multiple modes of transport, and multi-function terminals and transshipment facilities at strategically advantageous locations. The effective operation of transport corridors requires a continuously updated regulations and international cooperations, including those related to the standardized waybills for ensuring equal access to infrastructure and terminals. Conventions on International

⁵⁰ See Ting Gao, "Regional Industrial Growth: Evidence from Chinese Industries," *Regional Science and Urban Economics* 34, no. 1 (2004): 101–24.

⁵¹ "There are two primary categories of landlocked developing countries around the world. The initial group is composed of 15 countries found in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a combined population of over 200 million individuals, accounting for nearly 30% of the region's overall population. Furthermore, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which account for 12% of the region's population, are occasionally classified as landlocked due to their limited access to deep-water seaports. The second group is composed of nine landlocked countries in Central Asia and a few small states in Eastern Europe, totaling approximately 80 million people or roughly 17 percent of the region's total population." For more detail see "Improving Trade and Transport for Landlocked Developing Countries: World Bank Contributions to Implementing the Almaty Programme of Action" (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2008): 1.

Transport Corridors (ITCs) aim to promote the adoption of high tech customs systems for cargo and passenger transportation operations, develop transport infrastructure, and support the quality of services meeting international standards in the respective territories of the participating countries.⁵²

Transport corridors that involve multiple countries should be considered when examining factors for economic integration in border areas. The European Union is a good example of effective and connected transport systems. The development and maintenance of transport corridors are necessary to support the rapid expansion of trade. The Eurasian Economic Union, led by Russia, is focused on ensuring the functionality of its transport corridors. The Eurasian Development Bank has predicted that the EEU's cargo transportation could reach 490 million tons by 2020, a fourfold increase from 2000. However, the region's transport infrastructure have to be restored and improved to accommodate this growth. The purpose of this chapter is to provide insights into the transportation infrastructure in border areas and its impact on border management and economic activities.⁵³

Tourism- Visa-Immigration

To promote activities such as tourism, infrastructure services, and labor work, border arrangements are necessary, much like border trade. This aspect of border management is closely connected with trade and facilitating it, as well as cooperating in public services at the border. For effective border arrangements, a comprehensive approach is required that encourages cooperation in various domains, such as culture, tourism, commerce, and immigration.⁵⁴

According to United Nations World Trade Organization (UNWTO), tourism is one of the largest industries covering nine percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product

⁵² Evgeny Vinokurov, Murat Jadraliyev, and Yury Shcherbanin, "The EurAsEC Transport Corridors" (Almaty: Eurasian Development Bank, 2009).

⁵³ Vinokurov, Jadraliyev, and Shcherbanin.

⁵⁴ Kaminski and Mitra, *Borderless Bazaars and Regional Integration in Central Asia: Emerging Patterns of Trade and Cross-Border Cooperation*, 125-26.

(GDP).⁵⁵ 1.2 billion international tourists today are predicted to reach 1.8 billion in 2030 by UNWTO. Therefore, tourism is one of the socio-economic activities in border regions creating employment opportunities, offering jobs, and improving comfort, happiness, services, and local infrastructure.⁵⁶

The UNWTO determines international tourists based on different factors, such as the duration and distance of their stay and their purpose for traveling. However, a commonly used definition of tourism, which is also recognized by UNWTO and the UK Tourism Society, is provided by Telfer and Sharpley. This definition states that tourism involves people temporarily traveling to destinations outside of their usual living and working places, engaging in activities during their stay, and may include travel for any purpose, including day visits or excursions.⁵⁷

Livandovschi's research suggests that when discussing the competitiveness of tourist destinations, the potential of cross-border areas has been largely ignored. He asserts that frontier tourist destinations have typically been perceived as having more disadvantages and challenges than prospects for flourishing in the tourism industry.⁵⁸

Numerous regions along the border have inadequate infrastructure, including transportation, lodging, and other amenities. Moreover, these areas are often characterized by a scarcity of natural resources and may experience partial or complete isolation, with small or even migratory populations.⁵⁹

Besides, nearby the borders could be a cultural, historical, or natural place, attracting different visitors. Therefore, it appears that a golden opportunity to cooperate with

⁵⁵ UNWTO, "UNWTO Annual Report 2016," 2017, 74, http://cf.cdn.unwto.org/sites/all/files/pdf/annual_report_2016_web_0.pdf.

⁵⁶ Roman Livandovschi, "Cross-Border Tourism and Its Significance for Tourism Destinations," *Eastern European Journal of Regional Studies* 3, no. 1 (2017): 32.

⁵⁷ David J Telfer and Richard Sharpley, *Tourism and Development in the Developing World*, (London: Routledge, 2008): 5.

⁵⁸ Livandovschi, "Cross-Border Tourism and Its Significance for Tourism Destinations," 32.

⁵⁹ W.R. Buttler, "The Development of Tourism in Frontier Regions: Issues and Approaches," in *Tourism in Frontier Areas*, ed. S. Krakover and Y. Gradus (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002).

cross-border utilization for the border tourist destination is a favorable circumstance for merging them into the international tourism network. Subsequently, with this viewpoint, there is a substantial change in the theory of tourism in the minds of the general public, where the geographic borders of boundary terminals are seen as not only obstacles but also as opportunities for more diverse and splendid tourism experiences, leading to better overall destination outcomes.⁶⁰

Cross-border cooperation is a type of international collaboration, which can be assessed by studying the opinions of tourism stakeholders about a destination on the border and the impact of cross-border cooperation on tourism development in the area. This approach has been effectively employed in research on tourism in frontier destinations, with a particular focus on the approaches of tourism providers in these regions towards cooperation and their desire to increase competitiveness through collective cross-border tourism materials. Vodeb's study targeted small and medium-sized tourism businesses in border regions and aimed to test two hypotheses: first, that cross-border cooperation can improve the success of frontier regions, and second, that tourism stakeholders in border areas are keen on collaborating across borders in tourism.⁶¹

Ritchie and Crouch conducted a survey to evaluate the competitiveness of frontier destinations by assessing five factors: appeal, management, organization, information and efficiency. According to the survey, stakeholders in destination areas consider tourism and collaboration across borders to be effective means for developing regions along the border. Nonetheless, according to a distinct investigation conducted by Cankar and Seljak, while cooperation was eased by personal connections, proficiency in a common language, and mutual interests, the governmental and legal frameworks posed obstacles to it.⁶²

⁶⁰ Ksenija Vodeb, "Competitiveness of Frontier Regions and Tourism Destination Management," *Managing Global Transitions* 10 (2012): 51–68 ; Livandovschi., 32.

⁶¹ See Ksenija Vodeb, "Competitiveness of Frontier Regions and Tourism Destination Management," *Managing Global Transitions* 10 (2012): 51–68.

⁶² For more detail for the survey see Stanka Setnikar Cankar, Janko Seljak, and Veronika Petkovšek, "Factors That Influence Cross-Border Cooperation between Businesses in the Alps–Adriatic Region," *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istrazivanja* 27, no. 1 (2014): 304–19,

As a result, it is evident that cross-border partnership is crucial in enhancing the tourism industries of adjacent countries. The intricacies of cross-border tourism partnership must be meticulously evaluated, considering essential concepts such as collaborative agreements in planning and conversation with both government and private entities.⁶³

Besides tourism, border management supports people working in trade and labor migration activities. The World Bank report says,

*“since the border trade generates employment, households that would otherwise be impoverished have an income. In remote regions, where employment is scarce and salaries low, the easing of border trade can generate income for entire households and is more profitable than most other available economic activities.”*⁶⁴

Studies show the correlation between financial crises and migration, which is important to policymakers on immigration issues. Since the data on border crossing (both for tourism and immigration) or transportation are indicators of the regional situation of trade and travel. I have accounted for labor migration as a border-crossing activity in this dissertation. Especially in the Sino-Russian case, labor migration has come into prominence.⁶⁵

According to a World Bank survey, cross-border trade is highly dependent on governments. Sometimes, governments may facilitate cross-border trade by reducing visa restrictions for individuals living near the border and exempting certain weight and value limits from tariffs, which can be a powerful way to invigorate local economies. On the other hand, governments may also pose a barrier to cross-border trade. These barriers can arise from various factors, such as burdensome visa

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2014.952091>. G. Crouch and J. Ritchie, *The Competitive Destination-A Sustainable Tourism Perspective* (UK: CABI Publishing, 2003).

⁶³ For more details see Stanka Setnikar Cankar, Janko Seljak, and Veronika Petkovšek, “Factors That Influence Cross-Border Cooperation between Businesses in the Alps–Adriatic Region,” *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istrazivanja*, 27, no. 1, (2014): 304–19.

⁶⁴ “Cross-Border Trade within the Central Asia” World Bank, (Washington, D.C., 2007).

⁶⁵ Haibo Wang, Da Huo, and Yaquan Xu, “A Framework of Analyzing Border Crossing Transportation Data,” in *Proceedings - 2015 IEEE International Conference on Smart City, SmartCity 2015*, 2015, 1122–27.

obligations for border residents, rigid controls on road transit, limitations on border crossing times, and the shutdown of border crossing points (BCPs), all of which can reduce trade activity and result in adverse consequences for economically disadvantaged populations. Likewise, the closure or displacement of marketplaces that facilitate cross-border trade may incentivize smuggling activities. Other factors that can impede cross-border trade include exceedingly strict restrictions on exemptions from border tariffs and taxes, as well as limitations on vehicular mobility.⁶⁶

Border Policy

One of the subtitles of border management is border policy which refers to a wide range of border topics such as border security policy, border water policy, border immigration policy, border refugee policy, and border business policy. For this reason, I limited the border policy of this title in the following chapters to security policy. Border Security is closely linked to history of the border and demarcation.

Security is a factor in imposing controls and discouraging contraband trade, illegal immigration, human abuse, etc. It needs to be a secure environment for safe trade, transportation, and movement at the border point. For security matters, governments impose obstacles to visa and passport stamping or close the gates for a period of time. These negative factors affect the countries' border management and bilateral trade. Janparvar, Motlagh and Mehro highlight the importance of security in managing borders by stating that countries try to manage their borders to prevent disorder and insecurity. They believe that proper management of borders can preserve national identity, prepare for security and protect national interests. They also emphasize that countries can benefit from learning border management skills in various areas such as objective, cyber, and identity to optimize opportunities and interests beyond the borders while preventing the entry of overseas disorder and insecurity.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ World Bank, "Cross-Border Trade within the Central Asia,"5.

⁶⁷ Janparvar, Motlagh, and Mehro, "Border Management; as Strategy of States to Maintain Order and Security in the Country:" 60.

1.3. Theory and Methodology

The theory of this dissertation will be thoroughly discussed in Chapter 2. In this study, the theory-application approach is chosen English School. At first glance, China's border policy towards Mongolia, Russia, and Central Asia seems mainly based on realism. However, the case studies in this dissertation show that China also employs a liberal approach to enhance its impact in the region. China has signed agreements with neighboring countries to boost economic development in border regions and invested in infrastructure such as railways, roads, and commercial centers. Additionally, China utilizes its population as a means of engaging with the cultures of neighboring countries. As a result, China's border policy cannot be fully explained by either realism or liberalism alone. It is an eclectic policy that aims to integrate the border areas and can be analyzed through the lens of the English School, which combines theories and concepts, theory and history, morality and power, and agency and structure.⁶⁸

The research methodology employed in this dissertation involves the use of case study and process tracing methods. Five detailed descriptive case studies have been developed to examine Sino-Mongolian, Sino-Russian, Sino-Kazakh, Sino-Kyrgyz, and Sino-Tajik border relations. Each case study includes trade, transportation, visa and tourism, and border security as dependent variables, while the international conjuncture and China's bilateral relations with these neighboring countries are the independent variables. Case studies are an effective tool for investigating data within a specific context, and this study utilizes them to explore and analyze China's five border policies in the post-Soviet period.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ For more detail see and Steve Smith Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (London: Macmillan Press, 1998); Herbert Wight, Martin; Butterfield, *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in Theory of International Relations*, Harvard University Press (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1966).

⁶⁹ For more detail about case study see Andrew Bennett and Colin Elman, "Qualitative Research: Recent Developments in Case Study Methods," *Annual Review of Political Science* 9, no. 2001 (2006): 455–76, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.8.082103.104918>; Khairul Baharein Mohd Noor, "Case Study: A Strategic Research Methodology," *American Journal of Applied Sciences* 5, no. 11 (2008): 1602–4, <https://doi.org/10.3844/ajassp.2008.1602.1604>; N. Craig Smith, "The Case Study: A Useful Research Method for Information Management," *Journal of Information Technology*, 1990, <https://doi.org/10.1057/jit.1990.30>.

Process tracing is a method for analyzing the specific steps and decisions involved in a particular process. It is also used to draw general conclusions and establish cause-and-effect relationships. In this case, the process being studied is the relationship between external factors such as international cooperation and bilateral relations, and the outcomes of China's border policy in areas such as trade, transportation, tourism, and border management. The goal is to understand how these external factors influence the policy outcomes from the perspective of the English School theory.⁷⁰

The techniques employed will be qualitative in nature. There are abundant and diverse sources available. I will use data from various institutions, i.e., International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank (WB), and Eurasian Development Bank (EDB), and reports written by Central Asian Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC). In addition, the study of past literature, news articles, media releases, high-level meeting minutes, official documents, leaders' speeches, and interview transcripts of government officials are adopted in the analysis as secondary sources.

1.4. Main Argument

The dissertation focuses on studying border regions and their role in cross-border economic integration and bilateral relations with China's northern periphery. The thesis hypothesizes that China follows a constructive, peaceful, and developing policy instead of aggressive policies, contrary to the expectations of realists, in its border relations with five countries (Mongolia, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan). However, although China's regional investments and infrastructure development policy are read from a liberal perspective, it acts with concern for other regional powers' relative economic and military relations. China actually knows that Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia are quite open to internal disturbances or demands for separation. However, instead of determining the border policies with a realistic security concern, it has chosen to approach the threats that may occur by making

⁷⁰ See James Mahoney, "The Logic of Process Tracing Tests in the Social Sciences," *Sociological Methods & Research* 41, no. 4 (2012): 570–97; Andrew and Jeffrey T. Checkel. Bennett, *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

investments for economic development both on its own and in the neighboring lands. Therefore, there is a hybrid perspective China conducts toward its northern neighbors. The findings of the thesis support this hypothesis.

The research's dependent variables (border trade, visa tourism and migration, transportation, and border policy) were carried out for each case country. This offers an exceptional opportunity to investigate the trends and factors influencing China's cross-border trade and procedures through the ancient Great Wall neighbors. Moreover, it tests how the border policies, including movement and trade, affect China's economy and foreign policy with the neighbors through the lens of English School.

1.5. Structure of the Thesis

This dissertation has eight chapters. Introduction, the first chapter, includes scope and objectives, literature review, theory and methodology, and main argument. The second chapter is on a theoretical framework. It discusses the thesis' argument and results from the lenses of the theoretical approach, which is the English School.

The third chapter of the thesis presents the Sino-Mongol border management. The Sino-Mongol border is the first case that has constituted a historical dispute between the two sides. This chapter investigates the trade, transportation, and mobility patterns of borderland Erlian (on the Mongolian side of the border city) and Zamyn Uud (on the Inner Mongolian / Chinese side). The findings indicate a consistent annual rise in cross-border mobility and Chinese investment in transportation infrastructure, especially in railways.

The fourth chapter is on Sino-Russian border relations. This case is differentiated from the Central Asian and Mongolian cases of the imperial historical background of both sides. Russia and China also have had a great conflict on their border demarcation in history. Therefore, both countries did not attach importance to improving border relations for a long time. This chapter focuses on the border cities of Heihe (China) and Blagoveshchensk (Russia). Data and field studies analysis show that the Chinese

side is more hard-working to enhance trade, transportation, and mobility. In addition, this chapter draws attention to the labor migration on the Sino-Russian border. It is important to note that the issue of labor migration between China and Russia is complex. While there are certainly efforts being made to improve trade and transportation between the two countries, some Russians are not in favor of Chinese laborers coming to work in Russia. Concerns about competition for jobs, differences in culture and language, and other factors make it difficult for Russians to embrace Chinese labor migration.

The fifth chapter discusses the Sino-Kazakh border management. It focuses on railway stations between China and Kazakhstan in the Almaty region. The chapter shows the data series of border transportation and border trade between China and Kazakhstan, which plays a vital role in multilateral, regional, and bilateral integration and cooperation in border areas. There is a considerable potential to improve bilateral border relations and trade between China and Kazakhstan. Regarding physical and geographical suitability for investment and ethnic connections, the border region between China and Kazakhstan is one of the most open regional and global development areas.

The sixth chapter addresses the border relations with China and Kyrgyzstan. It starts with the border trade between the two countries. It also reveals the motivation factor of the border trade and transportation between the two countries. Kyrgyzstan is one of the poorest countries in Central Asia and needs to improve trade and border trade relations with its neighbors. China is the most attractive neighbor with its rapid economic growth. While border trade with Kyrgyzstan accounts for a small portion of total international trade with China, it significantly affects the economic progress of the border regions. Especially Xinjiang province, which is the neighbor of three Central Asian countries of China, has the priority to provide economic development in China. Kyrgyzstan-China border mobility is also closely related to the border between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The Chinese entering the region from the Kazakhstan border use the Chinese Kazakh border instead of the Chinese Kyrgyz border to reach Issyk Kul Lake, especially in tourism.

The seventh chapter focuses on China's border relations with the last one of its Central Asian neighbors, Tajikistan. Tajikistan is the other poorest country in Central Asia, and its situation is similar to Kyrgyzstan on border relations with China. Either side of the border tries to increase their benefit from the mutual border that has submitted profit for the local economies by promoting local service and production and raising local employment.

The eighth chapter is the conclusion. The chapter outlines China's border relations with its five neighbors and compares the conclusions and findings of all chapters examining China's responses to border management with them. In addition, the chapter outlines the study's theoretical framework through the overall argument of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO BORDER STUDIES

2.1. Introduction

This chapter of the thesis explores the concept of borders through three different perspectives: Realism, Liberalism, and English School. The collapse of the Soviet Union prompted discussions on integrating former socialist nations into the Western political and economic system. The shift from communist economies to democratic, market-based societies in countries like formerly Soviet countries has been a crucial topic in post-Cold War international relations and theory. The emergence of new states and their borders has also garnered attention, initially focused on security measures. Although the field of international relations primarily views borders through a security lens, borders also have a significant sociological dimension. Therefore, before delving into the theoretical approaches, the thesis examines the sociological elements of identity, nation, and territory. Then, the border and security context is discussed. After drawing the framework of the border concept's sociological aspect, the mainstream approaches to border studies are evaluated.

2.2. Conceptual Framework

In this chapter, I will discuss the political approach concentrating on realist and liberalist paradigms and English School created by political scientists. In addition, IR specialists focus on the internal dynamics and distribution of power within states rather than on relations between states and their borders. I will examine these three international relations paradigms and state boundaries' functions. Before delving into borders in international political theory, it is important to consider basic sociological concepts such as identity, nation, and territory. Additionally, issues related to security,

including policing, migration, crime, and military forces, should also be taken into account. Then, the border could be examined through the lenses of international relations theories. IR scholars focus on the links between identity formation, boundary drawing, and the establishment of political order.⁷¹ Territorial sovereignty and borders are considered one of the most critical national security features that political authority must protect. Borders draw a line to political, cultural, and social sovereignty, one of the main subjects of international relations. International relations have admitted the border limitations of conceptions and strategies that prioritize or emphasize the role and importance of the state. On the other hand, the analysis of borders centers on the notion of the boundary as both a physical demarcation (such as a state border) and a political institution. If states recognize the border, the institution of the border automatically performs its primary duties that refine the legal flow of people, goods, and information. The flow of people represents migration and tourism; goods mean/match with trade and transportation; and information symbolizing the security and border policy and border tariffs.⁷²

Studies for developing theories on political borders have been challenged by Prescott and others who claim that “borders are unique, and it is tough to make generalizations about them.”⁷³ On the other hand, Minghi proposed that border scholars should strive for generalizations to create theories that encompass categories and definitions that can be applied to specific cases and existing facts.⁷⁴ In other words, instead of detecting theoretical approaches, philosophical and ontological assumptions of scientific research can be reported. To reveal the ontological basis of the existence of boundaries, a nature-centric paradigm, which is a quasi-biological living phenomenon, should be considered. It should be noted that none of the approaches suggests a universal

⁷¹ Mathias Albert, “On Boundaries, Territory and Postmodernity: An International Relations Perspective,” *Geopolitics* 3, no. 1 (1998): 63.

⁷² Helena Rytövuori-Apunen, “The Depth of Borders Beyond the State: Analytical, Normative and Epistemic Challenges of Study,” in *Border Politics: Defining Spaces of Governance and Forms of Transgressions*, ed. Cengiz Günay and Nina Witjes (Vienna: Springer, 2017).pp.175-177.

⁷³ See Prescott, J.R.V., *Political Boundaries and Frontiers* (1987, London: Unwin Hyman).

⁷⁴ See Paasi, A., *Bounded Spaces in a ‘Borderless World’: Border Studies, Power and the anatomy of territory* (2009), p. 218; Minghi, J. “Boundary Studies in Political Geography,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 53, no.3 (1963): 407-428.

theoretical perspective. Instead, they give a chance to understand the existence and dynamics of borders within a political, cultural, and economic framework. Today, growing methodological pluralism, interdisciplinary approaches, ideological and national barriers between researchers appear as difficulties in making a generalization or formulating the border in border studies.⁷⁵

Defining borders and regulating boundaries can stem from distinct perspectives of regional or worldwide space. Therefore, borders can be analyzed based on their correlation with the establishment of nations, the formation of state ideologies, the consolidation of regimes, and the evolution of foreign policies. According to Gavrilis, the management of borders and territorial practices should be approached through an understanding of interests and the progression of political identities.⁷⁶

Onora O'Neill is renowned for her exceptional scrutiny of the political and philosophical ramifications of boundaries in literature. She refutes the notion that a just world can only exist without state borders and contends that boundaries are unacceptable when they consistently cause injustices to those outside of them.⁷⁷ On the other hand, Kenichi Ohmae enthusiastically defends the emergence of a borderless world. In his book "The End of Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies," Ohmae explains how the conventional nation-state model is no longer viable or practical for businesses in today's global economy. According to this view, more harmonious cross-border relations and less state intervention are favorable choices.⁷⁸ There are two cases that have tried to eliminate state borders and motivate societies or nations living together in the idea of socially mediated economic organization in a common territory: the Soviet Union, which collapsed in 1989, and the European

⁷⁵ Anton A. Kireev and Sergei E. Yachin, "Paradigms of Border Studies and the Metacultural Approach," *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 34, no. 3 (2019): 395–412, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2017.1344563>.

⁷⁶ See Gavrilis, *The Trouble with Borders*.

⁷⁷ Chris Brown, "Borders and Identity in International Political Theory," in *Identities, Borders, Orders: Rethinking International Relations Theory*, ed. Albert, Mathias; Jacobson, David; Lapid, Yosef (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. 122.

⁷⁸ Kenichi Ohmae, *The End of Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), p. 5.

Union, which is still alive since the 1950s. In both cases, however, states desire to claim the right to control and limit the subjects of the border as an operation of political realism.

As mentioned in the first chapter, border theory is also related to the state-centric system. The security and strength of boundaries depended on an orderly state system and constituted an internally moral community. Borders are concentric on all the makings of territory containing nation, society, identity, culture, economy, and language; therefore, they are essential elements of daily life, local action, and representations of national identity. In this respect, interdisciplinary literature on boundaries clarifies that Ohmae's claim of a borderless world is not a smooth action to implement.⁷⁹

2.2.1. Identity, nation, and territory

Focus on borders and territory requires deep knowledge of the population on land - a shared place- as old as human society. Add the fact that historically, identity, ethnicity, and nation are central to establishing borders between states. People are bounded to space not only by their memories but also by their economic, cultural, and social relations.

Gender, race, and ethnicity are categories of identity. According to Burton, theorizing identities are complicated since identities demarcate psychological rather than territorial space.⁸⁰ The common ground of the definitions of identity is sameness. Political identity is drawn by a familiar citizens/national and sovereign boundary “us” from an alien and other “them.” The way in which borders and identity are intertwined

⁷⁹ A. Paasi, “Boundaries as Social Processes: Territoriality in the World of Flows,” *Geopolitics* 3, no. 1 (1998): 69–88, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650049808407608>. pp. 85-86.

⁸⁰ Burton, John W. 1968 . *Systems, States, Diplomacy and Rules*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Identities, Borders, Orders : Rethinking International Relations Theory, edited by Mathias Albert, et al., University of Minnesota Press, 2001. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/metu2-ebooks/detail.action?docID=310541>. Created from metu2-ebooks on 2021-06-21 23:08:01.

shapes the way norms are established and determines the types of violence that are deemed acceptable or unacceptable. The Peace of Westphalia (1648) is important in this direction since the modern political system, and state sovereignty were designated in the background of domestic and international order and security.⁸¹ The Westphalian ideology portrays borders as fixed and absolute divisions that separate nation-states. Agnew characterizes this as the "territorial trap," which rests on three aspects: the primacy of territorial sovereignty, the distinction between internal and external affairs, and the discrete separation of the nation-state and its society.⁸²

Territorializing space, even if it was premature, was the initial constitutive principle of the modern political system that was beginning to shape Westphalian peace. However, as Ole Wæver highlights, in pre-Westphalian systems, there were states that existed without a corresponding sense of national identity, even nations without states that international relations would be relations without states.⁸³

A nation is no need for territorialization. Space can be defined as the geographical expression of social power, the state system including nation and space, appearing as a product of Westphalian peace first and French Revolution have to be seen in the same context. Nation-building certainly is not necessary for a territorial state. However, it (territorial state) is historically engaged with nation-building.⁸⁴ States are the subject matter of international relations, so Westphalia is important for a social

⁸¹ Mansbach, Richard W., Wilmer Franke, "War, Violence and Westphalian System," in *Identities, Borders, Orders : Rethinking International Relations Theory*, ed. Mathias Albert, David Jacobson, and Yosef Lapid (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 1–20.

⁸² See John Agnew, "The Territorial Trap," in *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory and International Political Economy*, ed. John Agnew and Stuart Crobridge (London: Routledge, 1995), 92–114; Agnew, "Borders on the Mind: Re-Framing Border Thinking;" John Gerard Ruggie, "Territoriality and Beyond : Problematizing Modernity in International Relations," *International Organization* 47, no. 1 (1993): 139–74.

⁸³ Ole Wæver, "Identity, Integration and Security: Solving the Sovereignty Puzzle in E.U. Studies," *Journal of International Affairs*, 1995.

⁸⁴ "Few states are built along carefully constructed ethnic lines in the World." "(...) The closest the World ever got to the ethnically 'homogenous' states and places where ethnicity and legally recognized territorial borders roughly coincided was in eighteenth-century Europe and Japan." For more detail see Graham E. Fuller, "Redrawing the World's Borders," *World Policy Journal*, no. Spring (1997): p. 12; also see Stuart Crobridge John Agnew, *Mastering Space: Hegemony, Territory and International Political Economy*, Routledge (London, 1995), p. 80-83, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203422380-10>.

contract of people and has a historical aspect for domestic order. This is also important for the debate on security at both national and international levels. As mentioned in the introduction chapter, borders are part of the national territory. On the other hand, Westphalia is important to overcome chaos and establish order in the sovereign states. Westphalia is a landmark for the social contract; it sets up morality rules among princes to endless wars and interstate violence. It is an ontology to legitimate relations between states.⁸⁵ Yet, as mentioned, there were also non-nation-states as much as the practical basis for identity. Westphalia is the political aspect of the evolution of nation-states. However, nations' cultural and social evolution is also important to discuss in the border theory. Since the theory of border is not just a theory of border but a theory of social movement from which society derives itself.⁸⁶

Ratzel argues that a nation's cultural evolution must reach territorial expansion. His well-known book '*The Lebensraum*'⁸⁷ was based on both a fixed and evolving conception of human societies and their evolution over time.⁸⁸ Chiantera-Stutte summarizes Ratzel's argument on space and life as:

*"...Ratzel maintains that 'life is movement, that always returns to a given form,' and that 'Every increase in the organic mass, every growth, every reproduction signifies spatial movement; and every movement is a mastering of space.' Yet, at the same time, he defines the ecumene as 'the space which [a species] occupies on the earth and on whose size and shape its viability depends in part, and affirms that 'each living thing is bound to its space and connected to its space.'"*⁸⁹

Soviet ethnographers Bromley and Kozlov are the authors that also designed a theory on space and society, claiming that society is a kind of live biological organism.

⁸⁵ Ronnie D. Lipschutz, *(B)orders and (Dis)orders: The Role of Moral Authority in Global Politics* in Mathias Albert, David Jacobson, Yosef Lapid, "Identities, Borders, Orders: Rethinking International Relations Theory" (2002, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis), p. 81.

⁸⁶ Thomas Nail, *Theory of Border* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016): 21.

⁸⁷ Ratzel defines the Lebensraum '*the space which (every species) occupies on the earth and on whose size and shape its viability depends in part*' for more detail see David Thomas Murphy, "'Retroactive Effects': Ratzel's Spatial Dynamics and the Expansionist Imperative in Interwar Germany," *Journal of Historical Geography* 61 (2018): 87. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2018.05.006>.

⁸⁸ Patricia Chiantera-Stutte, "Ratzel's Stone Guest: The Art of Politics in the Work of Friedrich Ratzel," *Journal of Historical Geography* 61 (2018): 92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2018.04.009>.

⁸⁹ Chiantera-Stutte.

Bromley suggested two different terms to describe society with territory and without territory in the 1970s. First, he characterizes ethnicoses as groups of people who have developed over time, sharing similar cultural and psychological characteristics, and who have a shared understanding of their identity and uniqueness in comparison to other similar groups.⁹⁰ Second, Bromley describes an *ethno-social organism* as a subset or a compact part of ethnicoses, referring to the community getting together with the relations of production. Russian people in the Soviet time are a good example of ethno-social organism and for ethnicoses, Kazakh people in the USSR, Jewish before 1948, or Eskimos. Ethnicoses can live without territory; however, ethno-social organisms cannot. Furthermore, the concept of an ethno-social organism aligns with Stalin's definition of a nation as a community of people who have come together through a shared history and have a stable identity that is based on a common language, territory, economic practices, and psychological characteristics, which are expressed through a shared culture.⁹¹ 'Struggle for space' is also emphasized in Ratzel's *Lebensraum*. Three main titles can be seen as the heart of his work: 'Density of life,' 'Retroactive effects' and 'Struggle for space.'⁹² He asserts the importance of space for the existing human species. Like the animals have colonies, humans live in the cities. Therefore, narrowing space for both species diminishes the quality and quantity of offspring. Consequently, he claims that overpopulation causes economic and social deterioration like hunger and poverty.⁹³ According to him, territorial expansion and conquest can be legitimized. He also uses the term 'organic boundaries' as a main idea, which imperialist expansion misused through hegemonic domination and control, ethnic cleansing, and even genocide.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Julian Bromley and Viktor Kozlov, "The Theory of Ethnos and Ethnic Processes in Soviet Social Sciences," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 31, no. 3 (1989): 429, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S001041750001598X>.

⁹¹ Bromley and Kozlov., 426.

⁹² David Thomas Murphy, "'Retroactive Effects': Ratzel's Spatial Dynamics and the Expansionist Imperative in Interwar Germany," *Journal of Historical Geography* 61 (2018): 87, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2018.05.006>.

⁹³ Murphy., 87.

⁹⁴ Ian Klinke and Mark Bassin, "Introduction: Lebensraum and Its Discontents," *Journal of Historical Geography* 61 (2018): 57. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2018.05.019>.

Klinke and Bassin provide an interpretation of Ratzel's philosophy, suggesting that in the aftermath of war, the military and political leaders of a country might be motivated to pursue a vision of reshaping political borders and expanding national territories as a means of fostering the natural growth and development of their nation.⁹⁵

Broomly, Kozlov, and Ratzel's ideas highlight the importance of territory for nations. 'Place,' 'space,' or 'territory' at first glance seems to be an important part of a nation. However, Bromley's arguments claim that nations can survive without territory or space.

As for Balibar, who represents a critical approach to the border in this respect, borders have evolved beyond simply being a physical boundary between two nations, and are now regarded as integral to the very essence of politics and the exercise of power. According to him;

*"...the idea of nations without a state, or nations 'before' the state, is thus a contradiction in terms, because a state always is implied in the historic framework of a national formation (even if not necessarily within the limits of its territory). But this contradiction is masked by the fact that national states, whose integrity suffers from internal conflicts that threaten its survival (regional conflicts, and especially class conflicts), project beneath their political existence to a preexisting 'ethnic' or 'popular' unity."*⁹⁶

Here, Balibar remembered us sovereignty is historically bound up with borders, not only the cultural aspects but also economic and political from the classical age to the imperial and the block's age before and after the dissolution. The spatial deterministic and naturalistic perspectives argue that humans have an innate tendency to defend and control territory, similar to the behavior observed in the animal kingdom. This viewpoint was commonly held, and often incorporated into nationalistic narratives, among early modern political geographers like Ratzel and Mackinder.⁹⁷ On the other hand, in his field theory, Bourdieu claims an ontological status for fields by creating the term 'social space.' He believes that relying solely on historical records or

⁹⁵ Klinke and Bassin. 58.

⁹⁶ Etienne Balibar, "The Nation Form : History and Ideology," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 13, no. 3 (1990): 329–61.

⁹⁷ See Agnew, J., *Making Political Geography*, (New York; 2002 Oxford University Press).

traditional accounts is insufficient for comprehending a social phenomenon or event. To truly understand interactions, transactions, and events, it is essential to take into account the social context in which they occur. Social space or field refers to historical, local, national, and international relational contexts by investigating previous knowledge.⁹⁸

2.2.2. Security, migration, and border

Space has been understood mostly in two common ways by social scientists. First is territorial, like states' boundaries. Second, like Bourdieu's explanation of space, it is structural. For example, entities, districts, or regions have interacted within a relationship concluded by an industrial core area or any other association.

First, the security limits should be drawn to better. Security is a multi-task concept that includes economic security, environmental security, civil safety and security, social security, etc. Therefore, it is not only for state border/external but also for societal/internal aspects. National and state security and societal and identity security are the main subtitles for confining security.⁹⁹

Katzenstein is a constructivist, formulating a vision of security that draws attention to national policies' internal and domestic determinants. He highlights that constructivism at any level of analysis focuses on examining the connections between the domestic social and legal norms of a state and its identities and interests.¹⁰⁰ It is a kind of alternative to the realistic and constructivist vision: analytic eclecticism. It identifies the difficulties while studying regions since the states or actors experience

⁹⁸ Michael James Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu : Key Concepts*, Vol. 2nd e (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1017/upo9781844654031.005>. p. 65.

⁹⁹ For more information Bigo, Didier and R. B. J. Walker (2007), "International, Political, Sociology", *International Political Sociology*, 1 (1): 1-5; Bigo, Didier (2002), "Security and Immigration: Toward a Critique of the Governmentality of Unease", *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, 27 (1): 63-92.

¹⁰⁰ Rudra Sil and Peter J. Katzenstein, *Beyond Paradigms: Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). See also Fred Chernoff, "Pragmatism, Pluralism, and Eclecticism: Sil and Katzenstein's 'Analytic Eclecticism' in *Beyond Paradigms*," *International Journal* 75, no. 3 (2020): 392–403, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702020961360>.

totally different processes during nation-building. A state's goals, aims and functionality are driven by different factors. Therefore, he claims that the concept of regionalism “consisted for two different reasons, unavoidable empirical ambiguities and differences in analytical perspective.”¹⁰¹

Alexander Wendt also believes that the state's identity determines its interests and informs us of its actions.¹⁰² Like Katzenstein and Wendt, Lapid and Heisler claim that international political sociology is a way to understand international relations.¹⁰³ For example, international relations consider state borders as fixed boundaries, including cultural, social and political identities, public and private limits, etc. However, regarding the security on the border, Michel Foucault or Pierre Bourdieu and Paul Vyne adopt an approach by using the term “field of security” which refers to both the social world and symbolic systems and the physical area.¹⁰⁴

“Field of security” illustrates the two traditions of the study of security: the structuralist and constructivist. Bourdieu combines the two traditions and recomposes as structuralist constructivism. According to him, structuralism refers to the social and cultural world, like identities, language etc., representing objective structures. On the other hand, he explained constructivism using the concept of “*habitus*” which refers to individuals, groups, or institutions that constitute perceptions, thoughts, and actions.

¹⁰¹ Peter J Katzenstein, “Regionalism in Comparative Perspective,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 31, no. 2 (1996): 123–59; Chernoff, “Pragmatism, Pluralism, and Eclecticism: Sil and Katzenstein’s ‘Analytic Eclecticism’ in Beyond Paradigms.”

¹⁰² See Stefano Guzzini and Anna Leander, “A Social Theory for International Relations: An Appraisal of Alexander Wendt’s Theoretical and Disciplinary Synthesis,” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 4, no. 4 (2001): 316–38.

¹⁰³ For more information see Albert, Mathias ve Yosef Lapid (2017), “IBO, IPS and SIP: Engaging the Sociologies of International Relations”, Basaran, Tugba, Didier Bigo, Emmaneul-Pierre Guittet ve R. B. J. Walker (Der.), *International Political Sociology: Transversal Lines* (Londra ve New York: Routledge): 68-80.

¹⁰⁴ For more information see William Walters, “Foucault and Frontiers: Notes on the Birth of the Humanitarian Border,” in *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*, ed. Ulrich Bröckling, Susanne Krasmann, and Thomas Lemke (New York: Routledge, 2011), 138–64, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203846476>; Kai Jonas Koddenbrock, “Strategies of Critique in International Relations : From Foucault and Latour towards Marx,” *European Journal of International Relations* 21, no. 2 (2015): 243–66, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066114538854>; Thomas Lemke, “Foucault, Governmentality, and Critique,” *Rethinking Marxism* 14, no. 3 (2002): 49–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/089356902101242288>; Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu : Key Concepts*.

This combination suggests that the interplay between the social context (or "field") in which individuals exist and their personal dispositions (or "habitus") can be summarized as a reciprocal relationship. The field both shapes and is shaped by individuals' habitus, while the habitus provides the foundation for actors' perceptions and interpretations of their experiences within the field.¹⁰⁵

Field of security indicates that an objectivist moment compensates for a subjectivist one, or vice versa, which can be defined in a dialectical relation.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, international relations discuss security and identity as a concept and natural part of power. A state's borders are determined by the power of the state where it started and stopped. States used to control people and resources in their territory limited by borders in the Westphalian system. Therefore, the role of the police and military separated sharply in the sixteenth century. Police have been responsible for crime and providing public order, but security outside state borders was the army's main task. However, in the mid of nineteenth century, the circumstances changed. First, the concept of borders is changing; second, new threats are appearing with the end of the bipolar system, and the migratory problem is one of them. So, the security agency's role is not limited to inside or outside the state. Technology also altered the fight modes among states, for example, information control by intelligence agencies became the primary race between the states to secure their nations from terrorist attacks. Concerning European Union, the borders disappear among the members.¹⁰⁷

Regarding the border, security is connected with a massive flow of refugees and (im)migration automatically includes police and military forces. This phenomenon

¹⁰⁵ Grenfell, *Pierre Bourdieu : Key Concepts* p. 51.

¹⁰⁶ Bourdieu explains dialectical relation "...even if for instance the subjectivist moment seems very close, when it is taken separately to interactionist or ethnomethodological analyses, it is separated from them by a radical difference: the points of view are apprehended as such and related to the positions in the structure of the corresponding agents." Bourdieu, Pierre. "The forms of capital.(1986)." *Cultural theory: An anthology* 1 (2011): 81-93.

It is a vision of constructivism that can be connected in IR, see Scott Burchill et al., *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

¹⁰⁷ See Dider Bigo, "*The Möbius Ribbon of Internal and External Security(ies)*" in Mathias Albert, David Jacobson, Yosef Lapid (eds), *Identities, Borders, Orders: Rethinking International Relations Theory*, (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

which is not new affects not only national borders but also state authority and national identity. However, the situation becomes more complex when security is shifted away from the military domain. Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde think about security in terms of sectors, like the political sector, military sector, economic sector, societal sector, and environmental sector.¹⁰⁸ Wæver claims societal sector is identity. According to their analysis, the concept of societal security has been understood and defined differently by various actors across different time periods and geographical regions. They outline the societal security threats as migration (e.g., Chinese migration into Tibet), horizontal competition (e.g., Quebecois of Canada), vertical competition (e.g., Yugoslavia or the EU).¹⁰⁹

Migration is a contemporary and much-debated problem in the West and the rest of the societies since refugees lead to an economic and social crisis by means of employment (causing unemployment for societies), involving crime (it is a threat and security issue for societies). According to the functionalist security vision, migration creates criminal elements on state borders. The vision defines the security issues through the stages of insecurity, such as risks, dangers, etc., yet not the security agencies. However, there is an interaction between crime/migration and police, war and the army. The perspective being described neglects the roles of the police and military, while also failing to account for instances of criminal activity carried out by internal security personnel and instances of warfare executed by external security personnel. Didier Bigo argues that there is no improvement in the IR literature on security including police, migration and crime, and military forces. Traditional IR theories identify security issues within the military action and the use of force.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ For more information see Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, Jaap de Wilde ed., *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998). p.7.

¹⁰⁹ “*Migration*: X people are being overrun or diluted by influxes of Y people; the X community will not be what it used to be, because others will make up the population; *horizontal competition*: although it is still X people living here, they will change their ways because of the overriding cultural and linguistic influence from neighboring culture; *vertical competition*: people will stop seeing themselves as X, because there is either integrating Project (...) for more details see Ole Wæver, “Toplumsal Güvenliğin Değişen Gündemi,” *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi* 5, no. 18 (2008): p. 158.

¹¹⁰ Didier Bigo, “*The Möbius Ribbon of Internal and External Security(ies)*” in Mathias Albert, David Jacobson, Yosef Lapid (eds), *Identities, Borders, Orders: Rethinking International Relations Theory*, (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 2001), p. 92.

Identity, nation and security are the components of border and make it extremely significant. Balibar summarizes the interactions of the components with the border as:

“The borders of new sociopolitical entities, in which an attempt is being made to preserve all the functions of the sovereignty of the state, are no longer entirely situated at the outer limit of territories; they are dispersed a little everywhere, wherever the movement of information, people, and things is happening and is controlled—for example, in cosmopolitan cities. But it is also one of my hypotheses that the zones called peripheral, where secular and religious cultures confront one another, where differences in economic prosperity become more pronounced and strained, constitute the melting pot for the formation of a people (dmos), without which there is no citizenship (politeia) in the sense that this term has acquired since antiquity in the democratic tradition.”¹¹¹

Sovereignty and borders are historically bounded to each other. Today, however, the main discussion on borders goes on the lines of de-territorialization and citizenship of borders.

2.3. Neorealist Approach to Politics of Border

Realism is an established and prominent theory in the field of International Relations, and it offers a powerful explanation for the prevalence of war, which is considered the typical state of affairs in the international system. Following the Second World War, Realism emerged as the prevailing theoretical framework. Classical realists like E. Carr, Hans J. Morgenthau, Reinhold Niebuhr, Frederic Schuman, George Kennan, and others emphasized the competitive nature of politics among the nations. Morgenthau underlines that power is the capacity to affect the other. Morgenthau distinguished military power and political power, the former is physical relation, and the latter is psychological relation to influence others. Hence, he realized that having military might alone does not suffice to comprehend power dynamics in international relations. His idea gave rise to a power-materialist theory that draws a parallel between the significance of power in international relations and the role of money in neoclassical economics. As Mearsheimer put it

“Power is the currency of great-power politics, and states compete for it among themselves. What money is to economics, power is to international relations.”¹¹²

¹¹¹ Etienne Balibar, *We, the People of Europe? : Reflections on Transnational Citizenship* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2004): 10.

¹¹² John J Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (London: Norton, 2001). p. 12.

According to Mearsheimer, Realism's primary concern is addressed through wealth (money) and security (power), whereas classical realists center their attention on the concept of Fallen Human Nature, which pertains to the will to dominate others.¹¹³

Kenneth Waltz's realist perspective on international relations is elucidated in his influential study "Man, the State and War." In this work, Waltz compares three images for the origins of war: human nature, the formation of the state, and the global system. He outlines three key characteristics of the international system. Firstly, it is anarchic and lacks any overarching authority. Secondly, states are considered to be equivalent entities. Lastly, resources are distributed unevenly among states within the system. Waltz posits that the balance of power motivates the international system, and this mechanism is determined by the Great Powers. Between 1945 and the end of the 1980s, the international system was characterized by a bipolar balance of power between the United States and the Soviet Union.¹¹⁴

Structuralist claims that bipolarity is less war-prone since there is only one great power versus another. Realists maintain that states must consistently pursue chances to enhance their strength in order to ensure their survival. They assume security is rare and states try to achieve it by enhancing their relative advantage. Defensive realists assert that the fundamental characteristic of the international system is that all states should restrain their pursuit of greater power. They argue that if any state becomes too dominant, a balancing response from other states within the system is likely to arise.¹¹⁵

Waltz grounded his argument on international anarchy rather than human nature. The competitive nature of the international system is manifested as anarchy, with states

¹¹³ Stefano Guzzini, "The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 10, no. 4 (2004): 533–68, p. 537.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066104047848>.

¹¹⁴ See Kenneth Waltz and Stephen M. Walt, "Man, the State, and War," *Man, the State, and War*, 2019, 1098395, <https://doi.org/10.7312/walt18804>.

¹¹⁵ Example of offensive realist analysis: John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War," *National and International Security* 15, no. 1 (1990): 107–58, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538981>. For more details on defensive realism Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

ving for power and resources. The territorial integrity of the state is regarded as the central element of this competition. Thus, international relations' subject matter becomes anarchy beyond state borders. Structural realism puts the security and balance of power at the system's core. Yet the view of the balance of power ignores the order within state borders.¹¹⁶

Waltz, the pioneer of structural realism, argues that the primary objective of states is not simply to maximize their dominance, but rather to secure and maintain their stance within the international system. He means that states should maximize their security, not power. However, there is no clear distinction between power and security both in Waltz and others. According to (neo)realists, security can not be separated from the pursuit of power; it might be reducible but not independent.¹¹⁷

Waltz argues that the study of international relations should exclusively focus on the systemic level of analysis. According to him, fear of domination by others motivates states to compete. Because of the territorial character of the state, anarchy beyond state borders is the subject of international relations. The order within state borders is not a study for IR. Waltz also highlights 'system of state' is structural and historical. According to him, Hobbes's attitude is the same as his direct succession of Thucydides, a philosopher of political realism. However, many theorists do not accept and strongly oppose that idea. In addition, Waltz rejects the notion that the global system can be traced back to the emergence of capitalism and military actions before the 18th century.¹¹⁸

The Westphalian system also needs to concentrate on the concept of the border. The realist view offers that central states would control security policy. Moreover, state

¹¹⁶ See Steve Smith Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). Thomas Biersteker, "State, Sovereignty and Territory," in *Handbook of International Relations*, ed. Beth A. Simmons Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse (London: SAGE, 2012), 157–76, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781848608290.n8>.

