Financial and Economic Sustainability
FINECS ISSN-2181-1636 Vol. 3, Issue 3, Sept, 2023
https://finecs.net

ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN CHINA AND CENTRAL ASIA

Chao Qing,
PhD Candidate, University of World Economy and Diplomacy;
Senior political engineer at the First Affiliated Hospital of Wannan Medical College

Abstract:
This analysis examines the economic cooperation between China and Central Asia, focusing on drivers, challenges, and implications. China's engagement, driven by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), aims to enhance connectivity and development. The paper explores complementarities, including resources and transit potential. It discusses areas of cooperation like infrastructure, energy, trade, and people-to-people exchanges. Challenges include infrastructure gaps and cultural differences. Implications include economic changes and geopolitical influence. Recommendations emphasize policy coordination and diversification. Understanding this relationship is vital for regional integration and development in Central Asia.

Moreover, the analysis then delves into the key areas of economic cooperation between China and Central Asia, such as infrastructure development, energy cooperation, trade and investment, and people-to-people exchanges. It assesses the progress made in these areas, identifies successful projects and initiatives, and examines the challenges and bottlenecks that hinder further cooperation. These challenges include inadequate infrastructure, regulatory barriers, political instability, and cultural differences.

Key words: China, Central Asia, economic cooperation, trade, connectivity, investment, resources

Introduction:

The economic cooperation between China and Central Asia has witnessed significant growth and attention in recent years. Driven by China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), this partnership aims to enhance connectivity, promote trade, and foster economic development between China and the countries of Central Asia. As Central Asia possesses abundant natural resources and serves as a strategic transit corridor between Asia and Europe, it presents a promising opportunity for China's economic expansion and regional integration. This analysis delves into the various aspects of economic cooperation between China and Central Asia, exploring the drivers, challenges, and potential implications for the involved countries. By examining the historical context, economic complementarities, key areas of cooperation, challenges, and potential implications, this analysis aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play in this important regional partnership.

Literature Review:

The literature on the economic cooperation between China and Central Asia highlights the evolving nature of this partnership and its implications for the involved countries. Scholars and analysts have explored various aspects of this cooperation, including its historical context, drivers, challenges, and potential implications.

One key aspect examined in the literature is the historical context of China's engagement with Central Asia. Researchers have highlighted the historical and cultural ties between China and the region, which have laid the foundation for economic

cooperation (Liu & Li, 2018). They have also noted the geopolitical significance of Central Asia as a strategic transit route and a source of abundant natural resources.

The literature also emphasizes the role of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a major driver of economic cooperation between China and Central Asia. Scholars have analyzed the goals and objectives of the BRI and its potential impact on the participating countries (Zhang, Y., 2020). They have explored the infrastructure projects, trade facilitation measures, and investment promotion initiatives under the BRI, and their implications for regional connectivity and economic development.

Challenges and bottlenecks in the economic cooperation between China and Central Asia have been extensively discussed in the literature. Scholars have examined issues such as inadequate infrastructure, regulatory barriers, political instability, and cultural differences that pose challenges to the smooth implementation of cooperative projects (Mahmud, S., & Yasin, M., 2019). They have also highlighted the need for policy coordination and institutional capacity building to address these challenges effectively.

The potential implications of economic cooperation between China and Central Asia have generated significant scholarly interest. Researchers have examined the economic changes and structural transformations that the participating Central Asian countries may experience as a result of this cooperation (Kassenova, N., 2019; Clarke, M., 2017). They have also explored the geopolitical implications, including China's expanding influence in the region and its implications for other major powers.

Overall, the literature on the economic cooperation between China and Central Asia provides valuable insights into the drivers, challenges, and potential implications of this partnership. It offers a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play and highlights the importance of policy coordination and capacity building for maximizing the positive outcomes of this cooperation.

Research methodology.

