
REVIEW
of the official reviewer for a PhD dissertation
on theme «China's contemporary social and economic interaction with India in
borders areas: models and challenges»
by Muratbekova Albina Mirzakhanovna
submitted for the award of degree of doctor of philosophy (PhD)
specialty 6D020900 – Oriental Studies

1. The relevance of the research topic

China and India have been the leading regional powers of Asia for millennia. These are among the few world civilizations that have managed to maintain the continuity of their own cultural, social and partly political models, and extend these models to a number of neighbouring countries in their orbit of influence. It is quite natural that such strong powers, moreover, having a common border of more than 3,000 km in their history of interaction, have experienced many conflicting moments and tested a number of models of cooperation, in which the residents of these two states, and often neighbouring countries, are involved. The modern period is no exception in the current paradigm of Sino-Indian relations: there is active cooperation in a number of areas, a conflict component, and, accordingly, mechanisms in which both powers interact on certain issues.

The study of such mechanisms of interaction in the border areas of China and India is extremely relevant for a number of parameters. Firstly, due to the fact that most of the border territories are controversial and, in this regard, should be considered as a potential source of security threat in Asia, especially taking into account the fact that both powers possess nuclear weapons. Secondly, due to the keen interest of Kazakhstan in obtaining the most elaborated and comprehensive information about the state of Sino-Indian relations. Our country, which is actively cooperating with the PRC and India, both on a bilateral basis and within the framework of multilateral formats, must not only be aware of the status of various territorial disputes, but also understand their origins, take into account all critical factors and, accordingly, use this information in the process of interaction. In this regard, a comprehensive scientific review of the state of socio-economic cooperation between China and India in the border areas is valuable both for a common understanding of the development trends of relations between the two countries and for building interaction in a multilateral format, especially within the framework of the SCO, BRI, and UN Security Council. Finally, thirdly, the unsettled relations in the border territories is a problem that is acute for many states in the Asian region and, in particular, for a number of countries in Central Asia. Despite the possible absence of politically disputed territories, situations often arise when one or another model of interaction between the population or countries as a whole is created in the border regions. The study of Sino-Indian experience in this area can enrich the theoretical concepts of models of border cooperation and provide material for understanding the processes taking place, including in our region.

Thus, the topic chosen by the applicant is relevant from a scientific and theoretical point of view, from the position of value for Kazakh oriental studies, and also has serious relevance in terms of replenishing the theoretical and information base for promoting the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

2. Correspondence of the dissertation topic to the priority areas of science development and / or state programs that are implemented in the Republic of Kazakhstan

The presented work is the result of a study of the current Sino-Indian socio-economic interaction in the border areas, conducted by Muratbekova Albina Mirzakhonovna based on an integrated approach combining the most relevant methodological theories. The author methodologically correctly formulates the goal and objectives of the study, accurately sets out all the provisions to be defended, gives the most complete and comprehensive analysis of the sources and literature on the stated problem. The dissertation research is distinguished by a clearly calibrated structure that corresponds to the goal and objectives of the work, as well as the methodological approaches chosen by the author, combining theories of globalization, economic interdependence and the value of territories. All this allowed the applicant to conduct research in accordance with the planned goals and come to conclusions that provide extremely relevant and scientifically valuable information. Theme and content of the dissertation of A.M. Muratbekova "China's contemporary social and economic interaction with India in border areas: models and challenges" correspond to the themes of "Oriental Studies", "International Relations" and "Foreign Policy".

The topic of the dissertation corresponds to basic political documents such as "Kazakhstan-2050 Strategy: a new political course of a successful state," "The Concept of the Republic of Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy for 2014-2020, approved by Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated January 21, 2014 No. 741.

3. The degree of validity and reliability of each research result (scientific position)

Based on the analysis of an extensive source and bibliographic database, the author came to the following research results:

The *first result* of the study showed that for the analysis of the evolution and state of Sino-Indian relations within the border regions, the combination of theories of globalization, economic interdependence and the value of the territory is optimal. This approach is new and seems scientifically justified, since it allows to identify the influence of global foreign policy processes on the state of the problem, analyze macro and microeconomic sections, and identify the role of political will and initiatives in the evolution and prospects of conflict development.