¹¹⁷ Stefano Guzzini, "The Enduring Dilemmas of Realism in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 10, no. 4 (2004): 533–68, p. 539. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066104047848>.

¹¹⁸ Agnew, "The Territorial Trap." pp.81-82.

sovereignty also would remain undamaged. Regarding the border, realists suggest central governments protect their frontiers and enhance border control. As Brunet-Jailly argues:

*“... realist theories of international relations would suggest that central states protect their frontiers and their monopoly over international links and thus enhance border control. Moreover, the multilevel governance approach would suggest that border security becomes a common feature of the intergovernmental networks as all government levels co-operate in the design and implementation of an effective border security policy.”*¹¹⁹

Unlike Waltz, Keohane considers how the international system cooperates without a hegemonic power. His argument depends on the role of regimes, rules, norms, principles, and decision-making procedures. While Keohane focuses on hegemonic power and hegemonic stability, he proposes the US. Keohane refers to the Second World War and Cold War while drawing the framework of the international economy, finance, and trade. States' behavior does not depend on the anarchic system; it also bases on the regimes, formal international institutions, etc.

The concept of the border is intricately linked to national security and the utilization of military power. Boundary regimes, despite their stability and role of providing security for states and outlying populations, have exceptions rather than the rule. Since states generally attempt to manage their borders in order to consolidate their security.

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There exists a paradox between the desire for secure borders and the growing necessity for cross-border communication and accountability. On the other hand, as mentioned above, security is a complicated notion. Understanding threats do not depend on just military force. For example, the most powerful army can not challenge illicit migration or terrorism, human smuggling, and drug and weapons trafficking.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, “Security and Border Security Policies: Perimeter or Smart Border? A Comparison of the European Union and Canadian - American Border Security Regimes,” *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 21, no. 1 (2006): 6.

¹²⁰ Gavrilis, *The Dynamics of Interstate Boundaries*. P.2.

¹²¹ Vladimir A. Kolosov, “Theoretical Approaches in the Study of Borders,” in Sevastianov, Sergei V. Laine, Jussi P., Kireev, Anton A. (eds), *Introduction to Border Studies*, (Vladivostok; Dalnauka: 2015): 49.

To sum up, in a realist perspective, all types of cross-border movements are seen as the same. Whether it is illegal immigrants or refugees they are all categorized as individuals whose movements should be regulated in the interest of domestic integrity and security.

2.4. Neoliberal Open Borders Approach: Free Trade and Migration

Liberalism is a competing perspective with Realism and deserves consideration in order to address the security dilemma. The world has experienced two great wars in anarchic conditions. After the Second World War, the Cold War period began. Military spending was so great that high technology was created in the armed force. These improvements prompted (neo)liberal perspective to provide for sustaining and stable peace together with the military advantage.¹²²

The roots of liberal thought go back to the European Enlightenment. Kantian liberal perspective on world politics claims to promote democracy, deepen the correlation of global trade, and boost the multipartite network of International Governmental Organizations (IGOs). From Kant's framework, liberal internationalism emphasizes that war and conflict can be beaten by uniting differences in the internal and global structure of governance. The viewpoint of Kant has not been entirely opposed to realism. Kant accepted the conflict among the nations. However, he believed that establishing democratic administration, ensuring economic independence, and adhering to international legislations are the keys to achieving a peaceful global community. War and conflict are artificial for Kant; he claims people are peace-loving naturally. Rousseau, Kant and Cobden, Schumpeter and Doyle, who are representatives of liberalist thought, argue that governments that are militaristic and anti-democratic often have a group of individuals known, who instigate wars in order to expand their own power through land acquisition. As a result, during times of war,

¹²² See Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*:112; Burchill et al., *Theories of International Relations*: 55-6.

these governments use such justifications to raise taxes, expand their bureaucracy, and exert greater control over their people.¹²³

Liberalism has advocated political freedom, democracy, constitutionalism, and juridically equal citizens. One of the main key concepts of liberalism is collective security, which is an agreement that the security of one state is the concern of all in the system. It should be responded to collectively. Free trade is the second key concept of liberalism we will use to understand the borderless world. In nineteenth-century liberalism, free trade was the basis of an allegation that would make world order more peaceful. Tim Dunne argues that trade is beneficial for all participants regardless of their economic size or type, as it results in mutual gains for everyone involved.¹²⁴

It can be said that the primary objective of the neoliberal approach in financial politics was to associate duration of worldwide financial formation with the 1970s affected by Keynesian policies. Therefore capitalism, freedom and the market became the holy trinity of liberal thought. The neoliberal approach argues open and competitive markets are the best way to protect liberty and offer a guarantee against the corruption of the government.¹²⁵

According to liberals, states keep in the background versus the union, organization, or integration groups. Consequently, the primary role of borders is to facilitate interactions between neighboring countries and promote various forms of international exchange. From that point of view, improving cross-border communications and infrastructure and using technology are vital actions. Conflicts and territorial disputes impede the free movement of products and individuals and integration. Neoliberals emphasize that the boundaries of any state are fewer than the integration to cope with global problems.¹²⁶

¹²³ See Burchill et al., *Theories of International Relations*: 59. Thomas C Walker, "Two Faces of Liberalism: Kant, Paine, and the Question of Intervention," *International Studies Quarterly* 52, no. 3 (2008): 451.

¹²⁴ Dunne, Tim, *Liberalism* in Baylis, John and Smith, Steve (eds), *The Globalization of World Politics* (New York, Oxford University Press, 2005): 200.

¹²⁵ Agnew, "The Territorial Trap: 199-200."

¹²⁶ See Anna Moraczewska, "The Changing Interpretation of Border Functions in International Relations," *Geopolitic* 10, no. 2 (2005): 329–40.

European Union creates a large and single market that allows member countries to collaborate on the common economic interest. In Scott Burchill, the idea behind the economic integration of Europe through free trade and the removal of barriers to commerce was that increased trade would foster common interests among states and reduce the likelihood of conflict.¹²⁷

The traditional liberal perspective on migration and open border policies suggests that states are not obligated to allow immigrants into their country. Walzer's claims are utilitarian. He is one of the proponents of this view. He says, liberal states should have the freedom to decide their own criteria for awarding or denying membership, including the number and type of immigrants they admit.¹²⁸

However, in the last decade, this view has been strongly criticized. Some scholars argue that developed states have a strong ethical obligation to accept immigrants, as this can reduce poverty and promote the spread of human rights. Joseph Carens' article "Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders" is a well-known study that presents a liberal perspective on open borders and migration. Carens argues for the idea of increased openness of borders. Since the idea of citizenship does not depend on people's exertion, it is just related to where people were born. He suggests that the current level of border openness should be increased, and people generally would be free to move and live in another country. His views were implied by John Rawls' theory of justice, property rights theories and utilitarianism.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ See Burchill et al., *Theories of International Relations*.

¹²⁸ Thomas Pölzler, "Open Borders and the Ideality of Approaches: An Analysis of Joseph Carens' Critique of the Conventional View Regarding Immigration," *European Journal of Analytic Philosophy* 15, no. 1 (2019): 18. For more detail about Walzer see Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 1983). *Two types of membership are accepted. "First, it uses ethnic or cultural membership acquired by birth or by ascribed identity to exclude people in the territory who want to stay. Such a ground for exclusion contravenes liberal egalitarianism. Second, the ethnic or cultural group's boundaries do not coincide with the state's boundaries, and states often contain more than one group; so all those who are citizens in the state are not the same set as the people who are members of the ethnic or cultural group."* For more detail see Paulina Ochoa Espejo, "Taking Place Seriously: Territorial Presence and the Rights of Immigrants," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 24, no. 1 (2016): 71, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopp.12061>.

¹²⁹ For more detail about Carens's assertions look at Joseph H. Carens, "Realistic and Idealistic Approaches to the Ethics of Migration," *International Migration Review* 30, no. 1 (1996): 156–70, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2547465>; Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (New York: Basic Books, 1974); John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971); Onora O'Neil,

Pölzler and Meilaender have not approved of Carens' arguments since they are moral instead of liberal. Carens discusses immigration and open borders based on moral values and justice. Meilaender finds Carens's claims incomplete. He criticizes Carens as:

*"If it is really only intended as an argument for people who are already liberals, then the reader expecting a case for genuinely open borders is bound to be disappointed; furthermore, it then seems obliged to return to and address the broad, continued disagreement within liberalism. If, on the other hand, it really is what it claims to be, an argument for open borders, then we must conclude that its reliance on and reflection of certain liberal principles (certain interpretations of them, even) leave it with little to say to countries that do not already share those principles."*¹³⁰

Considering migration, Carens claims that liberal states should accept immigrants if they are refugees. Refugees are divided into two types. First, refugees as determined by UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and second, asylum seekers. Carens emphasizes that states bear a significant moral responsibility towards individuals seeking asylum. These arguments also are highly idealistic.¹³¹

In the field of immigration and asylum, liberal frames follow a humanitarian perspective. It is concerned about rights, not moral values. In addition, liberals focus on individual rights rather than cross-border movements. For example, The EU's asylum and immigration policies have centered around limiting access to their territory by fortifying external borders, implementing strict visa regulations, penalizing carriers, assigning exclusive responsibility for deporting illegal immigrants and assessing asylum applications, and simplifying asylum procedures.¹³²

"Political Liberalism and Public Reason: A Critical Notice of John Rawls, Political Liberalism," *The Philosophical Review* 106, no. 3 (1997): 411–28.

¹³⁰ Peter C. Meilaender, "Liberalism and Open Borders: The Argument of Joseph Carens," *The International Migration Review* 33, no. 4 (1999): 1079; Pölzler, "Open Borders and the Ideality of Approaches: An Analysis of Joseph Carens' Critique of the Conventional View Regarding Immigration."

¹³¹ See Pölzler, "Open Borders and the Ideality of Approaches: An Analysis of Joseph Carens' Critique of the Conventional View Regarding Immigration."

¹³² Jan Niessen Elsbeth Guild, ed., *The Developing Immigration and Asylum Policies of the European Union* (The Hague: Kluwer, 1996).

2.5. English School Approach to Border Studies

The central argument of the English School of international relations is that sovereign states form a society, despite the absence of a higher authority. The ability of states to create a society of equals is considered one of the most intriguing aspects of international relations according to the English School. Despite the absence of a higher authority, the English School argues that there is a surprising degree of order and relatively low level of clash between states, given the anarchic nature of the international system. They encourage reflection on the potential for violence, fear, insecurity, and collapse in an anarchic society, and yet, these are not the defining characteristics of world politics. The English School acknowledges the presence of violence in international relations, but also emphasizes that it is often controlled by international law and morality.¹³³

Herbert Butterfield, Martin Wight, Hedley Bull, Adam Watson, John Vincent, and Michael Donelan are the scholars (among them are diplomats, historians, lawyers) recognized as the first generation of the School. They contributed to the history and theory of international society via an interdisciplinary point of view.¹³⁴

The English School provides a hybrid approach of various concepts, allowing for a combination of theory and history, power and morality, and agency and structure. English School reads the IR from social and historical aspects. The focus of this approach is on the international community, which is shaped by its shared norms and sense of identity. From that point, it is similar to constructivism. However, English School scholars claim that they used constructivism just to enhance the analytical framework of English School. Reus-Smit suggests that the English School could

¹³³ For more information see: Andrew Linklater and Hidemi Suganami, *The English School of International Relations: A Contemporary Reassessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

¹³⁴ See Adam Watson Hedley Bull, ed., *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxfordshire: Clarendon Press, 1984); Hedley Bull, "International Theory : The Case for a Classical Approach," *World Politics* 18, no. 3 (1966): 361–77; Barry Buzan, "From International System to International Society: Structural Realism and Regime Theory Meet the English School," *International Organization* 47, no. 3 (1993): 327–52; Martin Wight Herbert Butterfield, *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Politics* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966).

benefit from adopting a more sociological perspective, which it could learn from constructivism. Similarly, constructivism could benefit from English School by adopting a more standardizing approach. Thus, two approaches would be closer but not the same.¹³⁵

Members of the English School are drawn to elements of realism, but they do not tend to find a middle ground and do not fully reconcile with either perspective. They argue that the international political system is more orderly and civil than neo-realists suggest.¹³⁶

The English School places great importance on mutual recognition as a means of understanding society, but they also believe that shared trade, interests, and other factors are necessary. Recognition serves as an indicator of social practices, and the English School considers it a fundamental identity affair that represents the initial act in creating an international society. Bull and Watson assert that the history of international society is characterized by changing boundaries of inclusion and exclusion.¹³⁷

In “The Anarchical Society,” Hedley Bull contends that international relations are founded on the presence of self-governing political communities or states, each claiming sovereignty over a specific portion of the global population. In his book, Bull examines five possible routes towards achieving world order, which include a state of anarchy lacking a cohesive society, a world of self-governing states with no overarching system, a global government, a revival of medieval-style systems, or an entirely novel arrangement that surpasses our present conceptualization. All of these conjectures are contingent upon varying arrangements of states and the function of borders separating them. These arrangements might encompass reduced cross-border

¹³⁵ Christian Reus-Smit, “Imagining Society: Constructivism and the English School,” *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 4, no. 3 (2002): 487–509; Biersteker, “State, Sovereignty and Territory”: 119.

¹³⁶ Linklater and Suganami, *The English School of International Relations: A Contemporary Reassessment*.

¹³⁷ See Hedley Bull, *The Expansion of International Society*.

activities, rigid respect for state borders with minimal or no transboundary movements, the erosion or disappearance of borders among states, blurred or permeable territorial boundaries, or potentially even a more radical transformation of the very notion of state borders.¹³⁸

Chris Brown argues that there is a gap in studying border and identity together in the modern political and international relations theory (liberal or non-liberal). As mentioned above, studying frontiers in international relations, for example, is accepted as a topic that is examined by international lawyers or bureaucrats. Since frontier and border are used as interchangeable words and refer to a line dividing two states, it seems to interest only lawyers. Disputes on the frontier generally are appeared where the borderline is.¹³⁹

The realist theory focuses on state-centric philosophy and emphasizes the norm of state sovereignty considering the cross-border phenomena. Realism ignores the type of movement for security interests. Therefore, Realism challenges advancing and deepening on the cross-border actions. On the other hand, liberalism follows the humanitarian aspect and, as highlighted before, focuses on individual (his or her) rights, not cross-border movements. From the liberal frame, cross-border trade requires tight border controls, but illegal migration would not be controlled because of fundamental human rights.¹⁴⁰

The relationship between China and the West in the 19th and early 20th centuries was complex. China was not granted sovereign statehood until January 1942, and from the Treaty of Nanking in 1843 until that time, China was included within the framework of the states system, yet it was not generally recognized as a member of the

¹³⁸ Bull, H. *The Anarchical Society* (1977)

¹³⁹ Brown, Chris, *Borders and Identity in International Political Theory* in Mathias Albert, David Jacobson, Yosef Lapid (eds), *Identities, Borders, Orders: Rethinking International Relations Theory*, (Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 2001): 117-18; For more information see Chris Brown, "International Theory and International Society: The Viability of the Middle Way?," *Review of International Studies* 21, no. 2 (1995): 183–96, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210500117619>.

¹⁴⁰ Sandra Lavenex, "Migration and the EU's New Eastern Border : Between Realism and Liberalism," *J. of European Public Policy* 8, no. 1 (2001): 24–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501760010018313>.

international society. In the 19th century, European values were used to determine the conditions for becoming a member of international society, and China was deemed ineligible for legitimate membership and was consequently denied equal standing within the international society. Due to this unequal recognition, it is difficult to characterize the relationship between the West and China. This instance underscores the importance of historical limits of inclusion and exclusion as operational dynamics within the international structure.¹⁴¹

Recent literature on borders has shifted focus to how borders serve a variety of purposes as socio-territorial constructs that reflect national identity discourses and practices. Some studies also examine how borders function in a globalized context. However, many border studies continue to view borders primarily in terms of the tension between different forces.¹⁴²

To sum up with the impact of globalization and integration, the roles and functions of boundaries and borders are undergoing significant changes, requiring a thorough examination of the situation.¹⁴³ The effects of these factors are complex and varied, making them difficult to fully understand. The boundaries between states are gradually moving from being divisive to open and integrative forms, driven by globalization and economic liberalization, advancements in technology and communication, improved living standards, and increased awareness of transboundary and global environmental issues. The growing recognition of global issues, as well as the need for international cooperation, is also contributing to this trend.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ For more information about China's position before 1942, see Yongjin Zhang, "China's Entry into International Society: Beyond the Standard of 'Civilization,'" *Review of International Studies* 17, no. 1 (1991): 3–16, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026021050011229X>.

¹⁴² John Agnew, "Borders on the Mind: Re-Framing Border Thinking," *Ethics & Global Politics* 1, no. 4 (2008): 177.

¹⁴³ David Newman, "On Borders and Power: A Theoretical Framework," *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 18, no. 1 (2003): 13–25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2003.9695598>.

¹⁴⁴ See Kolossov, "Border Studies: Changing Perspectives and Theoretical Approaches"; Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, "Globalization, Integration and Cross-Border Relations in the Metropolitan Area of Detroit (USA) and Windsor (Canada)," *International Journal of Economic Development* 2, no. 3 (2000): 379–401; James Anderson and Liam O'Dowd, "Borders, Border Regions and Territoriality: Contradictory Meanings, Changing Significance," *Regional Studies* 33, no. 7 (1999): 593–604, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343409950078648>.

2.6. Conclusion

After discussing (neo)realism and (neo)liberalism, it can be said that studying the concept of border in IR is captured between realist fears and liberalist values. Considering the border of the Great Wall of China, we see that China has liberal policies on border regions. Although Realism dominated China's concerns about regional security, it is following the path of liberalizing on its borders. Since liberal policies give China a great chance to affect and control the border regions, China creates a unique and distinctive border order which is not like the rest of the world. It can not be explained through the lens of realism and liberalism. It should be a kind of eclectic theory named English School.

China sees its nearby countries, like Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Mongolia, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia, as connected to itself in terms of ethnicity, culture, and geography, and considers them part of its own territory. The relationship between China and its border neighbors is important in terms of the territorial trap¹⁴⁵ concept, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining territorial integrity. China has resolved border disputes with its neighbors through historical ties, and it does not seem to prevent mutual commercial, cultural, and social interaction. Although China recognizes that these regions are vulnerable to internal disturbances or demands for separation, it has chosen to address potential threats by investing in economic development in both its own and neighboring territories. Additionally, China has established cultural and ethnic communication with these areas while maintaining control over visa applications. For example, China implemented its own visa application process for people from Central Asia and Mongolia but has protocols with these countries for visa-free applications that will facilitate the transit of Chinese citizens to these neighboring countries. Therefore, Chinese citizens have the right to enter and exit Central Asia and Mongolia freely for thirty days.

China has adopted a hybrid attitude in its border policy towards Central Asia and Mongolia, a synthesis of neoliberal and neorealist perspectives. This attitude can be

¹⁴⁵ For more information about territorial trap see: Agnew, "The Territorial Trap."

best explained in theory with the English School, taking into account the historical evaluation.

There are no significant ethnic or cultural connections between China and Russia in the border region. In fact, Russia lacks a common culture, language, or religion that unites its identity and nation. The history of interactions between China and Russia has had a significant impact on their relationship along their shared border. Although most border disputes have been resolved, some issues remain unresolved, leading to occasional tensions or even conflicts between the two countries. Despite this, the difficult economic situation in Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union created opportunities for Russian citizens through border trade with China. China's approach to its border relationship with Russia is pragmatic, with no perceived ethnic or cultural threats. However, the relationship can be understood in terms of historical interests and conflicts. Today, China and Russia focus on building border trade zones that encourage booming trade and mobility, reducing the risk of conflict. Therefore, while China may have adopted neo-realist and neoliberal perspectives on its borders with Russia, it can be viewed within the framework of the English School.

In line with the English School's perspective, states' security dilemmas can be resolved when they recognize that agreeing on fundamental rules of behavior is advantageous for maintaining peace, security, and survival. As the international realm is composed of states, social relations between them are inevitable. States typically seek validation from the collective of states, meaning that they value the acceptance of their foreign policy actions.

CHAPTER 3

SINO-MONGOLIAN BORDER

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will provide a succinct overview of the historical evolution of the Sino-Mongolian border, with a specific emphasis on the post-Soviet era. The trade, transportation, and mobility dynamics of Erlian (located on the Mongolian side of the border city) and Zamyn Uud (situated on the Inner Mongolian/Chinese side of the border city) will be thoroughly examined. It is evident that both the Asian Development Bank and the Chinese government have invested substantial resources into infrastructure projects on both sides of the region, ranging from housing to transportation. The data reveals that border mobility has been steadily increasing on an annual basis.

3.2. Historical Background

Mongolia is located between two great empires Russia and China. Sino-Mongolian border disputes goes back three-centuries. From the seventeenth to the twentieth century, the border between China and Mongolia was not clearly drawn. Since the nomadic lifestyle dominated the region, there were Mongol princes which are in dispute among them. Over the course of history, there have been destructive invasions of the Chinese territories from the Mongolia. The Mongolians and the Chinese utilize distinct perspectives on this matter. The Mongolians believe that they are one of the first nations in Asia. In contrast, the Chinese consider Mongolia to be a minority group

which was part of the Middle Kingdom. This fundamental quarrel has had an ongoing impact on their relationship.¹⁴⁶

Afterwards, Stalin's 1945 negotiations with Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek, during January 1946 China recognized Outer Mongolia's independence. This meant that 603,909 square miles (1,564,116 km²) of what had formerly been internationally recognized as Chinese territory were dominated by Moscow until the end of the USSR in 1991.¹⁴⁷

After the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911, Mongols had a chance to become free from Chinese rule, but they partially ruined this possibility by getting too close to Russia. After establishing People's Republic of China in 1949, Mao Zedong expected Mongolia to return to China, as per Soviet promises during the 1930s. When this did not happen, Sino-Soviet tensions increased, particularly along their lengthy borders. In August 1962, China desired to resolve its territorial disputes with Mongolia through diplomacy. On 25 December 1962, China and the Mongolian People's Republic signed an agreement officially beginning the process of delineating the Sino-Mongolian border. Later, in 1988, a second treaty settled the 4,645 km border.¹⁴⁸

Tiananmen is a very catastrophic incident in Chinese history occurred in 1989.¹⁴⁹ Tiananmen Square massacre affected negatively China's economic and politic

¹⁴⁶ For more detail on Mongol history see Peter C. Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Michael Burgan, *Empire of the Mongols* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), <https://books.google.com/books?id=uu96OCReQYgC&pgis=1>; Owen Lattimore, *Pivot of Asia: Sinkiang and Inner Asia Frontiers of China* (Boston: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1950).

¹⁴⁷ Morris Rossabi, "Sino-Mongol Border : From Conflict to Precarious Resolution," in *Beijing's Power and China's Borders: Twenty Neighbors in Asia*, ed. A Elleman Bruce, Stephen Kotkin, and Clive Schofield (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2013), 169–84.

¹⁴⁸ For more detail on Sino-Mongol Relations in Soviet period see William B . Ballis, "The Political Evolution of a Soviet Satellite: The Mongolian People's Republic," *The Western Political Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (1956): 293–328; E . T . Williams, "The Relations Between China, Russia and Mongolia," *The American Journal of International Law* 10, no. 4 (1916): 798–808.

¹⁴⁹ See Peter Sandby-Thomas, *Legitimizing the Chinese Communist Party since Tiananmen: A Critical Analysis of the Stability Discourse* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Adam Lusher, "At Least 10,000 People Died in Tiananmen Square Massacre, Secret British Cable from the Time Alleged," *The Independent*, 2017.

relations with the western countries. Therefore, China decided to improve relations with its border, Mongolia being one of them. The Chinese government developed a new policy approach known as the "comprehensive periphery policy," which was based on three key observations. Firstly, it was predicted that the Asia-Pacific region would experience rapid economic growth in the 21st century. Secondly, a new form of Asianism was expected to emerge. Lastly, local blocs were expected to be established following the failure of the two-sided world order.¹⁵⁰

In response to China's integration to international system after the Cold War and the rapid development of Sino-Mongolian interactions, Mongolia's stance towards China has been evolving. In the last two decades China is regarded as a strong player capable of contributing to global economic development. However, before the late 1980s, it was seen as a hostile revisionist country by the Mongolia. China's significant influence on Mongolian politicians and scholars has a significant impact on the decision making processes in foreign affairs. However, both nations still face difficulties. According to Jiang Zeming, there are no unresolved issues among the two nations. Despite this, Mongolians still have a deep-seated distrust of China. Hu Jintao emphasized the significance of building confidence and reliance between China and Mongolia while he was visiting the Mongolian capital in 2003. While Mongolians acknowledge that their economic reliance on China is inevitable, they fear that China would interfere their domestic affairs.¹⁵¹

Mongolia's two main impediments in integrating with the rest of Northeast Asia are being landlocked and lack of economic regionalism. In addition, Mongolia has historical ties with Inner Mongolia which has been always a fragile topic for China, since the possibility of unification of the two part. During the 1990s China provided huge amount of humanitarian aid towards Mongolians (42.6 million RMB, as well as with loans over 100 million RMB between 1991-1998). Moreover, since the winter livestock disaster China increased its assistance between 1998-2002.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Suisheng Zhao, "China's Periphery Policy and Its Asian Neighbors," *Security Dialogue* 30, no. 3 (1999): 335–46.

¹⁵¹ Alicia Campi, "Sino-Mongolian Relations From Beijing Viewpoint," *China Brief* 5, no. 10 (2005).

¹⁵² See Campi; Alicia Campi, "Mongolia's Uneasy Relationship With China," *Transitions Online*, 2010.

In 2005, the dynamics of the Sino-Mongol relations changed. The economic and strategic benefits of China's regional policy towards Mongolia have been pleasing to China. During this period Russian security interests reduced towards Mongolia. Therefore, Chinese side took the opportunity and bilateral trade started to go up. However, Russia, Mongolia and China agreed on trilateral summits which first of them took place in Dushanbe in 2014. In 2015 it held in Beijing and the three sides focus on cooperation on economy, politics, and culture.¹⁵³

During Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh's official visit to Beijing in 2022, China and Mongolia signed 16 agreements on bilateral cooperation. Despite the global economic situation, bilateral trade between the two countries reached \$10,9 billion in 2022, representing a 25,8% annual increase. Mongolia's exports totaled \$8,48 billion, and its imports totaled \$2,47 billion, reflecting a 30,7% increase and an 11,4% increase, respectively. Based on this progress, the two sides decided to double their trade volume to \$20 billion in five years. To achieve this goal, they intend to enhance cooperation in areas including mining, commerce, technology and energy.¹⁵⁴

Inner Mongolia plays a crucial and complex role in Sino-Mongolian relationship. It serves as a key channel for China's trade with Mongolia. Additionally, China has a significant presence in Mongolia's grey economy, which makes up a large portion of the country's undetermined economy. The authorities in China have utilized Inner Mongolia as a means to promote cultural exchange and foster stronger diplomatic relations with Mongolia. Additionally, this strategy has enabled China to pursue its interests in Mongolia, particularly in the mining sector, in the midst of growing global competition for these resources. However, the task of bridging Mongolian cultural traditions with Chinese development patterns has proven to be difficult. Despite this, local collaborations across the border have emerged due to shared cultural traits. While

¹⁵³ For more information see Wang Wei-fang, "Pan-Mongolism" and US-China-Mongolia Relation," *China Brief*, 2005; "China-Mongolia Relations," *China Daily*, 2010, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010wentour/2010-05/27/content_9899648.htm; Meng Gancang and D. Batjargal, "Good-Neighborly Values in the Spotlight of Visit," *China Daily*, 2022, <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202212/01/WS6387e889a31057c47eba1ff6.html>; Urantsetseg Enkhbaatar, "Trilateral Cooperation Russia, Mongolia and China: In Case of Railway Project," *Public Administration & Regional Studies* 2 (2016): 16–24.

¹⁵⁴ See Batjargal, "Good-Neighborly Values in the Spotlight of Visit."

cross-border trade exists, the economic relationship between Inner Mongolia and Mongolia is largely controlled by large corporations such as Baotou Steel. The ethnic Mongolian population in Inner Mongolia has lower economic status compared to their Han Chinese neighbors, and they face challenges in preserving their traditional pastoral lifestyle and language. This has resulted in social and economic tensions based on ethnic differences.¹⁵⁵

China's special attention to Mongolia creates an asymmetrical dependence towards itself. Mongolia tries to balance it with Korean, Canadian, and Russian companies on critical sectors like energy, and mining. In 2010, Mongolia's National Security Concept (NSC) recognized the danger of relying excessively on foreign countries and banned any solitary country from contributing more than one-third of Mongolia's total foreign investment. Despite this, Chinese investment has dominated Mongolia's mining and infrastructure industries.¹⁵⁶

To revitalize its struggling raw material trade and increase copper exports from Oyu Tolgoi mine, Mongolia has started constructing a new road to China. Feasibility studies for the road from Maanit to Zamiin-Uud has begun. Additionally, in order to connect to China and Russia, they initiated a large highway project that spans the country from north to south. Mongolian politicians had been suspending the highway project for national security concerns for several decades.¹⁵⁷

In 2015, during the opening celebration at Zamiin Uud, the Chinggis Land Development Group, Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Mongolian Road Association signed an agreement aiming at utilizing Mongolian

¹⁵⁵ Freeman and Thompson, "China on the Edge: China's Border Provinces and Chinese Security Policy"; Asian Development Bank, "Mongolia: Supporting an Emergent Middle-Income Economy" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2016).

¹⁵⁶ "National Security Council of Mongolia," National Security Concept, 2010, <https://nsc.gov.mn/en/p/104>; Moritz Pieper, "The New Silk Road Heads North: Implications of the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor for Mongolian Agency within Eurasian Power Shifts," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 62, no. 5–6 (2021): 745–68, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2020.1836985>.

¹⁵⁷ Alicia Campi, "Mongolia's Place in China's 'One Belt, One Road,'" Jamestown Foundation, 2015.

firms, increasing the number of Mongolian workers, and providing training for Mongolian technical staff. As a result of the construction of the complete 990 km road, it is projected that 20,000-30,000 temporary workers and 50,000 employees in the near vicinity will be employed over a period of three years.¹⁵⁸

Although there is a lot of concern regarding the expanding Chinese influence, it appears that it will be challenging to prevent a greater level of incorporation with the transportation systems of China. In the next title border - border trade will be on the account. For China, Mongolia appears large on its northern edge. China's longest land border is with Mongolia. In 2002 Mongolia just a county for China which maintained small-scale border trade, however today it can be said that Mongolia counts China among its largest trading partners and sources of investment.¹⁵⁹

3.3. Trade

In the general sense, the economic growth in China has created an opportunity for the landlocked Mongolia without the discussion of dependency on China. In 2008, the total volume between China and Mongolia reached USD 2.8 billion, which was 18 times higher than its level in 1990.¹⁶⁰ This rate reaches in 2021 approximately USD 10.1 billion.¹⁶¹ According to the World Bank data the GDP is about USD 15.29 billion in 2021.¹⁶²

Mongolia exports its mineral resources to China, and there is also cross-border investment in both directions. China receives raw material from Mongolia like cashmere copper and other products. With more than 5000 companies, Chinese

¹⁵⁸ “‘Altanbulag-Ulaanbaatar- Zamiin-Uud Highway’ Project Opens,” GoGoMongolia, 2015, <https://mongolia.gogo.mn/r/146386>.

¹⁵⁹ Morten Axel Pedersen and Mikkel Bunkenborg, “Roads That Separate: Sino-Mongolian Relations in the Inner Asian Desert,” *Mobilities* 7, no. 4 (2012): 555–69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2012.718938>.

¹⁶⁰ J. Shishmishig, “Current Situation of Mongolia-China Trade Cooperation and Further Trends,” 2009.

¹⁶¹ “Trade Map,” accessed December 15, 2022, <https://www.trademap.org/>.

¹⁶² “GDP Growth Mongolia,” The World Bank, accessed March 14, 2021, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=MN>.

investment amounts to 1 billion dollars. 70% of this sum is in mining sector.¹⁶³ One of the biggest mine is Oyu Tolgi (OT). The Economist Intelligence Unit Report suggests that the increase in copper prices during 2018-19 will bolster the government's determination to rapidly expand the mine, which predominantly produces copper. Nonetheless, the current production capacity of the mine is expected to remain unchanged for a few years before any significant increase can be achieved. The report says:

*“Greater certainty in the regulatory environment, relative to recent years, and the current pick-up in coal and copper prices bode well for investment in mining projects in the forecast period. In particular, the expansion of the Mongolia’s biggest mine OT will lend considerable support to economic growth via investment in the next two years. Merchandise exports recovered in 2017, mainly on the back of surging demand for coal from China, but will grow at a slower pace in 2018 owing to base effects. Indeed, growth in outbound shipments will be outpaced by imports in 2018 on the back of the OT expansion; as a result, net exports will make only a marginal contribution to headline growth. In 2019 import growth will fall back slightly while exports strengthen, such that the contribution of net exports to headline growth rises again.”*¹⁶⁴

Table 1. Projects of the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor

Projects of the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor	
Type	Number
Transportation and Infrastructure	13
Industrial sector	2
Energy sector	1
Facilitation of trade	4
Environment	3
Education, science and technology	3
Humanitarian	3
Agriculture	1
Medical Science	1

Source: Mongolian Institute for Innovative Policies, 2020

¹⁶³ Zhang Jin, “China Supports Firms Investing in Mongolia,” China Daily, 2010, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2010-06/02/content_9922257.htm.

¹⁶⁴ “Mongolia, Country Report,” 2018.

In 2017, during the initial Belt and Road Forum, China and Mongolia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate. At this event, agreements were also signed to create an intergovernmental working group and cooperate on 32 projects related to the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor.¹⁶⁵

More than one-fifth of China's land borders are shared with Mongolia, with the majority of the Sino-Mongolian border running alongside Inner Mongolia. Analysts from China frequently refer to Inner Mongolia as a “rainbow” due to its various roles in linking China and Mongolia, such as through trade, cross-border connections, and cultural ties. Inner Mongolia's most significant border crossing with Mongolia is located at Erlian,¹⁶⁶ which translates to “multicolour” in Mongolian, and is decorated with rainbow arches, further emphasizing the “rainbow” theme.¹⁶⁷

Erlian became a city in 1966 after the Trans-Mongolian railway connecting Beijing-Ulan Bator-Moscow was opened in the mid-1950s, increasing its significance. After diplomatic relations resumed between Ulan Bator and Beijing, Erlian was promoted to a prefecture-level city in 1985. Nine more temporary border trade ports were set up during the 1990s, resulting in significant growth in trade, which favored China. Mongolia welcomes and generally respects trade with China, with the size of the underground or informal economy estimated by the World Bank to be equivalent to half of Mongolia's official economy, including cross-border trade.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ See Pieper, “The New Silk Road Heads North: Implications of the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor for Mongolian Agency within Eurasian Power Shifts.”

¹⁶⁶ The city is called Erlian in Chinese and Ereen in Mongolian. The Chinese-Mongolian Free Trade Zone is referred to as “Erlian-Zamyn Üüd”, while the Mongolian name “Eren Hot” is used to address the Chinese city itself, which is included in the trade zone. Erlian is situated on the Chinese side of the border while Zamyn Üüd (or Zamyn Uud) is located on the Mongolian side. “The door of the road” is the meaning of Zamyn Üüd. See: Susan Powell, “The Cartographic Evolution of the Sino-Mongolian Border at Zamyn Üüd/Erlian,” *East Asian History and Culture Review E-Journal* 21, no. 21 (2016): 186–95.

¹⁶⁷ See “‘Altanbulag-Ulaanbaatar- Zamiin-Uud Highway’ Project Opens”; Enkhbaatar, “Trilateral Cooperation Russia, Mongolia and China: In Case of Railway Project”; “China-Mongolia: Bilateral Trade, Investment, and Future Prospects,” China Briefing, 2022, <https://www.china-briefing.com/news/china-mongolia-bilateral-trade-investment-and-future-prospects/>.

¹⁶⁸ For more detail see Freeman and Thompson, “China on the Edge: China’s Border Provinces and Chinese Security Policy”; Campi, “Sino-Mongolian Relations From Beijing Viewpoint”; “The World Bank Annual Report 2018,” *The World Bank Annual Report 2018*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1296-5>.

The area where the Trans-Mongolian Railway intersects the border and links the two countries is a significant and delicate issue. This particular border location includes the neighboring towns of Zamyn Üüd and Erlian, which are crucial centers for cross-border commerce and transportation.¹⁶⁹

The only railway connecting Mongolia and China runs through Erlian, which is located just 9 km away from Zamyn-Uud situated on the Mongolian side. Cross-border trade has faced issues due to the lack of proper customs and inspection facilities in Zamyn-Uud, resulting in traffic buildup and congestion. In 2010, the Asian Development Bank granted Mongolia a loan of USD 45 million to build a container terminal with transportation connections to alleviate bottlenecks at the border. China and Mongolia have been holding regular meetings in an attempt to synchronize customs procedures. With support from the ADB, representatives from relevant offices on both sides have attended, along with leaders, such as those from the Inner Mongolian government and the director of Erlian Border Economic Cooperation Management, to increase cooperation and utilize a border committee.¹⁷⁰

Furthermore a fund was allocated to Erlian to build an airport. The airport began operating officially in 2010. Plans were in place to extend flights to destinations including Shanghai, Mongolia, and Russia. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the border was shut in 2019.¹⁷¹

Lacaze reports that half of the Mongolian population is involved in “suitcase trade” in the Erlian-Zamyn Uud free trade zone. Based on her fieldwork, Lacaze observes that

¹⁶⁹ Susan Powell, “The Cartographic Evolution of the Sino-Mongolian Border at Zamyn Üüd/Erlian,” *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review* 9, no. 33 (2016): 115–42.

¹⁷⁰ See Freeman and Thompson, “China on the Edge: China’s Border Provinces and Chinese Security Policy”; “Unlocking the Potential of Railways: A Railway Strategy for CAREC, 2017-2030,” in *15th CAREC Ministerial Conference* (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2017); Suocheng Dong et al., “An Evaluation of the Economic, Social, and Ecological Risks of China-Mongolia-Russia High-Speed Railway Construction and Policy Suggestions,” *Journal of Geographical Sciences* 28, no. 7 (2018): 900–918, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11442-018-1512-y>; John Scales, Jitendra Sondhi, and Paul Amos, “Fast and Focused – Building China’s Railways,” *China Transport Topics*, no. 03 (2012).

¹⁷¹ “China-Mongolia Border Trading Zone Reopens with COVID-19 under Control,” Xinhuanet, 2021, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-10/21/c_139456793.htm.

the primary challenge for cross-border traders is the difference in railway line widths between China and Mongolia. This requires people and goods to transfer trains, leading to increased costs and delays. To avoid this, many traders prefer to use land transportation, crossing the Erlian-Zamyn Uud border. Furthermore, many laborers work overnight to transfer goods between Chinese trucks and Mongolian containers, which are then transported as railway freight through Mongolia.¹⁷²

Crossing the border is relatively simple for local traders who frequently travel back and forth. They are able to use entry-exit passes which are checked by China's public security border force at the Frontier Inspection Station on the Chinese side of the border. A group of traders belonging to the Mongolian ethnicity, operating out of Erlian, engage in the trade of fruits and vegetables. They work in close collaboration with their Mongolian counterparts on the other side of the border, and use the railway network between Zamyn-Uud and Ulan Bator, a distance of over 650 km towards the northwest, to transport their merchandise. On the roads of Erlian, vehicles from Mongolia and Inner Mongolia can be observed mingled together.¹⁷³

3.4. Transportation

Mongolia has invested road, railway and airports to boom its economy. The progress of the transport sector plays a crucial role in driving economic growth in Mongolia. The success of most businesses and individuals heavily depends on the accessibility and quality of transportation to locations within and beyond the country. However, besides the economic restriction Mongolia faces several challenges caused by its geography for developing transport infrastructure. Mongolia's vast and arid geography is partially covered with desert, unsuitable for roads. In addition, the infrequent use of the roads due to the low density of population is also inconvenient in terms of road

¹⁷² Gaëlle Lacaze, “‘Run after Time’: The Roads of Suitcase Traders,” *Asian Ethnicity* 11, no. 2 (2010): 191–208, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14631361003779430>.

¹⁷³ Nanchen Chu, Xiangli Wu, and Pingyu Zhang, “Cross-Border Accessibility and Spatial Effects of China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor under the Background of High-Speed Rail Environment,” *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 16 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191610266>.

cost and maintenance costs. Railway is the most suitable transport choice for Mongolia.¹⁷⁴

Considering Chinese approach to Mongolian transport infrastructure it can be said China's government has various motivations for investing in infrastructure projects, such as addressing internal labor issues and establishing connections in international trade networks. Additionally, China is aware of potential in Mongolia's natural resources and wants to access them. To accomplish these goals, China has been quickly and efficiently developing various transportation methods such as highways, railways, and bridges through significant financial investments in these projects throughout Mongolia and the wider region of Eurasia (named One Belt One Road-OBOR). Mongolia has extended an invitation to Russia and China to establish a new entity aimed at enhancing the efficiency of rail transport. The proposed organization would work on devising a strategy to amplify the capacity of rail cargo along the Trans-Siberian route. The proposed endeavor complements the undertaking of a joint stock company, Russian Railways, which is working on establishing a transit passageway from east to west. This effort is being pursued through the company's subsidiary, "Russian Railways Logistics", and involves the creation of the Northern Railway Corridor. The intended outcome of this project is to augment the railways linking Mongolia and Russia at Naushki, and China at Erenhot, ultimately concluding at Jining.¹⁷⁵

The region being targeted by the project is a crucial element of the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor, serving as a vital link between the Trans-Siberian Railway, dynamic East Asia, and prosperous Europe Economic Circle. The connection and growth of regions in this area can be facilitated by the utilization of trains and the establishment of land transportation. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize the use of

¹⁷⁴ Asel Isakova, Alexander Plekhanov, and Jeromin Zettelmeyer, "Managing Mongolia's Resource Boom," 2012, <http://www.ebrd.com/downloads/research/economics/workingpapers/wp0138.pdf>; "Millennium Development Goals of Mongolia" (Ulaanbaatar, 2007).

¹⁷⁵ Maria Krol Sinclair, "How Sinophobia Blocked a \$485 Million Rail Project in Mongolia," Center for Strategic International Studies, 2018, <https://www.csis.org/blogs/trustee-china-hand/how-sinophobia-blocked-485-million-rail-project-mongolia>; Alicia Campi, "The Mongolian-Russian-Chinese Northern Railway Corridor," Jamestown Foundation, 2014, <https://jamestown.org/program/the-mongolian-russian-chinese-northern-railway-corridor/>.

these modes of transportation. Furthermore, analyzing the variations in railway passenger numbers in this area will help us comprehend the influence of these infrastructure advancements on regional connectivity and economic expansion.¹⁷⁶

The dynamics of railway transportation of container cargo by trains between China and Europe allows to identify the growing importance of the Mongolian direction. Thus, as of 2019, the distribution of container cargo flows between China and Europe is expressed in the following proportions: 56% through the points of entry in Kazakhstan, 25% through the border crossing of Zabaikalsk-Manzhouli on the Russian-Chinese border, 19% through the Zamyn-Uud-Erlian border crossing on the Mongolian-Chinese border. Notably, unlike the other border crossings, the Zamyn-Uud-Erlian border crossing is crossed by more container trains heading from Europe to China than vice versa. This is evidence of the attractiveness of this direction for European, including Russian, cargo shippers. The development of exports of food products and the conquest of new commodity niches suitable for containerization and in demand on the Chinese market will have a positive impact on the growth of container cargo flows.¹⁷⁷

The China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor aims to promote trilateral cooperation, particularly in transportation infrastructure. The initial list of 32 joint projects is not a final list but a starting point for further planning and documentation. Two transportation projects were given priority in 2018: modernizing the Central Railway Corridor and developing transit shipment along the Mongolian part of the route of the Asian Highway Network.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Dong et al., “An Evaluation of the Economic, Social, and Ecological Risks of China-Mongolia-Russia High-Speed Railway Construction and Policy Suggestions:”901-902

¹⁷⁷ Viktoria Namzhilova and Valentin Batomunkuev, “Mongolian-Chinese Border: Transforming Border Infrastructure and the Impact of the SREB,” *Problems of the Far East* 1 (2021): 21–32, <https://ras.jes.su/pdv/s013128120013887-6-1-en>.

¹⁷⁸ “Правительства Монголии, Китая и России Назвали Три Приоритетных Проекта в Рамках Строящегося Экономического Коридора -- Торгпред РФ,” Rambler News, 2018, <https://news.rambler.ru/other/40906391-pravitelstva-mongolii-kitaya-i-rossii-nazvali-tri-prioritetnyh-proekta-v-ramkah-stroyaschegosya-ekonomicheskogo-koridora-torgpred-rf/>.

It's crucial to upgrade the Central Railway Corridor by adding another track and energizing the Trans-Mongolian Railway. However, progress on this project has been slow despite its high priority. While there has been a consistent rise in rail freight transportation over the past few years owing to the worldwide trend towards containers, it is still not on par with transit through Kazakhstan. The Mongolian route is responsible for a significant portion of container freight turnover in Eurasian rail traffic passing through Russia. Currently, there are numerous routes of container trains traveling through the Central Railway Corridor between China and Europe. However, the potential for further development of the Mongolian route is limited by capacity. This necessitates upgrades to the infrastructure to overcome these constraints. While an initial study is required for the upgrade of the Central Railway Corridor, discussions are ongoing regarding the usefulness of constructing rail corridors on the Eastern and Western flanks.¹⁷⁹

At present, the initiative is in the process of evaluating the possibility of extending the railway towards the Eleget coal mine and the Mongolian border. Another recent development is the opening of a highway connecting Russia's Altai Republic with China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, passing through parts of western Mongolia.¹⁸⁰

To sum up, Ensuring that international trade runs seamlessly and leveraging its benefits, along with promoting strong intermediary foreign economic involvement, are crucial objectives for border areas situated along economic corridors. The effective methods employed by China to develop the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region within the economic corridor serve as a positive exemplar. However, Russian regions must shift their focus to economic development beyond transit opportunities to fully realize the potential of establishing an economic corridor.

¹⁷⁹ Victoria Namzhilova, "Economic Corridor 'China — Mongolia — Russia': Infrastructure in Focus," RIAC, 2022, <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/economic-corridor-china-mongolia-russia-infrastructure-in-focus/>; Vlada Verevkina, "Reality of the Corridor," East Russia, 2023.

¹⁸⁰ "Зүүнбаян-Ханги Чиглэлийн Төмөр Замын Бүтээн Байгуулалт Эхэллээ," Mongolia National News Agency, 2022, <https://montsame.mn/mn/read/292070>; "ОХУ-ААС БНХАУ-ЫН ХИЛИЙН БООМТТОЙ ХОЛБОГДОХ 745 КМ АВТО ЗАМЫГ АШИГЛАЛТАД ОРУУЛЛАА," MassMn, 2022, <https://mass.mn/n/87194>.