This analysis of economic cooperation between China and Central Asia follows a comprehensive approach that includes a review of existing literature, policy documents, and scholarly articles. The methodology involves the following steps:

Literature Review: Conducted a thorough review of relevant academic literature, research papers, and reports pertaining to the economic cooperation between China and Central Asia. This step ensured a comprehensive understanding of the historical context, drivers, challenges, and potential implications of the partnership.

Data Collection: Gathered data from various sources, including official government documents, statistical reports, and reputable international organizations. This data provided insights into the economic indicators, infrastructure projects, trade patterns, and investment flows between China and Central Asia.

Analysis: Analyzed the collected data to identify patterns, trends, and key findings related to the economic cooperation between China and Central Asia. This analysis involved examining the drivers of cooperation, challenges faced, and the potential implications for the involved countries and the broader region.

Synthesis: Synthesized the findings from the literature review and data analysis to present a comprehensive overview of the economic cooperation between China and Central Asia. This synthesis included identifying key areas of cooperation, discussing challenges and opportunities, and highlighting the potential implications for regional integration and development.

The methodology employed in this analysis aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the economic cooperation between China and Central Asia,

incorporating insights from existing literature and data analysis. By following this methodology, the analysis seeks to contribute to the existing knowledge on this important regional partnership.

Analysis and discussion.

The five Central Asian countries are the first external region for the development of "The Belt and Road," and they serve as a strategic bridgehead. The five Central Asian countries have had economic and trade exchanges with us for many years, but due to historical constraints, the exchanges have mostly been in transit or indirect investment. China's direct investment into the five countries has primarily been in industry, mining, and agriculture in recent years, with fewer projects involving direct commercial investment.

