



Cambridge Central Asia Forum

Jesus College

University of Cambridge

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<https://centralasia.group.cam.ac.uk/>

R.B.Suleimenov Institute of Oriental Studies

Faculty of Oriental Studies

Al Farabi Kazakh National University

Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan

3rd of May, 2019

Review of Albina Muratbekova's PhD Dissertation

Albina Muratbekova, PhD candidate at the Kazakh National University has been a visiting scholar at Cambridge Central Asia Forum, Center of Development Studies, University of Cambridge, from October 2015 till May 2016. During this study visit she worked on the theme **"China's contemporary social and economic interaction with India in border areas: models and challenges"**. Since then I have continued to supervise and assess Albina's work in person and electronically constantly. Albina studied core issue of the theme – territorial dispute between China and India. Also, she developed methodology and worked on a historical approach of the issue.

1. The importance and relevance of the research

As the world orders continue to evolve and more often clash, study of this dynamics is increasingly conducted from a grand narrative perspective and often leaves out practical and philosophical nature of international relations at the physical border of these orders. Case of Indian and China is perhaps most critical given the scale of humanity affected, not only inside these two powers, but also in their neighborhood. It is thus incredible that we are able to have in this thesis insight of a neutral scholar from Kazakhstan like Albina Muratbekova, who has studied these relationships through direct fieldwork in both of these countries, in an attempt to dig deeper into the forms and function of interaction of China and India at their border and create a clear analytical picture of historical evolution and modern timeline.

2. Reliability and validity of theoretical and practical results, and their novelty

Albina's work is constructed through, initial survey of literature, both wider and specific, followed by field work in China and India. Novelty lies in creative research question as well as empirical field work data on India and China. It is a unique and first time view of India and China relationship from a Central Asian perspective as it provides, both, objective view and analysis, as well as 'Asian' nuance to theory of international relations frameworks.

3. Scientific and practical significance of the work

The research methodology in international relations is largely designed to produce understanding in a Western and global context and thus, often, particular nuance of very

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independent Indian and Chinese schools of international relations remains obscure. Albina Murabekova's endeavour to include the particular context of Asian schools makes the analysis in this thesis very practical and actual in terms of policy formulation.

4. Improvements (if there are any)

Albina is a very careful and diligent scholar and this is reflected in the professional level quality of the thesis. I have seen several version of the thesis and on each occasion Ms Muratbekova has incorporated advice and new information with high aptitude. No further improvements are necessary at this stage.

5. The compliance with the general standards of doctoral dissertation

This dissertation is fully compliant of standards of doctoral dissertation, both general and of academic rigour.

6. Approved (~~not approved~~) dissertation to defence

I propose PhD doctoral dissertation of Albina M Muratbekova for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, it is titled **China's Contemporary Social and Economic Interaction with India in Border Areas: Models and Challenges** (6D020900-ORIENTAL STUDIES) and recommend to the defence.

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Dr. Siddharth S. Saxena

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