3.5. Tourism, Visa, and Immigration

China's Inner Mongolia area has a population of more than 5 million people who identify as ethnic Mongolians, surpassing the number of Mongolians in Mongolia itself. This situation worries Beijing because there is a possibility that Mongolian nationalism could affect the ethnic Mongolian population in China. Moreover, the possible connections among the pan-Mongolian movement, Tibetan Buddhism, and the political circumstances related to the Dalai Lama exacerbate these concerns.¹⁸¹

Regarding visas, individuals from Mongolia can remain in China for up to 30 days without undergoing registration. Some Mongolian nationals living and working in Erlian for a long time managed to stay without a visa by regularly traveling back to Mongolia. This way they remain as "temporary migrants" within China.¹⁸²

Cultural exchange is a significant and intricate aspect of the connection between China and Mongolia, with Inner Mongolia playing a crucial role. This involves various conventional forms of diplomatic exchange, such as the yearly hosting of 'Chinese Cultural Week' by Mongolia since 2004 and the corresponding 'Mongolian Culture Week' in China since 2005. Additionally, the National University of Mongolia established a Confucius Institute for Mandarin instruction in 2008. Chinese premier Wen Jiabao emphasized the significance of cultural exchange during his 2010 visit to Ulan Bator and pledged to award scholarships to 2000 Mongolian students. In 2008, Inner Mongolia and Mongolia agreed to allow 170 Mongolian students to be enrolled in universities in China. On the other hand, Chinese students have limited chances for education in Mongolia due to the stringent immigration policies in Northeast Asia.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Freeman and Thompson, "China on the Edge: China's Border Provinces and Chinese Security Policy"; Christopher P Atwood, "Inner Mongolian Nationalism in the 1920s: A Survey of Documentary Information," *Twentieth-Century China* 25, no. 2 (2000): 75–113, <https://doi.org/10.1179/tcc.2000.25.2.75>.

¹⁸² See Khong Max Ee Kie, "Transport and Trade Logistics Development Strategies for CAREC: A Synopsis of Nine ADB Studies" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2009).

¹⁸³ Freeman and Thompson, "China on the Edge: China's Border Provinces and Chinese Security Policy": 58.

China also would like to engage with Mongolia through the culture. Lacaze writes her experience:

“just before the Naadam festivities, trucks, merchandise and people gather at the Chinese–Mongolian border. In the early part of the year, Mongolian freight and transport companies opened several roads for products and humans to pass the frontier by trucks and minibuses.¹⁸⁴ Both the Chinese and Mongolian states organize the frontier passage by official buses, which are a little bit more expensive but quicker and safer than private minibuses. Twelve Mongolian buses per day go from Zamyn Uud to Erlian, while only two Chinese buses travel in the opposite direction from Erlian to Zamyn Uud. The imbalance of traffic originating from each city is based on the numbers of travelers each way. (...) Chinese people, however, come to Mongolia for economic or industrial tourism, in order to estimate the opportunities on offer in the Mongolian part of the Free trade zone. They need a ‘real’ Mongolian visa to cross the border. Each day, just a few investors and company bosses come from Erlian to Zamyn Uud to visit the city and the surrounding countryside. Two buses are sufficient in order to meet these travelers’ needs.”¹⁸⁴

Naadam is a customary celebration in Mongolia that commemorates the nation's wandering legacy. The festival is typically held annually in mid-July and features a variety of cultural events, including the “three games of men”: wrestling, horse racing, and archery. The wrestling competition is considered the most important and prestigious event of the festival, and features a large number of participants competing in various weight classes. Horse racing, meanwhile, is open to both children and adults and takes place over long distances across the countryside. Archery is also an important part of the festival, with both men and women competing in separate competitions. In addition to these events, Naadam also includes traditional music and dance performances, as well as food and drink stalls. A daily average of 1,500 people and nearly 200 vehicles travel through the Erlian-Zamyn Uud border for the movement of goods. These goods are transported year-round, but particularly during the summer months, from late June through Naadam and September, as well as before Cagaan Sar, also known as the “White Month.”¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Lacaze, “‘Run after Time’: The Roads of Suitcase Traders”: 199.

¹⁸⁵ Cagaan Sar is a traditional Mongolian term that refers to the “White Month.” It is typically the month of December and January, when the ground is covered in snow and the weather is very cold. The term is often used to describe the harsh winter months, when many traditional nomadic activities, such as herding and hunting, become more difficult due to the snow and low temperatures. For more details see Gaëlle Lacaze, “Prostitution and the Transformation of the Chinese Trading Town of Ereen Chapter,” in *Frontier Encounters: Knowledge and Practice at the Russian, Chinese and Mongolian Border*, ed. Franck Billé, Grégory Delaplace, and Caroline Humphrey (Cambridge: Open Book Publisher, 2012), 111–35, <https://doi.org/10.11647/obp.0026.07>.

As long as they don't overstay, Mongolian residents are permitted to remain in China for up to a month without undergoing any formal registration procedures. This policy has allowed certain individuals to take up employment and settle in Eren, without needing to obtain a visa. They cross the Mongolian-Chinese border on a regular basis, thereby retaining their designation as "temporary migrants" in China. In essence, these individuals could be regarded as "temporary-permanent migrants."

Starting from the 1990s, a considerable portion of informal commerce between Russia, China, and Mongolia has been carried out using the trans-Mongolian railway. This route has been serving as the main transportation corridor for business activities between Beijing and Moscow since 1956, and after its reopening in 1992, it quickly became a preferred option for Mongolian traders. As a consequence, both authorities had to regulate the number of individuals passing from the border. Eren city was relatively small in size and lacked basic infrastructure such as roads and a sewage system in 1990s.¹⁸⁶

Erlian is a favored spot for Mongolian tourists in summer. Numerous "new rich" individuals journey to Erlian to purchase goods at a lower cost than they would in Mongolia. Moreover, the city's shops and restaurants attract many of these visitors. July is especially preferred by tourists, as a fair takes place in the city.¹⁸⁷

3.6. Border Security

At a higher political level, China is wary of Mongolia's friendly relations with the United States and its partners in Asia. There is a fear that, as it did during the Cold War, Mongolia may be utilized as a base for those who pose a threat to China, specifically in the "three Norths" regions of North China, Northeast China and Northwest China. Therefore, China's Mongolian border policy cannot be thought of independently of Russia and the USA.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Lacaze.

¹⁸⁷ Lacaze:113-114.

¹⁸⁸ Wei-fang, "Pan-Mongolism" and US-China-Mongolia Relation"; Weiqing Song, "Peaceful Rise from the Border : Chinese Practice of Diplomatic Leadership in the Shanghai Cooperation

After the cultural revolution and the decrease in tension between China and the Soviet Union, China and Mongolia worked to strengthen their relationship. During 1984, delegates from Ulan Bator held discussions with China's Minister of Foreign Affairs in Beijing regarding strategies to strengthen their bilateral ties. As a primary measure, both nations reasserted the demarcation lines of their shared borders, which ultimately resulted in the first collaborative inspection of the China-Mongolia border. Nonetheless, the Soviet military forces stationed in Mongolia, with Mongolia's endorsement, impeded the advancement of their relationship. After Gorbachev declared in 1986 that military forces could be pulled out, and a Mongolian Vice Foreign minister visited Beijing, a consular agreement was made, followed by a treaty regarding border control in 1988. Although Mongolia believed the Soviet military should remain, China was enthusiastic about establishing a stronger relationship with Ulan Bator, which was facilitated by the development of U.S-Mongolian relations and mutual acknowledgement in 1987. Despite conversations, it was not until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989 that bilateral ties were fully restored.¹⁸⁹

Although Mongolia and China have a deep-rooted history, their current connection has only been established after the formation of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Subsequently, their relationship underwent three distinct phases of evolution. During the 1950s, they formed an amicable bond driven by ideology and pragmatic considerations. Nonetheless, with the worsening of Sino-Soviet relations, the Mongolia-China relationship transitioned into a phase of antagonism.¹⁹⁰

Being a small nation blocked by two dominant nations engaged in conflict, Mongolia had no other choice but to align itself with one of them. Because of their historical experience, Mongolians opted for the protection of the Soviet Union, and the amelioration of their relationship with China occurred only after the conclusion of the

Organisation,” in *China's Policies on Its Borderlands and the International Implications*, ed. Yufan Hao and Bill K P Chou (New Jersey: World Scientific, 2011), 47–67.

¹⁸⁹ M Taylor Fravel, “International Relations Theory and China's Rise: Assessing China's Potential for Territorial Expansion,” *International Studies Review* 12, no. 4 (2010): 505–32; M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400828876>.

¹⁹⁰ Williams, “The Relations Between China, Russia and Mongolia.”

Sino-Soviet encounter. Once this significant hurdle was overcome, both Mongolia and China acknowledged their mutual strategic interests and concurred to restore their relationship. Despite Russia's former alliance, which still affords them some influence in Mongolia, China has emerged as Mongolia's primary partner.¹⁹¹

China's attitude towards Mongolia has changed significantly since the Mao era when China openly contested Mongolia's sovereignty. China's present focus is centered on developing a harmonious environment for its growth and improving its relationships with neighboring nations. Moreover, China aims to create a global image as a trustworthy country that complies with international standards. This has resulted in a trustworthy environment for advancing the Mongolia-China relationship. Since the resumption of their relationship, Chinese leaders regularly conveyed their admiration for Mongolia's autonomy and sovereignty. In 1991, when China and Mongolia were beginning to establish regular diplomatic relations, President Yang Shangkun visited Ulaanbaatar and made it clear that China respected Mongolia's autonomy and self-determination.¹⁹² To further solidify their relationship in 1994, China's Premier Li Peng signed a fresh treaty of collaboration during his trip to Mongolia. Furthermore, Li Peng outlined China's Five Point Policy towards Mongolia which highlights the importance of observing the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, showing regard for Mongolia's freedom and self-governance, territorial unity, and its will to determine its own route of progress, advancing trade and economic collaboration based on mutual gain, endorsing Mongolia's nuclear-weapons-free condition, and encouraging Mongolia to establish relationships with other countries.¹⁹³

Despite the fact that the state of China-Russia connection has significantly reduced the role of Mongolia as a cushion in the security policies of both countries, China so far considers Mongolia to be a nation of great geopolitical importance. China and Mongolia have the longest border, and thus, it is crucial for China to maintain a

¹⁹¹ Campi, "Sino-Mongolian Relations From Beijing Viewpoint."

¹⁹² Migeedorj Batchimeg, "Future Challenges for the PRC and Mongolia: A Mongolian Perspective," China Brief, 2005, <https://jamestown.org/program/future-challenges-for-the-prc-and-mongolia-a-mongolian-perspective/>.

¹⁹³ Tsedendamba Batbayar, "Mongolia's New Identity and Security Dilemmas," *The Mongolian Journal of International Affairs*, no. 8–9 (2002): 3–11.

positive relationship with Mongolia in order to ensure the security and stability of its northern regions, including Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia.¹⁹⁴

3.7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has shown that China's foreign policy towards Mongolia and its policy in the border region are interconnected. Despite historical border disputes and a desire to protect its territorial integrity, China's increasing economic development has led to increased investments and aid to the border trade region with Mongolia and to Mongolia as a whole. While these aid efforts contribute to regional economic development and stability, China also benefits from access to raw materials and oil from the Gobi desert. Furthermore, China's railway investments between the border cities of Erlian and Zamyn Uud and support for the Trans-Siberian railway project demonstrate a desire for peaceful relations and cooperation in the region.

¹⁹⁴ See Li Dongyan, "The Interaction between Northeast Asian Cooperation and Chinese Development Strategy," in *Security, Economic and Infrastructure Factors of Economic Cooperation in the Northeast Asia*, ed. Lhamsurengiin Nyamtseren (Ulaanbaatar: Mongolian Development Research Center, 2002).

CHAPTER 4

SINO-RUSSIAN BORDER

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I will provide a brief overview of the history of China-Russia relations. Then I will focus on the border cities of Heihe (China) and Blagoveshchensk (Russia). Data and field studies analysis show that both sides are working to enhance trade, transportation, and mobility. Despite historical border disputes, Russia and China are attempting to overlook these conflicts and invest in economic development in the region.

4.2. Historical Background

Conflicts regarding the boundary between China and Russia date back to the time of the Qing Dynasty and Russian Empire. In the 1930s, major military clashes resulted from a disagreement between Manchukuo and the Soviet Union. Examples of these over 500 recorded border clashes that occurred between 1932 and 1938 include the Battle of Zhanggufeng (Khasan) in 1938 and the Battle of Nomonhan (Khalka-Gol) in 1939.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ For more information about Russia—China border dispute see Alexander Lukin, “The Image of China in Russian Border Regions,” *Asian Survey* 38, no. 9 (1998): 821–35; Alexander Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon: Russia’s Perceptions of China and the Evolution of Russian-Chinese Relations Since Eighteenth Century* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2016); William V. Wallace, “Sino-Soviet Relations: An Interpretation,” *Soviet Studies* 35, no. 4 (1983): 457–70; Michael Dawson Stephens, “A Political Geography of China’s Boundaries” (University of Edinburgh, 1965); Caroline Humphrey, “Concepts of ‘Russia’ and Their Relation to the Border with China,” in *Frontier Encounters: Knowledge and Practice at the Russian, Chinese and Mongolian Border*, ed. Franck Bille, Gregory Delaplace, and Caroline Humphrey (Cambridge: Open Book Publisher, 2012); John M. Thompson, *Russia and the Soviet Union: An Historical Introduction from the Kievan State to the Present* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2009).

In the period of the Soviet Union, areas in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan were viewed as belonging to China. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, the border between China and the Soviet Union was split between four nations: Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan. China was able to settle disputes over the border with the three Central Asian nations by signing delimitation agreements in 1994 with Kazakhstan, 1996 with Kyrgyzstan, and 1999 with Tajikistan. However, the resolution of border disputes with Russia has proven to be more challenging for China.¹⁹⁶

The border between Russia and China has a history of recurring patterns. After China gained independence from Japanese occupation, the Soviet army took control of the Amur and Ussuri rivers area, which was acknowledged as the boundary between the two nations. Although Russia withdrew from mainland China, it retained possession of various islands on the Chinese side of the river. China contested the Soviet Union's actions but lacked the strength to force them to give up the disputed areas.¹⁹⁷

In the early 1960s, negotiations between the Soviet Union and China over the border started, with China attempting to acquire sovereignty over the islands that were currently under Soviet control. Initially, in 1964, the Soviet Union consented to utilize the Thalweg principle to define the existing border along the Amur and Ussuri rivers. Nonetheless, Soviet leader Khrushchev demanded to keep the Heixiazi Island under Soviet control, which caused the negotiations to reach an impasse. Consequently, the disagreement between Russia and China concerning the islands located in these rivers remained unsettled, and the discussions ceased.¹⁹⁸

At the beginning of 1969, China carried out a sudden attack on the strategically important Zhenbao Island, taking the Soviet Union by surprise. The incident led to the

¹⁹⁶ Akihiro Iwashita, "Border Dynamics in Eurasia: Sino-Soviet Border Disputes and the Aftermath," *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 23, no. 3 (2008): 69–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2008.9695709>.

¹⁹⁷ See for more: Christopher A. Ford, *The Mind of Empire: China's History and Modern Foreign Relations* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010).

¹⁹⁸ Akihiro Iwashita, *A 4,000 Kilometer Journey along the Sino-Russian Border* (Sapporo/Japan: Hokkaido University, 2004).

brink of a total war, including the potential for a nuclear clash between Russia and China, escalating the conflict and resulting in significant casualties for both nations. Despite Russia's efforts to preserve the situation and persuade China to stabilize the border area, China ultimately gained control of Zhenbao Island during a meeting between Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai and Soviet Prime Minister Aleksei Kosygin in the same year. As a result, the Soviet Union agreed to cede control of some islands along the Amur and Ussuri rivers to China. Although the Soviet Union had previously maintained control of these islands, China gradually regained control over time.¹⁹⁹

In the late 1980s, Mikhail Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping organised a second meeting for border negotiations between the Soviet Union and China, resulting in an agreement on a "three-stage" approach. The first stage was to establish a negotiable border and temporarily halt talks on disputed territories. The second stage involved implementing a border agreement without resolving the disputed territories. Finally, the third stage called for the resumption of negotiations on the remaining disputed territories. Although this approach left the resolution of the most difficult disputes uncertain, both parties had learned from past experiences that even minor disputes could derail the negotiation process.²⁰⁰

Before the normalization of relations between China and the Soviet Union, Bolt and Cross identified three obstacles that needed to be addressed: the Soviet army in Afghanistan, the deployment of Soviet troops in the Chinese border, and the Vietnamese invasion in Cambodia. Although some progress was made in resolving these issues, the 1989 suppression of dissidents and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union hindered any further advancements in the relationship between Russia and China during Gorbachev's term. After Boris Yeltsin assumed the presidency of Russia in 1992, he visited China and the leadership of both countries started describing their relationship as a "strategic partnership" in 1996, thanks to the significant progress made in resolving border disputes. However, during this time, particularly in the early

¹⁹⁹ For more detail see Yang Kuisong, "The Sino-Soviet Border Clash of 1969: From Zhenbao Island to Sino American Rapprochement," *Cold War History* 1, no. 1 (2000): 21–52.

²⁰⁰ Iwashita, "Border Dynamics in Eurasia: Sino-Soviet Border Disputes and the Aftermath," 2008.

stages of Yeltsin's term, the Russian officials was primarily concentrated on the United States and Europe. This resulted in Moscow's attitude towards China being heavily affected by Russia's relations with the West and its search for a new identity.²⁰¹

Following a series of negotiations and reciprocal visits, Russia and China signed the "Supplementary Agreement of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on the Eastern Part of Sino-Russian Border" in 2004 during Vladimir Putin's visit to China. This agreement represented the ultimate resolution of the prolonged deadlock and conflicts between the two nations over their border, which had been a source of dispute for centuries.²⁰²

In 2008, the final agreement on the border was signed. The Sino-Russian Border Line Agreement, which formally accepted the demarcation a section of the Sino-Russian border at the east, was signed in Beijing, China, in 2008 by Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov.²⁰³

Humphrey highlights two crucial factors when examining the Sino-Russian border. Firstly, it is a border that has existed for centuries between two separate cultures that emerged from the disintegration of imperial states. Secondly, the local indigenous communities in the border regions, such as Buryats and Evenki, have only been partially assimilated into these larger civilizations. He argues that "these frontier and cross-border peoples have, in many aspects, a lot more in common with each other than the metropolitan centers." Understanding the social structures of local populations in the Sino-Russian border region is significant, as these groups often have unique characteristics such as fluid social networks and identities that do not align with national borders. However, it is important to note that it was the Russian and Manchu Chinese states, rather than these local ethnic groups, that originally established the border in the 17th century. Thus, it is also necessary to examine the differing political

²⁰¹ Paul J. Bolt and Sharyl N. Cross, "The Contemporary Sino-Russian Strategic Partnership: Challenges and Opportunities for the Twenty-First Century," *Asian Security* 6, no. 3 (2010): 194.

²⁰² See Bolt and Cross.

²⁰³ "China Signs Border Demarcation Pact with Russia," Reuters, 2008, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-russia-border-idUKPEK29238620080721>.

cultures of these two states and how they conceived and constructed their respective borders.²⁰⁴

The current perceptions of the Russian and Chinese towards their shared border differ significantly. From the Chinese perspective, the border is viewed primarily as a channel for forging business links and mutually beneficial agreements, whereas the Russians tend to associate it with anxiety, given its frequent association with illegal migration and criminal activity. Furthermore, the Chinese tend to exhibit a more aggressive and pioneering mindset, in contrast to the defensive attitude often seen among Russians. This is also evident in the difference in language proficiency, as a higher number of Chinese individuals are skilled in Russian, rather than vice versa.²⁰⁵

China's population is growing quickly and its economy is getting stronger. This worries Russia because China might want to move some of its people into areas near Russia. Also, China has less land and resources, while some of the areas in Russia near China are not being used very much. This makes Russia more worried about China's plans.²⁰⁶

Russia is bothered that China wants to take back land that China used to own. This feeling of being abandoned by the government is making Russia more anxious. Chinese people moving to live in Russia is seen as a 'second coming' of Chinese people to Russia, and it makes Russia worry about China's large population and strong government. This feeling of abandonment makes people in Russia think that the government can't protect them, making their worries worse.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Humphrey, "Concepts of 'Russia' and Their Relation to the Border with China."

²⁰⁵ See Nataliya Ryzhova and Grigory Ioffe, "Trans-Border Exchange between Russia and China: The Case of Blagoveshchensk and Heihe," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 50, no. 3 (2009): 348–64, <https://doi.org/10.2747/1539-7216.50.3.348>.

²⁰⁶ Franck Billé, "On Ideas of the Border in the Russian and Chinese Social Imaginaries," in *Frontier Encounters: Knowledge and Practice at the Russian, Chinese and Mongolian Border*, ed. Franck Billé, Grégory Delaplace, and Caroline Humphrey (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publisher, 2012): 19–32.

²⁰⁷ See Mikhail A. Alekseev, "Socioeconomic and Security Implications of Chinese Migration in the Russian Far East," *Post-Soviet Geography and Economics* 42, no. 2 (2001): 122–41, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10889388.2000.10641154>; Humphrey, "Concepts of 'Russia' and Their

Russia's concerns towards China are primarily due to the population and economic disparities between the two countries. However, even though there are only a few Chinese people on Sakhalin island, it is still a concern for Russia. This suggests that the root of the anxiety might be something else. According to some scholars, the perceived dangers of China are largely imagined and not based on actual events.²⁰⁸

4.3. Trade

The trade relationship between Russia and China has been expanding in recent times. Both countries have been working together more closely, which has led to increased economic cooperation. This has included high-level meetings, agreements for Russia to sell gas to China, a significant increase in trade using the ruble and yuan currencies, and plans to build a bridge connecting the two countries. This suggests that the regions along the Chinese border in Far Eastern Russia are well-positioned to take advantage of these growing connections. According to data from the first 10 months of the previous year, the total trade volume between China and Russia reached USD 153.94 billion, showing a significant increase of 33% compared to the same period in the previous year. Additionally, the growth of infrastructure cooperation between China and Russia has also contributed to the boost in trade. One notable example is the opening of the first China-Russia highway bridge which connects Heihe, a Chinese border city in Heilongjiang Province, to the Russian city of Blagoveshchensk over the Heilongjiang River. The bridge has effectively facilitated the movement of trade between the two countries. According to reports from the Global Times news, this bridge has been instrumental in strengthening economic ties between China and Russia.²⁰⁹

Relation to the Border with China”; Billé, “On Ideas of the Border in the Russian and Chinese Social Imaginaries.”

²⁰⁸ See Shiping Tang, “Economic Integration in Central Asia: The Russian and Chinese Relationship,” *Asian Survey* 40, no. 2 (2000): 360–76; Herman Pirchner Jr., “The Uncertain Future: Sino Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century,” *Demokratizatsiya* 16, no. 4 (2008): 309–23; Caroline Humphrey, “Concepts of ‘Russia’ and Their Relation to the Border with China,” in *Frontier Encounters: Knowledge and Practice at the Russian, Chinese and Mongolian Border*, ed. Franck Bille, Gregory Delaplace, and Caroline Humphrey (Cambridge: Open Book Publisher, 2012).

²⁰⁹ “China-Russia Trade Reaches \$153.9 Billion in First 10 Months, Rising 33 Percent Year-on-Year,” *Global Times*, 2022.

The Sino-Russian border areas are divided into two parts, one of them is the east part which is the northeast region of China, and the *far east*²¹⁰ part, which is east Siberia in Russia. In the west side, Russia shares an international border with China, Kazakhstan and Mongolia. Guozheng and Rongfen figured the Sino-Russian border as:

*“In the Sino-Russian east border area there are 19 pairs of corresponding port towns, through border trade the border area market has been formed. The industrial structure has gradually developed from agriculture, to manufacturing industry, and tourism and service trade, made the traditional backward area turn to relatively developed area, and correspondingly formed several sub-regional economic cooperation belts. A long the Sino-Russian borderline, from northwest to southeast, are these areas: the juncture of China, Russia and Mongolia, the middle and lower reaches of the Heilong River, the Wusuli River valley, the Suifen River valley, the lower reaches of the Tumen River. The formation of these sub-regional economic cooperation belts lay a strong foundation for the free economic region of the Sino-Russian borders.”*²¹¹

As previously discussed, China's main goal is to develop its border regions and increase its economic influence internationally. Despite the complicated history of Sino-Russian border conflicts, China has not given up on trying to integrate economically with these border areas. After relations between China and Russia normalized in the late 1980s, both countries had high hopes for the economic potential of the border regions. From Russia's perspective, the local leaders and population hoped to benefit from the border trade and connections with Chinese provinces. Several reasons motivated Russians to flourish in trade with China, especially in border areas at the beginning of the 1990s. For example, China is the nearest neighbor, and Chinese people attempted cut-price equipment and were able to carry out visa requirements and paperwork. However, this enthusiasm turned over and gave way to skepticism since dissatisfaction with cheap Chinese goods, some Chinese traders' negative attitudes and etc. Finally, the local administration started a company to stop the Sino-Russian border agreement. In Lukin's words, *“Russians had now acquired an allergy to everything Chinese.”*²¹²

²¹⁰ Today the term “far east” which used to for Chinese, Russian and other Asian countries' easternmost part is quitted from the literature in the last decade.

²¹¹ Yu Guozheng and Wang Rongfen, “Conception of Establishing the Sino-Russian Border Free Economic Region,” *Chinese Geographical Science* 9, no. 3 (1999): 236–42.

²¹² See Lukin, “The Image of China in Russian Border Regions,” p. 822.

To most Russians, both in the public and among the elite, China is viewed as a greater threat than an opportunity. Many believe that China poses a direct challenge to Russia's sovereignty. At the same time, there is significant underestimation of China's current level of development and its potential for growth. This misguided belief often leads to an expectation that China cannot maintain its high speed of development over a prolonged period.²¹³

This led to a stagnation period on trade between Russia and China between 1994-1998. According to Hiraizumi, there was another reason to decrease Russia-China trade that since the economic deflation on China some measures was taken by the government.²¹⁴

Heilongjiang province has been the most active province on the Sino-Russian border by means of trade. The province has 3000 km long border with Russia thereof Heilongjiang's most important trade partner is Russia. About 90 per cent of China's border trade with Russia represented by Heilongjiang province of China.²¹⁵

Heilongjiang province which emerged from Heihe in China is the differentiated from Jilin and Liaoning. Gaye Chirstoffersen explains the reason as: Heilongjiang province has been competing with Jilin and Liaoning to establish itself as the center of Chinese involvement in Northeast Asia. While Jilin has received support from South and North Korea, and Liaoning has had some backing from Japan, Heilongjiang has not gained the support of Russia. The province's strategy led to a large influx of Chinese traders and shuttles into the Russian Far East, which resulted in a backlash from Russia and hindered progress on the Tumen project. This led to a shift from the Tumen River Economic Zone (TREZ) to the Tumen River Economic Development Area (TREDA). The Russian backlash also prevented Heilongjiang from forming a transnational

²¹³ Sergei Karaganov, "Russia's Asian Strategy," in *ASEAN-Russia: Foundations and Future Prospects*, ed. Sergei Karaganov (Cambridge: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2012), 345–55.

²¹⁴ Hideki Hiraizumi, "Trade of Heilongjiang Province (China) with Russia" (China, Japan, 2010), <http://www.ide.go.jp/English/Publish/Download/Dp/pdf/246.pdf>. P. NOTE: No part of this publication may be reproduced without the prior permission of the IDE-JETRO.???

²¹⁵ Jongchul Lee, "Regionalization in Northeast Asia: Conceptions of Economic Cooperation and the Tumen River Area Development Programme (TRDAP)" (Graduate School of Syracuse University, 1996), <https://doi.org/10.16953/deusbed.74839>. p. 107.

alliance with the Russian Far East, which would have given the province a stronger bargaining position with Beijing. Despite this, Heilongjiang was able to steer Chinese participation in Tumen towards a model that focuses on dispersed benefits rather than benefits concentrated in one small area.²¹⁶

Vladivostok and Nakhodka are attractive Russian ports for China, and the Tumen project²¹⁷ targeted access to these ports. Chirstoffersen highlights the importance of the ports for the Chinese side: Heilongjiang province is interested in the Russian Far East because of its markets and ports, Vladivostok and Nakhodka. The most direct route for Heilongjiang's exports to reach Asia-Pacific markets is by rail on the Chinese Eastern railroad. This route passes through Suifenhe and terminates at Vladivostok, the endpoint of the Trans-Siberian railroad. With limited access to Vladivostok, the alternative route goes through the Tumen River delta, which lacks a deep-water port except for Zarubino. To access this route, one must cross the Sino-Russian border into an area known as the Khasanski District, which was once part of China but was ceded to Russia in the Treaty of Peking of 1860.²¹⁸

Historically, the Sino-Russian border has been actively used by various ethnic groups, including Russian, Chinese, and Mongolians, for transportation. During conflict on the border, people from both sides could cross easily without permission. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the border region became a major source of income for Russians, with the Chinese market playing a crucial role in their daily lives.²¹⁹

After the stagnation period, Russian citizens go to China and they carry out trade

²¹⁶ Gaye Christoffersen, "Nesting The Sino-Russian Border and the Tumen Project in the Asia-Pacific: Heilongjiang's Regional Relations," *Asian Survey* 20, no. 2 (1996): 267.

²¹⁷ For more detail on Tumen River Project in the final stage see Jungwon Cho, "The Conflict, Cooperation, and Competition of Sino-Russian Relations: Focused on Tumen River and the East," *Eurasian Review* 5, no. September 1939 (2012): 51–64.

²¹⁸ Gaye Christoffersen, "Nesting The Sino-Russian Border and the Tumen Project in the Asia-Pacific: Heilongjiang's Regional Relations," *Asian Survey* 20, no. 2 (1996): 275–76.

²¹⁹ Kapitolina Fedorova, "Transborder Trade on the Russian-Chinese Border: Problems of Interethnic Communication" in Bettina Bruns and Judith Miggelbrink ed., *Subverting Borders Doing Research on Smuggling and Small-Scale Trade*, (Heidelberg: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2012): 115.

business there. Kapitolina relaying her informant statements as:

“(…) Even more participate in transborder trade from time to time as so called ‘camels’, persons transporting goods through the border for someone else. For many years Russian authorities have constantly decreased the amount of goods, which can be taken by one person into the country for personal use. (The goods are mostly clothes, footwear, cosmetics, household chemicals, crockery etc. – the same things people buy for themselves but in greater quantities. The smuggling practices (involving medicine and ethyl alcohol) are rare now.)”²²⁰

In her analysis of interactions and network changes over time, Ryzhova examines the roles of traders, officials, suppliers, and establishments as agents. She notes that during the initial period of the 1990s, informal cross-border trade was predominantly carried out by traders. However, as trade became more established and advanced, suppliers also started to play a more significant role in this trade. In the late 1990s, a new class of agents emerged as Chinese suppliers moved to Russia. Officials were also present from the beginning, but their power grew as restrictions on extralegal activities increased. New businesses have arisen as a consequence of providing reduced tariffs on imported goods. I will mostly refer to the book written by Nataliya Ryzhova. The book is a case study about the border regions between Russia and the Chinese town of Heihe in Heilongjiang province. Ryzhova, who resides in Blagoveshchensk, conducted a series of interviews and surveys in her residential area to gather information.²²¹ Humphrey and Holzlehner focus on anthropological work on their articles.²²²

Blagoveshchensk or Khabarovsk are the most important border regions for both Russian and Chinese people since they are far away from Europe and it is difficult to reach European manufactures from this part of Russia. From the perspective of the Chinese, it means that business with Russians contributes to the tourism sector (fun,

²²⁰ Kapitolina Fedorova, “Transborder Trade on the Russian-Chinese Border: Problems of Interethnic Communication” in Bettina Bruns and Judith Miggelbrink ed., *Subverting Borders Doing Research on Smuggling and Small-Scale Trade*, (Heidelberg: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2012): 114.

²²¹ Natalia Ryzhova, “Informal Economy of Translocations: The Case of the Twin City of Blagoveshchensk-Heihe,” *Inner Asia* 10, no. 2 (2008): 323–51, <https://doi.org/10.1163/000000008793066731>.

²²² See Humphrey, “Concepts of ‘Russia’ and Their Relation to the Border with China”; Tobias Holzlehner, “Shadow Networks: Border Economies, Informal Markets, and Organized Crime in Vladivostok and the Russian Far East” (The University of Alaska Fairbanks, 2006).

spa, etc.) in the Chinese side of the border.²²³ However, the Russian side has not demonstrated the same desire to invest in tourism and leisure. Russians are mostly interested in using neighbours' resources.²²⁴

Based on Ryzhova's research, border relations between China and Russia is not as smooth as one might expect. The border regions that specialize in cross-border exchanges with large markets like China tend to have lower wages and experience centrifugal forces. Despite this, borders remain a significant impediment to trade. The study's focus is on the inconstant prices in China-Russia trade, with the results from 2002-2007 suggesting that border effects boost price fluctuations, indicating that borders hinder trade. However, border trade also acts as a buffer between Russia and China, reducing bureaucratic barriers. According to Ryzhova's research, border effects have a greater impact on trade flows than distance effects at the national level, with the impact decreasing in border regions. This indicates that border towns have better integration with China than with Russia.²²⁵

Heihe is the Chinese part looks across the Sino Russian border at Blagoveshchensk. Some authors call these two provinces as 'twin cities along the Russia-China border.' Yi Fan explains in his article how Russia supplies cheap energy to China:

"Since 2004, a number of enterprises have flocked to Heihe from all over China, drooling over the low cost energy from Russia and the prospect of the vast oil supply from the city's underconstruction pipeline and refinery plant. Heihe Xinghe Industries Development Co. was the first Chinese private company that imported power from Russia. According to the agreement it signed with the Russian company RAO EES Vostok Energo, eight Russian power lines will transmit 9.2 billion kWh by 2010, illuminating all the cities in Heilongjiang Province along the border with Russia, and powering an industrial zone in the region. What's more, Xinghe is cooperating with the Russian Lanta Oil Company on the Amur-Heihe petroleum refinery and transportation project. Assessments of the project's impact on the local environment

²²³ Kapitolina Fedorova, "Transborder Trade on the Russian-Chinese Border: Problems of Interethnic Communication" in Bettina Bruns and Judith Miggelbrink ed., *Subverting Borders Doing Research on Smuggling and Small-Scale Trade*, (Heidelberg: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2012): 116.

²²⁴ Igor Y. Okunev and Maria I. Tislenko, "Geopolitical Positioning of Twin Cities: A Case Study of Narva/Ivangorod, Valga/Valka, and Blagoveshchensk/Heihe," *Teorija in Praksa* 3-4, no. 54 (2017): 599.

²²⁵ Nataliya Ryzhova, "Cross-Border Trade And Integration Between Russia And China: An Interdisciplinary Perspective" (Khabarovsk: ERI FEB RAS, 2013).

*have already been completed, and ground will be broken soon. All of Heihe's residents, not least its deputy mayor Hu Dongsheng, are looking forward to the project's completion. They expect a golden era to roll in, lubricated by black fluid."*²²⁶

The cities of Blagoveshchensk and Heihe are distinct due to their proximity to the border and their significant reliance on cross-border trade.

Zabaikalski krai is another location in the Sino-Russian border. Zabelina and Klevakina have proposed that in order to promote cross-border integration between China and Russia, it is crucial to decrease the export of unrefined natural resources and encourage the diversification of the regional economy. However, the current focus of joint investment projects in the region primarily revolves around the production and initial processing of mineral resources, with advanced refinement taking place in China. This has resulted in the neglect of the development of infrastructure and service sector. Nearly 50% of investment initiatives in the region aim to exploit mineral resources, while in the neighboring part of China, the majority of new factories and upgraded facilities will specialize in the processing of natural resources, which not only generate employment opportunities but also add more value to end products.²²⁷

Ryzhova's research indicates that in the 2000s, Russia's eastern regions that share a border with China have not displayed any proficiency or superiority in manufacturing, despite the rapid growth of primary industries such as forestry and aquaculture, which have benefited from China's high demand. Moreover, Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI) has been largely focused on Russian border regions, which have not proven to be attractive to major investors in comparison to global cities. The data reveals that while Chinese FDI is concentrated in the agriculture sector in the eastern border regions of Russia, the majority of FDI from China for the industry and service sectors is intensified in other parts.²²⁸

²²⁶ Yi Fan, "Heihe: The Pioneer of Sino-Russian Trade," *China Today*, February 2007.

²²⁷ I A Zabelina and E A Klevakina, "Environmental and Economic Aspects of Natural Resource Use and Problems of Cross-Border Cooperation in Regions of Siberia," *Problems of Economic Transition* 55, no. 7 (2012): 45-46.

²²⁸ Ryzhova, "Informal Economy of Translocations: The Case of the Twin City of Blagoveshensk-Heihe"; Nataliya Ryzhova, *Cross-Border Trade And Integration Between Russia And China: An Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Khabarovsk: ERI FEB RAS, 2013).

Conversely, there is significant shuttle trade between China and Russia at the border. Holzlehner reports that shuttle trade is commonly carried by Chinese individuals who possess a multi-entry visa. Individuals use their own money to purchase goods in China, which they transport across the border into Russia. Although shuttle traders who work for a salary earn less profit, they do not have to invest as much capital or take on as much self-initiative as those who conduct shuttle trade independently. It is common for shuttle traders to hire two or three assistants to help increase the volume of imported goods, which in turn leads to higher profits. Although small shuttle trader groups are often established around family networks, the expansion of their trading activities may involve a range of social relationships.²²⁹

The Chinese government includes figures for small border trade in their total trade statistics, while the Russian government does not. For instance, in 2004, small border trade between China's Heilongjiang province and Russia was valued at 2.5 billion USD, which constituted 37% of the province's overall external trade. Nonetheless, this amount of 2.5 billion USD was not reflected in the Russian statistics. Furthermore, the external trade between China's eastern region and Russia, as recorded by Russia, was lower than the that of China, amounting to 2.2 billion USD.²³⁰

A study carried about the trade connections between Russia and China from 1980 to 2006 yields significant findings from two perspectives: the degree of informal exchanges at the border and the level of centralized management and financial independence of border regions. The trade dynamics in China can be classified into three stages: initially, there was a phase of substantial decentralization until 1991, which allowed various Chinese provinces to attract foreign investment and take part in international trade. This, in turn, led to a significant surge in informal trade across the border. In 1992, the Chinese administration established specialized organizations for cities and regions along the border, granting them unique recognition and benefits.²³¹

²²⁹ Holzlehner, "Shadow Networks: Border Economies, Informal Markets, and Organized Crime in Vladivostok and the Russian Far East."

²³⁰ Ryzhova, "Informal Economy of Translocations: The Case of the Twin City of Blagoveshensk-Heihe."

²³¹ Hiraizumi, "Trade of Heilongjiang Province (China) with Russia."

In Russia, a similar situation occurred where the border regions received some special treatment during the late 1980s under the Soviet period. Since then, neighboring countries, especially China's Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces, have been showing interest in working with the Russian Far East. These regions see potential in exporting goods to Russia and providing employment for workers. However, there are many factors that can affect trade between the two countries, including economic conditions, policies, and unpredictable events. These factors are uncertain and not always clear.²³²

According to data, Chinese farmers and traders are now the dominant players in importing agricultural goods to Blagoveshchensk. Over the past decade, numerous Chinese farmers migrated to Russia to engage in agriculture as a result of heightened cross-border trade limitations. To circumvent the obstacles imposed by local governments on immigrants, they frequently resort to informal means, such as employing a Russian representative. Furthermore, Chinese merchants exercise authority over the trade of crops cultivated by Chinese farmers in Russia or imported by Chinese corporations. As a result, they hold sway over prices in the Blagoveshchensk domestic market. However, it appears that agriculture hasn't been a top priority for the local economy in the border region.²³³

One of the approved pilot free trade zones in China, announced in 2019, will be situated in Heihe. Heihe section of The Heilongjiang Free Trade Pilot Zone was opened in September. The cross-border industrialization zone spans across 120 square kilometers and is split between three cities: Harbin(capital of the province), Heihe, and Suifenhe, This split was designed to address competition between them, with Harbin concentrating on technological, Heihe on energy, and Suifenhe wood and grain collaboration with Russia.²³⁴

²³² For more information about gray areas see Zhen-zhong Zhang, Shuang Liu, and Li-xia Tian, "The Study of Sino-Russian Trade Forecasting Based on the Improved Grey Prediction Model," in *The 19th International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Engineering Management*, 2013, 643, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-38442-4>.

²³³ N. Horie, "The Positionality of Russia's Far East Border Regions: Economic and Societal Changes," *Problems of Economic Transition* 59, no. 10 (2017): 753–67.

²³⁴ Gaye Christoffersen, "Sino-Russian Local Relations: Heihe and Blagoveshchensk," The ASAN Forum, 2019. <https://theasanforum.org/sino-russian-local-relations-heihe-and-blagoveshchensk/#43>

4.4. Transportation

Transportation is a determiner factor for border trade and border management as mentioned in the previous chapters. Considering Russia and China's trade in the border areas highly depend on mutual economic benefit. Compared to Russia with its main competitors China has done well. The road and rail network expansion implemented during 1999-2008 is the largest of all Asian countries.²³⁵ Ryzhova and Ioffe's research shows that there is no permanent land transport between Heihe to Blagoveshchensk.²³⁶ However official statistics demonstrates that the border crossing flows is asymmetrical among the three official border-crossing points. Ryzhova and Ioffe clearly explain:

“Official statistics on goods and people traversing the Sino-Russian border along the three official border crossings suggest that the flows are asymmetrical. For example, only 1 percent of goods cross between Blagoveshchensk and Heihe versus 19.6 percent of people. At the same time, statistics derived from the Blagoveshchensk bank accounts of Chinese citizens allow us to surmise that there is a significant understate- ment of flows of goods and people alike from Heihe to Blagoveshchensk. In 2006, the total value of deposits (USD643 million) and withdrawals to China (USD589 million) from these accounts by far exceeded the reported value of trade exchange between Amur Oblast and China (USD231.7 million), which points to widespread informal economic practices not captured by official Russian statistics. Our understanding of these practices is presented in greater detail below, first with respect to Chinese citizens' activities and then with those of Russians.”²³⁷

China is investing in transportation infrastructure to expand its reach towards Russia. The China-Mongolia-Russia High-Speed Railway is a notable project in this effort which is detailed in third chapter. The “Plan for Construction of the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor,” launched in 2016 by Russia, China, and Mongolia, aims to enhance connectivity between the nations by creating transportation corridors for railways and roads. A study by Dong et al. found that the objective of the plan is to build and enhance transport corridors for international land transportation, as well as to enhance the capacity of transportation. Constructing high-speed railways can be a

²³⁵ World Bank, World Development Indicators (WDI), <<http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators>>.

²³⁶ See Nataliya Ryzhova and Grigory Ioffe, “Trans-Border Exchange between Russia and China: The Case of Blagoveshchensk and Heihe,” *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 50, no. 3 (2009): 348–64.

²³⁷Ryzhova and Ioffe.

challenging and expensive task that may be impeded by a variety of local factors. The areas along the borders of China, Mongolia, and Russia exhibit marked disparities in terms of their economic progress, population density, social organization, and ecological factors. The dissimilarities between these areas could pose possible hazards for the establishment of high-speed railways in the China-Mongolia-Russia corridor and how it may affect the nearby economies, societies, and environment. It is important to identify and evaluate these risks to ensure that the design and construction of the high-speed railways in the China-Mongolia-Russia corridor are supported and risks are minimized.²³⁸

The construction of a bridge in Yakutsk, which is the administrative center of the Sakha Republic in the northeast region of Russia, is a possible secondary project. Yakutsk is among the biggest cities globally that lacks a connection to a road or rail network for a whole year. The connection of Yakutsk to the national road network via a bridge across the Lena River is a vital component of Russia's Transport Strategy. In 2016, President Putin supported a proposal to invite Chinese companies for the bridge's construction. This shows that Russian leaders are willing to overlook nationalist concerns for the sake of capital investment in infrastructure, which may explain why China's One Belt One Road initiative has received mostly positive responses from Russia.²³⁹

When examining the total trade between Russia and China, the North and Northeast border regions are the most significant in terms of imports and exports. According to data from Kerr, in 1995, Russia accounted for 10.6% of China's total exports and provided 19% of imports. In 2016, the trade value between the two countries reached USD 69.5 billion, with an annual growth rate of 14%.²⁴⁰ An innovative cooperation-based railways is necessary to minimize financial risks from an economic perspective.

²³⁸ Dong et al., "An Evaluation of the Economic, Social, and Ecological Risks of China-Mongolia-Russia High-Speed Railway Construction and Policy Suggestions."

²³⁹ Mia M. Bennett, "The Silk Road Goes North: Russia's Role within China's Belt and Road Initiative," *Area Development & Policy* 1, no. 3 (2016): 341–51, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23792949.2016.1239508>.

²⁴⁰ See David Kerr, "Opening and Closing the Sino-Russian Border: Trade, Regional Development and Political Interest in North-East Asia," *Europe - Asia Studies* 48, no. 6 (1996): 931–57, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668139608412392>. "Trading Economics," accessed October 23, 2020, <https://tradingeconomics.com/china/imports-by-country>.

China can provide financial investment, technology, technical expertise, and workforce for the establishment and upkeep of high-speed railways, and in return, Russia and Mongolia can grant mining rights commodities to China as compensation for its investment in the railway. The three countries can mitigate financial risks and achieve mutual development by utilizing their individual strengths and engaging in collaborative efforts.²⁴¹

Rail transportation provides China and Russia with a new economic opportunity in border areas. Russian Railways predicts that in 2017, cargo transportation by rail between the two countries will increase by 16% compared to the previous year. In 2016, 65 million tons of cargo was transported, a growth of 19%. The administration of the Chinese city Suifenhe estimates that in 2017, the volume of goods transported through the Russian-Chinese border could reach a record of 10 million tons, with over 7 million tons already transported as of the beginning of the year.²⁴²

4.5. Tourism, Visa, and Immigration

The border regions of Russia and China have a high population density due to effective infrastructure. These areas, particularly twin cities like Heihe and Blagoveshchensk, have strong economic ties, with cross-border tourism and shuttle trading being prevalent. Traveling daily in these border areas is common for both Russian and Chinese residents. 'Travel Trade' refers to the trade that takes place when people from either country enter the partner country under the guise of tourism but with the primary aim of buying or selling goods. This form of trade emerged in the late 1980s as the USSR economy began to decline. However, acquiring precise data on the scale of this type of trade is difficult due to Chinese merchants' frequent usage of "gray customs clearance" to export goods.²⁴³

²⁴¹ Dong et al., "An Evaluation of the Economic, Social, and Ecological Risks of China-Mongolia-Russia High-Speed Railway Construction and Policy Suggestions." P. 914

²⁴² "Russia/China: Cargo Transportation by Rail Expected to Increase in 2017," EMIS Emerging Markets Research, Data and News, 2017, <https://www.emis.com/php/search/doc?dcid=587508832&ebsco=1?>

²⁴³ For more information about gray areas see Zhen-zhong Zhang, Shuang Liu, and Li-xia Tian, "The Study of Sino-Russian Trade Forecasting Based on the Improved Grey Prediction Model," in *The 19th*

The data may be outdated, but during 1995-1999, the Chinese exported approximately two-thirds of the USD10 billion travel trade industry. In Suifenhe, tourism accounted for an average of 77% of total exports annually during this period, with a peak of 83.7% in 1996. Chinese traders often use trade agencies for customs clearance, transportation, and other services for their goods, which are then shipped to them in Russia. The Chinese traders enter Russia by posing as tourists, obtain the goods, and then distribute them through markets.²⁴⁴

According to reports, agencies frequently request customs clearance for goods owned by individual traders, with the declared customs value often being significantly lower than the real value of the products. This results in a decrease in Russia's tax revenue and damage to the Russian commerce. Russian officials started inspecting customs documents of products sold in markets to tackle the issue. In cases where Chinese sellers could not provide necessary documents, their goods were seized by authorities. The Russian government prohibited foreign retail sellers in 2007 to curb the sale of goods obtained through unlawful means. The Cherkizovskii Market, one of the major markets in Moscow, was shut down by the authorities in 2009 due to violations of hygiene requirements.²⁴⁵

The Russian government has stood against the illegal sale of goods through unofficial channels known as 'gray customs clearance. Putin declared in December 2009 that the closure of the Cherkizovskii Market had reduced trafficking and fake goods while boosting domestic production. Travel patterns in Russia have varied by region and over time. In 1988, tourist groups were allowed to make "one-day trips" between Heihe and Blagobeshichensk in the Province and the Russian Far East with the approval of both central governments. The allowance for visa-free group trips for Chinese tourists was eventually expanded to other border regions between China and Russia, with the

International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Engineering Management, 2013, 643, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-38442-4>.