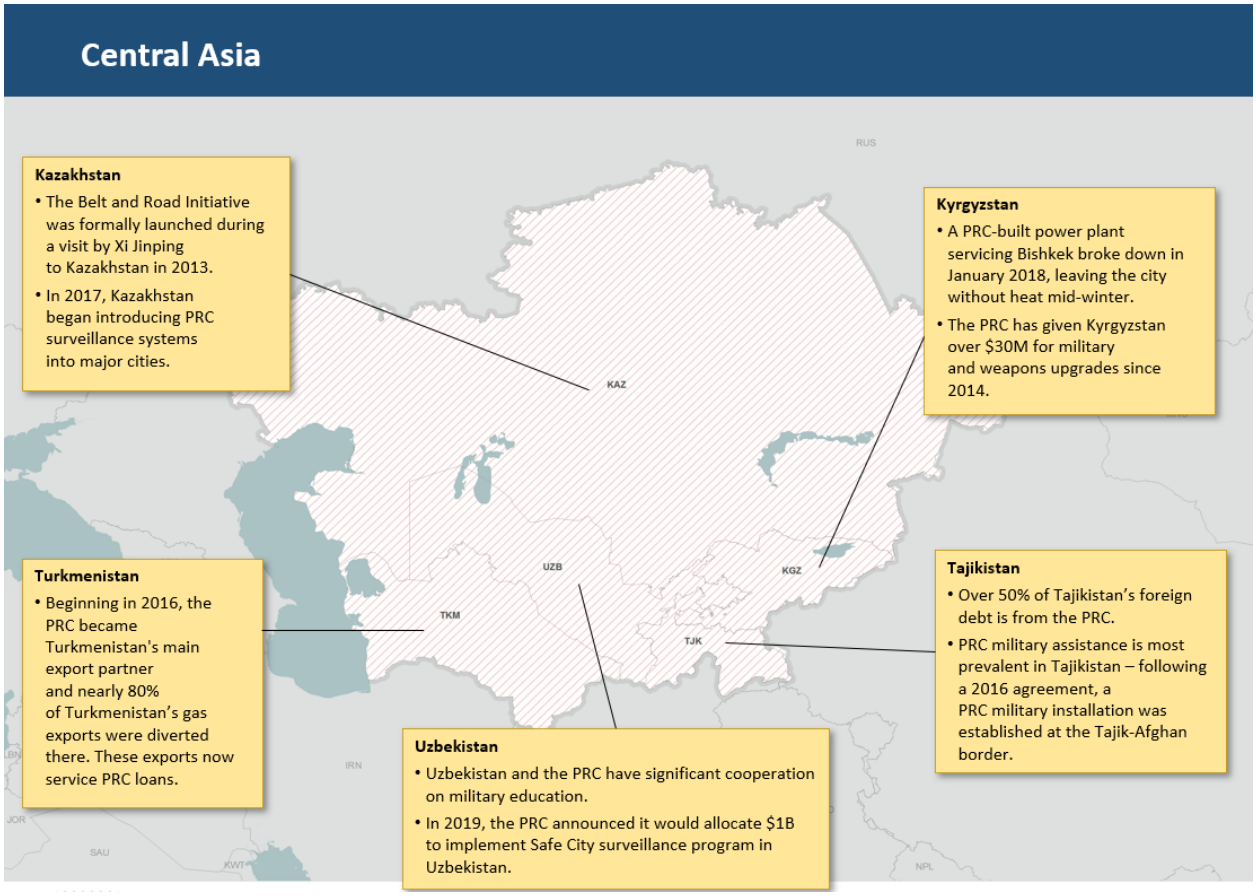


Figure 1. China and Central Asian countries cooperation[1]

Though China's involvement in Central Asia predated the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative in Kazakhstan in 2013, spending and cooperation have undoubtedly increased since then. By 2018, FDI from the PRC had reached nearly $15 billion in the five Central Asian countries, representing a 40% increase over pre-BRI levels. China is the destination for approximately 22% of Central Asian exports and the source of 37% of Central Asian imports, making the five Central Asian countries extremely reliant on trade with the PRC. Beijing announced a new transportation route from the PRC's western border through Kyrgyzstan and on to Uzbekistan in June 2020.

Table 1. China's Direct Investment in Central Asian Countries (US $million)[2]

[1] Foreign Affairs Committee of China https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/china-snapshot-project-central-asia-2/

[2] 2019 Annual Statistical Bulletin of China's Outward Foreign Direct Investment, Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China and statista.com data

Country (region)	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**
Kazakhstan	-251,027	48,770	207,407	11,835	78,649	17,500	
Kyrgyzstan	15,155	15,874	12,370	10,016	21,566	136, 12	334,74
Turkmenistan	-31,457	-2,376	4,672	-3,830	-9,315	6,756	7,896
Uzbekistan	12,789	17,887	-7,575	9,901	- 44,583		2,200
Tajikistan	21,931	27,241	9,501	38,824	6, 961	4,457	8,874

Since the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Kazakhstan in 1992, the two countries have had frequent high-level contacts, a high degree of mutual political trust, deep economic integration and expanding practical cooperation in various fields. in June 2011, the two sides announced the upgrading of their relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership. The overall development of China-Kazakhstan economic and trade cooperation is gaining momentum. China is one of the most important trade and investment partners of Kazakhstan. According to Chinese statistics, in 2019, bilateral trade between China and Kazakhstan amounted to $21.99 billion, up 10.6 percent from the previous year, returning to the $20 billion mark for the first time since 2015.In 2020, bilateral trade between China and Kazakhstan will be $21.43 billion. Currently, China is Kazakhstan's second largest trading partner (after Russia) and the second largest export destination (after Italy) and import source (after Russia), and its share and weight in Kazakhstan's foreign trade remains stable. By the end of 2019, China's cumulative investment stock in Kazakhstan was about USD 29.43 billion, various loans exceeded USD 50 billion, cumulative contracts for various types of engineering contracts were about USD 37.6 billion, and the number of Chinese-funded enterprises registered and operating in Kazakhstan exceeded 1,000. more than 6,000 China-European trains were operated in transit to Kazakhstan in 2019. Kazakhstan's exports to China have been expanding, and high-quality agricultural products such as flour, vegetable oil, meat, honey and camel milk powder have made their way to the tables of ordinary Chinese people. In the future, the two sides will further leverage their complementary advantages, unleash their cooperation potential and push China-Kazakhstan economic and trade relations to a new level.