The *second result* of the study stated that for the most complete and relevant assessment of the history and current state of socio-economic interaction in the border areas, a comprehensive analysis of all levels of Sino-Indian relations is required: from global to bilateral. In the work, such an analysis was carried out as thoroughly as possible and the state of relations in the border regions is considered

taking into account all significant factors, which is also the first such attempt for understanding the current situation for Kazakhstani science.

The *third result* is notable for its partial novelty; the author showed the influence of historical and conceptual premises as a key factor in the limited border interaction between China and India. The author has shown how the vision of both countries of their national interests, the evolution of the concept of borders, and the understanding of the historical boundaries of their own peoples influenced the current state of the problem. In addition, an analysis was made of real historical events that influenced the existing limited interaction in the border areas: from the occurrence of a territorial dispute to the 1962 border war.

As the *fourth result* of the study, the author put forward the thesis that the development of border relations between the two countries should be investigated not only on the basis of all dimensions of Sino-Indian interaction and domestic concepts, but also on the basis of studying regional issues, such as the state of relations in the China- Pakistan-India triangle, issues of Tibet and Dalai Lama, etc. This approach also has a partial novelty, but in combination with the above types of analysis to study cross-border relations between China and India have not yet been used.

The *fifth result* of the study, stated by the author, is the hypothesis that the concept of global and regional leadership of both powers, promoted by the leadership of China and India at the highest level, has a significant influence on the state of border interaction. The author shows how these claims influenced the current state of the problem, as well as what are the forecasts of their impact on socio-economic interaction in the border areas in the short-term perspective.

4. The practical and theoretical significance of research results

In practical terms, the results of the study and the extensive historical and economic data presented in the work can be used by Kazakhstani diplomats to obtain the most complete picture of the state of Sino-Indian relations with emphasis on interaction in the border areas. This information and conclusions have serious potential for application in such areas as work in international organizations, preparation and implementation of foreign economic projects, building relations with China and India in bilateral and multilateral formats.

In theoretical terms, the materials and research results presented by the author contribute to the development of areas such as “Oriental studies”, “World politics”, and “International relations”. They may be of interest to researchers involved in foreign policy and economic development of China and India, aspects of modern geopolitics, regional relations, as well as border issues.

5. Comments and suggestions on the dissertation

Presented work of Muratbekova A.M. should be considered as a complete independent study, characterized by relevance and scientific novelty. The dissertation did not reveal inconsistencies or facts of unfair attitude of the author. At the same time, there are a number of points that I would like to draw attention to:

First, despite the focus indicated in the title of the work on considering models of Sino-Indian socio-economic interaction in border regions, the dissertation

focuses more on the preconditions for the development of border conflicts and analysis of the state of relations between the two countries. This approach creates a certain imbalance in connection with the partial mismatch of the content of the work with the stated problems.

Secondly, in the structure of the work, the theoretical and methodological part is very carefully and consistently developed in the same way, a meaningful historical excursion is carried out, and at the same time, relatively little space is given to the actual socio-economic interaction. Similarly, these points did not receive detailed coverage in the conclusion of the work. The declared models would be expedient more clearly - preferably with the use of schemes or other options for visibility - to present and on this basis to talk about potential threats.

Thirdly, it would be advisable to study Chinese literature in more detail on this issue. In the bibliography of the dissertation, the percentage of works by Chinese authors is rather small, although this is partly explainable in connection with the serious ideologization of the Sino-Indian border confrontation in Chinese scientific literature. Nevertheless, there are a number of works, including on the current border relations, which would be advised to mention. In particular, this is the work of the Institute of Border Territories of the PRC Academy of Social Sciences (中国社会科学院 中国 边疆 研究所), reflected primarily in the quarterly publication "Studying the History and Geography of the Border Regions of China" (中国 边疆 史地 研究). Perhaps the perspective of the study proposed by the Chinese side will become the basis for the author to continue the study of the topic under discussion.

The comments made are polemical in nature; they do not diminish the value of the work done by A. Muratbekova - serious and painstaking research work and are mostly recommendations to improve the dissertation and further development of the theme chosen by the author.

6. Compliance with the content of the dissertation in the framework of the requirements of the Rules for awarding academic degrees

The dissertation by Muratbekova Albina Mirzakhanovna **“China’s contemporary social and economic interaction with India in borders areas: models and challenges”** qualifies as an independent completed research that meets the requirements.

Based on the foregoing, I believe that the author of the dissertation A.M. Muratbekova worthy of the award of degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the **6D020900 - Oriental Studies** specialty.

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