²⁴⁴ Hiraizumi, "Trade of Heilongjiang Province (China) with Russia."

²⁴⁵ Roman Kupchinsky, "'Clothing the Bear' and the Closing of Moscow's Cherkizovsky Market," Jamestown Foundation, 2009.

length of the trips extended to a week. As a result, numerous Russians started taking advantage of these trips to shop, as visas were not required for such short-term travel. In the beginning, Russians used to visit Chinese border regions as tourists, purchase necessary items, and bring them back to their home by themselves. However, in 1994, the Russian government passed a rule that permitted individuals to import up to 50 kg of goods per week without paying any duty.²⁴⁶

The Russian government has introduced regulations on the amount of duty-free goods that individuals can import into Russia. This has led to the emergence of individuals known as Pamagaika, Kirpichi, and Fonali in different regions, who organize group trips to China for Russian traders. These group trips, such as Econom Tour, offer discounted travel fares, and Russian traders can purchase goods from their Chinese trade partners while also buying personal items. The guides play a crucial role in this process by receiving the goods, dividing them into packages of 35 kg or less, and delivering them to the Russian traders after they clear customs in Russia. Russians can bring in goods that weigh 35 kg or less without duty and are meant for individual use, thus avoiding import taxes upon entry into Russia.²⁴⁷

The trade data began to record travel trade in 2000, but it only pertains to the shopping activities of Russians in China. Every year, it becomes as the third largest contributor to trade, with a value of USD 1.2 billion and accounting for 35% of the province's total trade in 2005. However, its value has decreased after 2006, possibly due to the change in Russian set of rules on personal imports.²⁴⁸

According to Horie's source:

"Until 2007, China was the number one destination visited by Russian tourists. In 2013, over two million Russians visited China, of these 1.7 million traveled for tourism

²⁴⁶ Yang Cheng, "Sino-Russian Border in the Soviet and Post Soviet Era: A Chinese Perspective," 7th Berlin Conference on Asian Security (BCAS) Territorial Issues in Asia Drivers, Instruments, Ways Forward (Berlin, 2013).

²⁴⁷ Ekaterina Mikhailova and Chung-tong Wu, "Ersatz Twin City Formation? The Case of Blagoveshchensk and Heihe," *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 32, no. 4 (2017): 513–33, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2016.1222878>.

²⁴⁸ Hiraizumi, "Trade of Heilongjiang Province (China) with Russia."

and 260,000 for business. During the same period, 1.7 million Chinese citizens traveled to Russia, including 370,000 for tourism and 300,000 for business. This belies the idea that the Chinese are invading Russia.”²⁴⁹

Gomilevskaya and Kononov’s research shows that in 2016, the number of total Russian citizens visiting China is around 587,000 that are a 24 per cent boost when compared the year 2015. Gomilevskaya and Kononov’s findings summarize us the final situation on tourism for both Russian and Chinese side. They say border tourism tends to increase in the last year. The authors sum up:

“Further development of border and cross-border tourism depends on expanding the range of the products in offer for such types of tourism as cultural, ethnographic, recreational, ecological, health, event tourism; it also depends on raising the quality of tourist services, on attracting new market segments, developing the cross-border brand name for “East ring of Russia” project.”²⁵⁰

Despite the fact that the visa-free regime for Russians traveling to China was abolished in 2005 and the new law limited individual imports to 35 kilograms per month in 2006, both sides have recently simplified regulations to promote tourism. One such example is that Chinese tourists are now able to travel throughout the entirety of Russian territory for up to 8 days without requiring a visa.²⁵¹

In addition to tourism, labor migration is another significant form of mobility across the Sino-Russian border. Due to economic difficulties on the Chinese side, many Chinese workers travel to Russia without visa requirements or documentation for seasonal work, resulting in a challenge of illegal Chinese workers on the Russian side. However, migration between China and Russia is not a new issue. The origins of this can be dated back to the Ming dynasty, which was before the Manchu conquest.²⁵²

²⁴⁹Horie, “The Positionality of Russia’s Far East Border Regions: Economic and Societal Changes:” 763.

²⁵⁰ G. A. Gomilevskaya and A. Y. Kononov, “Prospects for the Development of Sino-Russian Cross-Border Cooperation in Tourism,” *Russian Journal of Agricultural and Socio-Econmic Sciences*, no. 12 (2017): 252.

²⁵¹ Tobias Holzlehner, “Shadow Networks: Border Economies, Informal Markets, and Organized Crime in Vladivostok and the Russian Far East” (The University of Alaska Fairbanks, 2006): 120.

²⁵² For more detail on historical background of migration issue between Russia and China see Won Bae Kim, “Sino-Russian Relations and Chinese Workers in the Russian Far East : A Porous Border,” *Asian Survey* 34, no. 12 (1994): 1064–76. Eric Hyer, “Dreams and Nightmares: Chinese Trade and Immigration in the Russian Far East,” *The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 10, no. 2 (1996): 289–308.

The regularity of Chinese-Russian interaction at the border has evolved to the point that it is no longer restricted to casual encounters in public places or markets but has become an intrinsic aspect of everyday existence. For instance around half of the students in their final year at the University of Blagoveshchensk have engaged in part-time jobs with Chinese colleagues. Furthermore, approximately 33% of the inhabitants of Primorsky Krai have traveled to China.²⁵³

Certain specialists contend that a hybrid culture is emerging as Chinese and Russian people come into more direct contact in Siberia and Eastern parts of Russia. The shuttle trade dominated the form of trade in the past. Although it still exists, organized business took its place.²⁵⁴

The view of Chinese individuals residing near the border has changed for Russians, where the previous perception of them as poor, uneducated, and unauthorized laborers has been replaced by a new image of educated Chinese entrepreneurs who possess expertise in Russian language, culture, and commerce due to frequent interactions with Russians.²⁵⁵

The nature of the connections between Chinese and Russian people has undergone significant changes in recent times, both in terms of quality and quantity. Previously, these interactions were primarily limited to groups of businessmen or specific market types such as builders or shuttle traders. However, nowadays individuals from various groups regularly engage with one another in local businesses, which has resulted in a diverse and hybrid culture. This change is gradually altering the perception of the Chinese people living in Russian border regions.²⁵⁶

²⁵³ Horie, "The Positionality of Russia's Far East Border Regions: Economic and Societal Changes." 763.

²⁵⁴ Olga Alexeeva, "Chinese Migration in the Russian Far East: A Historical and Sociodemographic Analysis," *China Perspectives*, no. 3 (2008): 20–32.

²⁵⁵ Jonathan Sullivan and Bettina Renz, "Chinese Migration: Still the Major Focus of Russian Far East/Chinese North East Relations?," *Pacific Review* 23, no. 2 (2010): 261–85, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512741003624450>.

²⁵⁶ Mikhail A. Alexseev, "Economic Valuations and Interethnic Fears: Perceptions of Chinese Migration in the Russian Far East," *Journal of Peace Research* 40, no. 1 (2003): 85–102.

Liou has mentioned the Chinese workers seen as “Yellow Peril” in Russia and he concluded:

“In view of the current Russo-Chinese relations, both Russia and China have a consensus to maintain their relationship, so they hold public diplomacy activities in turn from 2006 to present in order to promote cultural exchange. Perhaps its effect is not rapid and obvious, but to some extent, it still helps to alleviate the cultural gap between Russia and China, and it indeed causes Russians to begin to positively treat the Chinese immigration and consider whether to accept China and cooperate with China. The anti-Chinese immigrant sentiments are related to Russia’s Oriental perception. Russian Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador Aleksandr Panov argues that it is correct for Russia to go east and integrate into the Asia-Pacific region. Nevertheless, Russians enter this region, but we do not allow others to enter Russia, especially the Russian Far East. The East will not be a threat to Russia; on the contrary, Russia will enjoy unlimited possibilities, but such a possibility is restrained due to Russia’s weak economy and deficiency of insight.”²⁵⁷

The population of Sino-Chinese border cities has great potential for economic development. With Russia having a large amount of land suitable for agriculture, it attracts Chinese seasonal workers. This could turn agriculture into an export-oriented sector of the Russian economy. However, Chinese migrants are more often viewed from a sociological perspective rather than their economic potential. To sum up, it is clear that Sino-Russian order mobility dominated by the labor migration when compared with the tourism.²⁵⁸

4.6. Security Policy

Although the barriers in international trade such as tariffs and quotas are gradually decreasing, markets in the international level is still more fractional as compared to domestic ones.²⁵⁹ Therefore, Sino-Russian border policy may be developed by Russia and China to improve the level of utility through trade cooperation on the border. Currently, China and Russia have distinct plans for collaboration along their border, including China's One Belt One Road initiative and Russia's Eurasian Economic Union aimed at establishing a free trade area. Although the Sino-Russian border has a

²⁵⁷ Shiao-shyang Liou, “Chinese Immigration to Russia and Its Non-Traditional Security Impact,” *East Asia*, no. 34 (2017): 271–86.

²⁵⁸ Jr., Pirchner, “The Uncertain Future: Sino Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century.”

²⁵⁹ Julius Horváth, Attila Rátfai, and Botond Döme, “The Border Effect in Small Open Economies,” *Economic Systems* 32, no. 1 (2008): 33–45, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecosys.2007.07.001>.

complicated history, both countries have recently begun to strengthen overall cooperation. While the presence of Chinese laborers in Russia may be perceived as a point of conflict between the two nations, it is essential to analyze it from a sociological viewpoint. From an economic perspective, the Sino-Russian border has high potential for trade, transport, tourism, service, and commerce. Additionally, an export-oriented economy can be developed by initiatives from both countries, taking advantage of Russia's vast agricultural land on the border. However, this requires a comprehensive border policy that includes the flow and production functions of trade, tourism, and functions that involve the comprehensive functions of free trade zones and export processing zones, including commerce, transport, service, finance, and export processing.

Ryzhova is highly skeptical about the prospects of economic integration between Russia and China due to the high level of centralized authority and bureaucracy in Russia's border regions, which constitute trade barriers and hinder economic integration with China. She believes that it is next to impossible to restrict or dissolve these policies as the rent-seeking bureaucrats who designed the informal networks impeding cross-border trade are themselves part of these activities. Furthermore, reducing centralized decision-making is something that politicians, who may not want to relinquish power to regional authorities, need to address. Ryzhova believes that the best long-term solution is to reduce trade barriers and promote economic collaboration by completely liberalizing cross-border connections between Russia and China. Nonetheless, Ryzhova anticipates that achieving this objective will be an arduous and protracted endeavor.²⁶⁰

From a security perspective, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization serves as a robust security mechanism for Russia and China. The organization was initially established to resolve conflicts on China's borders with its neighbors, but its strategy has since evolved to include cooperation on issues such as terrorism, human smuggling, and drug trafficking. Additionally, there have been many positive initiatives between the two countries, such as the 2001 Russia-China Treaty on Good-Neighborliness and

²⁶⁰ Ryzhova, "Informal Economy of Translocations: The Case of the Twin City of Blagoveshensk-Heihe."

Friendly Cooperation, which aims to promote peace on the border and increased trade.”²⁶¹

Therefore, bilateral relations closely affect the border relations too. As a result, the border regions in Russia have become more stable and secure. The plans for the development of Heixiazi (an island in the Heilongjiang River) have been advancing. While China is constructing on the west section of the island, Russia is constructing a bridge to link the east section of the island to a small town close to Khabarovsk. These developments have certainly impacted Russia’s relationship with China and have strengthened their strategic partnership. Although both sides avoid referring to their relationship as an alliance, the solid foundation of their relationship has been confirmed through the resolution of border issues and their mutual role in the evolving international order.²⁶²

4.7. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has highlighted the resolution of past border conflicts between China and Russia through the agreement signed in 2008. Despite occasional bilateral tensions, China's continued investments in the development of the border trade zone with Russia suggest a commitment to improving relations. As both countries are regional hegemons, it is observed that peaceful relations and cooperation have developed in the border region. However, it is important to note that cultural separation has led to dissatisfaction among the social base. This highlights the need for continued efforts to address cultural disparities in order to further strengthen relations between the two nations.

²⁶¹ Jr., Pirchner, “The Uncertain Future: Sino Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century.”310.

²⁶² Akihiro Iwashita, “Borders Inside and Outside Alliances: Russia’s Eastern Frontiers During the Cold War and After,” *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 32, no. 1 (2017): 64-65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2016.1222873>.

CHAPTER 5

SINO-KAZAKH BORDER

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, we will be concentrating on the relationship between Xinjiang, a significant region for China, and Kazakhstan, which shares a long border and has ethnic connections with China. Our analysis will be structured similarly to the previous chapters, beginning with a historical overview and then delving into the effects of China's economic growth on bilateral trade, transportation, tourism, and security in the border region between Xinjiang and Kazakhstan. In 1995, a treaty on a common border was signed between Kazakhstan and China, making Kazakhstan the first former Soviet republic to enter into such an agreement. This treaty is significant as it provides a crucial framework for managing and developing the border region.

5.2. Historical Background

After the Soviet Union fell, China adjusted its regional development plan to match its goal of "Integrate with the East, Open to the West." The objective of this initiative was to create economic connections with neighboring countries and encourage trade across borders. By 1994, the policy had already shown positive results, with Xinjiang establishing economic partnerships with 60 nations. With the Central Asian nations now independent and sovereign, there was significant potential for collaboration between them and China. In 1995, Kazakhstan was the first to sign an agreement on a shared border with China, which was a crucial framework for managing and advancing the China-Kazakhstan border area.²⁶³

²⁶³ Michael Clarke, *Xinjiang and China's Rise in Central Asia - A History* (London: Routledge, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203831113>.

At a local level, there has been a steady growth in interactions across borders. As early as the 1990s, there was an increase in the connections between Kazakhstan and China through air, rail, road, and telephone lines that linked Almaty with Urumqi. Xinjiang and Kazakhstan share ethnic, cultural, and geographical connections that have made them interdependent. In addition to the presence of the Uyghur community, Xinjiang accommodates Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Tajik communities, which are indicative of its Central Asian character. Therefore, the region has profound historical links with Central Asia. Despite the presence of a border demarcation, cross-border engagements have been frequent in history, barring significant political movements. This improved communication has facilitated an increase in the number of Chinese workers and entrepreneurs entering Kazakhstan, leading to the growth of Chinese businesses and products. Before 1992, there were scarce instances of cross-border trade between Kazakhstan and China at the border. Nevertheless, currently, border trade is flourishing and lively, with many of the border regions of Kazakhstan and China experiencing substantial gains from the increased freedom to conduct business with their neighboring nations.²⁶⁴

China regards Xinjiang as a highly sensitive area owing to the existence of separatist movements within its territory. Furthermore, the borders of Xinjiang have a crucial role to play in safeguarding China's territorial integrity and security. Consequently, China seeks support primarily from Kazakh leaders to ensure the security of the Kazakhstan border. For instance, Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister expressed satisfaction with the newly-signed border agreement with China, after the independence, citing its benefits for Kazakhstan's security. However, in exchange for the treaty, Kazakhstan agreed not to provide refuge to Uyghur activists, who are fighting for the separation of Xinjiang, a move that China sees as crucial in addressing the issue of Uyghur nationalism and Islamic uprising in Xinjiang. China has alleged Uyghur organizations based in Almaty of assisting groups in Xinjiang that are against the government, leading to unrest in border regions.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁴ Clarke: 192

²⁶⁵ Brain G. Carlson, "Waving the Banner of Independence: Kazakhstan's Relations with Russia, China, and the United States," *Yale Journal of International Affairs* 3 (2008): 46–64.

Since Kazakhstan gained independence in 1991, its political relations with China have been friendly. Bilateral relations between China and Kazakhstan were not only focused on Chinese development interests but also aimed to maintain peaceful control over the Chinese border, as part of Kazakhstan's multifaceted foreign policy objectives following its independence. The two countries have resolved previous disputes over their shared border and have established closer political ties. Chinese and Kazakhstani officials regularly meet to discuss matters of mutual interest, and according to Nazarbayev, maintaining positive and cooperative relations with China is a significant priority. During the initial three years of independence, there was a noteworthy rise in the suppression of Uyghurs in China, which led to the imprisonment or execution of numerous Uyghur 'separatists.' As a consequence, refugees are fleeing Xinjiang via the Sino-Kazakh border, which is causing concern for China.²⁶⁶ Meanwhile, Kazakhstan is disturbed by China's nuclear tests in Xinjiang. Uyghurs organized numerous protests in the border area opposing China's actions.²⁶⁷ Additionally, the increasing sway of China in Kazakhstan has resulted in demonstrations by Kazakh nationals. Despite the signing of the border agreement, border concerns are expected to remain a significant issue in their relationship.

Since gaining independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has maintained a positive political relationship with China, resolving border disputes and building stronger political connections. Both countries made an effort to stay away from conflict. Therefore, diplomatic and economic ties are being established with a focus on mutual interests, rather than being grounded solely in pragmatic considerations.²⁶⁸ China and Kazakhstan are members of various organizations, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), that aim to encourage cooperation, economic advancement, and security. This close mutual backing is crucial in achieving their shared foreign policy objectives. Kazakhstan approves China's "One China" policy on

²⁶⁶ Michael Clarke, "Xinjiang and China's Relations with Central Asia, 1991–2001: Across the 'Domestic–Foreign Frontier'?", *Asian Ethnicity* 4, no. 2 (2003): 207–24.

²⁶⁷ "Lop Nor area is a China's nuclear and missile test range in Xinjiang." For more detail see Millward and Perdue, "Political and Cultural History of the Xinjiang Region through the Late Nineteenth Century," in Frederick Star ed. *Xinjiang: China's Muslim Borderland*, (New York; M.E.Sharpe: 2004).

²⁶⁸ "China-Kazakhstan Relations Grow Stronger," *China Daily*, 2007.

Taiwan and Tibet,²⁶⁹ while China supported Kazakhstan's aspiration to join the World Trade Organization (WTO), which it eventually did in 2015 after nearly 20 years.²⁷⁰

China and Kazakhstan have developed strong economic relations, with China investing significantly in Kazakhstan and driving the growth of their trade ties. Economic data shows the success of this relationship, with China providing loans to the Kazakhstani National Welfare Fund and the petrochemical industry totalling to nearly 7 billion dollars, as well as pledging to purchase uranium from Kazakhstan worth approximately 8 billion in USD.²⁷¹ During the post-Soviet period, the foreign policy of Kazakhstan was significantly influenced by its economic interests. The country's economic concerns played a crucial role in shaping its external relations with China and other nations. The Kazakhstani government sees the increasing Chinese influence in the country as an opportunity to diversify its economy. Previously, Kazakhstan's trade with China focused mainly on exporting oil and gas, but the country is now working to diversify its economy, which is expected to have positive effects, particularly in border regions, as Kazakhstan and China's economies become more integrated.²⁷²

Improved bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and China are expected to strengthen positive developments in Kazakhstan in the mid-term. Officials from both countries have been discussing economic, political, cultural, and security issues since 2011, with both Chinese President Hu Jintao and Kazakhstani President Nursultan Nazarbayev agreeing to increase trade and high-level meetings by signing "Development of an All-Round Strategic Partnership". During the Kazakhstani presidency of the SCO in the latter part of 2011, there were numerous chances for the leaders of China and Kazakhstan to discuss different aspects of their mutual collaboration, and their relationship has been solid since the beginning of the 2000s. During this period, the

²⁶⁹ "China, Kazakhstan Upgrade Relationship," People's Daily Online, 2011.

²⁷⁰ Carlson, "Waving the Banner of Independence: Kazakhstan's Relations with Russia, China, and the United States."

²⁷¹ Leslie Hook & Isabel Gorst, "Kazakhstan Embraces Chinese Investments," Financial Times, 2011.

²⁷² "Global Insider: China-Kazakhstan Relations," World Politics Review, 2011, <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/trend-lines/8044/global-insider-chinakazakhstan-relations>.

Chinese Kazakh border also became increasingly important in terms of transporting Chinese goods to Europe, Africa and the Middle East. China has showed gratitude for the growth of their trade relationship and supports the establishment of the Khorgos International Centre of Boundary Cooperation, a cross-border trade center on the Kazakhstan-China border covering nearly 5 million square meters of lands from both countries.²⁷³

Kazakhstan and China have been successful in increasing their bilateral trade volumes over the years, leading to their satisfaction. The trade volume between the two countries grew from USD 8.3 billion to 20 billion between 2006 and 2011, surpassing the trade volume between Kazakhstan and Russia, who are attempting to increase their trade with a customs union. In 2015, officials from Kazakhstan and China set a target of reaching a trade volume of USD 15 billion, which they achieved and surpassed. The increased trade volumes between Kazakhstan and China have occurred largely due to the development of transportation infrastructure, particularly rail transportation. This significant growth in trade volume demonstrates the success of the economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and China.²⁷⁴

5.3. Trade

Kazakhstan's economy is a diverse mix of sectors, with industry being the largest contributor to its GDP at 34.4%. The country's industrial sector includes oil and gas, mining, and manufacturing. Agriculture is also an important sector, contributing 5.0% to the country's GDP. The country's vast land area and favorable climate make it suitable for livestock and crop production. The construction sector, which includes residential and commercial building construction, contributes 15.0% to the GDP, while trade contributes 17.7%. The transport sector, which includes road, rail, and air transportation, contributes 12.0% to the GDP. Finally, the real estate sector contributes

²⁷³ David Kerr, "Central Asian and Russian Perspectives on China's Strategic Emergence," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 86, no. 1 (2010):135.

²⁷⁴ Adilbek Yermekbayev, Meiram Sarybayev, and Chen Suriguga, "China-Kazakhstan Strategic Partnership and Bilateral Economic Cooperation," *Central Asia's Affairs* 85, no. 1 (2022): 18–27, <https://doi.org/10.52536/2788-5909.2022-1.02>.

13.8% to the GDP, reflecting the country's growing demand for housing and commercial space.²⁷⁵ Overall, Kazakhstan's economy is an attractive option for foreign investment due to its rich natural resources, strategic location as a gateway between Europe and China. Kazakhstan's economy is heavily reliant on the agricultural and industrial sectors. The agricultural sector, which employs around 20% of the workforce, is a significant contributor to the country's GDP, with a focus on grain production and livestock farming. In fact, Kazakhstan is ranked sixth in the world as a producer of grains such as wheat, rice, and barley. The industrial sector is primarily driven by the mining industry, which accounts for more than half of its output. Manufacturing is also a significant contributor to the sector, followed by electricity production and distribution.²⁷⁶ The mining industry of Kazakhstan is largely based on the country's ample reserves of natural resources, including oil and gas, coal, copper, zinc, uranium²⁷⁷ and silver.²⁷⁸ Considering China's raw material needs in recent years, the fact that Kazakhstan is rich in terms of both geographical proximity and natural resources attracts China's attention. In order to reach Kazakhstan's natural resources, China provides financing to the country's infrastructure and transportation projects of the Asian Development Bank. In this respect, borders are at the forefront.

²⁷⁵“Ministry of the National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan,” 1997.

²⁷⁶ International Monetary Fund, “Republic of Kazakhstan: 2017 Article IV Consultation-Press Release; and Staff Report” (Washington, D.C., 2017).

²⁷⁷ “International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has opened world's first low Enriched Uranium (LEU) Bank in Oskemen in Kazakhstan (I attended the signing ceremony in 2015). Considering the fact that highly enriched uranium (HEU), which can be used in the construction of a nuclear weapon, and low enriched uranium (LEU), which is the primary fuel for nuclear energy, are both products of the same enrichment process, the international community has long sought a way to provide countries with access to nuclear fuel without requiring them to pursue their own national enrichment programs. In 2015, this concept took on the beginnings of its material form when the IAEA and Kazakhstan agreed to establish the IAEA LEU Bank at the Ulba Metallurgical Plant in Oskemen, Kazakhstan. The first of its kind, the LEU Bank is expected to provide IAEA member states with access to nuclear fuel as a lender of last resort, or in other words if they cannot acquire this material via the open market or inter-state arrangements. Nonetheless, the mission of the Bank could grow with time. The IAEA LEU Bank will be owned and controlled by the IAEA but operated by Kazakhstan, and all of its operations will be carried out in accordance with stringent safety rules and regulations under the direct oversight of the IAEA.” For more information see Gülay Mutlu John Morris Dykes, “Kazakhstan: An Exemplary Non-Nuclear-Weapon State,” 2016, <https://www.eurasiareview.com/15042016-kazakhstan-an-exemplary-non-nuclear-weapon-state-analysis/>.

²⁷⁸ For more detail visit the web site “Ministry of the National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan.”

Table 2. Economic Structure of Kazakhstan (% of GDP)

Agriculture	5.00
Industry	34.40
Construction	15.00
Trade	17.70
Transport	12.00
Real Estate	13.80

Source 1 Ministry of the National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan

The Khorgas market located on the border of China and Kazakhstan has become a significant example of cross-border trade. In six months of 1997, the market was visited by an estimated 20,000 foreign traders, who purchased goods valued at 170 million yuan. The market comprises over 1,000 different businesses offering more than 2,000 distinct products, providing employment to around 800 people. The market's success has led Chinese merchants and businesses to expand their reach to the entirety of Kazakhstan, contributing to the growth of trade relations between China and Kazakhstan and boosting economic development in both countries.²⁷⁹ The Khorgas market has evolved significantly, expanding from a minor local marketplace to a vast global trading hub that appeals to traders and sightseers alike. Khorgas market's prime location plays a crucial role in linking China's Belt and Road Initiative with the Kazakhstani government's Nurlı Zhol infrastructure program. To sum up, the Khorgas market is no longer just a typical trading spot; rather, it has become an essential element of worldwide commerce by bridging two significant economies and their respective growth agendas. The market's growth shows no indication of decelerating soon, making it a critical catalyst for economic progress in both China and Kazakhstan.

The expected growth in oil production, along with the exploration of untapped oil reserves, could potentially lead to Kazakhstan producing up to 3 million barrels of oil per day by 2019, according to industry analysts. This increase in oil production could have a significant impact on the country's economy and make it one of the top 10 oil exporting countries, as oil accounts for a large portion of Kazakhstan's exports and

²⁷⁹ See Claes Levinsson and Ingvar Svanberg, "Kazakhstan-China Border Trade Thrives After Demarcation Treaty," *The Central Asia Caucasus Analyst*, 2000, <https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/7264-analytical-articles-caci->.

GDP. However, it is important to note that the projection is subject to various factors such as market demand, geopolitical events, and environmental concerns.²⁸⁰ Kazakhstan's primary oil and gas fields, namely Tengiz, Karachaganak, and Kashagan, have significant oil reserves. Each of these fields have around 8 billion barrels of oil recoverable. Karachaganak has an additional reserve 1,350 billion cubic meters of natural gas.²⁸¹ In 2004, the government of Kazakhstan introduced higher taxes on new oil ventures to increase its share of oil revenues. Three years later, the "Law on Subsoil and Subsoil Use" was revised, allowing the government to modify or cancel subsoil contracts that were considered a threat. This move was intended to strengthen the government's control over the country's mineral resources, particularly oil, which currently account for around 70% of its export earnings. The dominant role of the Kazakhstan government here is another matter of discussion, but this serves the interests of the country. While this has helped Kazakhstan to benefit from its natural resources, it has also led to concerns over the government's increasing control over the economy and its potential impact on foreign investment.²⁸²

The manufacturing sector in Kazakhstan is relatively underdeveloped compared to other sectors of the economy. A significant portion of goods is imported from neighboring countries like China and Russia. The manufacturing industry in Kazakhstan is largely focused on the production of chemicals, fertilizers, textiles, and pharmaceuticals. However, there have been recent efforts to diversify and develop the manufacturing industry, such as through the establishment of special economic zones and industrial parks. The manufacturing industry in Kazakhstan and China share a close relationship due to their proximity. The importation of Chinese goods into Kazakhstan has the potential to make a considerable impact on the country's economy and its trade ties.²⁸³

²⁸⁰ For more details see Economist Intelligence Unit, "Country Report: Kazakhstan" (London, 2018).

²⁸¹ For more detail see Max Ee Khong Kie and Saltanat Akhmet, *Kazakhstan: Trade Facilitation and Logistics Development Strategy Report* (Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, 2009); The World Bank, "Kazakhstan Trade Report: Improving the Trade Policy Framework" (Washington, D.C., 2015).

²⁸² See Economist Intelligence Unit, "Country Report: Kazakhstan."

²⁸³ The World Bank, "Kazakhstan Country Profile," 2018.

The construction sector is worthy of particular attention. It experienced a period of rapid growth between 2015 and 2017.²⁸⁴ The construction industry in Kazakhstan was significantly boosted by the country's hosting of EXPO 2017. It was held in Astana with the main idea of green buildings and clean energy powered by wind and solar energy.²⁸⁵ The housing issues in Kazakhstan have led to increased caution among investors, who now demand higher interest rates for financing. The modern form of building construction is mainly centered in Astana. The futuristic capital of Kazakhstan is at the forefront of leading a new era of architectural innovation. Astana has become the financial hub of the nation, reflecting its significant growth and development.²⁸⁶ The high financing costs in Kazakhstan have caused difficulties for real estate developers in expanding their projects, resulting in a slower rate of growth for the construction industry. China is a major investor in Kazakhstan's economy, particularly in the areas of infrastructure and energy. Despite this, the demand for building from oil companies in the Aktau region remains high, leading to a construction boost in the area.²⁸⁷

Kazakhstan's liberal policies for trade has resulted in a significant increase in foreign trade, which has become an important contributor to the country's GDP. Its major trading partners are primarily the European Union, China and the Russia (Table 3). These three actors also have an important share in world trade. As stated above, Kazakhstan's geographical location is the country with the best feasibility in terms of transportation on the route where China reaches the European market. The primary items that Kazakhstan brings into the country are machinery, mineral fuels and oils, vehicles, articles made from iron and steel, as well as electrical and electronic equipment. In contrast, the country's primary exports consist of mineral fuels and oils, iron and steel, copper, and inorganic chemicals. Kazakhstan is a major exporter of energy products, with oil and gas being the primary products. The country is located

²⁸⁴ This is evident from the authors' trip to Astana. The city has a relatively small population of 700,000, yet it is common to see many high-rise buildings and other construction project.

²⁸⁵ For more detail EXPO 2017 visit the web page "EXPO 2017," 2017.

²⁸⁶ Kie and Akhmet, *Kazakhstan: Trade Facilitation and Logistics Development Strategy Report*: 7.

²⁸⁷ Kie and Akhmet.

in a region with high demand for energy, making it a significant player in the global energy market. The construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline across the Caspian Sea has opened up new opportunities for Kazakhstan to increase its exports to Europe and other regions. Although there is a dispute among the coastal states regarding the legal status of the Caspian Sea, it is generally recognized that oil pipelines are essential for promoting regional development. Specifically, oil pipelines in Kazakhstan play a crucial role in transporting oil resources to neighboring countries, generating significant revenue and fueling economic progress. While the legal status of the Caspian Sea remains a contentious issue, the significance of oil pipelines in fostering regional development cannot be overstated. The port of Aktau in Kazakhstan is a vital location along this route, as it provides a critical link between Kazakhstan's energy producers and the international market.²⁸⁸

Table 3. Percentage Share of Imports, Exports, and Trade Balance with Trade Partners of Kazakhstan 2016

Major exports 2016	% of total Major imports	% of total
Mineral products	70.5 Machinery & equipmen	49.2
Metals	16.0 Chemicals	16.5
Chemicals	6.0 Metals	16.5
Food products	3.2 Mineral products	1.1
Leading markets 2016	% of total Leading suppliers 2016	% of total
Italy	20.3 Russia	36
China	11.5 China	14.4
Russia	9.6 Germany	5.7
Netherlands	8.9 US	5

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit,
<http://country.eiu.com/article.aspx?articleid=1646449548&Country=Kazakhstan&topic=Summary&subtopic=Fact+sheet>

Between 2014 and 2015, the significant decrease in oil prices had a significant impact on Kazakhstan's economy, exposing its reliance on oil. The country's government has since recognized the need to diversify the economy, reduce the state's involvement in the economy, and reestablish trust in the banking industry. To address the economic challenges, the government has taken measures such as implementing a privatization

²⁸⁸ The World Bank, "Kazakhstan Trade Report: Improving the Trade Policy Framework" (Washington, D.C., 2015).

plan and a stimulus package aimed at increasing lending to smaller businesses and supporting the banking sector.²⁸⁹

When we look at the trade partners, Russia is the most crucial trade partner for Kazakhstan, accounting for 20% of the country's foreign trade.²⁹⁰ It is not unexpected for Russia to be the primary trade partner for Kazakhstan, given the bonds that the Central Asian nations have with Russia. Presently, Kazakhstan, along with Russia is a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which aims to facilitate the elimination of trade barriers among its member states, thereby promoting the free flow of goods, services, and capital within the union.²⁹¹ In light of the strong economic and political ties between Kazakhstan and Russia, it is reasonable to anticipate that their trade relationship will continue to be strong and even expand in the future.

The Xinjiang region of China is an important source of products for many Kazakh businesses, making China a significant trade partner for Kazakhstan.²⁹² An example of a popular destination for Kazakhs sourcing construction materials and furniture from China is the Hua Ling Furniture Wholesale Complex in Urumchi, Xinjiang.²⁹³

Kazakhstan received the largest amount of foreign direct investment (FDI) from China among the former Soviet Union countries between 1991 and 2013. The investment from China amounted to around 22 billion US dollars.²⁹⁴ In 2014, China announced a

²⁸⁹ For more details see Economist Intelligence Unit, “Country Report: Kazakhstan.”.

²⁹⁰ “Ministry of the National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan”; Economist Intelligence Unit, “Country Report: Kazakhstan.”

²⁹¹ For more details for Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and external tariffs between Russia and Kazakhstan see Adelin Dumitru, “Whither Development? The Effects of the Eurasian Union on the Central Asian Republics,” *The Romanian Journal of Society and Politics*, (2015): 98.

²⁹² Kie and Akhmet, *Kazakhstan: Trade Facilitation and Logistics Development Strategy Report*.

²⁹³ Kie and Akhmet.

²⁹⁴ Jeanne L. Wilson, “The Eurasian Economic Union and China’s Silk Road: Implications for the Russian – Chinese Relationship,” *European Politics and Society* 17, no. 1 (2016): 113–32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23745118.2016.1171288>.

new series of economic agreements worth a total of 14 billion US dollars.²⁹⁵ A second set of agreements, worth 23.6 billion dollars, was signed in 2015.²⁹⁶ Therefore China also would like to develop Xinjiang via the investment of Kazakhstan which has border with Xingjiang.

A significant volume of commodities, including crude oil, coal, iron ores, and scrap metal, are imported by China from Kazakhstan. Upon closer scrutiny of Kazakhstan's trade relations with its top 20 partners, it is evident that trade within Central Asian countries is exceptionally limited.²⁹⁷

The trade relations between Kazakhstan and China are expected to be advantageous for Kazakhstan in the short and medium term as a transit country. China's eleventh five year plan projected that Xinjiang's international trade would increase by 18% yearly until 2010, which could provide a significant boost to Kazakhstan's economy.²⁹⁸ To prepare for the anticipated growth in trade, Kazakhstan has taken serious measures to enhance regional collaboration. One such initiative is the Korgos/Horgos International

²⁹⁵ China Daily, "China Eye to Eye with Kazakhstan on Enriching Co-Op with US14b Deals," 2014, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2014livisitkst/2014-12/15/content_19086844.htm; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Li Keqiang Holds Second Regular Meeting Between Chinese Premier and Kazak Prime Minister with Prime Minister Karim Massimov of Kazakhstan, Stressing to Upgrade and Update China-Kazakhstan Practical Cooperation on the Basis of Bilateral High-Level Politica," 2014, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/topics_665678/3755_666062/2014zt/lkqzlc/201412/t20141216_705626.html.

²⁹⁶ For more details Anuar Almaganbetov and Bakhytzhan Kurmanov, "China Challenges Russian Influence in Kazakhstan," East Asia Forum, 2015; Alvin Cheng-Hin Lim, "China And The Eurasian Economic Union: Prospects For Silk Road Economic Belt – Analysis," Eurasia Review, 2015.

²⁹⁷ The World Bank, "Kazakhstan Trade Report: Improving the Trade Policy Framework"; Kie and Akhmet, *Kazakhstan: Trade Facilitation and Logistics Development Strategy Report*.

²⁹⁸ See "Kazakhstan - Country Commercial Guide: Transport and Logistic," International Trade Administration, 2022, <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/kazakhstan-transport-and-logistics>. "Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook," China Year Books, 2017, <https://www.chinayearbooks.com/tags/Xinjiang-statistical-yearbook>.

Trade Cooperation Centre.²⁹⁹ Additionally, investments have been made in critical border points to ensure that the region can handle the future demands.³⁰⁰

The rapid expansion of trade between Kazakhstan and China through the Xinjiang region shows the increasing economic ties between the two nations. In 2006, more than half of Xinjiang's trade was with Kazakhstan. The trade volume between the two amounted to USD 500 million. In 2017, Kazakhstan was still Xinjiang's biggest partner, with a growth rate of nearly 80 %.³⁰¹ Therefore the percentage of trade volume between Kazakhstan and Xinjiang increase more that 20 percent in ten years period.³⁰²

Kazakhstan mostly imports various types of goods from Xinjiang, including rice, food, fruits, vegetables, tea leaves, coal, edible oil, paper, textiles, clothing, rubber products, machinery, and consumer electronic appliances. These products are essential for Kazakhstan's domestic consumption and various industries. In return, Kazakhstan exports products such as steel, fertilizer, scrap iron, lead, copper, fur, wool, and general materials for industries to Xinjiang. This mutually beneficial trade relationship has contributed to the growth of both economies, and the volume of trade is expected to increase further in the future.³⁰³

The Euro-Asia land bridge is a transportation network that connects China's eastern ports with Europe through Central Asia and Russia. This route offers a new

²⁹⁹ "Chinese business owners and prospective investors who had recently visited the China-Kazakhstan Horgos International Border Cooperation Center (ICBC), told Reuters they were disappointed by the disconnect between the hype and reality. Rather than the vibrant 21st Century trading post of Beijing's grand vision, Horgos is instead developing a reputation as China's very own tax haven." See Mariya Gordeyeva Sue-Lin Wong, "Silk Road Hub or Tax Haven? China's New Border Trade Zone May Be Less than It Seems," Reuters, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-silkroad-horgos/silk-road-hub-or-tax-haven-chinas-new-border-trade-zone-may-be-less-than-it-seems-idUSKBN18V15Z>.

³⁰⁰ See Sue-Lin Wong.; Also see "Euro-Asian Transport Linkages" (New York, 2012); Richard Rousseau, "Kazakhstan: Continuous Improvement or Stalemate in Its Relations with China?," *Strategic Analysis* 37, no. 1 (2013): 40-51; Alma Sultangaliyeva, "Kazakhstan and Its Neighbors: Opportunities and Limitations" (Astana, 2016): 19-20.

³⁰¹ "Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook."

³⁰² "Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook."

³⁰³ Hu Yongqi, "Li Says Free Trade Zones Should Stimulate Market," China Daily, 2017.

opportunity for cross-border and transit trade between Kazakhstan and Xinjiang. The land bridge has the potential to significantly reduce the distance from Xinjiang to Europe by 25%, which currently involves a long journey of over 24,000 km by rail and sea. By using the Euro-Asia land bridge, goods can be transported by rail from Xinjiang to Europe in a much shorter distance, which would save time and money for businesses involved in cross-border trade.³⁰⁴ This route can also be advantageous for goods transported to the United States, as it can reduce the distance by 44% compared to the traditional route via the Pacific Ocean through China. However, despite the growing trade relations between Kazakhstan and Xinjiang, there have been occasional conflicts. One such incident occurred in 2006 when China rejected several shipments of Kazakh exports due to radiation levels exceeding China's acceptable standards. While such occurrences are infrequent, they can disturb the trade between the two.³⁰⁵

As a global trading power, China is definitely interested in promoting its goods to foreign markets. Besides that, China needs raw materials, energy, and minerals to meet the demand of its domestic production for its growing consumer base. Therefore, China's proximity to Kazakhstan fits perfectly with China's national interests. Kazakhstan lies on the shortest overland routes between China and Europe, as well as China and the Middle East, a territory that is also rich with an array of minerals and natural resources, as mentioned before, such as oil, uranium, copper, and others. Therefore, it is very important to China that a stable and secular Kazakhstan ensures a safe environment on its western border, particularly along that of the Xinjiang province, where outbreaks of ethnic separatism occur sporadically.³⁰⁶

It makes sense that Kazakhstan has emerged as a significant ally for China in Central Asia after the collapse of the USSR. This is because Kazakhstan is responsible for

³⁰⁴ See "Euro-Asian Transport Linkages." *UN Economic Commission for Europe* (2012).

³⁰⁵ See Khong Max Ee Kie, "Transport and Trade Logistics Development Strategies for CAREC: A Synopsis of Nine ADB Studies" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2009).

³⁰⁶ Yelena Kalyuzhnova and Julian Lee, "China and Kazakhstan's Oil and Gas Partnership at the Start of the Twenty-First Century.," *Emerging Markets Finance & Trade* 50, no. 5 (2014): 206–21, <https://doi.org/10.2753/REE1540-496X500515>.

approximately 70% of China's overall trade with the area.³⁰⁷ Bilateral ties between the two countries have grown significantly largely due to China's intensive economic presence in Kazakhstan, including imports of Chinese goods, Chinese interest in the energy sector (the extraction and export of oil, uranium and other raw materials) and the provision of trade loans. In 2015, among Kazakhstan's main export partners, China came in second place to the EU, at 12 % and 53.5 % respectively.³⁰⁸ By way of comparison, the share of Kazakhstan's exports going to Eurasian Union member countries was 10.7 %.³⁰⁹

Kazakhstan benefits from Chinese investments, which is crucial due to decreased financial support from the EU. The country can export its main resources (oil and minerals) to China, one of the top consumers of raw material in the world. China's reliance on imported oil has increased from 7.5% to 53.3% between 1993 and 2011. However, Kazakhstan can improve its underdeveloped transportation infrastructure, including pipelines and roads, by diversifying its exports to other countries.³¹⁰

China, in turn, requires diverse energy sources, and needs to rely on direct supplies from a stable region. Thus, the convergent interests of Kazakhstan and China naturally lead to the construction of relevant infrastructure, for instance, an oil pipeline from Kazakhstan to China. An international highway to western Europe from western China, which is scheduled to open by the end of 2016, is under construction with the involvement of several international financial institutions.³¹¹ The Kazakhstan government has intentions to allocate \$1.664 billion for modernizing railways from

³⁰⁷ Economist Intelligence Unit, "Country Report: Kazakhstan."

³⁰⁸ Economist Intelligence Unit.

³⁰⁹ Rouben Azizian and Elnara Bainazarova, "Eurasian Response to China's Rise: Russia and Kazakhstan in Search of Optimal China Policy," *Asian Politics and Policy* 4, no. 3 (2012): 379.

³¹⁰ Asian Development Bank, "Development Effectiveness Review 2014" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2015).

³¹¹ Evgeny Vinokurov, ed., *Eurasian Integration Yearbook 2012* (Almaty: Eurasian Development Bank, 2013).

2022 to 2025, and roughly \$4 billion to renovate depots and railcars, and overhaul rails and locomotives between 2022 and 2026.³¹²

Chinese investment has partially offset the reduction in Western investment and loans to Kazakhstan which started with the 2008 global financial crisis. Judging by the dynamics of Kazakhstani-Chinese cooperation, this trend will continue. One of the results of Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev's visit to Beijing in September, 2015 was the signing of agreements on the implementation of joint contracts and on Chinese loans to Kazakhstan at a total amount of USD 23 billion.³¹³

The stark differences between Kazakhstan and China in economics are demonstrated by the quality and by the volume of their trade with other countries. In 2014, the biggest trading partners of China were the United States and Japan, amounting to USD 590.4 billion and USD 306.7 billion respectively.³¹⁴ By way of comparison, the same year the total volume of Kazakhstan's foreign trade reached only USD 120.7 billion.³¹⁵

The geographic proximity of such an influential neighbor as China causes concerns about Kazakhstan's economic security and sovereignty. On the one hand, there is a sharp asymmetry between the two countries in the relative sizes of their economies and in their demographics. On the other hand, there is the unparalleled expansion of China's financial influence in Kazakhstan and its broader role in Eurasia. These factors cannot but raise suspicions about Chinese economic expansion in Kazakhstan.³¹⁶

The unequal nature of Kazakhstan-China bilateral relations is manifested in their mutual trade. Kazakhstan's exports to China of non-renewable natural resources, such

³¹² See "Kazakhstan - Country Commercial Guide: Transport and Logistic."

³¹³ Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty, "Kazakh President Touts \$23 Billion In Deals With China," 2015, <https://www.rferl.org/a/kazakh-president-touts-23-billion-deals-china/27221761.html>.

³¹⁴ Cordula Rastogi and Jean-Francois Arvis, *The Eurasian Connection: Supply-Chain Efficiency along the Modern Silk Route through Central Asia* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2014).

³¹⁵ Rastogi and Arvis.