In September 2013, during his visit to Kazakhstan, President Xi Jinping first proposed the initiative to build the Silk Road Economic Belt, to which Kazakhstan responded positively. The two sides reached an important consensus on strengthening the dovetailing cooperation between the construction of "The Belt and Road" and the new economic policy of the Bright Road, and have achieved a number of early harvests. "In June, during the SCO Bishkek summit, Kazakhstan's newly elected President Tokaev held a meeting with President Xi Jinping and stressed that relations with China are an integral part of Kazakhstan's foreign policy. In September, President Tokaev visited China and held a meeting with President Xi Jinping. The two heads of State unanimously decided to develop a permanent comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Kazakhstan in a spirit of common interests and win-win cooperation.

FINECS ISSN-2181-1636 Vol. 3, Issue 3, Sept, 2023
https://finecs.net

Table 2. Bilateral trade statistics between China and Kazakhstan 2015-2020 ($ billion)[3]

year	import and export volume	Chinese exports	Chinese imports	shortfall
2015	142.97	84.42	58.55	25.87
2016	130.93	82.89	48.04	34.85
2017	180.00	116.43	63.57	52.86
2018	198.86	113.50	85.35	28.15
2019	219.91	127.29	92.62	34.67
2020	214.47	117.07	97.39	19.68

According to Chinese customs statistics, bilateral trade between China and Kazakhstan stood at $21.99 billion in 2019, up 10.6 percent from the previous year and back to the $20 billion mark for the first time since 2015. Of the total, China's exports to Kazakhstan were $12.73 billion, up 12.1 percent year-on-year, while imports from Kazakhstan were $9.26 billion, up 8.6 percent year-on-year. The Chinese surplus in bilateral trade was $3.47 billion, up 22.7 percent year-on-year. Currently, China is Kazakhstan's second largest trading partner (after Russia) and the second largest export destination (after Italy) and import source (after Russia), and its share and weight in Kazakhstan's foreign trade has remained stable.

According to the Ministry of Commerce of China, in 2019, Chinese enterprises signed 241 new contracting contracts in Kazakhstan, with a new contract value of $5.357 billion and completed turnover of $1.982 billion. A total of 4,164 laborers of various types were dispatched, with 5,047 laborers in Kazakhstan at the end of the year. The newly signed large-scale contracting projects include the construction of five terrace hydropower plants on the Tentako River in Kazakhstan by China Gezhouba Group Company Limited; the construction of projects in Almaty, Kazakhstan by China Construction Group Company Limited and the construction of multiple housing complexes in Almaty by China Railway 20th Bureau Group Company Limited; and the construction of the Almaty subway project by China Railway 20th Bureau Group Company Limited.

In December 2014, during the second meeting between the Prime Ministers of China and Kazakhstan, the two governments reached a consensus on the development of production capacity cooperation, and in August 2015, the two sides signed the Framework Agreement on Strengthening Production Capacity and Investment Cooperation between the governments of China and Kazakhstan. By the end of 2019, China and Kazakhstan had held 17 dialogue sessions on capacity and investment cooperation and identified 55 key cooperation projects with a total investment amount of nearly US$28 billion. Among them, four projects were completed in 2017 with an investment amount of $143 million; 11 projects started in 2018 with an investment amount of about $7.1 billion; and 11 projects are scheduled to start construction with an investment amount of more than $4.4 billion.

Current status of geo-economic cooperation between China and Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan is a friendly neighbor of China, with a relatively stable political situation, largely sound laws and a sustained economic development. Kyrgyzstan joined the World Trade Organization in 1998 and the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015 with a highly liberalized trade regime, and in 2019 Kyrgyzstan continues to pursue an open economic policy that encourages strong attraction of foreign investment. China and Kyrgyzstan

[3] China Customs data

share a common border of more than 1,000 kilometers. Bilateral political relations between China and Kyrgyzstan are close, with frequent high-level visits, and in June 2018, during the visit of Kyrgyz President Zhembekov to China and his attendance at the 18th meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State, the two sides upgraded Sino-Kyrgyz relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership.In June 2019, President Xi Jinping successfully visited Kyrgyzstan and attended the 19th meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State that elevated the China-Kyrgyz comprehensive strategic partnership to a new level.

Good political relations have laid a good foundation for promoting Sino-Kyrgyz economic, trade and investment cooperation, and Kyrgyzstan has responded positively to China's "The Belt and Road" initiative and taken the initiative to dovetail with Kyrgyzstan's National Development Strategy for 2018 to 2040. In recent years, bilateral trade and economic cooperation between China and Kyrgyzstan has been developing smoothly and the level of cooperation has been increasing, giving full play to the role of "ballast" and "propeller" in bilateral relations. China's merchandise trade has continued to grow over the years, and in 2019, China continued to maintain its position as the largest trade partner and the largest source of investment in Kyrgyzstan. China's investment and economic cooperation projects in Kyrgyzstan cover major areas of economic and social development, such as transportation, communications, power, mineral resources development and agriculture, and the scale and level of these projects are constantly increasing.

Table 3. Bilateral Trade Statistics between China and Kyrgyzstan 2015-2020[4]

year	import and export volume	Chinese exports	Chinese imports	shortfall
2015	43.42	42.84	0.58	42.26
2016	56.76	56.05	0.71	55.34
2017	54.48	53.61	0.87	52.74
2018	56.12	55.57	0.54	55.03
2019	63.46	62.80	0.66	62.14
2020	29.01	28.66	0.35	28.31

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Kyrgyzstan, bilateral trade has basically maintained a stable growth trend, especially in recent years, with a significant growth rate. According to Chinese customs statistics, the trade volume between the two countries was only US$35.49 million in 1992; in 2008, bilateral trade volume reached a record high of US$9.33 billion. According to Chinese customs statistics, in 2019, Sino-Kyrgyz trade volume was US$6.378 billion, up 13.15% year-on-year, of which China's exports were US$6.312 billion, up 13.07% year-on-year; China's imports were US$65.96 million, up 21.4% year-on-year, and China was Kyrgyzstan's top trading partner and top source of imports.

According to Chinese customs statistics, in recent years, the main categories of Chinese exports to Kyrgyzstan include: knitted or crocheted clothing and clothing accessories; shoes, boots, leggings and parts thereof; knitted and crocheted fabrics; cotton; non-knitted or non-crocheted clothing and clothing accessories; chemical fibre filaments; boilers, mechanical apparatus and parts thereof; electric, electrical, audiovisual equipment and accessories therefor; leather products, luggage and bags, etc.

[4] China Customs data

The main categories of Chinese imports from Kyrgyzstan include: mineral sands, slag and ash; copper and its products; raw hides and leather; mineral fuels, mineral oil, etc.; wool and other animal wool, horse hair yarn and its woven fabrics; fruits, dried fruits, etc.