³¹⁶ Stephen Blank, "Xinjiang and China's Security," *Global Economic Review* 32, no. 4 (2003): 125.

as oil, gas and others, accounted for 97% of Kazakhstan's trade with China, in 2011, while China mainly exports finished products to Kazakhstan.³¹⁷ Currently, the largest volume of imported goods to Kazakhstan comes from China to the tune of USD 7.4 billion.³¹⁸

Usually, the exchange of goods between Kazakhstan and Xinjiang is moved using either Korgas located in China or Dostyk situated in Kazakhstan. Korgas is mainly used for road transportation while Dostyk serves as the main point for rail transportation. A minority of products are brought in through Maikapshagal. Despite the advantages of road transport in terms of flexibility and reliability, a greater percentage of commodities are still transported by rail. Nonetheless, using rail as a means of transportation presents a challenge because of the varying railway widths, which require the transfer of goods at the Dostyk station. Moreover, the customs clearance procedure for rail transport in Kazakhstan is ineffective, resulting in inbound shipments taking up to seven days to clear. Several factors, including a shortage of staff, inadequate railway infrastructure, and complex inspection procedures, could be contributing to this specific situation. Consequently, it takes around twenty days for freight moving from Urumchi to Almaty.³¹⁹

The import of Chinese products into Kazakhstan is pivotal in invigorating local and regional markets and creating employment opportunities. A strong cross-border trade relationship between the two countries is imperative for the economic growth and job creation of southeastern Kazakhstan. Furthermore, this trade also acts as an avenue for Chinese consumer goods to penetrate Kazakhstan and other Central Asian markets. Cross-border trade is typically limited to a 30km radius from the border, with individual traders transporting cargo of up to 50kg. The Korgas border crossing, which

³¹⁷ Jean-Francois Arvis et al., "Connecting to Compete 2012: Trade Logistics in the Global Economy" The World Bank, (Washington, D.C., 2012), <http://lpi.worldbank.org/international/global>.

³¹⁸ "By way of comparison, imports from Germany amount to \$2.3 billion, and imports from the USA amount to \$1.9 billion." Jean-Francois Arvis et al., "Connecting to Compete: Trade Logistics in the Global Economy" *The World Bank* (Washington, D.C., 2016).

³¹⁹ Kie and Akhmet, *Kazakhstan: Trade Facilitation and Logistics Development Strategy Report*.

enables trade for around 150,000 traders a year, is an exemplary model of successful collaboration.³²⁰

Table 4. International Border Crossing Points between Kazakhstan and China

	Name of Crossing Points in the Republic of Kazakhstan	Dislocation in the Republic of Kazakhstan	Name of Crossing Points in the People's Republic of China	Dislocation in the People's Republic of China	Operating regime
1	Khorgos – highway	Almaty region	Khorgos/Horgos – highway	Huocheng, Yili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture	Daylight
2	Dostyk – highway	Almaty region	Alashankou – highway	Bortala Mongol Autonomous Prefecture, Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region	Daylight
3	Koljat – highway	Almaty region	Dulata – highway	Chabuchar-sibotyansky Autonomous County, Yili region, Yili Kazakh Autonomous Prefecture	Daylight
4	Bakhty – highway	East Kazakhstan Region	Bakhty – highway	Chuguchak Tacheng region	Daylight

Source <http://www.advantour.com/kazakhstan/border-crossing.htm>

Mitra and Kaminski's study reveals that Chinese traders are allowed to bring in goods valued up to 1,000 dollars without paying duties with current simplified process for obtaining visas. Chinese products, primarily household appliances and clothing, worth USD 3.1 billion in 2006, are supplied to markets across Kazakhstan. The value of merchandise sold in the largest bazaars in Almaty, close to the Chinese border, is estimated to be around USD 1.8 billion annually. This amount surpasses the value of US-Kazakhstani trade, which was USD 2.6 billion in 2011. During their field study, Mitra and Kaminski confirmed that the most of the products in these bazaars were of Chinese origin, and these markets are also a significant source of employment, employing about a quarter million individuals in the case of Barakholka alone. The influx of Chinese products has contributed to improving life standards of Kazakh nationals. Recognizing the advantages of cross-border trade, the two countries have

³²⁰ Kaminski and Mitra, *Borderless Bazaars and Regional Integration in Central Asia: Emerging Patterns of Trade and Cross-Border Cooperation*.

decided to spread their trade cooperation. In 2011, the Horgos International Border Cooperation Centre was launched, broadening the scope trade and allowing China to import resources without tariffs.³²¹

Sue-Lin Wong, Mariya Gordeyeva from Reuters conducted interview with some businessman on the border of China and Kazakhstan, Horgos. Although expectation of the economic contribution of the Horgos International Border Cooperation is high, it seems to be not satisfying the businesspeople.³²² According to the interview, a businessperson whose surname Ma says his disappointed with these words: “We were so unimpressed by what we saw that after looking around for three hours, we turned around and drove eight hours straight back to Urumchi.”³²³

Ma's negative feedback on the poor design and low visitor numbers at Horgos was echoed by several other business owners who also visited the area. They too expressed their concerns about the feasibility of opening a high-end clubhouse in the vicinity.³²⁴ There are also shopping centers on the Chinese side selling inexpensive products. However, traders have expressed concerns that there are insufficient guests to these centers. It can be said that the news indicates us the ineffective border point:

*“Sometimes I’ll sit here for a whole day and not make a single sale,” said Ma Yinggui, 56, who has a market stall selling clothes. “Some Kazakhs are rich but most are poor. They come and haggle over a 20 yuan (USD 2,93) t-shirt.” More than five years after the 5,3 sq km trade zone opened, much of the Kazakh side remains empty. Only 25 of the 63 projects on the Kazakh side have investors, according to Ravil Budukov, ICBC press secretary on the Kazakh side. About 3-4,000 people enter from Kazakhstan each day and around 10,000 from China, he added.”*³²⁵

³²¹ Bartłomiej Kaminski and Mitra Saumya, “Skeins of Silk : Borderless Bazaars and Border Trade in Central Asia” (Washington, D.C., 2010); Also see Bartłomiej Kaminski and Saumya Mitra, *Borderless Bazaars and Regional Integration in Central Asia: Emerging Patterns of Trade and Cross-Border Cooperation* (Washington: The World Bank, 2012); Bartłomiej Kaminski et al., “‘Asiaregio’: An Institutional Model to Deepen Integration in Central Asia’s Border Regions,” *Global Journal of Emerging Market Economies* 2, no. 3 (2010): 347–60.

³²² By means of trade, commerce and tourism. See Sue-Lin Wong, “Silk Road Hub or Tax Haven? China’s New Border Trade Zone May Be Less than It Seems.”

³²³ “A businessman from the capital of China’s far western region of Xianjiang, who only wanted to give his surname, Ma, due to the sensitivity of the topic” Sue-Lin Wong.

³²⁴ Sue-Lin Wong.

³²⁵ Sue-Lin Wong.

On the other hand, Horgos is a significant duty-free shopping center located in western China and is recognized as the world's first cross-border free-trade zone. It features over 40 duty-free shops that sell a range of high-end brands, attracting shoppers from all over the world. The shopping center is strategically located near the border of Kazakhstan, providing a convenient shopping destination for both Chinese and Kazakhstani consumers. The zone has witnessed trading volume of billion dollars since its opening. In addition to its numerous duty-free shops, Horgos also offers various entertainment options, such as movie theaters, hotels, and restaurants, making it a popular tourist destination.³²⁶

Trains operating on the Urumchi-Alashankou-Dostyk railway line often face significant delays due to two main reasons. Firstly, the Dostyk station frequently reaches its maximum capacity, causing lengthy "Restriction to Entry" periods, during which no more trains are allowed to enter the station until some of the current trains have departed. This leads to long wait times for incoming trains, delaying their arrival at their final destination.³²⁷ Secondly, the lack of proper management of the wagon fleet is another major reason for delays. The shortage of available wagons, commonly referred to as "No Wagons Available," causes significant delays in dispatching trains from terminals. This highlights the need to either expand wagon fleets or implement measures to improve wagon availability to prevent further delays. The delays caused by these factors negatively impact the efficiency of the railway system, hindering the transportation of goods and people across the Urumchi-Alashankou-Dostyk railway line.³²⁸

³²⁶ China Daily, "Xinjiang's Horgos sees booming border trade"
http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2017-04/12/content_28892824.htm; "China Daily, China-Kazakhstan border trade gives him pot of gold"
http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/beltandroadinitiative/2017-04/14/content_28934821.htm

³²⁷ Ying Qian et al., "CAREC Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring 2015" (Mandaluyong City; Asian Development Bank, 2016).

³²⁸ Ying Qian et al., "CAREC Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring 2015" (Mandaluyong City; Asian Development Bank, 2016).

5.4. Transportation

The transportation between China and Kazakhstan is primarily facilitated through two rail connections: Dostyk/Alashankou and Altynkol/Horgos. The Dostyk rail line in Kazakhstan was constructed in 1959 during the Soviet Union era. However, the rail line connecting Alashankou from Urumchi was not constructed until September 1990 due to the deterioration of relations between China and the USSR. Since the opening of this border crossing in 1991, it has become the busiest land port of entry into China. Initially, commercial ties were minimal in the first decade of Kazakhstan's independence due to economic uncertainty in Central Asia following the breakup of the Soviet Union and security concerns along the former China/USSR borders. However, with Kazakhstan's abundant energy potential and the presence of common nationalities on both sides of the border, economic ties with China grew significantly. This growth was supported by numerous joint venture investment projects that strengthened the relations between the two countries.³²⁹

In 2009, the construction of the Jinghe-Yining-Khorgas Railway was completed, linking Khorgos to the Chinese rail system and making it possible to transport goods to the border of Kazakhstan. In 2012, the railway connecting Almaty's Zhetigan terminal to the Altynkol border station on the Kazakhstan side was finished, resulting in a substantial decrease in the distance between Almaty and the China border. The Horgos road border has played a critical role in the transportation of goods by trucks between China and Kazakhstan, and the construction of the railway will reinforce its significance as a vital strategic border crossing.³³⁰

China has made substantial investments to establish the Altynkol/Horgos border as the main access point for cargo transportation between China, Central Asia, and Europe.

³²⁹ Yasmin Melet, "China's Political and Economic Relations with Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan," *Central Asian Survey* 17, no. 2 (1998): 229–52; Richard Rousseau, "Kazakhstan: Continuous Improvement or Stalemate in Its Relations with China?," *Strategic Analysis* 37, no. 1 (2013): 40–51; Rouben Azizian and Elnara Bainazarova, "Eurasian Response to China's Rise: Russia and Kazakhstan in Search of Optimal China Policy," *Asian Politics and Policy* 4, no. 3 (2012): 377–99.

³³⁰ Ying Qian et al., "CAREC Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring 2014" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2015): 20.

As part of this effort, China has built five wholesale market malls in the border area. On the other hand, Kazakhstan has been sluggish in developing its portion of the border, offering only limited shops to cater to Chinese visitors. However, Kazakhstan is currently involved in a major undertaking to enhance its infrastructure and services on its side of the border. The Altynkol/Horgos border is the most direct route between the China border and Central Asian markets, including Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Turkmenistan, through the newly constructed China gateway.³³¹

The Kazakhstani government has authorized a large-scale development initiative named SEZ (Horgos East Gate), which seeks to establish advanced infrastructure to improve production and export capabilities, as well as draw in additional transit traffic.³³² The estimated cost of the entire project is USD 426 million.³³³

China and Kazakhstan have created areas where visas are not required, allowing their citizens to cross the border for shopping. Kazakh citizens usually take an overnight passenger train from Almaty to Altynkol station to reach the border zone, where they are met by buses that transport them to the shopping area. The Kazakh visitors usually spend the day shopping in the border zone before heading back to Altynkol to catch the overnight train back to Almaty.³³⁴

The "Silk Wind Project" cargo route from China to Europe includes the transit route in Kazakhstan, which goes through both the Altynkol and Dostyk gateways. The route then proceeds to the port of Aktau and the Caspian Sea gateway (TRACECA route),

³³¹ Wade Shepard, "The Complex Impact of Urbanization in Xinjiang," *The Diplomat*, 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/12/the-complex-impact-of-urbanization-in-Xinjiang/>; China Daily, "Xinjiang's Horgos Sees Booming Border Trade," 2017, http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/business/2017-04/12/content_28892824.htm.

³³² China Services Info, "Special Economic Zone Khorgos – Eastern Gate," 2019, accessed July 17, 2020, <https://govt.chinadaily.com.cn/s/201902/13/WS5c63c6a8498e27e33803839d/special-economic-zone-khorgos-eastern-gate.html>.

³³³ China Services Info.

³³⁴ Parhad Keyim, "Inbound Tourism Development at the Western Border Region of China," *East Asia*, no. 34 (2017): 79–85.

through Azerbaijan and Georgia, and finally to Turkey via the new Baku-Tbilisi-Kars rail link.³³⁵

Transporting containers from China has several advantages. One of the reasons that block container trains have short transit times between China and Europe (about 15 days) is the common customs zone comprising Kazakhstan, Russia, and Belarus. This helps minimize documentation issues at border crossings.³³⁶ Russia has been urging Kazakhstan to enhance its scrutiny over the movement of goods from China to Kazakhstan as a lot of China's trade with Russia goes through Kazakhstan. Russia is worried about the smuggling of inexpensive Chinese goods to Russia through the Russia-Kazakhstan-Belarus Customs Union. This could be a limiting factor for future growth in trade between Kazakhstan and China.³³⁷

Table 5. Kazakhstan China Rail Border Crossing

Border Station	Average time (hr.)	Border Station	Average time (hr.)
Altynkol (KAZ)	37.4	Dostyk (KAZ)	59.7
Horgos (CHINA)	23.9	Alashankou (CHINA)	42.4

Source: Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring (CPMM) Report 2015

The time and cost analysis did not include Dostyk, but a comparison can be made between the time spent at Altynkol and Horgos stations and the results of the Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring (CPMM). The study found that the time taken for exports to pass through Altynkol station was 17 hours, which is an improvement over the 37.4 hours indicated by CPMM data.³³⁸ The data collected

³³⁵ Peter Frankopan, "Succession in the Silk Road," *History Today*, 2017.

³³⁶ For more details about Eurasian Economic Union see Wilson, "The Eurasian Economic Union and China's Silk Road: Implications for the Russian – Chinese Relationship."; Fan Lijun, "Construction of Russia's 'Eurasian Union' and 'Economic Corridor among China, Mongolia, and Russia,'" in *China's Belt and Road Initiatives and Its Neighboring Diplomacy*, ed. Zie Zhang (New Jersey: World Scientific, 2016), 83–107; Zhang Xin, Li Lifan, and Alexander Gabuev, "Competition or Coordination? The Eurasian Economic Union and China's One Belt, One Road Initiative," *Russian Analytical Digest* (Bremen, May 2016).

³³⁷ See Xin, Lifan, and Gabuev, "Competition or Coordination? The Eurasian Economic Union and China's One Belt, One Road Initiative."

³³⁸ Goh, Kie, and Santos.

indicates that it took 2 days (excluding holidays) to pass through Horgos station, which is longer than the 23.9 hours shown in the CPMM data. In conclusion, according to the study, cargo transit time was quicker at Altynkol station than the CPMM data indicated, while the time taken at Horgos station was longer.³³⁹

Other infrastructure projects between Kazakhstan and China are currently underway, including the development of the Khorgos Gateway (KTZ), an international rail and logistics center, and a free economic zone (FEZ) land port situated at the border between the two countries. Kazakhstan is anticipating that up to 10% of the China-Europe trade volume may pass through its territory by 2020 due to the expected rise in transit cargo.³⁴⁰ As of 2014, the amount of cargo transported through Kazakhstan was only a small portion of the total amount of trade flowing from China to Europe, with a value of USD 4.9 billion out of the current total of USD 615 billion.³⁴¹

The Almaty Ministerial Conference held in 2003 aimed to address the challenges faced by landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) by bringing together various stakeholders such as Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries, Donor Countries, and International Financial and Development Institutions. During the conference, a Program of Action was declared to address the problems of LLDCs, focusing on seven key objectives that included ensuring access to seas, decreasing the charges and enhancing services, decreasing import costs, mitigating route issues, and establishing efficient networks in national level.³⁴²

³³⁹ For more details see Asian Development Bank, “Unlocking the Potential of Railways: A Railway Strategy for CAREC, 2017-2030.”

³⁴⁰ Asian Development Bank, “CAREC Transport and Trade Facilitation Strategy 2020,” in *12th Ministerial Conference on Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation* (Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, 2013).

³⁴¹ Qian et al., “CAREC Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring 2015.”; Alma Sultangaliyeva, “Kazakhstan and Its Neighbors: Opportunities and Limitations” (Astana, 2016): 20.

³⁴² The World Bank, “Improving Trade and Transport for Landlocked Developing Countries: World Bank Contributions to Implementing the Almaty Programme of Action.”

5.5. Tourism, Visa, and Immigration

Due to globalization and geopolitical shifts that promote liberalized trade agreements and economic cooperation, international borders have opened up more to tourism. As a result, Chinese tourism industry has experienced rapid growth in travel since the implementation of its open door approach, which has helped build up its diplomatic relationships with nations around the world. In this title, tourism and visa issues will be discussed first. The aim is to understand better border management (visa and tourism are the component of border management) between China and Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan is actively implementing significant policies to promote the development of tourism. Promotional activities highlight the country's natural beauty as a major attraction for visitors, with neighboring countries being its primary source of tourists. Among these tourists are those visiting family members due to kinship ties; proximity and connectivity via Xinjiang in China facilitate such visits. Furthermore, Kazakhstan boasts better border infrastructure compared to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan when entering from China, making it a preferred route for individuals traveling onwards towards other destinations beyond Kazakh borders.³⁴³

Xinjiang is located in the northwestern part of China, covering approximately 17% of the country's total land area, making it the largest region in China. The province have borders to eight countries. There are currently 15 border crossing posts open for travelers, to Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Pakistan. Two international airports in Urumchi and Kasgar connects the region to various cities worldwide.³⁴⁴

Statistics indicate that Kazakhstan is currently the biggest inbound tourism market for Xinjiang among Central Asian countries.³⁴⁵ In 2015, the Xinjiang region received 1.68 million inbound tourists, with Kazakhstan accounting for the largest share of 1.27

³⁴³ See Parhad Keyim, "Inbound Tourism Development at the Western Border Region of China," *East Asia*, no. 34 (2017): 79–85.

³⁴⁴ Keyim, "Inbound Tourism Development at the Western Border Region of China."

³⁴⁵ "Xinjiang Official Tourism Website," 2019.

million visitors, which is approximately 75% of the total tourism market of Xinjiang.³⁴⁶

Peyrouse suggests that border trade tourism is a significant component of China-Kazakhstan trade and falls under the category of inbound tourism.³⁴⁷ Shopping tourism is a popular form of trade between China and Kazakhstan, also known as shuttle trade or suitcase trading. This type of trade involves specialized tourist agencies that organize trips for individuals to go shopping in neighboring countries. Shopping tourism has become one of the significant forms of Sino-Kazakhstani trade, alongside organized trade and private entrepreneurship. This type of tourism provides translation services, hotel reservations, transportation, and customs assistance to tourists who are interested in shopping. The people who run this type of tourism are typically unemployed engineers and service industry workers who lost their jobs due to the collapse of the goods trade from Moscow after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.³⁴⁸ As mentioned earlier, Kazakhstan is the biggest trade partner of China when countries in Central Asia is concerned. Of all the trade between Central Asia and China, the trade between China and Kazakhstan constitutes 70%.³⁴⁹

Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and Russia have entered into a free trade zone agreement with China, aimed at reducing or eliminating tariffs on goods traded within these regions. This agreement is anticipated to be mutually advantageous for all parties involved. China's strategic alliances with neighboring nations, as demonstrated by this agreement, exemplify its efforts to extend its reach in the global market. To facilitate border trade and trade tourism, free trade zones have been established adjacent to the China-Kazakhstan borders. Furthermore, visa requirements between China and Central Asian countries have been gradually eased to encourage trade. For example,

³⁴⁶ "Xinjiang Official Tourism Website."

³⁴⁷ Sébastien Peyrouse, "Chinese Economic Presence in Kazakhstan: China's Resolve and Central Asia's Apprehension," *China Perspectives* 3 (2008): 34–49.

³⁴⁸ See Parhad Keyim, "Inbound Tourism Development at the Western Border Region of China," *East Asia*, no. 34 (2017): 79–85.

³⁴⁹ Sebastien Peyrouse, "Economic Aspects of the Chinese–Central Asia Rapprochement," Silk Road Studies Program, (Washington, D.C., 2007).

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have set up consulates in Urumchi in order to allow Chinese businesspeople to apply for visa without going to Beijing.³⁵⁰ Residents living near the border are allowed to do daily visits to the trade zones. It is not obligatory to acquire visa for such visits. Peyrouse's estimate in 1992 suggested that approximately 700,000 individuals from Kazakhstan traveled to China to purchase goods and sold them in their own country. As of 2002, shopping tourism continued to generate job opportunities for almost half a million Kazakh citizens as of 2002. The trade volume generated by them in Xinjiang is estimated to be 1 billion in USD.³⁵¹

However, there seems to be some uncertainty and inconsistency in statistical data related to cross-border movements between Xinjiang and Kazakhstan. Furthermore, it is not certain whether the border crossings involve tourists or not.

Xinhuanet recorded:

*"Liu Xinwei's long Hummer is an eye-catcher on the China-Kazakhstan border." In two years, tall buildings will rise up here, and opportunities are everywhere," Liu told tourists on board while driving his long Hummer in a China-Kazakhstan free trade zone. The Horgos International Border Cooperation Center on the China-Kazakhstan border in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region has seen an increasing number of tourists since 2012. It attracted a total of 5.43 million tourists in 2016. Covering 5.28 square kilometers, the center opened in April 2012 as a destination for cross-border shopping. It has more than 40 duty-free shops selling luxury brands such as Omega and Versace. The facility is the world's first cross-border free-trade zone and west China's biggest duty-free shopping center. It allows entry of citizens from any country with valid passports or with exit and entry permits. Since its establishment, more and more fortune-seekers have been enticed here. Liu left his home in central China's Henan Province and arrived here in July 2016. He bought a second-hand Hummer in Kazakhstan and began to work as a tour guide. Every day he drives to show tourists around the FTZ. "The center is especially busy in May. You can earn hundreds of yuan even if you sell bottled water."*³⁵² Liu said.

The National Tourism Administration of China's statistics indicate that tourists visiting Xinjiang in 2011 represented a small percentage of China's total tourist numbers,

³⁵⁰Alex Reynolds, "Report: The China – Kazakhstan Border Crossing at Khorgos," 2021.

³⁵¹ Sebastien Peyrouse, "Economic Aspects of the Chinese–Central Asia Rapprochement," Silk Road Studies Program, (Washington, D.C., 2007).

³⁵² New China, "China-Kazakhstan Border Trade Drives Hummer Driver's Dream for Fortune," 2017, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-04/11/c_136199158.htm.

accounting for only 0.53% of the total.³⁵³ The low percentage of inbound tourists in Xinjiang in 2011 does not reflect the region's real tourism potential. Xinjiang possesses plentiful tourism assets and enjoys a strategic geographic position in proximity to countries in Central Asia and Europe, rendering it a highly appealing and sought-after travel destination. For example, Horgos attracted 5.43 million tourists in 2006.³⁵⁴ On average, trade volumes hit 5 million yuan every day.³⁵⁵

Despite the significant potential for tourism development in Xinjiang, the region's tourist numbers remain relatively small, with the majority of tourists centered in Urumqi. From 1999 to 2008, the majority of inbound tourists in Xinjiang were concentrated in Urumchi (52.62%), followed by Ili, Turpan and Kashghar. The amount of tourists and tourism income varies from year to year.³⁵⁶ The number of tourists visiting Xinjiang saw significant fluctuations at times of disasters of regional instabilities, such as the SARS outbreak in 2003 and the 2009 Urumchi protests.³⁵⁷ According to China Daily, the number of domestic and overseas tourists visiting Xinjiang in 2017 increased by 33% compared to 2006, reaching over 100 million.³⁵⁸ Yuan summarizes the final border visit in his article

"Today, hundreds of buses carry tourists in and out daily; Cargo busses from China and Kazakhstan shutting across the border 24/7; Khorgos, a city sprouting from barren dunes, is moving into the spotlight. Located in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region and bordering the far east of Kazakhstan, the site O' Khorgos was once a major hub on the ancient Silk Road. Now it is being revived as a new epicenter of the logistics connecting China to countries along the Silk Road Economic Belt In July 2014; it was upgraded from a special economic zone to a city,

³⁵³ Mingjiang Li, "From Look-West to Act-West: Xinjiang's Role in China – Central Asian Relations," *Journal of Contemporary China* 25, no. 100 (2016): 515–28, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2015.1132753>.

³⁵⁴ Keyim, "Inbound Tourism Development at the Western Border Region of China."

³⁵⁵ China Daily, "Xinjiang's Horgos Sees Booming Border Trade."

³⁵⁶ "Xinjiang Official Tourism Website"; Asian Development Bank, "A Strategic Framework for the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program 2011–2020" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2012).

³⁵⁷ Johannes F. Linn, "Kazakhstan 2050: Exploring an Ambitious Vision," *Global Journal of Emerging Market Economies*, 2014, Volume 6, Issue 3, p. 284.

³⁵⁸ China Daily, "Xinjiang's Horgos Sees Booming Border Trade."

making it the youngest city in the country and a new destination for both tourists and business people."³⁵⁹

5.6. Border Security

Kazakhstan places significance on the security context concerning its neighboring countries. Kazakhstan faces a range of potential challenges that could threaten its territorial integrity, including the possibility of military invasion, demographic pressures from neighboring countries, drug trafficking, uncontrolled migration, environmental risks, and concerns about information security. Kazakhstan is situated in a geographical area where political and social conflicts such as disputes over borders and ethnic tensions are likely to occur. Hence, ensuring security is equally crucial as pursuing economic interests.³⁶⁰

Kazakhstan's external and internal security have been affected at various levels by crisis situations in some neighboring states. When political unrest and violent clashes erupted in Kyrgyzstan in 2010, Kazakhstan had to close its border temporarily as it was impacted both externally and internally in terms of security. Additionally, the riots in Urumqi in 2009 had a negative impact on tourism, trade, and transportation.³⁶¹

The internal security issue of ethnic separatism and terrorist acts in China's Xinjiang region, which shares a border with Kazakhstan, has the potential to spill over into Kazakhstan and become a security problem for the country as well. There is a potential risk of ethnic migration from China to Kazakhstan due to the proximity of Muslim ethnic groups in both Xinjiang and Kazakhstan, particularly the Uighurs. This risk exists alongside the risk of labor migration. China is worried about Uighur separatists who want to secede through violence and who promote radical nationalist and religious ideologies. These separatists could use the Kazakhstani territory, and Uighurs living in Kazakhstan may be seen as potential supporters of separatist movements in the

³⁵⁹ Keyim, "Inbound Tourism Development at the Western Border Region of China."

³⁶⁰ Sergey V. Golunov, "Border Security in Kazakhstan: Threats, Policies and Future Challenges," *The J. of Slavic Military Studies* 18, no. 1 (2005): 31–58, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13518040590914127>.

³⁶¹ Alma Sultangaliyeva, "Kazakhstan and Its Neighbors: Opportunities and Limitations" (Astana, 2016).

border region. This could lead to the rise of Islamist movements in Kazakhstan and territorial disputes with China. Kazakhstan has prohibited support for Xinjiang separatists and extradited several individuals suspected of belonging to extremist organizations to China to avoid displeasing China.³⁶²

China's foreign policy is significantly impacted by its domestic situation. As a country that places a high value on stability and security, maintaining internal peace is of paramount importance to the Chinese government. In order to safeguard internal stability, China has shown a willingness to make compromises on border issues in its negotiations with other nations. China's approach to negotiating border disputes with Central Asian countries provides evidence of this. China has often demonstrated a tendency to make concessions during these negotiations, which is a reflection of its prioritization of internal security. This approach reflects a strategic decision by China to prioritize domestic security and stability over external territorial claims. While China may have strong historical or cultural ties to certain territories, it recognizes the importance of maintaining internal peace and stability as a necessary precondition for pursuing its broader foreign policy objectives. An example of this can be seen in the border talks with Kazakhstan, where China gave a higher percentage of concessions to Kazakhstan than it received in return. Therefore, this perception is tempered by the fact that China's territory is 3.5 times larger than Kazakhstan, so Beijing's relative losses were actually much smaller than what Kazakhstan agreed to forfeit. Indeed, in addition to making concessions, China has also been successful in achieving its political objectives in its negotiations with Kazakhstan. In 1994, the two countries reached an agreement which not only resolved their border dispute but also addressed China's security concerns in the region. Following the agreement, Kazakhstan's President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, made a statement reassuring China that Kazakhstan would not permit any factions of "East Turkestan" to engage in activities that could harm the relationship between China and Kazakhstan. This commitment from Kazakhstan was significant for China, as it helped to address its concerns regarding separatist movements in the region. China's success in achieving this commitment from Kazakhstan demonstrates its strategic approach to negotiations, which is not only

³⁶² Sergey V. Golunov, "Border Security in Kazakhstan: Threats, Policies and Future Challenges," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 18, no. 1 (2005): 40.

to make concessions but also to seek commitments that advance its broader political objectives. In this case, China was able to ensure that its interests and security concerns would be protected in the region, while also resolving the border dispute with Kazakhstan through compromise.”³⁶³ Throughout the negotiations, Kazakhstan reaffirmed its commitment to not supporting Uyghur activities in China, which was a significant factor for China in ensuring its security concerns were addressed. China's negotiations with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan between 1994 and 2002 demonstrated a consistent pattern of compromise and accommodation. In these negotiations, China was able to secure agreements on border issues while also addressing its security concerns in the region. Considerable progress has been made in these negotiations with the relevant Central Asian states and Russia. The negotiations mentioned earlier have had a significant impact, particularly in laying the groundwork for future developments. The most notable of these was the establishment and growth of the SCO, which initially focused on disarmament and building trust in border areas. This serves as an excellent illustration of these processes in action in the realm of international relations. The cost of the negotiations for Central Asian states was their unwillingness to address the issue of Uyghurs with China during the summit that prepared the 1996 five-power treaty.³⁶⁴

China's rapid expansion of economic activity in Kazakhstan is driven by several objectives, including the establishment of a secure and cordial environment along its northwestern border, access to valuable energy resources, and the creation of transit routes for goods.³⁶⁵

Through offering economic aid to Central Asian countries, China aims to establish a favorable and secure environment along its northwestern border, while also gaining direct access to energy resources and creating transportation routes. This can be seen

³⁶³ See Hasan Haider Karrar, “The New Silk Road Diplomacy: A Regional Analysis of China’s Central Asian Foreign Policy, 1991-2005” (McGill University, 2006); Stephen Blank, “Kazakhstan’s Border Relations with China,” in *Beijing’s Power and China’s Borders: Twenty Neighbors in Asia*, ed. Bruce A. Elleman, Stephen Kotkin, and Clive Schofield (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2013): 97–110.

³⁶⁴ Blank, “Kazakhstan’s Border Relations with China.”104.

³⁶⁵ Aziz Burkhanov and Yu-Wen Chen, “Kazakh Perspective on China, the Chinese, and Chinese Migration,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 2016, Volume 39, Issue 12, p. 2135.

as the creation of an economic sphere that is supportive of China's interests, which could be considered a group of nations united by mutual interests or even a sphere of influence. One example of this is Tajikistan, which is the poorest country in the region and has a high level of Chinese economic activity. Tajikistani authorities have acknowledged that the country may become economically reliant on China. Acknowledging that China's investment strategy in Kazakhstan primarily aims to establish a foothold for Chinese state-owned companies in the extraction of natural resources would be a more realistic approach. Kazakhstani expert Konstantin Syroezhkin suggests that China's collaboration with Kazakhstan is driven by China's own demands and priorities, meaning that China's investment in Kazakhstan moves at a pace that aligns with China's needs.³⁶⁶

The accelerated advancement of China's economic and political influence in Kazakhstan is happening in the context of several ongoing trends. Firstly, the weakening of Western interests in Central Asia and the decline of Russia's economy are seen as signs of China's dominance in the region, and this coincides with the rapid growth of China's economic and political influence in Kazakhstan. Second, many analysts suggest that Chinese investments are a key component of China's expanding influence in Central Asia. Third, China's interest in acquiring uranium mines in Kazakhstan and subsequently exporting uranium to China has given it practical control over this strategically important industry at a national level. As a result, border management is becoming another movement for China to assert its dominance in the Kazakhstani market.³⁶⁷

Chinese officials have identified the development of the north-western regions of China, particularly Xinjiang, as a strategic priority. As part of the One Belt One Road Initiative, they propose leveraging Xinjiang's geographic advantages and its position as a gateway to the west to enhance relations and collaboration with other Asian countries. The ultimate goal is to transform Xinjiang into a crucial hub and an integral

³⁶⁶ Konstantin Syroezhkin, "Geopolitical Projects in Central Asia and the Role of Kazakhstan," 2016, <http://cabar.asia/en/konstantin-syroezhkin-geopolitical-projects-in-central-asia-and-the-role-of-kazakhstan/>.

³⁶⁷ Syroezhkin.

part of the Silk Road Economic Belt.³⁶⁸ The OBOR initiative serves primarily as a means for Chinese capital to expand its markets, despite the language used to promote the shared destiny and benefits of Asian countries. Given the rise of other production hubs in Asia, the significance of this project has grown.³⁶⁹

It is reasonable to anticipate significant involvement from China in the execution of the OBOR initiative. Some projections suggest that the primary beneficiaries of the major foreign contracts in the OBOR project will be Chinese companies that manufacture trains.³⁷⁰ This suggests that Chinese resources, management, and labor will be utilized, meaning that foreign companies will only be able to secure subcontracts as a spillover business. This forecast regarding Chinese train manufacturers winning most of the major foreign contracts in the OBOR project still needs to be validated in the context of Kazakhstan, where the country's own manufacturers have been producing locomotives and wagons.³⁷¹

The Chinese government has effectively employed regional multilateral institutions like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) to achieve its objectives. At the last SCO summit in Ufa, the OBOR was discussed, and a dedicated provision for it was included in the final resolution of the meeting. This indicates that China successfully utilizes regional multilateral organizations, such as the SCO, to advance its goals.³⁷²

Some of the most widespread fears and misconceptions regarding China's intentions in Kazakhstan relate to China's economic, demographic, and military expansion, which could lead to a loss of sovereignty for Kazakhstan. Protests were triggered by the

³⁶⁸ See Alexander Cooley, "The Emerging Political Economy of OBOR: The Challenges of Promoting Connectivity in Central Asia and Beyond" (Washington, D.C., 2016).

³⁶⁹ Cooley.

³⁷⁰ Ying Qian, Yuebin Zhang, and Jeff Procak, "Bilateral Dimensions of the CAREC Trade Facilitation Agenda: Spotlight on Mongolia and the People's Republic of China," Asian Development Bank, (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2010).

³⁷¹ Qian, Zhang, and Procak.

³⁷² Stephen Blank, "Was the SCO Summit in Ufa a Breakthrough?," CACI Analyst, 2015.

Kazakhstan government's announcement in 2010 of its plan to lease agricultural land to China on a long-term basis. This led to the abandonment of those plans.³⁷³

5.7. Conclusion

The fall of the Soviet Union has resulted in a considerable boost in China's foreign direct investment in Kazakhstan, indicating China's dedication to the advancement of the nation. With shared ethnic ties to Xinjiang, China views the economic development of both countries as a strategic measure to prevent separatist movements in the region. However, the fact that Kazakhstan has become a major supplier of oil and gas to China in recent years is a testament to the success of China's diplomatic relationship with the country. Therefore, it can be inferred that the dynamics of the economic and energy ties between China and Kazakhstan have undergone a significant change over the past decade and can currently be described as a form of strategic cooperation.

A significant finding in this chapter relates to the theoretical framework of territory and identity, which was previously discussed in the theory section. The Xinjiang-Kazakhstan border serves as a clear boundary between two ethnic groups with distinct historical ties. As demonstrated in the thesis's theoretical framework, addressing border issues requires taking into account factors related to national identity and territorial integrity. Kazakhstan's experience is similar to Mongolia's in demonstrating how borders can divide ethnic groups despite inhabiting contiguous territories; however, these borders often facilitate integration rather than separation when analyzed from an interdisciplinary perspective advocated by the English School of scholarship. The English School underscores the importance of considering identity and territory when analyzing border issues between nations.

³⁷³ Alma Sultangaliyeva, "Kazakhstan and Its Neighbors: Opportunities and Limitations" (Astana, 2016).

CHAPTER 6

SINO-KYRGYZ BORDER

6.1. Introduction

This chapter explores the Sino-Kyrgyz border in the context of border management, with a focus on bilateral trade, transportation, and migration issues. Kyrgyzstan, along with Tajikistan, is one of the poorest countries in Central Asia. However, Kyrgyzstan has an important direct transportation corridor with Kazakhstan, making it a strategically important location for China.

6.2. Historical Background

The division of land that established the current boundary between Kyrgyzstan and China occurred during the late 19th century between the regional powers of the Qing Dynasty and the Russian Empire. The Central Asian region was of significant interest to both nations, leading to competing territorial claims. Ultimately, the Qing Dynasty and Russian Empire agreed to share the region.³⁷⁴ Towards the conclusion of the 1800s, the economy and military might of the Qing Dynasty had declined. Taking advantage of this situation, the Russian Empire compelled the Qing Dynasty to sign a series of "unequal treaties." These treaties, dictated that land would be divided between the two nations.³⁷⁵ As per the terms of those agreements, the Russian Empire took control of various territories. These included the Amur basin, Vladivostok, Pamir and Kashgar,

³⁷⁴ V I Terekhov, "Russia — The Inevitability of Empire," *Russian Studies in History* 37, no. 2 (1998): 88–96.

³⁷⁵ James A. Millward, *Eurasian Crossroads A History of Xinjiang* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

as well as certain islands located in Siberia.³⁷⁶ Consequently, in 1863, the Russian Empire took control of the Kyrgyz territories, primarily the northern sections. However, the southern region denied becoming a part of the empire for an extended period. It was not until 1876 that the southern region agreed to join the Russian Empire. Thus, the entire expanse of Kyrgyz territories came under the control of the Russian Empire.³⁷⁷

Kyrgyzstan's experience in drawing its borders with China can be analyzed through the lens of the concept of the territorial trap, which was discussed in Chapter 2 and fictionalized by authors such as Agnew and Raggie. During this process, Kyrgyzstan underwent a political revolution to prevent the loss of its lands while demarcating its borders with China. If we consider this historical process within the conceptual framework of the territorial trap, Kyrgyzstan sought to resolve its border issues with China without engaging in any conflict. However, it was unable to find a solution that would favor its interests in this matter.

Before the formation of the Soviet Union, the territories that later became its member states did not exist as independent countries within their current boundaries. Instead, they were part of a larger imperial framework, such as the Russian Empire. The borders of these nations were determined by the Soviet government after the revolution of 1917 and the subsequent establishment of the Soviet Union. During the 1920s, Soviet officials carefully crafted the borders of the new nations within the Soviet Union, taking into account political, economic, and ethnic factors. The goal was to create a system of Soviet republics that would be both politically and economically viable, while also accommodating the diverse ethnic groups that lived within the Soviet Union.³⁷⁸ Due to being part of a unified system that functioned as a single country, the member countries did not enforce border controls or customs regulations. The central government was responsible for ensuring the security of each member country within

³⁷⁶ Terekhov, "Russia — The Inevitability of Empire."

³⁷⁷ Terekhov.

³⁷⁸ Scott C Levi, "Early Modern Central Asia in World History," *History Compass* 10, no. 11 (2012): 866–78.

the union. Visas were not required for travel between member countries. In addition to the carefully crafted borders of the Soviet republics, the Soviet system allowed for the renting of land between member countries for long periods of time. This practice was designed to facilitate economic development and cooperation between the republics, and allowed for the sharing of resources and expertise. However, with the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991, many disputes emerged over the ownership and use of these lands. The newly independent states had to negotiate the rightful distribution of land and resources, including oil and gas reserves, water resources, and arable land.³⁷⁹ Indeed, the interconnectedness of the Soviet Union made the separation of its member countries complex and difficult. The shared infrastructure, resources, and production lines meant that the well-being of each country was intertwined with that of the others. When the Soviet Union collapsed, the newly independent countries were faced with the daunting task of untangling this web of interdependence and deciding on the rightful distribution of resources and infrastructure.³⁸⁰

Prior to delving into the border issue, it is essential to note that Kyrgyzstan is the most democratic country among the Central Asian states after gaining independence. As a result, the country has experienced two revolutions, both of which occurred through opposition channels within the democratic framework. Nevertheless, corruption has become a significant challenge for Kyrgyzstan, which is not particularly wealthy economically.

The Soviet Union was initially hesitant to negotiate with China over border issues, as it feared that such negotiations could set a precedent for the questioning of Soviet borders. However, in 1988, the two countries were able to reach an agreement which provided the possibility for the reclaim of disputed lands. The summit between Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping in 1989, marked the end of the longstanding conflict between the two. Nevertheless, the collapse of the Soviet Union prevented the

³⁷⁹ Peter Kenez, *A History of the Soviet Union from the Beginning to the End* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), <https://doi.org/10.1215/10474552-11-2-136>.

³⁸⁰ See Cornelius Amaebi Biye Okoko, "A Comparative Study of the Political and Economic Consolidation Policies Pursued by the Soviet Union in Kazakhstan (1917-33) and Communist China in Sinkiang (1949-57)" (University of British Columbia, 1972).

resolution of borders. As a result, China had to make negotiations for every border conflict with the corresponding newly established independent country. This process of resolving border disputes was challenging and often led to tensions between China and its neighbors. Despite these difficulties, China continued to pursue its interests in the region, using its economic and political influence to expand its presence and further its strategic objectives.³⁸¹

During the initial years of their independence, the countries that constituted the former Soviet Union formed a new union known as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). They decided to preserve the system of free movement among themselves. Consequently, they entered an agreement known as the "Bishkek Accord," which permitted visa-free travel between the member states. This accord aimed to promote economic and political cooperation between these newly independent states, particularly in the areas of trade, transportation, and communication. This provision aimed to facilitate the movement of people, goods, and services between the member countries, which was crucial for the economic transformation and development of these countries. By promoting greater economic integration, the accord aimed to strengthen the regional economies and to promote greater stability and security in the region.³⁸² Unfortunately, the removal of visa requirements allowed for the unrestricted movement of people, including criminal elements such as terrorists, drug traffickers, and smugglers. This led to an increase in crime and security threats, which prompted Russia and other member countries to withdraw from the agreement and impose visa requirements. As a result, the Bishkek Accord lost its effectiveness, and member countries had to rely on other means of promoting economic cooperation and regional integration. In contrast, Kyrgyzstan utilized the platform provided by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to raise concerns about its border disputes with China in the post-Soviet era. Through this organization, China had the opportunity to resolve its long-standing border issues with Kyrgyzstan, dating back to the period of

³⁸¹ See Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Eric Hyer, "The Sino-Russian Boundary Settlement," *IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin*, 1996, www.dur.ac.uk/ibru/publications/view/?id=88: 91-92.

³⁸² See Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*; Richard Pomfret, *The Central Asian Economies Since Independence* (New York: Princeton University Press, 2006): 200.

the Qing dynasty. China's primary motivation for joining the SCO was to enhance regional security by collaborating with Central Asian countries and resolving border disputes that emerged after the disintegration of the Soviet Union.³⁸³

In the early 1990s, shortly after Kyrgyzstan gained independence, a disputed region emerged between the Kyrgyz Republic and China. In 1992, China claimed sovereignty over the Uzongu-Kuush region of Kashgar, stating that it had been part of Chinese territory before it was taken over by the Russian Empire.³⁸⁴ The dispute continued for several years, with occasional military clashes between the two countries. However, in 1999, the two countries signed an agreement that resolved the dispute.³⁸⁵ Under this agreement, Kyrgyzstan agreed to recognize China's sovereignty over a smaller portion (30%) of the disputed region, while China agreed to recognize Kyrgyzstan's sovereignty over the rest of the territory. Among the territories given to China was the Bedel area which has water resources. That was important for China, as it faces severe water shortages in some of its regions.³⁸⁶

The political environment in Kyrgyzstan was greatly affected by the delineation of the Kyrgyz-Chinese border in the early years of the country's independence. Kyrgyzstan was not ready to give up any of its territories to China, especially when developing a sense of national identity was crucial. The Kyrgyz population resisted the process of border demarcation with China due to concerns over ceding a portion of their country's land, which was particularly important during a time of building national identity. The announcement of the plan triggered extensive public debate and opposition in various media outlets.³⁸⁷

³⁸³ Pomfret, *The Central Asian Economies Since Independence*.

³⁸⁴ Humphrey, "Concepts of 'Russia' and Their Relation to the Border with China."

³⁸⁵ Humphrey.

³⁸⁶ See Humphrey; Niklas Swanström, "China and Central Asia: A New Great Game or Traditional Vassal Relations?," *Journal of Contemporary China* 14, no. 45 (2005): 569–84, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670560500205001>.

³⁸⁷ Steven Parham, "'Rightful' versus 'Real' Homelands: Changing Concepts of Kyrgyz Boundaries and Belonging on the China-Kyrgyzstan Frontier," *Asian Ethnicity* 15, no. 3 (2014): 265–85; ; Akihiro Iwashita, "Border Dynamics in Eurasia: Sino-Soviet Border Disputes and the Aftermath," *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 23, no. 3 (2008): 69–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2008.9695709>.

The perception that their ancestral lands were being surrendered without adequate compensation to another country fueled the discussions and opposition among the Kyrgyz population regarding the border issue. However conversations centered around the problem were uninformed about its specifics and historical context. Experts and government officials were invited by the mass media to discuss the border issue extensively to help clarify the matter and address concerns among the Kyrgyz population. Experts from both sides analyzed the area and maps to reach a solution to the border dispute, resulting in an agreement where China would receive 30% of the disputed region, while 70% would remain as the territory of Kyrgyzstan. In general, the belief among the Kyrgyz population that their land was being given away to China without appropriate compensation was incorrect. Through the media and expert explanations, attempts were made to clarify and increase understanding of the situation.³⁸⁸ Both parties tried to solve the dispute in peace in order to foster their relationship.³⁸⁹ Some experts criticized the parliament members who vehemently opposed the border demarcation with China by initiating discussions. Their perspective is that Kyrgyzstan needs to prioritize pragmatic considerations over nationalist or emotional sentiments when it comes to border disputes. They believe that it is essential for Kyrgyzstan to maintain a positive relationship with China to promote its own economic development and stability, and that resolving the border dispute is a necessary step towards achieving this goal.³⁹⁰

The opposition of the Akayev government used border demarcation with China, raising the population's outrage. A group of 15 parliamentarians in the Kyrgyz Republic lodged their disagreement with President Akayev's stance on the border dispute with China, arguing that he had not allowed them sufficient time to scrutinize the matter. As previously mentioned, the democratic nature of Kyrgyzstan highlights

³⁸⁸ Madeleine Reeves, "Fixing the Border: On the Affective Life of the State in Southern Kyrgyzstan," *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space* 29, no. 5 (2011): 905–24, <https://doi.org/10.1068/d18610>.

³⁸⁹ Steven Parham, "The Bridge That Divides: Local Perceptions of the Connected State in the Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan – China Borderlands," *Central Asian Survey* 35, no. 3 (2016): 351–68.