Current status of geo-economic cooperation between China and Tajikistan

Tajikistan is a friendly neighbor of China, and China-Tajikistan established diplomatic relations in 1992. In recent years, the two countries have exchanged high-level visits frequently, political mutual trust has been strengthened, and a deep friendship has been established between the leaders of the two countries.In August 2017, President Rahmon paid a state visit to China, and China and Tajikistan established a comprehensive strategic partnership.In June 2019, President Xi Jinping visited Tajikistan and attended the Asia Trust Summit, and China and Tajikistan signed the Joint Declaration on Further Deepening China-Tajikistan Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, in which the two countries are committed to gradually building a development community and a security community. China-Tahran political and economic relations are now at their best in history, and China-Tahran economic and trade cooperation is developing rapidly, gradually expanding in scale and scope and increasing in level. China-Tahran economic and trade cooperation has become an important force in promoting the construction of China's "Silk Road Economic Belt", and the ancient Silk Road has once again come to life.

Table 4. Bilateral Trade Statistics between China and Tajikistan 2015-2020[5]

year	**import and export volume**	**Chinese exports**	**Chinese imports**	**shortfall**
2015	18.49	17.97	0.52	17.45
2016	17.56	17.25	0.31	16.94
2017	13.71	13.24	0.47	12.77
2018	15.05	14.28	0.77	13.51
2019	16.74	15.90	0.85	15.05
2020	10.63	10.18	0.45	9.73

Since 2000, trade between China and Uzbekistan has been expanding and maintaining a relatively fast growth. China has been Uzbekistan's top trade partner since 2016 and has maintained its position as Uzbekistan's top trade partner for three consecutive years. According to Chinese customs statistics, in 2019, bilateral trade between China and Uzbekistan amounted to $7.21 billion, up 15.1 percent year-on-year. Among them, China's exports were $5.02 billion, up 27.6 percent, while China's imports were $2.18 billion, down 6.2 percent. China's trade surplus was $2.84 billion. According to Uzbekistan's official data, in 2019, the trade volume between Uzbekistan and China was $7.62 billion, up 18.5% year-on-year, accounting for 18.1% of Uzbekistan's total foreign trade.

Since 2017, the new government of Uzbekistan, under the leadership of President Mirziyoyev, has been making vigorous efforts to deepen domestic reforms, actively open up the country to the outside world, attract investment, significantly improve the business environment, and continue to unleash market dynamism and development potential, and Uzbekistan is now in a "window period" of reform and Uzbekistan is now in a window of reform and a golden opportunity period for development. Uzbekistan sincerely welcomes Chinese enterprises and self-employed persons to come to Uzbekistan to engage in

[5] China Customs data

economic and trade cooperation, and will provide them with assistance and services to the best of its ability.

In general. In terms of trade volume, Central Asian countries have been the fastest-growing region in recent years, accounting for 2.5 per cent of China's total imports and exports with countries along "The Belt and Road". Since 2014, China has turned from a trade deficit to a trade surplus with Central Asia, and the trend is expanding year by year. The ranking of China's trade volume with Central Asian countries has changed, from high to low in recent years, namely, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, which is not consistent with the ranking of the economic development gap of Central Asian countries from high to low, namely, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. This is, on the one hand, related to the trade environment of each country, such as Kyrgyzstan's relatively liberal trade environment, whose ranking in China's trade volume with Central Asian countries has been higher than its ranking in the GDP of Central Asian countries; on the other hand, it is also related to commodity trade, such as Turkmenistan, which has the lowest ranking in the trade environment of Central Asian countries, but since Turkmenistan exported natural gas to China in 2012, its ranking in its trade volume with China's trade volume ranking with Central Asian countries has jumped from the bottom to the second, a position that has some stability due to the long-term nature of energy trade.

In terms of trade structure, China's exports to Central Asian countries are dominated by shoes, boots and similar goods, and among the top ten Chinese exports to Central Asia in 2017, toys, game and sporting goods and their zero accessories increased by more than three times, mainly to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan; imports are dominated by mineral fuels, mineral oil and its distillation products, asphalt substances, mineral waxes, etc., and in 2017 China's exports to Among the top ten commodities imported into Central Asia in 2017, lead and its products had the highest growth rate, mainly from Tajikistan.

In terms of trade subjects, exports are dominated by private enterprises and imports by state-owned enterprises, and among export subjects, private enterprises have always been the main trade subjects of China's exports to Central Asia. The share of private enterprises' exports in the export value of all trade subjects has generally been on an upward trend since 2013, rising from 72.2% in 2013 to 84.5% in 2017, while the export value of state-owned enterprises was US$2.19 billion in 2017, accounting for 10.2% of the export value of all trade subjects, with a decreasing trend since 2013.

Among the main importers, state-owned enterprises occupy a considerable proportion, with imports of US$13.25 billion in 2017, accounting for 91.2% of the imports of all trading entities, and the proportion has a tendency to further expand.

In terms of commodity transportation modes, China's exports to Central Asian countries are dominated by road transportation, and the share of railway transportation in imports has been increasing year by year. In 2017, China's exports to Central Asian countries by road transportation accounted for 69.1% of the exports of all transportation modes, and railway transportation accounted for 27.2% of the exports of all transportation modes; imports are dominated by other transportation and railway transportation modes. Among them, imports of other transport modes accounted for 56.3% of imports of all transport modes; railway transport accounted for 34.3% of imports of all transport modes. From 2013 to 2017, the proportion of imports of other transport modes showed a decreasing trend, while the proportion of railway transport showed an increasing trend.

Overall, Central Asian countries have become one of the most important trade regions for China along "The Belt and Road", with Kazakhstan, Turkey and Ukraine becoming China's most important trade partners in Central Asia due to their rich energy

resources.

Trade dependence refers to the ratio of a country's or a region's import and export trade to GDP, which not only reflects the contribution of foreign trade development to economic growth, but is also an important indicator of a country's or region's openness to the outside world. The higher the trade dependence, the higher the openness, the more economic agents have the economic basis to carry out economic cooperation, and the stronger the willingness to seek economic cooperation. The share of bilateral trade reflects the degree of economic ties, and it directly reflects the basis, potential and necessity of bilateral economic cooperation, and is also an indicator of competition, cooperation and alliance between countries and regions around commodity markets, resource supply, capital and technology flows, etc. This paper analyzes the geo-economic trade dependence in China's geo-economic cooperation with Central Asia and classifies its types in order to clarify the relationship between the two sides in geo-economic cooperation and provide some reference for promoting geo-economic cooperation between China and Central Asia and promoting the construction of "The Belt and Road".

$$z = \frac{X + M}{GDP} * 100\%$$

Where Z denotes a country's foreign trade dependence, X denotes the total value of the country's exports, and M denotes the total value of the country's imports. Then, based on the data provided by the Chinese Customs on China's import and export trade with Central Asian countries and the values of GDP of each country over 2015 provided by the World Bank, we can summarize as follows.