³⁹⁰ Parham.

how the territorial dispute with China played a significant role in the downfall of a leader.³⁹¹

The opposition insisted that signing an international agreement with China has violated the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic. The infringement in question relates to the breach of the law on the protection and unity of the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic, which is stipulated in the third article of the nation's constitution. The third article of the Kyrgyz Republic's constitution states that the country's territory is inviolable and integral. According to this article, the borders of the country can only be altered through a decision made by the parliament with a two-thirds majority vote. The violation mentioned relates to this particular law. According to the opposition, the condition set out in the third article of the Kyrgyz Republic's constitution was breached during the ratification process of the agreement between the Kyrgyz Republic and China in 1997. The opposition also argues that altering borders should be done through a specific law rather than an international agreement, which is another point of contention. The allegations made by the opposition have led to an impeachment process being initiated against the President of the country.³⁹² The process of impeaching the President of the country is a complex matter that involves the establishment of a special parliamentary commission to investigate the allegations.³⁹³

The socio-political division of Kyrgyzstan into north and south is another crucial factor contributing to opposition against Akaev's regime. Generally, those who oppose Akaev's authoritarian rule are predominantly from the less socio-culturally developed southern region of the country. Among the dissidents, those who strongly advocate for the preservation of territorial integrity are primarily individuals from this particular region.

³⁹¹ Parham.

³⁹² Alia Omuralieva, "China-Kyrgyzstan Relations" (Hacettepe University, 2014).

³⁹³ Erica Marat, "Kyrgyzstan: Prospects for Pluralism," 2015, http://www.pluralism.ca/images/PDF_docs/pluralism_papers/ericamarat_prospectsforpluralism_EN_Global_Centre_for_Pluralism.pdf.

While the border dispute with China was undoubtedly a significant source of tension in Kyrgyzstan, it was not the only factor contributing to internal turmoil in the country. The United States also played a role in exacerbating the situation by investing considerable resources through non-governmental organizations to promote democratic values and support civil society.³⁹⁴ President Akayev was accused of being authoritarian and suppressing dissent. The opposition parties used this discontent to their advantage, galvanizing support by framing themselves as champions of democracy against the corrupt and oppressive Akayev regime. Economic factors also contributed to the dissatisfaction of the Kyrgyz population, as the country struggled with a downturn and high levels of unemployment. Corruption and nepotism were also rampant in Akayev's administration, with many of his family members holding government positions, leading to further public anger. The issue of land demarcation with China served as a rallying point for the opposition, who portrayed the government's decision to cede territory as a betrayal of the country's sovereignty and a threat to national security. This rhetoric resonated with the people, leading to widespread protests and eventually the Tulip Revolution, which toppled Akayev's government.³⁹⁵

The issue of border delimitation between Kyrgyzstan and China can be seen as a situation where a small state is aligning itself with a great power. It is important to mention that after the collapse of the Soviet Union almost all of the countries in the region had border disputed with China. These countries have all acknowledged China's standpoint on disputed territories and have negotiated with China to solve these conflicts. Therefore, Kyrgyzstan couldn't simply decline to resolve this issue, as the other countries had also settled their respective border disputes with China. The resolution of these disputes is crucial for maintaining stability and cooperation between neighboring countries. In the case of Kyrgyzstan, it was necessary to negotiate

³⁹⁴ See Nick Megoran, "Rethinking the Study of International Boundaries: A Biography of the Kyrgyzstan – Uzbekistan Boundary," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102, no. 2 (2012): 464–81; Erica Marat, "Global Money Laundering and Its Domestic Political Consequences in Kyrgyzstan," *Central Asian Survey* 34, no. 1 (2015): 46–56.

³⁹⁵ Nick Megoran, "The Critical Geopolitics of the Uzbekistan – Kyrgyzstan Ferghana Valley Boundary Dispute, 1999 – 2000," *Political Geography* 23 (2004): 731–64, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2004.03.004>.

with China to find a mutually acceptable solution. This decision was not made lightly, as the border demarcation issue was sensitive and had historical and emotional significance for the Kyrgyz people. However, it was ultimately deemed necessary to maintain good relations with China and promote regional stability.³⁹⁶

With the disintegration of the Soviet Union, newly independent countries became neighbors to China. Since these countries were under the influence of The United States and other western countries, China considered them a threat to its national security. Since the new countries were not as powerful as the Soviet Union, China saw this an opportunity and began to assert its claims to "historical" territories in Central Asia. As these border disputes continued, they were eventually resolved through negotiations that involved the sharing of disputed territories.³⁹⁷ China insisted that it made confrontations by settling for smaller lands than its initial claims.³⁹⁸ As mentioned earlier, China has settled for 30% of its initial claims in the case of Uzongu-Kuush.³⁹⁹

Finally, the resolution of the border dispute between Kyrgyzstan and China led to social unrest in Kyrgyz side. On the other hand, China extended its territory as well as its influence in Central Asia while drawing an image of a powerful country which solves its problems with neighbors through negotiation and is willing to maintain positive relations and collaboration with other countries in the region.⁴⁰⁰

³⁹⁶ See Elżbieta Proń and Emilie Szwajnoch, "Kyrgyz and Kazakh Responses To China's Xinjiang Policy Under Xi Jinping," *Asian Affairs* 51, no. 4 (2020): 761–78; Omuralieva, "China-Kyrgyzstan Relations."

³⁹⁷ Chien-peng Chung, "The Shanghai Co-Operation Organization: China's Changing Influence in Central Asia," *The China Quarterly*, no. 180 (2004): 989–1009.

³⁹⁸ Sébastien Peyrouse, "Central Asia's Growing Partnership with China," 2009.

³⁹⁹ Marlène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse, *China as a Neighbor: Central Asian Perspectives and Strategies*, (Singapore: Johns Hopkins University-SAIS 2009). http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/131570/ipublicationdocument_singledocument/20729eaf-c7c8-47d9-bfca-e034ff23ef07/en/chinaneighbor.pdf.

⁴⁰⁰ Laruelle and Peyrouse.

6.3. Trade

The establishment of gateways on the China-Kyrgyzstan border in 1992 was a significant development that had a major impact on trade between the two countries. Starting with the Torugart Pass and later followed by others, these checkpoints made it possible to transport goods between Xinjiang and Kyrgyzstan, providing new opportunities for Kyrgyzstan-based enterprises to acquire their inventories from major cities like Kashgar, as well as markets in Urumchi and other hubs located along China's coastline. This opened up new avenues for trade and economic cooperation between the two countries, with China becoming an increasingly important economic partner for Kyrgyzstan. Trade between the two countries grew rapidly, with China becoming Kyrgyzstan's largest trading partner and an important source of investment and aid.⁴⁰¹

Kyrgyzstan faces challenges in developing its economy due to its limited natural resources and difficult terrain. This has hindered the growth of its transportation sector, making it challenging to achieve long-term economic growth. While the country did receive significant financial aid from other Soviet republics in the past, which helped in developing its transport infrastructure and industries, the growth of these industries did not always align with local interest and available supply. As a result, China-Kyrgyzstan border has become less active, with fewer trade and economic activities taking place.

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, there were some factories located at Kyrgyzstan. However, they were irrelevant to local resources and did not meet the regional demands.⁴⁰² The disintegration of the Soviet Union resulted in the emergence of new borders in Central Asia, which had the unintended consequence of dividing the southern and northern regions of Kyrgyzstan. Roads that previously linked different regions of the country now traverse the borders of neighboring nations, substantially

⁴⁰¹ Henryk Alff, "Flowing Goods, Hardening Borders? China's Commercial Expansion into Kyrgyzstan Re-Examined," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 57, no. 3 (2016): 433–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2016.1200993>.

⁴⁰² Economist Intelligence Unit, "Country Report Kyrgyz Republic" (London, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.5089/9781513538693.002>.

raising travel time and expenses. Although the country's industry and transportation sectors were negatively affected by these changes, the agriculture and service industries were less affected. As a result, the relative importance of the agricultural and service sectors in the country's economy increased, while the significance of the industrial sector declined. Another important GDP component in Kyrgyzstan is remittances. Today it is the world's second largest country after Tajikistan of 45% of GDP comes from remittances.⁴⁰³

The Kyrgyz Republic has three primary trading partners, namely the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, and China. To fully exploit its trade potential with China, the country needs to develop new infrastructure that links it to Xinjiang through a network of roads and railways. During the early 1990s, transportation volume in the Kyrgyz Republic saw a significant decline. The development of the transportation sector is essential for the Kyrgyz Republic to capitalize on its geographic location and maximize its economic growth potential.⁴⁰⁴

The development of the Kyrgyz Republic is being impeded by several obstacles, including poverty, high external debt⁴⁰⁵, and limited access to resources for sustainable growth. Despite transitioning from a planned economy to a market economy and privatizing most of its industrial and agricultural companies, the private sector remains weak and unable to participate in development projects. Economic growth has been unstable and limited, with the country yet to return to its 1990 economic level. The agriculture sector has grown to a limited extent despite difficulties in obtaining funding and marketing. The country's GDP is USD 950 per capita, with a purchasing power parity estimate of USD 2,200⁴⁰⁶. The lack of natural resources and challenging terrain

⁴⁰³ Economist Intelligence Unit.

⁴⁰⁴ Peyrouse, "Central Asia's Growing Partnership with China."

⁴⁰⁵ The World Bank, "Kyrgyz Republic Statistics," 2018, <https://data.worldbank.org/country/kyrgyz-republic?view=chart>.

⁴⁰⁶ The World Bank.

further limit the country's ability to develop its logistics industry and achieve sustainable economic growth.⁴⁰⁷

In 2005, the newly formed government of the Kyrgyz Republic aimed to address poor living conditions, unemployment, and corruption.⁴⁰⁸ The country's unemployment rate is just below 10%, and many of its labor force work abroad and remit money back to their families.⁴⁰⁹ It's estimated that over 500,000 people, about 10% of the population, work in Russia and Kazakhstan.⁴¹⁰ Although the Kyrgyz Republic experienced a significant growth in international trade between 2004 and 2008, with a rate of 31% annually, this growth was mainly due to an increase in imports by 36% per year, whereas exports only grew by 2% annually.⁴¹¹

The Kyrgyz Republic's international trade is largely dominated by Russia and Kazakhstan, with Russia being the leading partner in terms of value, and Kazakhstan in terms of volume. However, since the statistics about trade is not reliable enough, import and export volumes may be underreported. The country's trade with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan mainly involves cheap products, such as ores and other raw material,⁴¹² which are transported by less expensive modes such as rail and highways. In contrast, valuable products may require more expensive modes of transportation such as aviation. There may be room for the country to improve its export competitiveness by diversifying its exports and developing higher-value products.⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁷ Erica Marat, "Global Money Laundering and Its Domestic Political Consequences in Kyrgyzstan," *Central Asian Survey* 34, no. 1 (2015): 46–56.

⁴⁰⁸ Marat.

⁴⁰⁹ Erica Marat, "National Ideology and State- Building in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan" (Washington, D.C., 2008).

⁴¹⁰ The World Bank, "Kyrgyz Republic Statistics"; Economist Intelligence Unit, "Country Report Kyrgyz Republic."

⁴¹¹ Economist Intelligence Unit, "Country Report Kyrgyz Republic."

⁴¹² Bartłomiej Kaminski, "How Kyrgyzstan Has Seized Opportunities Offered by Central Asia's Economic Recovery: Patterns and Modalities" (Washington, D.C., 2008).

⁴¹³ Oleg Samukhin and Esengeldy Toguzbaev, "The Kyrgyz Republic: Trade Facilitation and Logistics Development Strategy Report" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2009).

The Kyrgyz Republic's major trading partners, except for Kazakhstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan, tend to export higher value density goods to the country than they import from it. This trend is mainly due to the fact that these countries import raw materials, while exporting higher value-added products. For instance, the Kyrgyz Republic imports goods such as fuel, machinery, and equipment, which have a higher value density, while exporting low-value density goods such as gold, cotton, and non-ferrous metals. Specifically, the average value density of imports from those countries is 1.15 USD/kg, whereas the average value density of imports from Kazakhstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan is only 0.29 USD/kg.⁴¹⁴ Similarly, the average value density of exports to countries other than Kazakhstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan is 1.42 USD/kg, while the average value density of exports to these three countries is only 0.31 USD /kg.⁴¹⁵

The Kyrgyz Republic faces challenges in transportation due to limited railway systems and lack of waterways. This limits the options for transporting goods with lower value density and leads to more costly modes of transport. Additionally, the cost of both imports and exports is significantly increased as a result of obstacles in road transportation. The value density of exports to China is half of that of imports to China. While the Kyrgyz Republic imports end-products and machinery from China, its exports to China mostly comprise raw materials.⁴¹⁶ Approximately 80% of the Kyrgyzstan's imports and exports are comprised of fundamental building materials and petroleum products.⁴¹⁷ The Kyrgyz Republic's import volume is heavily influenced by oil products, which makes up around 40% of the total import volume. Therefore, fluctuations in oil prices in recent years have contributed significantly to changes in import-export balance.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁴ Asel Isakova, Zsoka Koczan, and Alexander Plekhanov, "How Much Do Tariffs Matter? Evidence from the Customs Union of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia," *Journal of Economic Policy Reform* 19, no. 2 (2016): 166–84, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17487870.2014.988212>.

⁴¹⁵ The World Bank, "The World Bank in the Kyrgyz Republic," 2018, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kyrgyzrepublic/overview>.

⁴¹⁶ Economist Intelligence Unit, "Country Report Kyrgyz Republic."

⁴¹⁷ Economist Intelligence Unit.

⁴¹⁸ The World Bank, "The World Bank in the Kyrgyz Republic."

Industrial and service sectors have become the primary drivers of economic growth since 2007, with their shares in GDP increasing or remaining stable.⁴¹⁹ However, the gold sector's challenges in 2012 have partly interrupted the process of structural transformation.⁴²⁰ The agricultural sector has been showing weak performance and its contribution to the GDP has been declining (17.5% in 2012).⁴²¹

The service sector, particularly in the areas of communication and trade, has played a significant role in the growth of the Kyrgyz Republic's economy. The country's location and its membership in the WTO have enabled it to capitalize on the export of Chinese products to neighboring markets. This has created opportunities for the country to benefit from transit trade and to further develop its transport infrastructure.⁴²² On the other hand, mining, manufacturing, construction, and textiles were the main driving forces behind industrial development. Changes in the gold concentration found in the extracted ore, as well as technical or geological issues, have been responsible for most of the fluctuations in the gold sector. When there is a relatively significant increase in gold production, it helps support industrial growth during that year.⁴²³ Kyrgyzstan's gold sector has been performing poorly, which is having a negative impact on the country's overall economic growth. However, despite this, the country's growth is being fueled by solid domestic interest, which is primarily impelled by remittances.⁴²⁴

Two key factors are responsible for the growth of Kyrgyzstan's re-export (import-process-export) industry and the way its people view the country's relationship with

⁴¹⁹ The World Bank, "The World Bank in the Kyrgyz Republic."

⁴²⁰ Economist Intelligence Unit, "Country Report Kyrgyz Republic."

⁴²¹ Economist Intelligence Unit, "Country Report Kyrgyz Republic."

⁴²² Roman Mogilevskii, "Is Accession to the World Trade Organization Worthwhile?: The Experience of Kyrgyzstan," *Problems of Economic Transition* 47, no. 2 (2004): 68–73; Kyrgyz Republic and the WTO, https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/countries_e/kyrgyz_republic_e.htm

⁴²³ Economist Intelligence Unit, "Country Report Kyrgyz Republic."

⁴²⁴ See Madeleine Reeves, "Black Work , Green Money : Remittances , Ritual , and Domestic Economies in Southern Kyrgyzstan," *Slavic Review* 71, no. 1 (2012): 108–34; Madeleine Reeves, "Black Work, Green Money: Remittances, Ritual, and Domestic Economies in Southern Kyrgyzstan," *Slavic Review* 71, no. 1 (2012): 108–34.

China. Firstly, China's concerns about securing its overseas resource supply have led to an expansion in transportation routes. China has been importing oil since 1993 and relies heavily on the Middle East and Africa for it. As a result, China has been exploring alternative diversify its sources of energy. This has had a significant impact on the development of the re-export industry in Kyrgyzstan.

Secondly, the perceptions of the Kyrgyz people regarding the Sino-Kyrgyz relationship have also contributed to the growth of the re-export industry. The people of Kyrgyzstan have developed a positive view of China due to its investment in the country's infrastructure and economy. This has led to a greater willingness among the Kyrgyz people to do business with China, and the re-export industry has been a major beneficiary of this trend. As a result, the industry has grown rapidly in recent years, and many Kyrgyz traders have found success in re-exporting goods to China and other countries in the region.⁴²⁵ China is expanding the transportation ways in Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan to diversify the routes for its imports. By integrating overland routes, China aims to reduce the risk of disruption to its energy supplies in case of disputes with other countries. This move has enabled China to access alternative supply paths, including the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea, which are not vulnerable to the geopolitical risks associated with sea routes. This has also created new trade opportunities for Kyrgyzstan, resulting in the development of the re-export industry and greater economic cooperation between the two countries. Crossing point between Kyrgyzstan and China serves as a vital trade hub between the two nations, despite the mountainous terrain and hazardous conditions on the Kyrgyz part.⁴²⁶

Improvements on the trade between China and Kyrgyzstan depends on the proposed China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway project. Since the current road system is ineffective and often inaccessible during winter, it hampers trade between the two countries. Completion of the railway project could lead to a significant increase in trade between the three countries. This would make Kyrgyzstan the primary transit

⁴²⁵ Hsiu-Ling Wu and Chien-Hsun Chen, "The Prospects for Regional Economic Integration between China and the Five Central Asian Countries," *Europe-Asia Studies* 56, no. 7 (2004).

⁴²⁶ Asian Development Bank, "Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic: Almaty – Bishkek Regional Road Rehabilitation Project" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2007).

corridor for Chinese goods heading towards Uzbekistan and effectively exclude Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. The railway project is part of China's Belt and Road Initiative, aimed at developing transportation infrastructure to boost trade and economic cooperation among participating countries. The completion of this project could have a transformative impact on the economies of all three countries involved, enhancing their connectivity and promoting greater regional integration. The proposed railway project between China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan is seen as having a positive impact on Kyrgyzstan's economy, but there are concerns about China's direct involvement. Despite this, Kyrgyzstan's accession to the World Trade Organization has been a more significant factor in the growth of trade between Kyrgyzstan and the rest of Central Asia. After China joined the WTO in 2001, trade between China and Kyrgyzstan increased rapidly. From 2000 to 2010, trade between the two countries surged from \$118 million to \$4.2 billion. Kyrgyzstan's membership in the WTO has created opportunities for the country to expand its exports and attract foreign investment. This has helped to diversify the Kyrgyz economy and reduce its reliance on a single export product.⁴²⁷

Re-exporting became a successful business in Kyrgyzstan due to the ability of local traders to import low-tariff goods from China. They sell them to other Central Asian countries for a profit. Most Kyrgyz people are aware of China's significant economic involvement in their country and the impact it has on their lives, but they do not consider whether or not Chinese involvement is beneficial. The high demand for Chinese goods in Kyrgyzstan and neighboring countries has increased cross-border trade, with positive and negative effects on the Kyrgyz economy. While re-exporting has created new business opportunities and income for traders, it has also created a trade deficit and a dependence on China's economy. This dependence raises concerns about the sustainability of the re-export industry and Kyrgyzstan's economic independence.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁷ See Simon W Tai and Jung Wan Lee, "Strategies of Regional Economic Integration and WTO Accession in Central Asia," *Eurasian Journal of Business and Economics* 2, no. 3 (2009): 1–14; World Trade Organization, "World Trade Report 2018," 2019.

⁴²⁸ Mogilevskii.

China considers it crucial to maintain favorable trade ties with Kyrgyzstan, and one of the driving factors behind this priority is China's concern for the stability of its westernmost province, Xinjiang. This region has a substantial population of Uighur Muslims, making up around 48% of the province's residents. The Chinese government has faced challenges in maintaining social and political stability in Xinjiang due to several incidents of violent protests and riots instigated by Uighur groups. To address these concerns, China has implemented a strategy of promoting economic improvement in the region. However, this approach has been criticized for overlooking the deeper underlying social and political issues that contribute to unrest in the area.⁴²⁹

In order to prevent the spread of separatist sentiment among the Uighur minority in Xinjiang, China sees a stable Kyrgyzstan as crucial for the export of products made in the province. Uighur calls for an independent state date back to the early 1930s when the East Turkestan Republic briefly gained independence from Chinese rule. During times of unrest in Xinjiang, these separatist views have gained more support among Uighur populations, making it even more important for China to have a stable trading partner in Kyrgyzstan. China has implemented a strategy of promoting economic growth as a means to maintain stability in Xinjiang. The idea is that providing employment opportunities to Uighur Muslims in the region will reduce the desire to revolt or engage in violent protests. This approach is often subsidized by investments from China's more prosperous eastern provinces. Therefore, when political revolutions arose in Kyrgyzstan in 2005 and 2010, China was worried that trade with the country would suffer and that this would have negative consequences for the economic growth of Xinjiang.⁴³⁰ Despite the negative effects of these political revolutions on Kyrgyzstan's economy, the long-term impact was limited, and trade between China and Kyrgyzstan was able to recover. In fact, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicted a 7% GDP growth for Kyrgyzstan in 2011. This demonstrates the importance

⁴²⁹ Michael Clarke, "China's Integration of Xinjiang with Central Asia: Securing a 'Silk Road' to Great Power Status?," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 6, no. 2 (2008): 89–111.

⁴³⁰ Michael Clarke, "The Impact of Ethnic Minorities on China's Foreign Policy: The Case of Xinjiang and the Uyghur," *China Report* 53, no. 1 (2017): 1–25, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0009445516677361>.

of maintaining positive trade relations with Kyrgyzstan for China's economic growth and stability strategy in Xinjiang.⁴³¹

Kyrgyzstan recognizes the importance of its strategic location which was a key section of the historical Silk Road. A large part of this trade route passed through Kyrgyzstan, and many Kyrgyz people today aim to capitalize on this by using it as a transit route to transport goods from China to the rest of the world. While trade is a significant factor in the relationship between Kyrgyzstan and China, it is not the only aspect that shapes Kyrgyz perspectives towards China. Other global powers have a presence in the country as well, further shaping Kyrgyzstan's foreign policy considerations.⁴³²

6.4. Transportation

Kyrgyz Republic now has a surplus of transportation vehicles as a result of a significant decrease in the amount of goods being transported, with the figure dropping from 338.5 million tons to 29.1 million tons between 1990-2006.⁴³³ At the same time, the cargo transportation equipment is aging, most of them are outdated. After the privatization of public transportation systems from the Soviet era, numerous small businesses emerged in Kyrgyzstan. However, these companies are facing several challenges such as low efficiency levels and high operational expenses, resulting in many of them being unprofitable.⁴³⁴

Kyrgyzstan and China are connected with two major international road corridors. One of them is Bishkek-Naryn-Torugart road, which is also a part of the CAREC Transport Corridor 1, which links China to Kazakhstan.⁴³⁵

⁴³¹ IMF, "World Economic Financial Surveys: Regional Outlook Middle East and Central Asia" (Washington, D.C., 2014).

⁴³² Asian Development Bank, "KGZ: Proposed CAREC Transport Corridor 1 (Bishkek-Torugart Road) Project 2" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2009). See Madeleine Reeves, "Fixing the Border: On the Affective Life of the State in Southern Kyrgyzstan," *Environment and Planning: Society and Space* 29, no. 5 (2011): 905–24.

⁴³³ Asian Development Bank, "KGZ: Proposed CAREC Transport Corridor 1 (Bishkek-Torugart Road) Project 2."

⁴³⁴ Asian Development Bank, "KGZ: CAREC Transport Corridor 1 (Bishkek –)" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2013).

⁴³⁵ Asian Development Bank.

Kyrgyzstan has a poor cross-border performance. It is positioned last in the list of cross-border ranking by the World Bank (Table 6).

“Trading across the Borders” index is based on the number of import and export documents, trading days, and cost required for the import or export of one 20-foot multimodal container. On the other hand, the country has the highest logistics performance index (LPI) among all Central Asian countries, being ranked 104th of the 150 countries included in the 2017 World Bank study.⁴³⁶ The LPI measures a country’s trade logistics using parameters such as customs procedures, logistics services, and infrastructure. A country that scores a high LPI has lower trade costs and is more efficient in moving goods.”⁴³⁷

Table 6. Kyrgyzstan: Doing Bussiness in 2016

Country	Rank in Trading accross the borders	Rank in the overall Bussiness Index
China	48	83
Mongolia	156	58
Uzbekstan	171	138
Tajikistan	177	159
Azerbaijan	174	33
Afghanistan	179	162
Kazakhstan	180	70
Kyrgyzstan	181	68

Source World Bank, Doing Bussiness Index

Under the Soviet Rule, transportation framework in Kyrgyz territory was established mainly to facilitate the transportation of goods among the Soviet Republics, with limited trade relations with China. The transportation of vehicles between Central Asian countries was not restricted, but the focus was primarily on goods transportation rather than passenger transport.⁴³⁸

Trade relationships and transportation in Central Asia have transformed since the Soviet era. Presently, the most convenient routes for transportation within Kyrgyzstan

⁴³⁶ Asian Development Bank, “KGZ: CAREC Corridors 1 and 3 Connector Road Project” (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2016).

⁴³⁷ Samukhin and Toguzbaev, “The Kyrgyz Republic: Trade Facilitation and Logistics Development Strategy Report.”

⁴³⁸ “Kyrgyz Republic: CAREC Transport Corridor 1 (Bishkek – Torugart Road) Project 2” (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2015).

pass through Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Nevertheless, these roads are subject to delays at border crossing points and additional costs received by Kazakh and Uzbek officials. In addition, some of the roads within Kyrgyzstan cross through Uzbek and Tajik lands, creating further difficulties. Therefore, it is necessary for the Kyrgyz Republic to improve its internal road network to overcome these challenges.⁴³⁹

Meanwhile, China has surpassed the trade volume of all other former Soviet states combined to become the most significant trading partner of the Kyrgyz Republic.⁴⁴⁰ To fully capitalize on the potential for trade with China, the Kyrgyz Republic must invest in the development of new infrastructure that will facilitate trade with China. This includes the construction of a comprehensive road network and a rail link that will connect the Kyrgyz Republic with Xinjiang. While the volume of transport in the Kyrgyz Republic declined in the early 1990s, it has slowly increased since then. However, in order to fully optimize trade opportunities with China, significant improvements to the transportation infrastructure are necessary.⁴⁴¹

The rail network in Kyrgyz Republic is fragmented and consists of five small sections that are not interconnected within the country. The network is divided into two systems, the Northern and Southern systems. The Northern system comprises a single 340 km track linking the borders of Kazakhstan to Issyk-Kul lake, which was previously part of the Almaty rail network. As a result, the management, design, and training facilities are still based in Almaty.⁴⁴²

Kyrgyz Railways has made significant progress, but it still relies heavily on other CIS countries for know-how on design, operation and maintenance of its railway infrastructure.⁴⁴³

⁴³⁹ Megoran, “Rethinking the Study of International Boundaries: A Biography of the Kyrgyzstan – Uzbekistan Boundary.”

⁴⁴⁰ World Trade Organization, “World Trade Report 2018.”

⁴⁴¹ Asian Development Bank, “Bi-Annual Environmental Monitoring Report KGZ: CAREC Transport Corridor 1 (Bishkek – Torugart Road), Project 2” (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2014).

⁴⁴² Samukhin and Toguzbaev, “The Kyrgyz Republic: Trade Facilitation and Logistics Development Strategy Report.”

⁴⁴³ Samukhin and Toguzbaev.

The main stations of the Northern system are situated in and around Bishkek. In the past, the terminal station in Balykchi was crucial for the transportation of goods in the region. However, it was discovered that although the rail track and signaling systems were well-maintained, the amount of transportation through this station had decreased to less than 5% of its full capacity.⁴⁴⁴ Still, it carries the potential to become an important regional logistics and trade center in the future.

Kyrgyz transportation system's northern part has only one station capable of handling multimodal containers, which is the Alamedin station in Bishkek. The station currently has the capacity to handle up to 1,000 containers per month, with the potential for future expansion. Kyrgyz Railways has acquired two stack car loaders for the container yard, one with funding from the Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States program and the other with its own capital.⁴⁴⁵

In terms of the extent of railway operations, Kyrgyzstan has the lowest capacity among the CIS countries. Therefore, it relies heavily on Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan for the provision of rail cars and multimodal containers.⁴⁴⁶ As a minor participant, Kyrgyz Railways is compelled to effectively organize and plan its activities in order to prevent incurring additional charges from neighboring railways. Any rail cars that enter the country must be promptly unloaded and, if there are any available return loads, loaded and transported back to Kazakhstan or Uzbekistan without delay. This circumstance renders Kyrgyz Railways less lethargic than other railway administrations in CIS nations and consequently more open to implementing additional reforms and operating procedures that prioritize customer satisfaction.⁴⁴⁷

The primary railway stations of the Southern system are Osh and Jalal-Abad, which are situated in close proximity to one another. However, there are Uzbek enclaves in

⁴⁴⁴ Michael S. Mirski, "The Soviet Railway System : Policy and Operation," *The Russian Review* 13, no. 1 (1954): 18–32.

⁴⁴⁵ Samukhin and Toguzbaev, "The Kyrgyz Republic: Trade Facilitation and Logistics Development Strategy Report."

⁴⁴⁶ Asian Development Bank, "Kyrgyzstan Railway Report" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2017).

⁴⁴⁷ Asian Development Bank.

between. The movement of cargo is heavily influenced by their position since they are located near some of the largest cities in Kyrgyzstan. The majority of the products transported through these stations are building components and fuel.⁴⁴⁸

Within the Southern railway system, only the Osh station possesses machinery for handling containers. Container-related activities at the station were somewhat sporadic until railway track maintenance crane was installed in 2007.⁴⁴⁹ At present, the primary use of containers at the Osh station is for importing second-hand cars. Since regular container operations began, the station has been handling up to 200 containers per month. However, any further increase in the capacity will require investment in expanding the container field.⁴⁵⁰

The Jalal-Abad station, on the other hand, currently lacks the necessary infrastructure to support multimodal activities. However, it does possess comparable or even superior potential to Osh for establishing a container field due to the availability of ample space for expansion.⁴⁵¹

The potential for significant advancement in the transit infrastructure of the Kyrgyz Republic exists with the implementation of a rail connection between Kashgar in China and the Southern system of the Kyrgyz rail system. This rail system would establish a connection between China, Europe, and the Middle East via the Kyrgyz Republic.⁴⁵²

In Kyrgyzstan there are two international airports (in Bishkek and Osh) and 22 domestic airports. Manas Airport in Bishkek serves as the primary gateway into the country, featuring a runway that meets the specifications of Class 1 International Civil

⁴⁴⁸ Asian Development Bank.

⁴⁴⁹ Asian Development Bank.

⁴⁵⁰ Asian Development Bank, “Kyrgyz Republic: Road Rehabilitation Project, Second Road Rehabilitation Project, and Third Road Rehabilitation Project” (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2010).

⁴⁵¹ Asian Development Bank, “Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Republic: Almaty – Bishkek Regional Road Rehabilitation Project.”

⁴⁵² Asian Development Bank, “Kyrgyz Republic: Road Rehabilitation Project, Second Road Rehabilitation Project, and Third Road Rehabilitation Project.”

Aviation Organization standards.⁴⁵³ Therefore the airport has the capacity to handle the largest airliners. Although a section of the airport is currently used as a United States airbase, the majority of the facility is utilized for civilian flights.⁴⁵⁴

In 1994, an improvement plan together with a 20-year investment schedule is formed, which aimed at developing the airport's facilities. Although the plan wasn't entirely executed, it resulted in the construction of new structures such as cargo and international passenger terminals, and improved navigation systems. Even though there have been developments in the airport, it continues to receive a low number of flights. The primary reason for this is the absence of a strong national aviation company in the Kyrgyz Republic, which leads to a reliance on charters and international airlines.⁴⁵⁵

Manas Airport's cargo section can not be considered as old. However the equipment installed there is outdated, complicating the operations in cases of heavy air traffic. While new equipment has been provided, they have not been fully put into use, and some have not been deployed because of the ambiguities about customs.⁴⁵⁶

Despite being comprised mostly of small operators, the road cargo sector in Kyrgyzstan has a few relatively large companies. Large cargo companies in Kyrgyzstan are forming agreements with truck owners, with the cargo company acting as a parent organization. The cargo company takes care of administrative tasks, while the drivers are responsible for the transportation and maintenance of their trucks. Drivers have the freedom to work with other clients as they are not exclusively tied to the cargo company.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵³ Asian Development Bank, "Air Transport Capacity Enhancement Project" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2014).

⁴⁵⁴ Asian Development Bank.

⁴⁵⁵ Asian Development Bank, "Development Effectiveness Review 2012 Implementing CAREC 2020 Vision and Action" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2013).

⁴⁵⁶ Asian Development Bank, "Air Transport Capacity Enhancement Project."

⁴⁵⁷ Rastogi and Arvis, *The Eurasian Connection: Supply-Chain Efficiency along the Modern Silk Route through Central Asia*.

Samukhin and Toguzbayev noted that there are multiple transport companies that focus on international cargo transportation and operate under the Transports Internationaux Routiers (TIR) transit guarantee system. They also observed that the number of TIR trucks in the Kyrgyz Republic is steadily growing. There are currently two road carrier associations in Kyrgyzstan, namely the National Association of Road Carriers and the Association of International Road Carriers which is responsible for the TIR carnet system.⁴⁵⁸

The China-Kyrgyzstan trade route was previously restricted due to stringent border protection during the Soviet era. However, with eased security measures, both countries are now committed to enhance their trade through new corridors of transportation.⁴⁵⁹

Currently, there is no direct railway connection between the China and Kyrgyzstan, which is a significant obstacle to the expansion of international transit of goods through the Kyrgyz Republic. However, the construction of the rail link between Kashgar in China and the Southern system of the Kyrgyz rail network, as discussed earlier, has the potential to substantially impact the development of transit infrastructure. This would be also in favor of the growth of the (CAREC)-1 and CAREC-2 (TRACECA) routes.⁴⁶⁰

The utilization of the Torugart and Irkeshtam passes as road links has seen a significant surge. For the continued growth of transit traffic from China, it is crucial to enhance the physical conditions in those roads. Nonetheless, there are still some significant hindrances, such as time-consuming and inefficient cross-border procedures, subpar road infrastructure, and insufficient support services through the corridor that must be addressed.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁸ Samukhin and Toguzbaev, “The Kyrgyz Republic: Trade Facilitation and Logistics Development Strategy Report.”

⁴⁵⁹ Cordula Rastogi and Jean-Francois Arvis, *The Eurasian Connection: Supply-Chain Efficiency along the Modern Silk Route through Central Asia* (Washington, D.C.: The World Bank, 2014).

⁴⁶⁰ Asian Development Bank, “Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Investment Forum 2015: Summary of Proceedings,” in *Investment Forum* (Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, 2016).

⁴⁶¹ Asian Development Bank.

6.5. Tourism, Visa, and Immigration

Kyrgyzstan is making efforts to leverage its unique assets, such as its rich cultural heritage and abundant biodiversity, to tap into the global tourism market. One-third of developing countries and half of the least developed countries rely on tourism as their primary source of foreign exchange, with some of them deriving up to 40% of their GDP from tourism.⁴⁶² International development organizations have acknowledged that tourism can contribute to worldwide economic expansion, and they have taken the lead in implementing initiatives aimed at promoting tourism development.⁴⁶³

The UN launched an initiative called "Sustainable Tourism for Eliminating Poverty". The initiative aims to enhance the potential of local communities by promoting tourism initiatives that preserve natural and cultural heritage. This is achieved through capacity building programs that establish business links, provide financial services to small-scale community-based enterprises, implement marketing strategies, develop tourism facilities, and provide training to local guides and tourism employees.⁴⁶⁴

While the program is not currently operating in Kyrgyzstan, the UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative (UNPEI) started its work in the country in 2011. The UNPEI is a worldwide initiative that promotes the integration of poverty reduction and environmental management initiatives into the planning of national and regional development. The UNPEI has aimed to integrate sustainable development objectives such as environmental health and gender equality into Kyrgyzstan's rural poverty reduction and management strategies for natural resources.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶² Sheradil Baktygulov and Damira Raeva, "Kyrgyzstan: Creating Value For All: Community-Based Tourism" (New York, 2010).

⁴⁶³ Baktygulov and Raeva.

⁴⁶⁴ Tom Baum and Karen Thompson, "Skills and Labour Markets in Transition: A Tourism Skills Inventory of Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Uzbekistan," *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources* 45, no. 2 (2007): 235–55, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1038411107073601>.

⁴⁶⁵ Baum and Thompson.

Prior to 1991, many parts of Kyrgyzstan were off-limits to non-Soviet tourists, but the Soviet Union promoted tourism in the country, particularly in the health spas surrounding Lake Issyk-Kul in the north and the mountain village of Arslanbob. Kyrgyzstan had limited tourism infrastructure before 1991, with a few tourism companies in operation. The tourism market was largely dominated by Moscow-based tour operators and large trade-union holidays.⁴⁶⁶ After gaining independence, Kyrgyzstan's tourism industry continued to be dominated by other countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union. According to reports from 1996, the majority of tourist arrivals in Kyrgyzstan, about 72%, were from Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, and most of them were traveling for business purposes.⁴⁶⁷ After the Soviet era, the development of tourism, and especially ecotourism, has been lacking.⁴⁶⁸

The recently established state placed great emphasis on tourism as a crucial policy, with both economic and political motives. Experts have observed the growing trend of utilizing tourism as a swift, reactive sector to rejuvenate regions that have suffered from economic decline, particularly in remote locations. Kyrgyzstan aimed to lure foreign income by promoting international tourism, leveraging its ample Soviet-era tourism infrastructure and an abundance of nature-based tourism experiences. The government played a formal role in the growth of tourism by endorsing it as a way to boost foreign currency earnings and enhance economic prospects in underdeveloped areas. Tourism was also employed as a political instrument by the recently established state. Officials endorsed tourism as a strategy to increase global visibility and promote domestic nation-building, which were particularly crucial for Kyrgyzstan in the immediate aftermath of its independence.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁶ Nicola J. Palmer, "Economic Transition and the Struggle for Local Control in Ecotourism Development: The Case of Kyrgyzstan," *Journal of Ecotourism* 5, no. 1–2 (2006): 40–61, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14724040608668446>.

⁴⁶⁷ Baktygulov and Raeva, "Kyrgyzstan: Creating Value For All: Community-Based Tourism."

⁴⁶⁸ Sheradil Baktygulov and Damira Raeva, "Kyrgyzstan: Creating Value For All: Community-Based Tourism" (New York;UNDP, 2010).

⁴⁶⁹ Nicola J. Palmer, "Kyrgyz Tourism at Lake Issyk-Kul: Legacies of Pre-Communist and Soviet Regimes," in *Domestic Tourism in Asia*, ed. Nicola J. Palmer (London: Routledge, 2009): 181.

Encouraging tourism has the capacity to support the development of national identity, as both seek to present and affirm a nation's self-image to both local and global audiences. Nevertheless, in Kyrgyzstan, where there exists a varied ethnic composition, utilizing tourism as a means of nation-building and identity establishment is complex. While tourism advertisements can be viewed as a method of honoring a nation's cultural and historical inheritance, in societies with diverse ethnic groups, these storylines may not be coherent. Academics have discussed whether tourism in Central Asia strengthens power imbalances by favoring the dominant ethnic group and its related languages and customs, or if it can instead alleviate tensions among ethnic groups by offering mutual economic prospects. Additionally, Kyrgyz tourism officials have encountered obstacles due to inadequate budgetary resources, and their capacity to create policies has not always resulted in effective policy execution.⁴⁷⁰ As a result, the newly formed state's accomplishments in promoting tourism were restricted.⁴⁷¹

Currently, the expansion of the Kyrgyz tourism sector is impeded by political and economic issues, such as inadequate investment capital, insufficient infrastructure, a shortage of skilled workers, political instability, and national-level economic conditions that discourage investment in the industry.⁴⁷²

The industry also confronts additional obstacles, such as significant seasonal variations that necessitate the use of part-time employees in the workforce.⁴⁷³ There is a lack of reliable tourism statistics in Kyrgyzstan, with data from various sources frequently varying by as much as 30%, resulting in an absence of accurate information.⁴⁷⁴ Many

⁴⁷⁰ Karen Thompson and Nicola Foster, "Ecotourism Development and Government Policy in Kyrgyzstan," in *Ecotourism Policy and Planning*, ed. David A. Fennell and Ross K Dowling (Cambridge, MA: CABI Publishing, 2003); 169-186.

⁴⁷¹ Thompson and Foster.

⁴⁷² See Pınar Akçalı, "Tourism in Kyrgyzstan," in *Tourism in Central Asia: Cultural Potential and Challenges*, ed. Kemal Kantarcı, Mzaffer Uysal, and Vincent P. Magnini (Toronto: CRC Press, 2015):259-286.

⁴⁷³ Baum and Thompson, "Skills and Labour Markets in Transition: A Tourism Skills Inventory of Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Uzbekistan."

⁴⁷⁴ Lindsey T. Ehinger, "Kyrgyzstan's Community-Based Tourism Industry: A Model Method for Sustainable Development and Environmental Management?" (University of Wyoming, 2016).

stakeholders in the tourism industry bemoan this situation and highlight that the absence of data creates challenges in terms of evaluating progress and devising future strategies. According to a study, in 2004, the Kyrgyz Border Authorities registered around 1.5 million tourists, whereas the State Statistical Committee recorded only about 700,000 tourists during the same period.⁴⁷⁵

Chinese nationals are widespread in Kyrgyzstan, and their conduct has occasionally led to friction with the locals. Kyrgyzstan's political structure is defined by decentralization, and its legal system is regarded as relatively weak by some measures. The relatively weaker legal system in Kyrgyzstan, as opposed to neighboring Kazakhstan, has been identified as a contributing factor to the greater incidence of social unrest observed in the country. Chinese traders and businesses in Kyrgyzstan frequently function with limited government supervision, and a few have links to illicit undertakings. In 2006, there was a significant contrast in trade numbers between Kyrgyzstan and China, with Kyrgyzstan declaring USD 283 million in trade and China recording over USD 2.2 billion.⁴⁷⁶

The majority of Chinese immigrants residing in Kyrgyzstan are engaged in the shuttle trading sector. In Kyrgyzstan, there are 70,000 Dungans and 46,000 Uyghurs, according to statistics from 2012. However, information from 2004 indicates that there are roughly 900 Han Chinese living in the nation. It is probable that the actual number is higher, as there are challenges in obtaining precise information, much like the situation in Kazakhstan.⁴⁷⁷

Kyrgyzstan's strategic location along crucial transit routes is of great significance in China's Belt and Road Initiative, and as a result, the country has been receiving both direct and indirect investment from China in this area. Overall, given that it appears to be getting better all the time, it can be said that China and Kyrgyzstan's partnership

⁴⁷⁵ Kyrgyz Community Based Tourism Association (KCBTA), "Yearly Report," 2014.

⁴⁷⁶ Nicholas J. Steiner, "Chinese Migration to Central Asia: Contrasting Experiences between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan" (University of Washington, 2013).

⁴⁷⁷ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2016, <http://stat.kg/en/>

has a lot of room for expansion. On the other hand, the tourism that is being promoted in the area of Issyk Kul aims to improve the relationship between two countries by promoting the crossing of borders. Nonetheless, visitors originating from China opt not to cross into Kyrgyzstan directly, but rather use the Kazakhstan border for a more comfortable journey and then enter Kyrgyzstan through the Kazakh-Kyrgyz border. This circumstance is viewed as an additional signal of the prospect for promoting bilateral connections in border areas.

6.6. Border Security

The collapse of the Soviet Union marked the beginning of China's relationship with Central Asian countries, initially prioritizing security issues that hold crucial importance in the region. Given the significance of maintaining its territorial integrity and ensuring the stability of the troubled Xinjiang region, China remains deeply concerned about the border issue.⁴⁷⁸

China acknowledges the importance of its border regions in terms of their economic connections with neighboring countries and even beyond. Nonetheless, they approach cross-border links with prudence, as these could give rise to international issues. Such issues could include the growth of ethnic nationalism that transcends borders and potentially undermines China's efforts to build a cohesive nation, especially given the fragile nature its newly established neighbors. The presence of a permeable border and cross-border exchanges can introduce ambiguity into the relationship between China and its neighboring countries. China's neighbors suffer from underdevelopment, and often face governance and security challenges, with some being wracked by domestic conflicts or enduring widespread poverty. Its neighbors may also serve as breeding grounds for violent extremism and terrorism, as well as for human trade and drug trade, which can serve as sources of funding for such groups. Additionally, they may also be sources of violent crime and disease that can spread into China's border areas.

⁴⁷⁸ Steven Parham, "'Rightful' versus 'Real' Homelands: Changing Concepts of Kyrgyz Boundaries and Belonging on the China-Kyrgyzstan Frontier," *Asian Ethnicity* 15, no. 3 (2014): 265–85, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14631369.2013.832995>.

Ever since Central Asian countries became independent, China has made it a priority to ensure political stability and economic development in its interactions with them. To achieve this, China has employed a combination of bilateral and multilateral approaches, utilizing the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to further its interests. Although the nature and degree of China's engagement with these nations have fluctuated over the last two decades, China's attitude towards them has always rested on certain core principles such as respect for national sovereignty, maintenance of territorial integrity, and avoidance of meddling in each other's domestic affairs.⁴⁷⁹

6.7. Conclusion

In conclusion, Kyrgyzstan is one of the two economically underdeveloped countries in Central Asia that shares a border with China. Although the trade relationship between China and Kyrgyzstan is not as substantial as it is between China and Kazakhstan, China's interest in the region and its infrastructure investments in Kyrgyzstan have drawn attention. Additionally, Kyrgyzstan is strategically located on important transit routes in China's only road project, and as such, receives direct or indirect investments from China in this regard. Overall, the relationship between China and Kyrgyzstan has significant potential for growth as it seems to continue to develop.

⁴⁷⁹ Gudrun Wacker, "China and Its Central Asian Neighbour," in *China's Policies on Its Borderlands and the International Implications*, ed. Yufan Hao and Bill K P Chou (New Jersey: World Scientific, 2011), 69–91.

CHAPTER 7

SINO-TAJIK BORDER

7.1. Introduction

In 2002, the disputes pertaining to territorial boundaries between China and Tajikistan were settled, thereby setting the stage for a cordial and mutually advantageous relationship between the two nations. This chapter aims to examine Sino-Tajik border management from economic, social, and security perspective, providing a framework for understanding the relationship. Tajikistan, as the poorest Central Asian country, is strategically important for China due to its border with Afghanistan. Conversely, as China is a major energy consumer, the country's interest in Tajikistan's hydro-power energy has resulted in Chinese investment in that field.

7.2. Historical Background

Upon gaining independence in 1991, Tajikistan underwent period of civil war between 1992 and 1997. Since then it has achieved noteworthy economic growth and stability. Despite these advancements, however, it still ranks as one of the most impoverished nations in Central Asian Region. Its economy is heavily dependent on exports of aluminum and cotton, as well as on remittances received from Tajik nationals working abroad.⁴⁸⁰

The border that separates Tajikistan and China marks the boundary between an independent province in Tajikistan and self-governing county and province in China. Tajikistan is a diminutive nation that faces economic difficulties and is located next to

⁴⁸⁰ Iwashita, "Border Dynamics in Eurasia: Sino-Soviet Border Disputes and the Aftermath," 2008.

one of the most sparsely populated areas of China. Population of Tajikistan in 2022 was 9.1 million, with an estimated GDP of USD 2,522 billion.⁴⁸¹ Just 7% of Tajikistan's land is arable, and despite having valuable mineral deposits, the country's lack of access to the sea and poorly developed transportation infrastructure is impeding its economic growth. Challenges surrounding the management of public affairs, governance practices and protection of civil liberties serve as hindrances to both political and societal advancement within the nation. Tajikistan shares its borders with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to the north and west, respectively, while Afghanistan lies to its southern side. Tajikistan lacked any external partners to aid or mediate in the controversial territorial disagreement with China.⁴⁸²

In the 19th century, competition for territory between Russia and China often led to boundary divisions in remote, sparsely populated regions based on drainage divides or control of strategic mountain passes. Eastern Turkestan, which was controlled by the Qing dynasty in the 18th century, was a point of contention as Russia expanded into Central Asia in the 19th century. Russians also competed with British Empire in Central Asia, known as the “Great Game.”⁴⁸³

As Russia made progress in the northern regions of Central Asia, the British reacted by taking action from their southern position. China and Russia had a different opinion about the western boundary of Eastern Turkestan. Meanwhile, Britain and Russia argued over their areas of control's borders. Russian diplomats conducted negotiations that established a demarcation line separating the British and Russian spheres of influence. This delineation ultimately became recognized as Afghanistan's northern border, with Britain also agreeing to acknowledge the Sarikol divide in defining the eastern boundary of the Pamir region. As an outcome, present-day Badakshan (inTajikistan) came under Russian control rather than Chinese administration despite China not being involved in the Anglo-Russian accord reached during 1895. As a

⁴⁸¹ “The World Factbook CIA.”

⁴⁸² Gregory Gleason, “Tajikistan-China Border Normalization,” in *Beijing's Power and China's Borders: Twenty Neighbors in Asia*, ed. Bruce A. Elleman, Stephen Kotkin, and Clive Schofield (Routledge, 2013), 283–93.

⁴⁸³ Gleason.

result, China regards the accord serving as the foundation for the southern Xinjiang frontier as an "unequa treaty."⁴⁸⁴

The Treaty of Beijing in 1860 established the mid-Asia border between Russia and China based on the water divide principle. However, this method is not always practical for mountainous areas with complex terrain like the Sarikol ridge within the Pamir Knot, where multiple mountain ranges intersect. The disputed territory includes crucial water sources located along the eastern slope of Pamir Mountains.⁴⁸⁵

The region's physical geography, which includes snowmelt and runoff that contributes to the Tarim River in the Taklamakan desert basin and valleys sloping towards the Pyandzh River, is significant. However, political connections are equally important. Tajikistan has distinct political relationships with neighboring countries such as Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Iran besides its delicate relations with China.⁴⁸⁶

Tajikistan is comprised of four primary administrative divisions: Khatlon, Sugd, the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (known as Pamir to the locals), and districts that are under the direct authority of the republic. The majority of the population resides in the western regions, specifically Khatlon, Sugd, and the Republic. The eastern region, despite its large size, has a comparably lower population density and fewer roads and railways. Nonetheless, the eastern region serves as a crucial border to China and is therefore of great importance to Tajikistan's trade and transportation industries.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁴ Gregory Gleason, "Why Russia Is in Tajikistan," *Comparative Strategy* 20, no. 1 (2001): 77–89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01495930150501124>.

⁴⁸⁵ Tobias Kraudzun, "From the Pamir Frontier to International Borders : Exchange Relations of the Borderland Population," in *Subverting Borders- Doing Research on Smuggling & Small-Scale Trade*, ed. Bettina Bruns Judith Miggelbrink (Heidelberg: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2012), 166–86.

⁴⁸⁶ Gleason, "Why Russia Is in Tajikistan."

⁴⁸⁷ Graham Sherbut, Nazneen Kanji, and Juanita Hatcher, "Linking Past and Future: Cross-Border Development and Quality of Life in the Badakhshans," *Central Asian Survey* 34, no. 2 (2015): 255–71, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634937.2014.976948>.

7.3. Trade

Tajikistan is a mountainous country with a weak economy heavily dependent on mineral extraction, agriculture, and remittances from Tajik workers abroad. Its natural resources are uranium, gold, silver, coal and tungsten. While there are mainly small, outdated food and industrial factories, a large aluminum plant and substantial hydropower facilities are also available. The civil war that occurred between 1992 and 1997 caused additional harm to the economy, leading to a significant drop in both agricultural and industrial output. Only 7% of Tajikistan's land is suitable for farming and it relies mainly on cotton production. It is the most impoverished among the previous Soviet republics. As a result, the country imports about 70% of its food. Tajikistan per capita GDP at only USD 38,058 billion (2021).⁴⁸⁸

Therefore, further economic reforms are needed to address financial risks. Dushanbe serves as an important industrial and cultural center in a rich agricultural area that is also home to coal, lead, and arsenic mines. The city is renowned for its cotton products but also manufactures silk products, clothing items, textile machinery parts, tractor components, appliances, leather goods and food products. It has air connection to Moscow and other capitals in Central Asia while being connected by rail to Termez in Uzbekistan.⁴⁸⁹

Tajikistan possesses significant deposits of various minerals, such as gas, oil, coal, mercury, antimony, ore, lead, silver, zinc, and construction materials. Currently, over 400 fields containing these resources have been found and are available for improvement. The northern Sugd region contains reserves of construction materials like marble, granite, and limestone, while tungsten deposits have been found about 95 km away from the capital city of Dushanbe. The Khatlon area is currently exploring four deposits of the rare metal strontium, which is widely utilized in the atomic, chemical, metallurgical, and pharmaceutical industries. However, the lack of government resources and the complicated negotiations with foreign investors have

⁴⁸⁸ "The World Factbook CIA."

⁴⁸⁹ Asian Development Bank, "Tajikistan: Trade Facilitation and Logistics Development Strategy Report" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2009).

resulted in no active exploration or development of these deposits at present. These resources could have been utilized for exploration during the negotiation period.⁴⁹⁰

Tajikistan's significant hydropower resources, capable of producing 300 billion kilowatt-hours annually, are the foundation for the country's crucial export product, electricity.⁴⁹¹ Tajikistan is home to the biggest hydroelectric power station in Central Asia, Nurek Dam.⁴⁹² In addition, the building of the Rogun and Sangtuda hydropower plants along the Vakhsh River is underway and these facilities are predicted to significantly boost Tajikistan's electricity production capacity once finished. The value of electricity exports from the country was 53 billion US dollars in 2015.⁴⁹³

The Tajikistan Customs Department, headquartered Dushanbe, is responsible for regulating cross-border trade. Its objectives include protecting and increasing the country's revenue, combating illegal activities, and maintaining operations in borders. In accordance with Tajikistan's commitment to the principles of the World Customs Organization, the Customs Department has achieved improvements in the effectiveness and openness of its activities. This progress can be seen by the increase in foreign trade and custom clearances.⁴⁹⁴

Tajikistan is highly dependent on Uzbekistan due to its geographical location. In order to export to Europe and other Central Asian countries, it has to pass through the territory of Uzbekistan. Despite the friendship agreement signed in 2000, Uzbekistan is blocking Tajikistan's imports and exports without warning. Some areas of the border are dangerous with mines. Tajik drivers are often stopped for inspections, causing

⁴⁹⁰ IMF, Tajikistan Country Report, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2016/cr1641.pdf>

⁴⁹¹ World Bank, Enhancing Regional Power Trade in Central Asia, (Washington DC, 2016).

⁴⁹² Olsson, Oliver; Bauer, Melanie; Ikramova, Malika; Froebrich, Jochen, *The Role Of The Amu Darya Dams And Reservoirs In Future Water Supply In The Amu Darya Basin*, in: Qi J., Evered K.T. (eds) *Environmental Problems of Central Asia and their Economic, Social and Security Impacts*. (2008) NATO Science for Peace and Security Series C: Environmental Security. Springer, Dordrecht

⁴⁹³ Asian Development Bank, "Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program in Tajikistan: Building A Global Future," 2015.

⁴⁹⁴ Sebastien Peyrouse, "Tajikistan's New Trade: Cross-Border Commerce and the China-Afghanistan Link," *PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo*, no. 169 (2011): 1–6.

delays. Furthermore, limitations on visas make it difficult for businessmen to move between the two countries. Removal of these trade barriers would be advantageous for everyone involved.⁴⁹⁵

To facilitate the flow of goods and improve customs administration, the Customs Department requires appropriate infrastructure upgrades. Specifically, the roads must be enhanced to accommodate increased traffic volume and weight. Karamik is a vital border crossing point for Tajikistan's goods entering Kyrgyzstan. The border facilities require upgrades, including the construction of temporary storage warehouses, procurement of telecommunication equipment for improved communication and control, and access to better inspection equipment. Some border checkpoints are not available throughout the year. For instance, Kulma Pass, which is a crucial entryway between Tajikistan and China, shuts down for five months each year because of the severe winter climate. Even when the pass is open, it only operates when the weather conditions are suitable.⁴⁹⁶

Since Xinjiang is the entryway to China's rapidly expanding market, it's important to talk about Tajikistan's trade with this area. In the past, Tajikistan had limited trade with China, and there was hardly any cross-border trade until 2004. Before the inauguration of Kulma Pass in 2004, which serves as a checkpoint at the border, there existed no direct mode of transportation connecting both nations except for air transport. In addition, China's road vehicles had to travel through Pakistan to reach Tajikistan. The inauguration of Kulma Pass was a pivotal moment in the advancement of road transportation and commercial connections between both nations.⁴⁹⁷ The Kulma Pass is the main access point utilized for facilitating cross-border trade activities between Tajikistan and Xinjiang. Ever since its inception as a checkpoint at the border, there has been a substantial rise in the volume of both goods and people that pass through

⁴⁹⁵ Jusup Pirmibaev, Kamalbek Karymshakov, and Junus Ganiev, "Perspectives on Kyrgyzstan's and Tajikistan's Membership to Common Economic Space of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia," in *Central Asian Economies in Transition*, ed. E. Ayşen Hiç Gencer and Cevat Gerni (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012).

⁴⁹⁶ Pirmibaev, Karymshakov, and Ganiev.

⁴⁹⁷ Nargis Kassenova, "China as an Emerging Donor in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan" (Paris, Bruxelles, 2009).

it. It is expected to continue playing a crucial part in Tajikistan-China relations. Nevertheless, there are some significant drawbacks to its use. Firstly, due to its cold climate, it can be challenging to live and work in the area. Secondly, the harsh terrain in Pamir can be a threat to transportation. Finally, the surface conditions of the roads in the region are considerably poor.⁴⁹⁸

The Dushanbe-Khorog-Murgab-Kulma Pass-Kashgar route's condition can be unpredictable. From Dushanbe and Khorog, the road is inadequately cared and presents challenges in navigation. Vehicles carrying China containers are required to halt at Khorog to unload their cargo and switch to smaller vehicles due to the narrow and risky nature of the road, resulting in an arduous almost a week-long journey by delivery vehicles. The Khorog - Kulma Pass section is relatively in good condition. The final part of the road from Kulma Pass to Kashgar is within Chinese borders and in good shape too.⁴⁹⁹

In Pamir, traders face the constraint of encountering difficulties when acquiring visa due to the absence of a Chinese consulate in the district's administrative center. They need to visit the Chinese embassy in Dushanbe to apply for a visa, resulting in increased expenses and delays. The traders also have complaints about the visa fees imposed by the Chinese side.⁵⁰⁰

Despite the aforementioned challenges, there has been a notable upswing in the volume of trade and investment between China and Tajikistan since 2004. Numerous Chinese enterprises are presently investing in Tajikistan, on a wide range of sectors. However, to augment the trade volume with China further, Tajikistan must confront the subpar physical condition of its transportation infrastructure. Road transportation is the only viable means of transport. If there are no investments and enhancements,

⁴⁹⁸ Steven Parham, "The Bridge That Divides: Local Perceptions of the Connected State in the Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan – China Borderlands," *Central Asian Survey* 35, no. 3 (2016): 351–68.

⁴⁹⁹ Parham, "The Bridge That Divides: Local Perceptions of the Connected State in the Kyrgyzstan – Tajikistan – China Borderlands."

⁵⁰⁰ Asian Development Bank, "Tajikistan: Trade Facilitation and Logistics Development Strategy Report."

it will continue to remain exorbitant and fraught with delays, potentially deterring the growth of trade volumes.⁵⁰¹

7.4. Transportation

Tajikistan's transportation industry is primarily comprised of three subsectors: road, rail, and air transport. Since there are no seas or waterways around Tajikistan, it lacks a water transportation. Tajikistan's railway system is split into two sections; the northern section and the southern one. These sections are not connected to each other. Among the four regions of Tajikistan, only the Gorno Badakhshan region lacks railroads. The other three regions share a total of 950 km of railways (422 km in Khatlon, 314 km Sudg, 214 km in the Republic).⁵⁰²

Around 66% of the total railway cargo transportation in Tajikistan comprises transit rail traffic, and most of them passes through the northern region of the country, particularly the cities of Kanibadam and Khuzhand. This indicates that Tajikistan's railway system plays a significant role in the transportation of goods through the country, especially as a transit route. The northern section of Tajikistan appears to be a significant transportation hub due to the considerable amount of transit rail traffic it handles.

Tajikistan relies heavily on railways for transporting goods that are bulky but of low worth, such as construction supplies, cotton, wheat, and cement. However, Like other railways in the area, Tajikistan also encounters comparable challenges with its railway system. Firstly, significant investment is required to revamp the railway tracks, which have deteriorated over time and are presently in a poor state. Secondly, the locomotives are also old and in a dilapidated state, which hinders their ability to transport heavier

⁵⁰¹ Asian Development Bank, "Developing Tajikistan's Transport Sector" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2011).

⁵⁰² Sherbut, Kanji, and Hatcher, "Linking Past and Future: Cross-Border Development and Quality of Life in the Badakhshans."

loads or achieve higher speeds. Lastly, the theft of goods while in transit is a considerable issue that deters transportation companies from using the railways.⁵⁰³

In contrast to many other countries, Tajikistan's transportation system faces unique challenges, as roads are the preferred mode of domestic transportation instead of railways. Another issue is the lack of interconnectivity between the north and east railway lines, which requires passing through enclaves to travel between them. However, constructing a railway to connect these lines is not feasible due to the prohibitive cost of traversing the mountainous Gissar and Zeravshan ranges.⁵⁰⁴ The northern enclave of Tajikistan depends heavily on rail lines for the transit of goods between Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic. Meanwhile, the southern part of the country relies on railways as a vital route for transporting goods to Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran. However, the ongoing instability in Afghanistan poses significant challenges in transporting goods through this route.⁵⁰⁵

As far as the road transportation is concerned, Tajikistan has a network of 30,000 km. The local roads in Tajikistan are mostly intended for rural areas and are not suitable for international trade. Asphalt roads make up 45% of the country's road system, while concrete pavements account for about 30%. The remaining portion is composed of dirt roads.⁵⁰⁶

Tajikistan has constructed a bridge connecting Nizhniy Pyandzri in Tajikistan to Shir Khan in Afghanistan's Kunduz province with funding from the United States. The recently established gateway at the Tajik-Afghan border is the initial one to adhere to international norms. The bridge forms a crucial component of the fresh transport route

⁵⁰³ Qian et al., "CAREC Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring 2015" (Mandaluyong City; Asian Development Bank, 2016).

⁵⁰⁴ Asian Development Bank, "Safely Connected: A Regional Road Safety Strategy for CAREC Countries, 2017-2030" (Mandaluyong City, Philippines, 2017).

⁵⁰⁵ Graham Sherbut, Nazneen Kanji, and Juanita Hatcher, "Linking Past and Future: Cross-Border Development and Quality of Life in the Badakhshans," *Central Asian Survey* 34, no. 2 (2015): 255–71.

⁵⁰⁶ Asian Development Bank, "Tajikistan: Trade Facilitation and Logistics Development Strategy Report."

that is set to connect Central Asia with South Asia. Its construction is expected to reduce cargo travel duration from Tashkent, Uzbekistan, to Karachi in Pakistan. However, the prevailing political instability in Afghanistan presents a substantial obstacle.⁵⁰⁷

Tajikistan's transportation infrastructure, including both roads and rails, is not designed for intermodal transportation due to several reasons. Firstly, the only means of transportation available between the northern and southern parts of Tajikistan is by road, which is not accessible throughout the year. This limitation significantly hinders the smooth movement of goods between the two regions. Secondly, the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region has poorly maintained roads and lacks railway lines, which makes it challenging to expand trade between Tajikistan and China. Thirdly, there is a shortage of integrated terminals that can facilitate seamless transfer of goods from trucks to rail wagons and vice versa. Lastly, the existing terminals require warehouses to temporarily store goods because of a lack of coordination between the schedules of truck and locomotive arrivals and departures.⁵⁰⁸

Since Tajikistan is a landlocked country with limited land transportation opportunities, air transport is of utmost importance for the country. Nevertheless, it represents just 0.01% of all freight volume in Tajikistan because of high expenses and insufficient number of flights.⁵⁰⁹ There are 15 airports in Tajikistan. Four of them are international airports namely Dushanbe, Khuzhand, Kulyab, and Kurgan-Tyube.⁵¹⁰

Tajikistan's air transportation industry faces significant challenges due to policies and procedures that are not aligned with international standards. The process of clearing goods is made difficult by the differences in how Tajik customs authorities interpret

⁵⁰⁷ The World Bank, "Improving Trade and Transport for Landlocked Developing Countries: World Bank Contributions to Implementing the Almaty Programme of Action." (2008).

⁵⁰⁸ *Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossing - A Trade and Transport Facilitation Perspective* (Vienna: OECE, 2012), http://www.unece.org/trans/publications/wp30/best_practices.html.

⁵⁰⁹ Qian et al., "CAREC Corridor Performance Measurement and Monitoring 2015," (Mandaluyong City; Asian Development Bank, 2016).

⁵¹⁰ *Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossing - A Trade and Transport Facilitation Perspective*.

and execute policies. As an instance, alterations in the management of border control can lead to new officers stopping cargoes on the grounds of supposed violations of rules that were not previously acknowledged. As a result, Dushanbe airport's attractiveness as a destination airport is diminishing, and it is barely handling any transit air freight. In contrast, Tashkent and Almaty airports are gaining more attention from air cargo handlers, whereas Dushanbe is lagging behind in comparison.⁵¹¹

7.5. Tourism, Visa, and Immigration

In the decade following Tajikistan's independence from the Soviet Union, there has been a significant increase in tourist activity. As a result, it is important for the tourism industry to focus on improving and transforming the destination experience in various ways. A positive image of a destination is crucial since people's perception of a destination heavily influences their priorities. Despite the economic downturn, rising oil prices, and global unemployment, tourism in Tajikistan has declined gradually since 2008.⁵¹²

In 2004, the Kulma-Karasu border was set up at the boundary between China and Tajikistan. In 2016, it was upgraded from a seasonal to a year-round crossing. The number of individuals passing through this gate has risen from 8,000 to 16,000 between 2008 and 2013. It is uncertain if these individuals were tourists on a shopping trip, but the establishment of a free-trade zone at the border post in 2006 was unsuccessful.⁵¹³

Tajikistan is a nation that proactively dispatches its labor force to foreign lands, predominantly in Russia, for pursuing lucrative job prospects. A study carried out between 2012 and 2013 aimed to investigate how labor migration affects family

⁵¹¹ Asian Development Bank, "Air Transport Capacity Enhancement Project."

⁵¹² Valery Tishkov, Zhanna Zayinchkovskaya, and Galina Vitkovskaya, "Migration in the Countries of the Former Soviet Union," *Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration*, no. September (2005): 42.

⁵¹³ Parhad Keyim Idikut, "Silk Road Economic Belt Initiative and Inbound Tourism Development in the Uyghur Autonomous Region," *Advances in Applied Sociology*, 2020.

dynamics of Tajik migrants working in Russia. The research involved the use of surveys and in-depth interviews with participants both in Tajikistan and Russia. The findings indicated that these changes had a profound impact on families, society, and even the country's demographic development in the long run.⁵¹⁴

The migratory trends observed in the Central Asian region indicate that there is a prevalent inclination towards migration from Tajikistan to China, as opposed to the converse. Being a growing nation, Tajikistan is deficient in the required infrastructure and sources that could draw substantial financing from China. Furthermore, the persistent instability and security issues in Afghanistan, which shares a border with Tajikistan, intensify the financial difficulties faced by the country, thereby rendering it less appealing for China.⁵¹⁵

7.6. Border Security

China's economic influence has expanded, and as a result, it has increased its presence in various areas, including the military. There are those who contend that China's actions in Central Asia are justifiable due to its security interests. These individuals believe that China has legitimate reasons to expand its presence in the region in order to protect itself from potential threats. China has been increasing its investment in security measures in Central Asia, with the goal of creating secure zones along borderlines of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan. This investment is driven primarily by China's concerns about the potential threat posed by radical Islam in the region, particularly in Xinjiang.⁵¹⁶

China has formed an alliance with Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan to combat domestic militant threats, and it appears that China is urging these countries to increase

⁵¹⁴ R. H. Rowland, "National and Regional Population Trends in Tajikistan: Results from the Recent Census," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 46, 3 (2005), p. 202-223.

⁵¹⁵ Kraudzun, "From the Pamir Frontier to International Borders : Exchange Relations of the Borderland Population."

⁵¹⁶ Sherbut, Kanji, and Hatcher, "Linking Past and Future: Cross-Border Development and Quality of Life in the Badakhshans."

military and security collaboration. The purpose of the alliance is to enhance coordination with regional nations in the fight against terrorism.⁵¹⁷

In 2016, China and Tajikistan participated in a counterterrorism exercise held in Tajikistan, close to the border with Afghanistan. While there has been little public discussion of the increased military cooperation, it appears that Tajikistan's willingness to strengthen ties with China is linked to its growing concern about the threat posed by radical Islamists. Russian officials have not publicly criticized China's growing military presence in Tajikistan, but it is likely that Moscow is uneasy about China's rapid expansion in the Central Asian region. Although Russia's influence in the region has declined in the last decade, Central Asia is far from being given up by the Russians.⁵¹⁸ Russian officials are being careful not to overstate the importance of China's current actions in Tajikistan. They believe that the military alliance between China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Tajikistan is too narrow to evolve into a quasi-NATO since its main objective is to enhance border security. Although Russia has not been asked to join the new alliance, it has maintained military presence in Tajikistan for over 50 years. According to reports, the most recent military agreement extends Russia's military presence in Tajikistan until 2042.⁵¹⁹

China has become a major player in both the economic and military spheres in Central Asia. In 2015, Tajikistan received a substantial investment of USD 273 million from China. Furthermore, as reported by EurasiaNet, the country's growing economic reliance on China became evident in 2011 when the Tajik government agreed to transfer roughly 1% of its land to China in exchange for the forgiveness of some of its outstanding debts. This increasing economic cooperation has allowed China to exert greater influence in Tajikistan and the wider Central Asian region. Additionally, China's military presence in the region, as evidenced by the establishment of a military

⁵¹⁷ Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes*.

⁵¹⁸ Souleymane Coulibaly, "Shifting Comparative Advantages in Tajikistan: Implications for Growth Strategy," no. July (2012), <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/11941/WPS6125.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

⁵¹⁹ EurasiaNet, "China Holds Anti-Terror Exercises on Afghanistan-Tajikistan Border," 2016, <https://eurasianet.org/china-holds-anti-terror-exercises-afghanistan-tajikistan-border>.

alliance with Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, has further solidified its influence and strategic interests in the area.”⁵²⁰

China's engagement in Central Asia has been characterized by its interests in both economic and security areas. As part of its Silk Road initiative, China has sought to play an important role in the region's security sector. This interest is likely aimed at ensuring that al-Qaeda or Taliban groups in Tajikistan do not pose a significant security threat to China, especially to its Xinjiang province. China's recent military alliance with Tajikistan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan is part of its efforts to ensure regional security and project its military power in the region. The alliance has a similar symbolic function as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a joint organization between China and Russia. China's military exercises in Tajikistan, which are part of the alliance's activities, are also aimed at showcasing its military capacity.⁵²¹

China has been primarily motivated by its security interests in the region. The Chinese government has been trying to rule out any extremist or terrorist activities that are originating from Afghanistan. In addition, China has intended to avert any destabilization in the region. China's main security concern has been the threat posed by the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, a separatist group endeavors to detach Xinjiang and establish an Islamic state, thereby freeing the Uighurs from China.⁵²²

7.7. Conclusion

Despite the limited current contact between China and Tajikistan at the border, there is significant potential for the development of bilateral relations. Tajikistan primarily generates electricity through hydroelectric power plants, which attract Chinese investment in the energy sector. The country's key industries include nonferrous metallurgy, light industry, and food production. Agriculture in Tajikistan includes

⁵²⁰ EurasiaNet.

⁵²¹ Zhao Huasheng, “China’s View of and Expectations from the Shanghai Cooperation Organization,” *Asian Survey* 53, no. 3 (2013): 436–60.

⁵²² Jennifer Murtazashvili, “China’s Activities and Influence in South and Central Asia,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2022.

cotton cultivation, silk farming, fruit growing, and grape cultivation. Tajikistan has expressed a strong interest in joining the Belt and Road Initiative and to expanding collaboration in different sectors such as trade, energy, transportation, agriculture, investment, and finance, as well as to increase cultural and people-to-people exchanges, in order to promote sustained and healthy development of bilateral ties.



CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

This study examines China's policies towards its border nations of Mongolia, Russia, and the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan from 1991 to 2019. The dissertation aims to comprehend the impact of China's economic expansion on its border relations with neighboring countries and how it aligns with China's self-interests. As China's economy has grown, there are concerns about whether its strengthened military abilities will result in aggressive behavior in the area. The present study posits that preserving secure borders and cultivating amicable relations with China's northern periphery is crucial for ensuring the country's ongoing peaceful rise. To this end, the English School of International Relations was employed as the theoretical framework, acknowledging the limitations that any singular theoretical approach may entail. Despite these limitations, the English School's interdisciplinary nature and prominent position within the field of International Relations make it an appropriate choice, as its conceptual tools provide a consistent means of analyzing the concept of borders, ethnicity, territory and international relations. It should also be noted that utilizing additional theories of border policy and examining China's border relations and interests could shed further light on the subject matter and open new avenues for inquiry. However, this falls outside the purview of the current study, which aims to provide a foundation for future scholarly research in this field.

Since its reform and opening up (1978), China's diplomacy has strongly emphasized fostering a favorable environment for domestic economic development by actively cultivating good-neighborly relations with neighboring countries. As a result, China has made significant efforts to strengthen its relationships with nations such as

ASEAN, Mongolia, Vietnam, India, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, and others in a gradual improvement in these relations.

After the Cold War, China has made significant efforts to settle its boundary issues with its neighbors through equal negotiations, mutual understanding, and accommodation. Additionally, agreements were reached to freeze pending boundary issues until a final solution could be achieved. To further explore means to settle remaining boundary issues, the leaders of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan held meetings in Shanghai and Moscow in 1996 and 1997 and agreed on implementing confidence-building measures in military actions and disarmament of border regions. These meetings established the annual mechanism of the Shanghai Five, facilitating the peaceful settlement of remaining boundary issues and increasing mutual trust among member states. This led to the extension of mutually beneficial collaboration among the member states from the security field to political, diplomatic, economic, and cultural areas. It is worth noting that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), established in 2001, plays a crucial role in solving border problems between China and the Central Asian republics. Since its formation, the SCO has internally pursued the peaceful resolution of border issues and has fostered cooperation among member states.

China's approach to territorial disputes often involves compromise, with a significant portion of these compromises driven by domestic threats to its security. Ethnic unrest within China is one example of how internal threats to a state's territorial integrity can motivate cooperation with neighboring nations. For instance, some Uyghur groups in the northwest have closer ties to countries west of China and have links to separatist movements in these countries. This has urged China to form alliances with Central Asian countries to address the Uyghur issue. China's strategy for addressing these internal and external challenges is multifaceted, balancing the need for maintaining a peaceful external environment, maximizing economic benefits, and addressing internal security concerns by shifting its focus on its border regions, making sure that provinces on border areas help to secure a stable relationship with neighboring countries and also benefit from the interregional economic interaction.

Managing China's borders with neighboring countries has become important in its international relations. This dissertation presents the findings of five case studies on China's border management with its neighboring countries. The first case of the Sino-Mongol border management reveals an annual rise in cross-border mobility and Chinese investment in transportation infrastructure, particularly in railways, which have positively impacted border relations. Both sides also promote cultural interaction since sharing the same ethnic and historical background with Mongolia and Inner Mongolia. In the second case, despite the challenges both sides face due to the imperial historical background, the study shows that in Sino-Russian relations, the Chinese side is more proactive in enhancing trade, transportation, and mobility, focusing on labor migration on the border. Although there are concerns about competition for jobs, and cultural and language differences, the issue of labor migration remains complex. The third case on the Sino-Kazakh border management focuses on the Almaty region's railway stations and highlights the potential to improve bilateral border relations and trade between China and Kazakhstan. This border region is one of the most open and suitable for investment and ethnic connections. The border region also bridges China and the West and China and the Middle East. Additionally, China seeks sustainable oil and gas suppliers, making Kazakhstan a good alternative. In the fourth case, despite border trade with Kyrgyzstan accounting for a small portion of total international trade with China, it significantly affects the economic progress of the border regions, mainly Xinjiang province. The study also reveals that Chinese tourists entering the area from Kazakhstan use the Chinese Kazakh border instead of the Chinese Kyrgyz border to reach Issyk Kul Lake (in Kyrgyzstan), indicating a need for investment and improvement in Kyrgyz border transportation with China. The fifth case study on China's border relations with Tajikistan, the other poorest country in Central Asia, shows that both sides try to increase their benefit from the mutual border by promoting local service and production and raising local employment, resulting in positive economic impacts for the local economies. Tajikistan has a vast electricity potential which attracts China.

One of the findings confirmed by the thesis is: that China's interest in maintaining stability in Central Asia, which is crucial to the strength of its western periphery, has remained consistent over the past two decades. China will likely continue using a

combination of bilateral and multilateral approaches in its relations with Central Asian countries. The SCO may not be deeply institutionalized, but it serves as a valuable framework for China, the driving force behind it. China will also continue to work towards a more robust integration of its western territories with the Chinese heartland and neighboring states through communication infrastructure. Despite the security risks, opening borders' economic and political benefits have far outweighed the risks. The extent to which this approach will contribute to stability in Xinjiang and the surrounding regions is still to be determined.

The border regions between China and Russia, Mongolia, and three Central Asian countries are particularly interesting for border studies due to China's rapid economic growth and increasing regional disparities. China has advocated its engagement in establishing regional transportation systems as a means to create an open Asian market. Still, the reality is that it recognizes the strategic importance of trans-Asian logistics networks to gain an advantage in the competition for investment, export markets, and natural resources. It has become evident that the establishment of new logistics routes has helped China to enhance its economic standing in nearby areas. China's fast-growing economy has become directly connected to previously inaccessible markets. The increasing traffic through Chinese trade ports demonstrates that China is progressing towards achieving two main goals: securing access to rich natural resources and tapping into the markets in the close vicinity. Furthermore, it has been more successful in doing so than its competitors.

The research suggests that the Sino-Russian border offers an opportunity to improve relations between them. In the past, China and Russia had conflicts over their shared borderland, but they signed an agreement in 2008 to reduce the border. As a result, the border regions have become more stable and secure. Plans for economic development in Heilongjiang and Blagoveshchensk have also helped to foster trade and transportation between the two. China and Russia's cooperation on border issues and their shared role in the global order have strengthened their geopolitical relationship. China's One Belt, One Road framework also involves potential investment opportunities for China to expand its infrastructure into Russia, with the possible goal of accessing new resources from Russia as an energy supplier.

The Sino-Mongolian border relations chapter illustrates that China's main goal for its foreign policy strategy is to secure energy and raw materials to sustain its population's rising standard of living. By doing so, it is also able to address ethnic separatism issues. The ultimate aim is to create a peaceful environment and to attain the maximum economic advantages. Inside the country, China has also altered its policy towards its border regions, ensuring that these provinces play a role in maintaining stable relations with neighboring counties and also benefit from economic interaction between the regions.

China is currently emphasizing on strengthening its borders while also extending its influence outward, which forms a crucial aspect of its foreign policy strategy. The primary motivation for this strategy is to ensure a steady supply of energy and raw materials to sustain the improving quality of life of its citizens. China has adopted a unidimensional approach to foreign relations to achieve this goal, strengthening its ties with global powers and improving relations with the neighboring countries. Although several factors may influence Chinese foreign policy behavior, it seems that China's policies toward its borders are gaining more significance.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

Bu alışmanın birincil odak noktası, in'in kuzey ve kuzeybatı sınır hattında yer alan komşuları, Moğolistan, Rusya, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan ve Tacikistan'a yönelik sınır yönetimini ve sınır politikasını incelemektir. Bu alışmanın cevaplamaya alıştığı, in'in ekonomik büyümesinin adı geçen sınır komşularıyla sınır yönetimi dahilinde sınır ticareti, ulaşım, sınır geçiş hareketliliği (vize ve göç/işçi göçü) ve sınır güvenliği konuları temelinde ikili ilişkilerini nasıl geliştiği ve in'in çıkarlarıyla örtüşüp örtüşmediği sorudur. in'in ekonomisi büyüdükçe, artan askeri yeteneklerinin özellikle uluslararası ilişkiler disiplini çerçevesinde realizmin ve neorealizmin temsilcileri akademisyen ve uzmanlar bölgede saldırgan eylemlerin oluşabileceği öngörüsünde bulunmuştur. alışmanın sonuçları ise göstermiştir ki güvenli sınırlar ve komşu ülkelerle sınır yönetimlerinin olumlu yönde ilerletilmesi, in'in önce bölgesel ve sonra da küresel barışçıl yükselişinin sürdürülebilirliği açısından hayati öneme sahiptir.

in'in beş ülkenin her biri ile olan sınır yönetimi tezdeki vaka alışmalarıdır. Her ülkenin ikili tarihsel arka planı verildikten sonra karşılıklı ticaret, ulaşım, vize ve göç konularının da yer aldığı sınır hareketliliği ve güvenlik yönetimi başlıkları bağımlı değişken olarak saptanmıştır. Bağımsız değişkenler ise uluslararası konjonktür, örneğin in'in ABD ile ilişkileri veya Moğolistan'ın izlediği in'i Rusya ve ABD ile dengeleme politikası ve in ile beş komşusu arasındaki ikili ilişkiler olarak belirlenmiştir. Bu tezde kullanılan metodoloji, İngiliz Okulu'nun teorik çerçevesine dayanan analitik bir açıklama geliştirmeye yardımcı olan vaka alışması ve süreç izlemeyi içermektedir.

Çin'in adı geçen komşuları seçilirken tarihi Çin Seddi'nin bulunduğu kuşak tercih edilmiştir. MÖ 246 yılları arasında inşa edilen ve UNESCO dünya mirası listesinde yer alan ve orijinal haliyle 9 bin km'yi bulan Çin Seddi çalışma için ilham kaynağı olmuştur. Ming Hanedanlığı döneminde inşa edilen bu mühendislik dehası duvarın iki temel amacı vardı. İlk olarak, Çin'in erken imparatorluk döneminde, feodal devletler sınırlarını korumak için birbirleri arasında bariyerler inşa ettiler. İkincisi, kuzey Çin gelişip uygarlaştıkça, duvarlar göçebe kabilelerden ve kuzey barbarlarına karşı savunma amacıyla inşa edildi. Çin Seddi, Çin halkının güvenlik endişelerinin bir sınırı ve sembolü olarak hizmet etti. Tez, Çin'in kuzey ve kuzeybatı bölgelerindeki bu sınır ve güvenlik kavramlarını bugünün koşullarında ve sınırlarında derinlemesine araştırmaktadır.

'Sınır' terimi, iki ülkeyi, bölgeyi veya diğer alanları ayıran bir çizgiyi ifade etmektedir. Hem doğa bilimlerinde hem de sosyal bilimlerde 'sınır bölgeleri', 'sınırlar' 'hudut' gibi eşanlamlı olarak kullanılmaktadır. Coğrafya, tarih, ekonomi, antropoloji, siyaset dahil olmak üzere çeşitli disiplinlerde kendine yer edinen 'sınır' kelimesi disiplinler arası bir kavramdır.

Bu çalışmada, Dünya Bankası'nın sınır yönetimi tasviri, 'bir ülkenin sınırları boyunca mal ve hizmet akışını düzenlemeye yönelik politika ve prosedürler dizisi' tanım olarak kabul edilmiştir. Bu tanım ile sınır yönetimi ulusal yasalara uyumu sağlamak, halk sağlığını ve güvenliğini korumak ve yasadışı mal ve insan kaçakçılığını önlemek için gümrük ve diğer idari prosedürlerin kullanılmasını içerir. Etkili bir sınır yönetimi, güvenlik ve kamu düzenini korurken ticaret ve yatırımı kolaylaştırmak için kritik öneme sahiptir.

Sınır yönetimi, gümrük ve göçmenlik kontrolü, ticaretin kolaylaştırılması ve sınır güvenliği konularının dahil olduğu ancak bunlarla sınırlı kalmayacak şekilde çok çeşitli faaliyetleri kapsayan karmaşık ve çok yönlü bir süreçtir. Yasal çerçevelerin, bilgi sistemlerinin ve fiziksel altyapının geliştirilmesi ve uygulanması, insanların ve malların sınır ötesi verimli ve güvenli hareketini sağlamada hayati bir rol oynamaktadır.

Bu çalışma ülkelerin sınırları boyunca mal ve hizmet hareketini düzenlemek için uyguladıkları politika ve prosedürleri içeren sınır yönetimi kavramını kullanarak Çin'in ilgili komşu ülkeler ile ikili ilişkilerinin politik çerçevesini çizmeyi ve onu kuramsal bir alt yapıda tanımlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Diğer bir deyişle bu çalışma spesifik olarak, sınır yönetiminin Çin'in kuzey ve kuzeybatı komşuları arasındaki ticari etkileşimler ve ikili ilişkilerini uluslararası ilişkiler disiplini perspektifinden değerlendirmektedir. Çalışmada sınır ile ilgili olarak iki boyut ele alınmaktadır: anlaşmaları, sınırlamaları ve ikili ilişkileri dikkate alan tarihsel boyut ve sınır ticareti, ulaşım, vize, göç, turizm ve sınır politikasını içeren sınır yönetimi unsurları boyutu. Sınır yönetiminin tarihsel boyutu, hudut çizmek için kullanılan yöntemler ve sınırların nasıl kontrol edildiği ve sürdürüldüğü gibi sınırla ilgili kavramların anlaşılmasına önemli ölçüde katkıda bulunmaktadır. Aynı zamanda uluslararası sınırların belirlenmesi aşaması ikili ilişkilerin tarihi hakkında da bilgi vermektedir. Çalışmanın ikinci boyutu, bağımlı çoklu değişkenleri içeren sınırların incelenmesinin karmaşık doğasına odaklanmaktadır: ticaret, ulaşım, vize ve turizm ve güvenlik politikası.

Her sınır ve çevredeki bölgelerin kendine özgü özellikleri vardır, bu da spesifik ve ayrıntılı bir çalışma gerektirir. Sınırların çok çeşitli maddi ve sembolik kullanımları vardır ve yalnızca örnek olay incelemelerinin veya karşılaştırmaların sayısını artırmak, çağdaş sınırları tam olarak anlamak için yeterli olmayabilir. Belirli bir sınırın siyasi, sosyal, ekonomik ve kültürel faktörlerini anlamak, genel olarak sınırların teorik ve tarihsel bağlamda incelenmesini gerektirmektedir. Tarihsel olarak, sınır çalışmaları öncelikle sınırların anlaşmalar, hudut çizme gibi tarihsel yönlerine odaklanmıştır. On yedinci yüzyılda Avrupa'da imzalanan Westphalia Anlaşması ile oluşturulan sistemin kurulmasından bu yana, sınırların çizilmesi küresel sistemde çok önemli bir faktör olagelmektedir. Dolayısıyla Çin'in komşularıyla olan ilişkilerine tarihsel bir bakış hem karşılıklı yakınlığı hem de husumeti açıkça göstermektedir. Örneğin, Rusya ve Çin tarihsel bir sınır çatışması içerisinde bulunmaktadır. Bu çatışma günümüzde her ne kadar en aza indirgenmiş olsa da yakın geçmişe kadar ikili ilişkilere etkisini sürdürmüştür.

'Sınır ötesi iş birliği' ve 'sınır ötesi bölge' kavramları, tek pazar ve Avrupa Birliği (AB) gibi ulus- üstü oluşumlar sınırla ilgili fikirlerin hayata geçen varyasyonlarıdır.

Buna bir diğ er  rnek 1991’de dağılan Sovyetler Birliğı’dir. Ortak pazar veya tek pazar uluslararası iliřkilerden  ok ekonomi ve politik ekonomi dallarıyla daha yakından iliřkilidir. Bu tezde, vaka  alıřmaları yorumlamak ve karřılařtırmak i in ticaret ve sınır ticareti hacimleri rakamsal olarak bulunmaktadır. Diğ er taraftan sınırların sadece devletleri ayıran  izgiler olmadığı, aynı zamanda  eřitli ekonomik ve sosyal iřlevlere de hizmet ettiğı bu  alıřmada g sterilmektedir.

Sınır, iki  lkenin egemenliğinin sona erdiğı veya bir  lkenin otoritesinin artık ge erli olmadığı noktadır. Tarihsel a ıdan bir sınırı ge mek, bireylerin, ara ların ve malların hem  ıkıř hem de giriř  lkelerinin yasalarına uyması gereken iki  lkenin kara yoluyla ayrılması řeklindeydi. Ancak sınır kavramı zaman i inde geliřmiřtir ve artık bir  lkenin  evresiyle sınırlı değıldir. Sınırlar, idari varlıkları tarafından tanımlanan i  ve dıř sınırlara b l nm ř bir  lke i inde de bulunabilir. Bu sınırlar aynı zamanda ulusal, etnik, dinsel ve dilsel gruplar gibi sosyal sınırlarla da řekillenir.  lkeler arasında devlet sınır anlařmaları bozulduėunda, sınır anlařmazlıkları ve  atıřmalara neden olabilir. Hatta sınırlar tamamen kapatılabilir. Buna  rnek olarak T rkiye-Ermenistan sınırı verilebilir.

 lkeler arasındaki ikili iliřkilerde  nemli bir rol oynayan sınırların,  nemi ve katkıları azımsanamaz  l dedir. Uluslararası sınır b lgelerinde geniřletilmiř serbest ticaret olasılığına rağmen, g venlik endiřeleri ve vergi gibi politikalar genellikle ticaret potansiyelin yeterince kullanılmamasına neden olur. Ek olarak, yetersiz altyapı, y ksek iřlem maliyetlerine ve ithalat, ihracat ve transit malların g mr k iřlemleri sırasında gecikmelere neden olur. Yine de pahalı maliyetler ve sınırlarda ilerlemeyi engelleyen idari engeller gibi zorluklara rağmen, bir ok  lkenin ticaretin kolaylařtırılmasında sınırlar  nemli rol oynamaktadır.  in,  rneğın bu t r g mr k iřlemlerinin etkisini en aza indirmek i in bahsi ge en  lkeler ile  eřitli protokoller imzalamaktadır. Bunlardan bir tanesi Rusya ile 3 Haziran 2019’da imzalanan ve 26 Aėustos 2019’da y r rl ėe giren biri Heihe’de yer alacak olan bir a  pilot serbest ticaret b lgesini onaylandı. Heilongjiang Serbest Ticaret Pilot B lgesi Heihe b l m  Eyl l 2019’da a ıldı. Sınır  tesi sanayileřme b lgesinden yararlanacak bazı řirketler listelendi. Toplam    řehre b l nm ř 120 kilometrekarelik bir alanı kapsayan bu

protokol ile enerjiden tahıl ithalatına kadar birçok konuda iki ülke sınır ticaretine kolaylık sağlamaktadır.

Çin-Moğolistan sınırı, batıdan doğuya 4,630 km uzunluğundadır. Bu sınırın çoğu Gobi Çölü'nü geçer ve dünyanın dördüncü en uzun uluslararası sınırı olarak kabul edilmektedir. Rusya ve Çin arasındaki sınır 4,000 kilometre uzunluğundadır. Çin ile Kazakistan arasındaki sınır, 121,86 km'si kara sınırı ve 566,89 km'si nehir veya gölleri takip eden sınır olmak üzere toplam 1782,75 km uzunluğundadır. 1,063 km'lik bir mesafeyi kapsayan Çin-Kırgızistan sınırı, Kazakistan sınırının bittiği noktadan başlayıp Tacikistan sınırının başladığı noktada sona eren Tian Shan sıradağlarının engebeli dağ manzarası boyunca güneybatı yönünü izlemektedir. 477 km uzunluğundaki Çin ve Tacikistan arasındaki sınır, Kırgızistan ve Çin sınırlarının birleştiği noktadan başlayıp, Pamir Sıradağlarının çok sayıda dağ sırtı ve zirvesi boyunca kuzey-güney doğrultusunda ilerleyerek Afganistan ve Çin'in sınırının başlamasıyla sona ermektedir.

İkinci bölüm 'Sınır Çalışmalarına Teorik Yaklaşımlar' başlığını taşımaktadır. Sınır kavramı bu bölümde üç farklı bakış açısıyla incelemektedir: Realizm, Liberalizm ve İngiliz Okulu. Sovyetler Birliği'nin çöküşü, eski sosyalist ulusları Batı'nın siyasi ve ekonomik sistemine entegre etme tartışmalarına yol açtı. Eski Sovyet ülkeleri gibi ülkelerde komünist ekonomilerden demokratik ve serbest piyasaya dayalı ekonomi modeline geçiş, Soğuk Savaş sonrası uluslararası ilişkiler ve teoride çok önemli bir konu olmuştur. Başlangıçta güvenlik önlemlerine odaklanan yeni devletlerin ve sınırlarının ortaya çıkışı oldukça ilgi topladı. Uluslararası ilişkiler alanı sınırlara öncelikle bir güvenlik merceğinden baksa da sınırların önemli bir sosyolojik boyutu da vardır. Bu nedenle, teorik yaklaşımlara geçmeden önce tez, kimlik, ulus, göç ve toprak (*territory*) gibi sosyolojik unsurların tarihsel gelişimini ve eleştirel yaklaşımlarını da ele almaktadır. Ardından, sınır ve güvenlik bağlamı tartışılmaktadır. Sınır kavramının sosyolojik boyutunun çerçevesi çizildikten sonra sınır çalışmalarına yönelik ana akım yaklaşımlar değerlendirilmektedir.