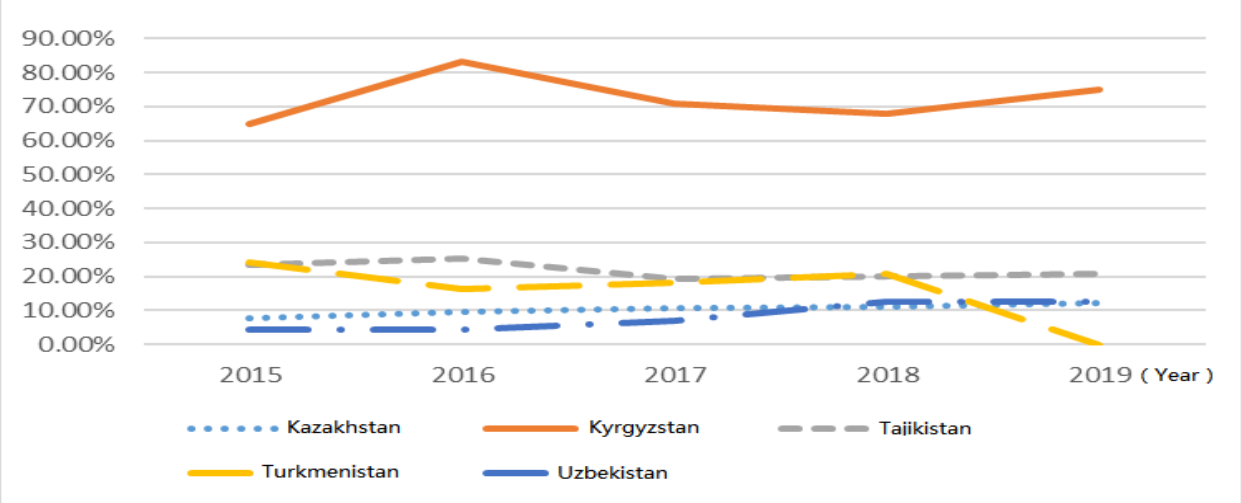


Figure 2. Trade dependence between China and Central Asian countires[6]

As shown in Figure 2, China's trade dependence with the five Central Asian countries fluctuates but is always at a relatively stable level, mostly close to or above 20%. Analyzing the ratio of China's trade with Central Asian countries to each other's total trade, China's total trade with the five Central Asian countries in 2019 was US$618 million, accounting for about 0.45% of China's total trade, and 88.6% of China's outward FDI in 2019 went to Asia and Europe, of which US$110.84 billion went to Asia, up 5.1% year-on-year, accounting for The ratio is 80.9%, mainly concentrated in East and South Asia. In contrast, trade between the five Central Asian countries and China as a share of their total trade has shifted from a rapid upward trend since 2013 to a stable one. China has

[6] China Customs, World Bank data

also become an important trading partner of Central Asian countries in bilateral trade (China became the second largest trading partner of Kazakhstan, the top trading partner and the top source of imports of Kyrgyzstan, and the top trading partner of Uzbekistan). The high dependence of China's foreign trade with Central Asian countries indicates the high degree of economic openness of each economic entity, and the high share of foreign trade of Central Asian countries with China indicates the high degree of economic and trade integration and close economic ties between Central Asian countries and China; while the small proportion of foreign trade with Central Asian countries in the total foreign trade of China indicates the huge potential of developing foreign trade between China and Central Asian countries. Judging from the degree of trade dependence and the current situation of mutual trade development, the two sides have the conditions to further deepen trade cooperation and can do something to achieve smooth trade flows.

Conclusion:

The analysis of economic cooperation between China and Central Asia underscores the dynamic partnership driven by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and mutual interests. This analysis has shed light on various aspects of this cooperation, including its historical context, drivers, challenges, and potential implications.

China's engagement with Central Asia is rooted in historical ties and strategic considerations, as the region serves as a vital transit route and a source of abundant natural resources. The BRI has played a crucial role in promoting economic cooperation, with infrastructure projects, trade facilitation measures, and investment promotion initiatives serving as key drivers.

However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, regulatory barriers, political instability, and cultural differences have been identified as obstacles to seamless cooperation. Overcoming these challenges requires policy coordination, institutional capacity building, and regional integration efforts.

The economic cooperation between China and Central Asia has significant implications for both the participating Central Asian countries and the broader geopolitical landscape. Central Asian countries may experience economic changes and structural transformations, while China's expanding influence in the region may have implications for other major powers.

To maximize the positive outcomes of this cooperation, it is essential to diversify cooperation beyond traditional sectors and explore avenues such as digital connectivity, tourism, and agricultural cooperation. Additionally, continued policy coordination, institutional strengthening, and regional integration efforts will be instrumental in addressing challenges and ensuring the sustainable development of the region.

In conclusion, the economic cooperation between China and Central Asia presents opportunities for growth, connectivity, and regional integration. By understanding the drivers, challenges, and potential implications of this partnership, policymakers, scholars, and stakeholders can contribute to its success and contribute to the economic development and regional integration of Central Asia.

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