Teorik yaklaşımlar bölümünde realist ve liberal paradigmlar üzerine yoğunlaşan politik yaklaşımı ve siyaset bilimciler tarafından oluşturulan İngiliz Okulu tartışmanın

üç ana unsurunu oluşturmaktadır. Ayrıca uluslararası ilişkiler uzmanları, devletler ve sınırları arasındaki ilişkilerden ziyade devletlerin iç dinamiklerine ve güç dağılımına odaklanır. Bu çalışmada üç uluslararası ilişkiler paradigmasının devlet sınırlarının işlevlerini nasıl gördüğü teorik çerçevenin merkezinde yer almaktadır. Uluslararası siyaset teorisinde sınırları incelemekten önce, kimlik, ulus ve bölge gibi temel sosyolojik kavramları göz önünde bulundurmak önemlidir. Ek olarak, polis ve asker gücü, göç ve suç da dahil olmak üzere güvenlikle ilgili konular da dikkate alınmalıdır. Daha sonra sınır, uluslararası ilişkiler teorilerinin merceğinden incelenebilir. Bu tezde bu kuramsal çerçeveden yola çıkılarak tezin teorik yapısı oluşturulmuştur. Uluslararası ilişkiler araştırmacıları, kimlik oluşumu, sınır çizme ve siyasi düzenin kurulması arasındaki bağlantılara odaklanmaktadır. Bölgesel egemenlik ve sınırlar, siyasi otoritenin koruması gereken en kritik ulusal güvenlik özelliklerinden biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Sınırlar, uluslararası ilişkilerin temel konularından biri olan siyasi, kültürel ve sosyal egemenliğe bir çizgi çizer. Uluslararası ilişkiler, devlet merkezli kavramsallaştırmaların ve yaklaşımların sınır sınırlamalarını kabul etmiştir. Öte yandan, sınır çalışmaları, sınırın kendisi (devlet sınırı) olarak sınır kavramına ve bir kurum olarak devlet sınırına odaklanır. Devletler sınırı tanırsa, sınır kurumu otomatik olarak insanların, malların ve bilgilerin yasal akışını iyileştiren birincil görevlerini yerine getirir. İnsanların akışı, göçü ve turizmi temsil eder; mallar ticaret ve ulaşım ile eş anlamlıdır/eşleşir; güvenlik ve sınır tarifeleri ise sınır politikası kapsamındadır. Bu çalışmada sınır politikası sınır güvenliğine atıf yapılmıştır.

Siyasi sınırlarla ilgili teoriler geliştirmeye yönelik araştırmalar, Prescott ve "sınırların benzersiz olduğunu" iddia eden diğerleri tarafından sorgulanmıştır ve yazarlar sınırlar hakkında genellemeler yapmanın zor olduğunu savunur. Öte yandan Minghi, sınır çalışmalarının belirli durumlara ve mevcut gerçeklere uygulanabilecek kategorileri ve tanımları kapsayan ve teoriler oluşturmak için genellemeler yapmaya uygun bir çalışma başlığı olduğunu düşünür. Başka bir deyişle, teorik yaklaşımları tespit etmek yerine, bilimsel araştırmaların sınır çalışmalarındaki felsefi ve ontolojik varsayımları raporlanabilir. Sınırların varlığının ontolojik temelini ortaya çıkarmak için yarı biyolojik canlı bir fenomen olan doğa merkezli bir paradigma dikkate alınmalıdır. Yaklaşımların hiçbirisi evrensel bir kuramsal bakış açısı önermemektedir. Bunun yerine siyasi, kültürel ve ekonomik bir çerçevede sınırların varlığını ve dinamiklerini anlama

imkânı sağlamaktadır. Günümüzde artan metodolojik çoğulculuk, disiplinler arası yaklaşımlar, araştırmacılar arasındaki ideolojik ve ulusal engeller, sınır çalışmalarında genelleme yapmakta veya sınırı formüle etmekte güçlükler olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Sonuç olarak sınırlar, uluslararası ilişkiler disiplininde ulus inşası süreci, devlet ideolojisi oluşum süreci, rejim konsolidasyonu ve dış politika gelişimi arasındaki ilişkiler açısından incelenebilir. Gavrilis, sınır yönetimi ve bölgesel uygulamaları çıkarlar ve siyasi kimlik geliştirme süreci açısından ele almak gerektiğini iddia etmektedir.

Sınırların politik-felsefi içeriklerini literatürdeki en iyi inceleme uygulamalarından birine sahip olan Onora O'Neill, 'ancak devlet sınırlarının olmadığı bir dünyanın adil bir dünya olabileceği' düşüncesini reddetmekte ve sınırların, sınırları çizildiğinde kabul edilemeyeceğini iddia etmektedir. Dışarıdakilere sistematik olarak adaletsizlikler uyguluyor. Öte yandan Kenichi Ohmae, sınırsız bir dünyanın ortaya çıkışını coşkuyla savunmaktadır. Ohmae, "Ulus Devletin Sonu: Bölgesel Ekonomilerin Yükselişi" adlı kitabında, geleneksel ulus-devletlerin küresel bir ekonomide neden doğal olmayan, hatta imkansız iş birimleri haline geldiğini gösterir. Bu görüşe göre, daha uyumlu sınır ötesi ilişkiler ve daha az devlet müdahalesi olumlu seçeneklerdir. Devlet sınırlarını ortadan kaldırmaya çalışan ve toplumları veya ulusları ortak bir bölgede sosyal olarak çevreleyen ekonomik örgütlenme fikrinde birlikte yaşayan toplumları veya ulusları motive etmeye çalışan iki örnek vardır: 1989'da çöken Sovyetler Birliği ve o zamandan beri (1950'ler) hala canlı olan Avrupa Birliği. Ancak her iki durumda da devletler, siyasi gerçekçiliğin bir operasyonu olarak sınır tebaasını kontrol etme ve sınırlama hakkını talep etme arzusundadır.

Sınır teorisi devlet merkezli sistemle ilişkilidir. Tarihsel açıdan sınırların güvenliği ve gücü, düzenli bir devlet sistemine bağlıydı ve içsel olarak ahlaki bir topluluk oluşturuyordu. Sınırlar, ulusu, toplumu, kimliği, kültürü, ekonomiyi ve dili içeren tüm toprak yapılarında eş merkezlidir; bu nedenle günlük hayatın, yerel eylemin ve ulusal kimliğin temsillerinin temel unsurlarıdır. Bu bağlamda, sınırlarla ilgili disiplinler arası literatürde, Ohmae'nin sınırsız bir dünya iddiasının uygulanmasının kolay bir eylem olmadığını açıkça göstermektedir.

Uluslararası ilişkilerde Realizmin en temel temsilcisi ve çalışması Kenneth Waltz ve onun *Man, the State and War* kitabıdır. Waltz; insan doğası, devletin anayasası ve uluslararası sistem üzerinden tanımlamalar yapar. Uluslararası sistemin üç özelliğini tanımlar: anarşiktir, herhangi bir yüksek otoriteden yoksundur; devletler orantılı birimlerdir; ve kaynakların devletler arasında eşit dağıtımamıştır. Ona göre uluslararası sistem güç dengesi tarafından hareket ettirilir ve bu mekanizma Büyük Güçler tarafından belirlenir. 1945'ten 1980'lerin sonuna kadar uluslararası sistem, ABD ile Sovyetler Birliği arasında iki kutuplu bir güç dengesi içeriyordu.

Yapısalcılar, iki büyük gücün diğerine karşı olduğu için iki kutupluluğun savaşa daha az yatkın bir ortam oluşturduğunu iddia eder. Realistler ise, devletlerin varlığını korumak için gücü en üst düzeye çıkarmak için fırsatlar araması gerektiğini savunur. Realistler, uluslararası sistemle ilgili temel gerçeğin, tüm devletlerin daha fazla güç taleplerini sınırlamaları gerektiğini vurgular. Herhangi bir devlet çok güçlü hale gelirse, dengeleme güçleşir. Sınır kavramı, ulusal, güvenlik ve askeri gücün kullanımı ile yakından ilgilidir. Çünkü devletler genellikle güvenliklerini pekiştirmek için sınırlarını yönetmeye çalışırlar. Ancak, sınır güvenliği ile artan ticaret sonucu açık sınır ihtiyacı ve sınır ötesi iletişim arasında bir ikilem var. Öte yandan, yukarıda da belirtildiği gibi, güvenlik karmaşık bir kavramdır. Tehditleri anlamak sadece askeri güce bağlı değildir. Örneğin, en güçlü ordu yasa dışı göçe veya terörizme, insan kaçakçılığına, uyuşturucu ve silah kaçakçılığına karşı koyamaz. Yasadışı göçmenler, sığınmacılar ve mülteciler, iç güvenlik ve istikrar adına devlet topraklarına girişleri kontrol edilmesi gereken güvenlik kategorisinde yer alır.

Liberal düşüncenin kökleri Avrupa Aydınlanmasına kadar uzanır. Kant'ın dünya siyasetine ilişkin liberal perspektifi, ileri demokrasinin, uluslararası ticareti derinleştirdiğini ve Uluslararası Örgütlerin çok taraflı ağını güçlendirdiğini iddia eder. Kant'ın çerçevesinden liberal enternasyonalizm, savaşın ve çatışmanın yerel ve uluslararası yönetim yapısındaki değişiklikleri birleştirerek yenilebileceğini vurgular. Kant'ın bakış açısı tamamen anti-realist değildir. Kant, uluslar arasındaki çatışmayı ve anarşik yapıyı kabul eder. Ancak demokratik hükümet, ekonomik bağımsızlık ve hukukun üstünlüğü barışçıl bir dünya için liberalistlerin çözüm önerisi olarak karşımıza çıkar. Liberal düşüncenin temsilcilerinden Rousseau, Kant ve

Cobden, Schumpeter ve Doyle, militarist ve anti-demokratik yönetimlerin, toprak fetihleriyle güçlerini ve zenginliklerini genişletmek için savaşlar yaratan bir 'savaşçı sınıfa' sahip olduğunu öne sürerler. Bu nedenle, savaş sırasında hükümetler vergileri artırmayı, bürokratik aygıtlarını genişletmeyi ve vatandaşlar üzerindeki kontrollerini artırmayı haklı çıkarmakta ve meşru kılmaktadır. Bu nedenle liberalist/neoliberalist yaklaşımda Avrupa Birliği gibi ortak Pazar alanlarının yaratılması çatışmaların engellenmesi ve artan ticaret ihtiyacının karşılanması bir sonucudur. Böylece barışçıl bir uluslararası ortam oluşturulabilir.

Göç ve açık sınır politikası söz konusu olduğunda, liberalizmin geleneksel görüşüne göre, devletlerin göçmenleri kabul etme görevi yoktur. Bu görüşün savunucularında Walzer'in iddiaları faydacıdır. Liberal devletlerin, kabul ettikleri göçmenlerin sayısı ve türü de dahil olmak üzere üyeliği ödüllendirmek veya reddetmek için kendi kurumlarına göre karar verme özgürlüğüne sahip olduğu savunulur. Ancak son on yılda bu görüş şiddetle eleştirilmektedir. Akademisyenler, demokrasi ve daha açık sınırlar yoksulluğu azalttığı ve insan haklarını yaygınlaştırdığı için liberal devletlerin göçmenleri kabul etme konusunda güçlü ahlaki görevleri olması gerektiğini iddia eder. Joseph Carens'in '*Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders*' makalesi, açık sınırlar ve göç üzerine liberal bir bakış açısı sunan iyi bilinen bir çalışmadır. Carens, sınırların daha açık olması gerektiğine inanır. Vatandaşlık fikri insanların emeğine bağlı olmadığı için, sadece insanların doğduğu yerle ilgilidir. Sınırların şu an olduğundan daha açık olması gerektiğini ve insanların genellikle başka bir ülkede hareket etmekte ve yaşamakta özgür olacağını iddia eder. Göç ve iltica alanında, liberal çerçeveler insani bir bakış açısı izler. Ahlaki değerlerle değil, haklarla ilgilenir. Ayrıca liberaller, sınır ötesi hareketlerden çok bireysel haklara odaklanır. Örneğin, AB'nin iltica ve göçmenlik politikaları, dış sınırları güçlendirerek, katı vize düzenlemeleri uygulayarak, taşıyıcıları cezalandırarak, yasadışı göçmenleri sınır dışı etme ve iltica başvurularını değerlendirerek ve iltica prosedürlerini zorlaştırarak kendi bölgelerine erişimi sınırlamaya odaklanmıştır.

İngiliz Okulu'nun ana argümanı, egemen devletlerin daha yüksek bir otoritenin olmamasına rağmen bir toplum oluşturduğudur. İngiliz Okulu'na göre devletlerin eşitlerden oluşan bir toplum yaratma yeteneği, uluslararası ilişkilerin en ilgi çekici

yönlerinden biri olarak kabul edilir. İngiliz Okulu, daha yüksek bir otoritenin olmamasına rağmen, uluslararası sistemin anarşik doğası göz önüne alındığında, devletler arasında şaşırtıcı derecede bir düzen ve nispeten düşük düzeyde şiddet olduğunu savunur. Anarşik bir toplumda şiddet, korku, güvensizlik ve çöküş potansiyeli üzerine düşünmeyi teşvik ederler, ancak yine de bunlar dünya siyasetinin belirleyici özellikleri değildir. İngiliz Okulu, uluslararası ilişkilerde şiddetin varlığını kabul eder, ancak bunun genellikle uluslararası hukuk ve ahlak tarafından kontrol edildiğini de vurgular. Herbert Butterfield, Martin Wight, Hedly Bull, Adam Watson, John Vincent ve Michael Donelan (aralarında diplomatlar, tarihçiler, hukukçular da vardır) Okulun ilk kuşağı olarak tanınan akademisyenlerdir. Bu isimler disiplinler arası bir bakış açısıyla uluslararası toplum tarihine ve İngiliz Okulu teorisine katkıda bulunmuşlardır.

İngiliz Okulu, farklı teori ve kavramların bir sentezini sunar. Teori ile tarihi, ahlak ile gücü ve altyapı ile üst yapıyı birleştirmemizi sağlayan bir teoridir. İngiliz Okulu, uluslararası ilişkileri sosyal ve tarihsel açılardan okur. Normlar ve kimlik tarafından yönlendirilen uluslararası toplumla ilgilenir. Bu yönüyle konstrüktivizme yani yapısalcılığa benzemektedir. Bununla birlikte, İngiliz Okulu temsilcileri, yapısalcılığı sadece İngiliz Okulu'nun analitik çerçevesini geliştirmek için kullandıklarını öne sürerler. Reus-Smit'e göre, İngiliz okulu yapısalcılıktan nasıl daha sosyolojik olunacağını öğrenebilirken, yapısalcılık da İngiliz okulundan nasıl daha normatif olunacağını öğrenebilir. Birbirine katkı sunan bu iki yaklaşımın aynı olmayacağı da burada belirtilir.

İngiliz Okulunun önemli temsilcilerinde Hedley Bull eseri *The Anarchical Society* ile uluslararası ilişkilerin başlangıç noktasının, her biri bir hükümeti işleyen ve insan nüfusunun belirli bir kesimine egemenlik iddia eden devletlerin veya bağımsız siyasi toplulukların varlığı olduğunu iddia eder. Bull kitabında dünya düzenine giden beş olası yolu araştırıyor: toplum değil sistem; devletler ama bir sistem değil; bir dünya hükümeti; bir tür ortaçağcılık; veya hayal gücümüzün ötesinde tamamen yeni bir düzenleme. Bu varsayımların her biri, sırasıyla, farklı devlet konfigürasyonlarına ve devletler arasındaki sınırların işlevine dayanır. Eyalet sınırları boyunca daha az faaliyet; çok az veya hiç sınır ötesi faaliyet olmaksızın sınırlar olarak eyalet sınırlarına

sıkı sıkıya bağı kalma; devletler arasındaki sınırların azalması veya yokluğu; belirsiz bölgesel sınırlar; veya muhtemelen devletin sınırı kavramında daha köklü bir değışiklik olması gerektiğı tartışmasını yapar.

Modern siyasi ve uluslararası ilişkiler teorisinde (liberal veya liberal olmayan) sınır ve kimliğı birlikte inceleme konusunda boşluk olduğı bir gerçek. Yukarıda bahsedildiğı gibi, örneğın uluslararası ilişkilerde sınırları incelemek, uluslararası hukukçular veya bürokratlar tarafından incelenen bir konu olarak kabul edilmektedir. Sınır ve hudut birbirinin yerine kullanılabilen kelimeler olduğundan ve iki devleti ayıran bir çizgiyi ifade ettiğinden, sadece hukukçuları ilgilendiriyor gibi görünür. Sınır uyuşmazlıkları genellikle sınırın olduğı yerde ortaya çıkar.

Realist teori, devlet merkezli felsefeye odaklanır ve sınır ötesi fenomeni dikkate alarak devlet egemenliğı normunu vurgular. Realizm, güvenlik çıkarları için hareket türünü görmezden gelir. Bu nedenle Realizm, sınır ötesi eylemlerde ilerlemeye ve derinleşmeye karşıdır. Öte yandan, liberalizm insani yönü takip eder ve daha önce vurgulandığı gibi, sınır ötesi hareketlere değıl, bireysel (onun) haklarına odaklanır. Liberal çerçevede, sınır ötesi ticaret sıkı sınır kontrolleri gerektirir, ancak temel insan hakları nedeniyle yasadışı göç kontrol edilemez.

On dokuzuncu yüzyılda ve yirminci yüzyılın başlarında Çin ile Batı arasında birçok sorun vardı. Çin'in egemen devlet olması Ocak 1942'ye kadar Batı tarafından reddedildi. 1843'teki Nanking Antlaşması'ndan 1942'ye kadar Çin, devletler sisteminin bir parçasıydı ama uluslararası toplumun bir üyesi değıldi. 19. yüzyılda uluslararası toplumun bir üyesi olabilmek için Avrupa değıerleri belirleyici idi. Çin bu değıerleri benimsemediğı için, uluslararası toplumun meşru bir üyesi olarak tanınmadı ve eşit üyeliğı reddedildi. Batı ve Çin birbirlerini eşit üyeler olarak tanımasalardı, ilişkilerini karakterize etmek zor olurdu. Burada, sistemin ve toplumun dinamikleri olarak kapsayıcılık ve dışlayıcılığın tarihsel bir örneğı karşımıza çıkmıştır.

(Neo)realizm ve (neo)liberalizm tartışıldıktan sonra, uluslararası ilişkilerde sınır kavramının çalışılmasının realist korkular ve liberal değıerler arasında sıkışıp kaldığı söylenebilir. Çin Seddi sınırına bakıldığında, Çin'in sınır bölgeleri konusunda liberal

politikalara sahip olduğunu görmekteyiz. Realizm, Çin'in bölgesel güvenlik kaygılarına hakim olsa da, kendi sınırlarında liberalleşme yolunu izlemektedir. Liberal politikalar Çin'e sınır bölgelerini etkileme ve kontrol etme konusunda büyük bir şans verdiğinden, Çin dünyanın geri kalanına benzemeyen benzersiz ve kendine özgü bir sınır düzeni oluşturmaya çalışıyor. Bu düzen realizm ve liberalizm merceğinden açıklanamaz. İngiliz Okulu gibi her iki yaklaşımın değerlerini tam anlamıyla olmasa da kısmen taşıyan eklektik bir teoriye ihtiyaç duyulur.

Çin, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan, Tacikistan, Moğolistan gibi komşu ülkeleri kendi sınırları içinde yer alan Sincan Özerk Bölgesi ve İç Moğolistan'ın etnik, kültürel ve coğrafi uzantısı olarak görmektedir. Çin, komşularıyla olan sınır anlaşmazlıklarını tarihi süreçte çözmüştür ve karşılıklı ticari, kültürel ve sosyal etkileşimi engellemiyor gibi görünmektedir. Çin, bu bölgelerin iç karışıklıklara veya ayrılma taleplerine karşı savunmasız olduğunu kabul etse de, bu güvenlik zaafını hem kendi hem de komşu bölgelerin ekonomik kalkınmasına yatırım yaparak oluşabilecek potansiyel tehditleri bertaraf etmeyi seçmiştir. Ayrıca Çin, vize uygulamaları üzerindeki kontrolünü sürdürürken bu bölgelerle kültürel ve etnik iletişim kurmuştur. Örneğin Çin, Orta Asya ve Moğolistan vatandaşları için kendi vize başvuru prosedürünü uygularken bu ülkelere, Çin vatandaşlarının geçişini kolaylaştıracak vizesiz uygulamalar için protokolleri bulunmaktadır. Örneğin Çin vatandaşları otuz gün boyunca Orta Asya ve Moğolistan'a serbestçe giriş çıkış yapma hakkına sahiptir. Çin, Orta Asya ve Moğolistan'a yönelik sınır politikasında neoliberal ve neorealist bakış açılarının bir sentezi olan hibrid bir tavır benimsemiştir. Bu tavrı İngiliz Okulu ile açıklamak mümkündür.

Çin ile Rusya arasında herhangi bir etnik veya kültürel bağ bulunmamaktadır. Aslında Rusya ve Çin'i birleştiren ortak bir kültürden, dilden veya dinden bahsedilemez. Bugün Çin ve Rusya arasındaki ilişki, büyük ölçüde tarihsel etkileşimleri tarafından şekillendirildi. Günümüzde ikili arasında yaşanan çoğu sınır anlaşmazlığı çözülmüş olsa da bazı sorunlar henüz çözüme kavuşmadı. Bu durum da iki ülke arasında zaman zaman gerilimlere ve hatta çatışmalara yol açmıştı. Buna rağmen Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından sonra Rusya'da yaşanan zor ekonomik koşullar, Çin ile sınır ticareti yoluyla Rus vatandaşlarına fırsatlar yaratmıştır. Çin'in Rusya ile sınır ilişkisine

yaklaşımı pragmatiktir ve algılanan hiçbir etnik veya kültürel tehdit yoktur. Ancak, ikili ilişki tarihsel çıkarlar ve çatışmalar açısından anlaşılabilir. Bugün Çin ve Rusya, artan ticareti ve hareketliliği teşvik ederek çatışma riskini azaltan sınır ticaret bölgeleri inşa etmeye odaklanıyor. Dolayısıyla çalışmada Çin, Rusya ile olan sınırlarında neo-realist ve neoliberal bakış açılarının sentezi haricinde tarihsel bir perspektifle açıklanabildiği için de interdisipliner özellik taşıyan İngiliz Okulu kuramı çerçevesinde ele alınmıştır.

İngiliz Okulu'na göre, devletlerin güvenlik ikilemleri, temel davranış kuralları üzerinde anlaşma ve bunu sürdürülebilir kılma sağlandığı ölçüde çözülebilir. Uluslararası alan devletlerden oluştuğu için aralarındaki sosyal ilişkiler kaçınılmazdır. Devletler tipik olarak devletler topluluğundan onay isterler, yani dış dış politika eylemlerinin uluslararası (toplumsal) kabulüne değer verirler.

Üçüncü bölüm, Sovyet sonrası dönemi vurgulayarak, Çin-Moğol sınırının tarihsel gelişimini anlatır. Sonrasında ise Erlian (sınır şehrinin Moğol tarafında yer alan kısmı) ve Zamyn Uud'un (sınır şehrinin İç Moğol/Çin tarafında yer alan kısmı) ticaret, ulaşım ve hareketlilik dinamikleri etraflıca incelenmektedir. Hem Asya Kalkınma Bankası'nın hem de Çin hükümetinin bölgenin her iki yakasında konuttan ulaşımına uzanan altyapı projelerine önemli kaynaklar yatırdığı görülmektedir. Veriler, sınır hareketliliğinin yıllık bazda istikrarlı bir şekilde arttığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Sonuç olarak bu bölüm, Çin'in Moğolistan'a yönelik dış politikası ile sınır bölgesindeki politikasının birbiriyle bağlantılı olduğunu göstermektedir. Tarihsel sınır anlaşmazlıklarına ve toprak bütünlüğünü koruma arzusuna rağmen, Çin'in artan ekonomik gelişimi, Moğolistan ile olan sınır ticaret bölgesine ve bir bütün olarak Moğolistan'a yapılan yatırımların ve yardımların artmasına neden oldu. Bu yardım çabaları bölgesel ekonomik kalkınmaya ve istikrara katkıda bulunurken, Çin de Gobi çölünden ham madde ve petrole erişim imkanı bulmaktadır. Ayrıca Çin'in sınır kentleri Erlian ve Zamyn Uud arasındaki demiryolu yatırımları ve Trans Sibiry demiryolu projesine verdiği destek, bölgede barışçıl ilişkiler ve işbirliği arzusunu ortaya koymaktadır. Ancak Çin'in İç Moğolistan açısından bağımsızlık talepleri yönünde

endişeleri sürmektedir ve güvenlik kaygıları da göz ardı edilemeyecek ölçüde bulunmaktadır.

Dördüncü bölümde, diğer bölümlerde olduğu gibi Çin-Rusya ilişkilerinin tarihi anlatılmaktadır. Ardından Heihe (Çin) ve Blagoveshchensk (Rusya) sınır şehirlerine ve bu iki şehir üzerinden karşılıklı sınır ticareti ve sınır hareketlilikleri ile ulaşım konuları irdelenmektedir. Veriler ve saha çalışmaları analizi, her iki tarafın da ticareti, ulaşımı ve hareketliliği geliştirmek için çalıştığını göstermektedir. Tarihsel sınır anlaşmazlıklarına rağmen, Rusya ve Çin bu çatışmaları görmezden gelmeye ve bölgedeki ekonomik kalkınmaya yatırım yapmaya çalışmaktadır. Sonuç olarak bu bölüm, 2008'de imzalanan anlaşma aracılığıyla Çin ile Rusya arasındaki geçmişteki sınır ihtilaflarının çözümünün altını çizmektedir. Zaman zaman yaşanan ikili gerilimlere rağmen, Çin'in Rusya ile sınır ticaret bölgesinin geliştirilmesine yönelik devam eden yatırımları, ilişkileri geliştirme taahhüdünü ortaya koymaktadır. Her iki ülkenin bölgesel hegemon olması nedeniyle sınır bölgesinde barışçıl ilişkilerin ve işbirliğinin geliştiği görülmektedir. Bununla birlikte, kültürel ayrışmanın toplumsal tabanda memnuniyetsizliğe yol açtığını belirtmek önemlidir. Bu, iki ülke arasındaki ilişkileri daha da güçlendirmek için kültürel eşitsizlikleri gidermeye yönelik çabaların sürdürülmesi gereğini vurgulamaktadır. Diğer taraftan Çin'in 2019 Ağustos ayında Rusya ile sınır bölgesini kapsayan Heliongjeng Serbest Ticaret Bölgesi pilot uygulamasını hayata geçirmiştir. Bu uygulama Çin açısından da önemli avantajlar sağlarken Rusya'nın da Çin denizine kolaylaştırılmış tarife ile ulaşmasına imkan sağlamaktadır. Sonuç olarak ikili çabaların olumsuz yönde gelişmediği, sınırların yeniden bir çatışma alanına dönüşmeyeceği kanaati bu bölümün ana fikrini oluşturmaktadır.

Beşinci bölümde, Çin için hayati öneme sahip bir diğer bölgesi olan Sincan ile uzun bir sınırı paylaşan ve Çin ile etnik bağları olan Kazakistan arasındaki sınır ilişkilerine odaklanılmaktadır. Tartışma, önceki bölümlerin sırasını takip edecek öncelikle tarihsel gelişim hakkında bilgi vermekte ve Çin'in ekonomik büyümesinin Sincan-Kazakistan sınır bölgesindeki ikili ticaret, ulaşım, turizm ve güvenlik üzerindeki etkisini incelemektedir. Giriş bölümünde, sınır yönetiminin, sınırlarda ulusal güvenliği sağlamaya ve bir ulusun kültürel, sosyal ve ekonomik iletişim yoluyla çeşitli

ihtiyalarını karřılamak iin sınır tesi yasal hareketleri dzenlemeye ynelik bir mekanizma olarak tanımlanmıřtı. Kazakistan-in sınırı, sınır ařan sular da dahil olmak zere yaklaşık 1.782,75 kilometre uzunluęunda olup, Kazakistan-Rusya sınırından sonra Kazakistan iin en uzun ikinci sınırdır. 1995'te Kazakistan ve in, ortak sınır konusunda bir anlařma imzalayarak Kazakistan in ile sınır anlařması yapan ilk eski Sovyet cumhuriyeti oldu. Bu antlařma, sınır blgesinin ynetimi ve kalkınması iin nemli bir ereve oluřturması aısından nemlidir.

in'in ulusal ıkarlarının ncelięi, dıř politikasının bizzat inli yetkililer tarafından onaylanmasıdır. Blgesel kalkınmada in'in ortaya attıęı Tek Kuřak Tek Yol giriřimi ncelikle Sincan Uygur zerk Blgesini de geliřtirecek ve bu blgenin batı ile coęrafi yakınlıęını avantaja evirecek bir proje olarak kararlařtırılmıřtır. Daha birok ayaęı olan bu proje Orta, Gney ve Batı Asya lkeleri ile iřbirlięini, ulařım, ticaret, lojistik, kltr, bilim ve eęitim merkezi gibi konularda geliřtirmeyi hedeflemektedir. Ancak te yandan Kuřak ve Yol projesi, sylemden olduka ayrı Asya lkelerinin ortak iyilięi ve ortak kaderi zerine, ncelikle in sermayesi iin pazarların geniřletilmesi iin bir ara olarak da tanımlanmaktadır.

Sovyetler Birlięi'nin kř, in'in Kazakistan'daki doęrudan yabancı yatırımında nemli bir artıřla sonulandı. Sincan dolayısıyla Kazakistan ile ortak etnik baęlara sahip olan in, her iki lkenin ekonomik geliřimini blgedeki ayrılıkı hareketleri nlemek iin stratejik bir nlem olarak grmektedir. Bununla birlikte, Kazakistan'ın son yıllarda in'in nemli bir petrol ve gaz tedarikisi haline gelmesi, in'in lke ile diplomatik iliřkisinin bařarısının bir kanıtı olarak not edilmelidir. Bu nedenle, in ile Kazakistan arasındaki ekonomik ve enerji baęlarının dinamiklerinin son on yılda nemli bir deęiřim geirdięi ve řu anda bir tr stratejik iřbirlięi olarak tanımlanabileceęi ıkarımı bu blmn ana fikrini oluřturmaktadır.

Altıncı blm in ve Kırgızistan bařlıęını tařımaktadır. Tarihsel aıdan bakıldıęında iki lkenin hudut tespiti uzun bir srece yayılmış ve Kırgızistan'ın baęımsızlıęının ilk yıllarında lkenin i siyasi hayatında ok byk etki yaratmıřtır. Kırgızistan, topraklarından in'e toprak vermeye hazır deęildi. Dięer bir deyiřle, “topraklarımız”, “insanlarımız”, “kltrmz” gibi kavramların halk iin byk nem tařıdıęı

bağımsızlığın kazanılmasından sonra ulusal kimliğin inşası döneminde olan Kırgızistan'ın Çin ile sınır çizgilerinin çizilmesi, ülke topraklarının bir kısmının Çin'e bırakılması anlamına geliyordu. Toprakların Çin'e verilmesi, bu haberin kitle iletişim araçlarında yayınlanmasının ardından halk arasında geniş çaplı tartışmalara ve muhalefete yol açtı.

Kırgızistan'daki iç istikrarsızlığın tek nedeni Çin ile olan sınır sorunu değildi. Bağımsızlığını yeni kazanmış ülkede ABD, STK'ları aracılığıyla demokrasiyi geliştirmek ve muhalefet partilerini desteklemek için büyük çaba sarf etti. Çin ile sınırların çizilmesi, bölgede renkli devrim adı verilen Lale Devrimini hızlandıran nedenlerden biri oldu. Ama esas neden ekonomik kriz, yüksek işsizlik ile birlikte halkın hoşnutsuzluğu idi. Özetle bağımsızlığının ilk yılları iç çalkantılar ile geçen Kırgızistan bir yandan da bölgesel ve küresel bir güç olan Çin ile sınır komşusu olmuştu.

Diğer açıdan bakıldığında Sovyetler Birliği'nin dağılmasından sonra, dış müdahalelere açık farklı iç dinamiklere sahip zayıf devletler (Kırgızistan ve Tacikistan) Çin'in yeni komşuları haline geldi. Bu durum doğrudan Çin için tehdit oluşturuyordu. Sınır anlaşmazlıkları, tartışmalı toprakların bölünmesiyle çözüldü. Şunu da eklemek gerekir ki, Sovyet yıllarında tüm bu 'ihtilafli bölge' Sovyetler Birliği'nin devredilemez bir parçası olarak kabul edilmişti. Çin, Orta Asya'da tarihi topraklarını talep ederek ve gerçekte sınırlarını Orta Asya'ya kaydırarak yeni komşuları ile ilişkilerine başladı. Çin, ilk başta iddia ettiğinden daha az toprak kabul ederek taviz verdiğini düşünüyor. Son olarak Kırgızistan ile Çin arasında sınır sorunları çözülünce toprak kaybetme ve uzlaşma algısı oluştu. İlginç olan, bu çok eski sınır anlaşmazlığının ancak bölgenin Sovyet egemenliğinden çıktıktan sonra çözülebilmesidir. Dolayısıyla bu sınır sorununda Çin, dostane ilişkiler ve daha fazla iş birliğine sahip olacaklarını garanti ederek, herhangi bir çatışma olmadan nihayet topraklarına geri dönebilecek etkili ülke olarak kendisini tanımladı.

Çin, hem komşuları içindeki hem de daha uzaklardaki ekonomik ilişkileriyle ilgili olarak sınır illerinin önemini kabul etmektedir. Bununla birlikte, sınır ötesi bağlantılar da ulus ötesi sorunların potansiyel kaynakları olarak dikkatle görülmektedir. Bunlar

arasında, özellikle birçok komşu devletin kırılabilirliği göz önüne alındığında, Çin'in ulus inşa etme çabalarına potansiyel olarak meydan okuyabilecek, sınırları aşan etno-milliyetçiliğin ortaya çıkışı yer almaktadır. Bu bağlamda, geçirgen bir sınır ve sınır ötesi akışlar, ikili ilişkilere bir belirsizlik unsuru getirmektedir. Çin'in sınır bölgeleri az gelişmiş ve zayıf yönetişime ve iç güvenlik kapasitesine sahip sınır ülkeleridir. Bunlardan bazıları iç çatışmalar veya yaygın yoksulluk yaşamaktadır. Bu sınır devletleri aynı zamanda potansiyel aşırıcılık ve uluslararası terörizm kaynakları olabileceği gibi bu hareketler için fon kaynağı olarak da hizmet edebilecek uyuşturucu ve insan kaçakçılığı gibi yasa dışı faaliyetlere de karışabilmektedir.

Siyasi istikrarı sürdürmek ve ekonomik kalkınmayı teşvik etmek, bağımsızlıklarından bu yana Çin'in Orta Asya ülkelerine yönelik politikalarında sürekli olarak ön saflarda yer aldı. Çin, ikili ilişkilerini hem tek hem de çok taraflı olarak beş Orta Asya cumhuriyetini de içeren Şanghay İşbirliği Örgütü (SCO) çerçevesinde ilerletmiştir. Son yirmi yılda, bu ülkelerle ilişkiler kapsam ve yoğunluk bakımından çeşitlilik gösterdi, ancak ulusal egemenlik, toprak bütünlüğü ve iç işlere karşılıklı karışmama ilkeleri örgütün prensipleri ve Çin'in dış politikasının da temeli oldu.

Sonuç olarak Kırgızistan, Orta Asya'da Çin ile sınır komşusu olan ekonomik olarak az gelişmiş iki ülkeden biridir. İki ülke arasındaki ikili ticaret Çin-Kazak ticareti kadar önemli olmasa da Çin'in bölgeye ilgisi ve Kırgızistan'daki altyapı yatırımları dikkatleri üzerine çekti. Ayrıca Kırgızistan, Çin'in tek yol projesinde önemli transit güzergâhları üzerinde stratejik bir konumda bulunmakta ve bu nedenle Çin'den bu konuda doğrudan veya dolaylı yatırım almaktadır. Genel olarak, Çin ve Kırgızistan arasındaki ilişki, gelişmeye devam ediyor gibi görüldüğü için önemli bir büyüme potansiyeline sahiptir denilebilir. Issık Gölü çevresinde teşvik edilen turizm ise ikili ilişkileri sınır geçişleri bağlamında geliştirmeye teşvik ediyor. Ancak Çin tarafından gelen turistler Kırgızistan sınırından değil de daha konforlu olması açısından Kazakistan sınırını geçerek Kazak-Kırgız sınırından ülkeye giriş sağlıyor. Bu durum da ikili sınırların geliştirilmesi potansiyelinin olduğunun bir diğer göstergesi olarak değerlendirilmektedir.

Yedinci bölüm Çin Tacikistan sınır ilişkilerini konu almaktadır. 2002 yılında Çin ile Tacikistan arasındaki toprak ve sınır sorunları çözülerek dostane ve karşılıklı yarar sağlayan ilişkilerin yolu açıldı. Bu bölüm, Çin-Tacik sınır yönetimini ekonomik, sosyal ve güvenlik açısından incelemeyi ve ilişkiyi anlamak için bir çerçeve sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Orta Asya'nın en fakir ülkesi olan Tacikistan, Afganistan ile olan sınırı nedeniyle Çin için stratejik öneme sahiptir. Diğer taraftan, Çin büyük bir enerji tüketicisi olduğundan, Tacikistan'ın hidroelektrik enerjisine olan ilgisi, ikili ilişkilerde Çin'i bu alana yatırımlar yapmaya yöneltti.

Çin ile Tacikistan arasında sınırda sınırlı mevcut temasa rağmen, ikili ilişkilerin geliştirilmesi için önemli bir potansiyel bulunmaktadır. Tacikistan, öncelikle enerji sektöründe Çin yatırımını çeken hidroelektrik santralleri aracılığıyla elektrik üreticisi bir ülkedir. Ülkenin kilit endüstrileri arasında demir dışı metalurji, hafif sanayi ve gıda üretimi yer alıyor. Tacikistan'da tarım, pamuk ekimi, ipek tarımı, meyve yetiştiriciliği ve üzüm yetiştiriciliğini içerir. Tacikistan, Kuşak ve Yol girişiminin inşasına katılmaya ve ticaret, enerji, ulaşım, tarım, yatırım ve finans gibi alanlarda işbirliğini genişletmenin yanı sıra kültürel ve halklar arası alışverişi artırmaya da isteklidir. Tacikistan iliki ilişkiler ve sınır ilişkileri açısından diğer ülkelere bir nebze geri kalmıştır. Bunun nedeni ise bağımsızlığının ilk yıllarında tecrübe ettiği iç savaştır.

Çalışmanın son bölümü sekizinci bölümdür. Bu bölüm sonuç kısmını içerir. Çin'in bölgesel ve küresel çıkarlarının uyumlu olduğu bu bölümde yapılan değerlendirmelerden ilkidir. Mevcut çalışma, güvenli sınırların korunmasının ve Çin'in kuzey çevresi ile dostane ilişkilerin geliştirilmesinin, ülkenin devam eden barışçıl yükselişini sağlamak için çok önemli olduğunu öne sürmektedir. Bu amaçla, herhangi bir tekil teorik yaklaşımın gerektirebileceği sınırlamaları kabul ederek, teorik çerçeve olarak İngiliz Okulu kabul edilmektedir. İngiliz Okulunun disiplinler arası doğası ve uluslararası ilişkiler teorileri arasındaki belirgin konumu, kavramsal araçlarının sınırlar ve uluslararası ilişkiler kavramını tutarlı bir araç haline getirmektedir. Ek sınır politikası teorilerinin yanı sıra Çin'in sınır ilişkileri ve çıkarlarının incelenmesinin konuya daha fazla ışık tutabileceği ve araştırma için yeni yollar açabileceği de belirtilmelidir.

Reformundan ve dışı açılmasından (1978) bu yana Çin diplomasisi, komşu ülkelerle aktif bir şekilde iyi komşuluk ilişkileri geliştirerek ülkenin ekonomik kalkınması için elverişli bir ortamın geliştirilmesine güçlü katkılar sağladı. Sonuç olarak Çin, ASEAN, Moğolistan, Vietnam, Hindistan, Afganistan, Pakistan, Tacikistan, Kırgızistan, Kazakistan, Rusya ve diğerleri gibi ülkelerle ilişkilerini güçlendirmek için önemli çabalar sarf etti ve bu ilişkilerde kademeli bir iyileşme sağladı.

Soğuk Savaş'tan sonra Çin, komşularıyla sınır sorunlarını eşit müzakereler, karşılıklı anlayış ve uzlaşma yoluyla çözmek için önemli çabalar sarf etti. Ek olarak, nihai bir çözüme ulaşılan kadar bekleyen sınır sorunlarını rafa kaldırmak için anlaşmalara varıldı. Kalan sınır sorunlarını çözenin yollarını daha fazla araştırmak için Çin, Rusya, Kazakistan, Kırgızistan ve Tacikistan'dan devlet başkanları 1996 ve 1997'de Şangay ve Moskova'da bir araya geldiler ve askeri alanlarda güven inşasını güçlendirmeye ve bölgede silahsızlanmaya yönelik anlaşmalara imza attılar. Bu toplantılar, yalnızca kalan sınır sorunlarının barışçıl çözümünü kolaylaştırmakla kalmayıp, aynı zamanda üye devletler arasında karşılıklı güveni artıran Şanghay Beşlisi'nin yıllık mekanizmasını oluşturdu. Bu, üye devletler arasında karşılıklı yarar sağlayan iş birliğinin güvenlik alanından siyasete, diplomasiye, ekonomik ve kültürel alanlara yayılmasına yol açtı. 2001 yılında kurulan Şangay İşbirliği Örgütü'nün (SİÖ), Çin ile Orta Asya cumhuriyetleri arasındaki sınır sorunlarının çözümünde çok önemli bir rol oynadığını belirtmekte fayda var.

Çin'in toprak anlaşmazlıklarına yaklaşımı genellikle uzlaşmayı içerir ve bu tavizlerin önemli bir kısmı rejim güvenliğine yönelik iç tehditlerden kaynaklanır. Çin'deki etnik huzursuzluk, bir devletin toprak bütünlüğüne yönelik iç tehditlerin komşu ülkelerle işbirliğini nasıl motive edebileceğinin bir örneğidir. Örneğin kuzeybatıdaki bazı Uygur gruplarının Çin'in batısındaki ülkelerle daha yakın bağları var ve bu ülkelerdeki ayrılıkçı hareketlerle bağlantıları var. Bu, Çin'i Uygur sorununu çözmek için Orta Asya ülkeleriyle ittifak kurmaya sevk etti. Çin'in iç ve dış zorlukları ele alma stratejisi çok yönlüdür, bu çok yönlülük: barışçıl bir dış ortamı koruma, dengeleme, ekonomik faydaları en üst düzeye çıkarma ve politikasını sınır bölgelerine kaydırarak iç güvenlik endişelerini ele alma ve sınır eyaletlerinin komşu ülkelerle istikrarlı bir ilişki

sağlamaya yardımcı olmasını sağlama devletler ve bölgeler arası ekonomik etkileşimden de faydalanma olarak sıralanabilir

Çalışma tarafından doğrulanan bulgulardan biri şudur: Çin'in, batı sınırının istikrarı açısından çok önemli olan Orta Asya ile barışçıl ve sürdürülebilir ilişkiler geliştirmeye olan ilgisi, son yirmi yılda tutarlı kalmıştır. Çin'in gelecekte Orta Asya ülkeleriyle ilişkilerinde ikili ve çok taraflı yaklaşımları bir arada kullanmaya devam etmesi muhtemeldir. Örneğin ŞİÖ derinlemesine kurumsallaşmamış olabilir, ancak arkasındaki ana itici güç olan Çin için yararlı bir komşuluk oluşturma görevi sürmektedir.

Çin ile Rusya arasındaki sınır bölgeleri, Moğolistan ve üç Orta Asya ülkesi, Çin'in hızlı ekonomik büyümesi ve artan bölgesel eşitsizlikleri nedeniyle sınır çalışmaları için özellikle ilgi çekicidir. Çin, açık bir Asya pazarı yaratmanın bir yolu olarak bölgesel ulaşım ağlarının geliştirilmesine katılımını destekliyor, yoğun ve açık trans-Asya lojistik ağlarının stratejik önemini bir avantaj elde etmenin bir yolu olarak kabul ediyor. Yatırım, ihracat pazarları ve doğal kaynaklar için bir rekabet ortamı oluşturmaya çalışıyor. Bu yeni lojistik rotaların Çin'in komşu bölgelerdeki ekonomik konumunu güçlendirmesine yardımcı olduğu çalışma tarafından ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Daha önce erişimi zor olan pazarlar artık doğrudan Çin'in hızla büyüyen ekonomisine bağlı ve Çin ticaret limanları üzerinden artan trafik, Çin'in iki ana hedefe ulaşma yolunda ilerleme kaydettiğini gösteriyor: geniş doğal kaynaklara erişimi güvence altına almak ve yakındaki potansiyelden yararlanmak, ki bunlar da kendi ürünleri için oluşturduğu pazarlardır. Çin'in bu konuda, özellikle çalışmanın konusunu oluşturduğu kuzey sınırları bağlamında rakiplerinden daha başarılı olduğu aşikardır.

Çin'in mevcut dış politika stratejisi, kara sınırlarını sağlamlaştırmaya ve dışa doğru genişlemeye odaklanmaktadır. Bu stratejinin birincil kaynağı, Çin nüfusunun yükselen yaşam standartlarını desteklemek için ülkeye sürdürülebilir enerji ve hammadde kaynağı sağlamaktır. Bu amaca ulaşmak için Çin, dış ilişkilerinde çok boyutlu bir yaklaşım benimsemiştir, yalnızca büyük dünya güçleriyle ilişkilerini geliştirmekle kalmayarak aynı zamanda eski rakipleri de dahil olmak üzere tüm komşu ülkelerle ilişkilerini ilerletmiştir. Barışçıl bir dış ortamı sürdürmek ve ekonomik faydaları en üst

düzeye çıkarmak Çinli liderler için temel öncelidir. Çin kendi içinde de sınır bölgelerine yönelik politikasını değiştirmeye çalıştı ve bu eyaletlerin komşu devletlerle istikrarlı bir ilişkiye katkıda bulunmasını ve ayrıca bölgeler arası ekonomik etkileşimden faydalanmasını sağladı. Çinli liderler, sınır bölgelerini ve ortaya koydukları zorlukları küresel, bölgesel ve yerel güçler tarafından şekillendirilen değişen siyasi, ekonomik, sosyal ve kültürel dinamikler bağlamında okumaktadır. Çin'in dış politika davranışını analiz ederken dikkate alınması gereken birçok faktör olsa da, Çin'in sınır bölgelerine yönelik politikalarının giderek daha önemli hale geldiğini bu çalışmanın ortaya koyduğu bir gerçekliktir.



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