


Sinophobia and Sinophilia in Central Asia after the Collapse of the Soviet Union (1991–2023)

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Received: 2025-04-24	Revised: 2025-06-17	Accepted: 2025-07-02	Published: 2025-10-10
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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

This claim downplays energy's strategic relevance, yet the Belt and Road Initiative heavily emphasizes energy corridors. Please provide empirical support or revise to reflect the dual importance of economic and strategic motives.

This assertion needs comparative data or sources. How are Chinese firms' accountability standards measurably different from Western or Russian counterparts operating in Central Asia?

Strong claim; please support with comparative statistics showing differences in labor-related protests involving Western vs. Chinese companies in the region.

This quotation is evocative. Consider integrating analysis of populist-nationalist discourse in Central Asia to frame this rhetoric more analytically.

The paragraph could benefit from clearer segmentation. Separate the issues of corruption, environmental degradation, and lack of legal frameworks into distinct analytical threads.

The paragraph assumes the establishment of military bases is confirmed. Given the geopolitical sensitivity, please qualify statements with phrases such as "reportedly" or "according to sources."

Consider analyzing the normative implications of China's support for authoritarian responses. How does this shape local legitimacy or Sinophobia?

A deeper critique of China's soft power would be welcome here. How does this top-down approach compare with U.S. or EU models of public diplomacy in the region?

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

Although consistent with neorealism, the paper could benefit from contrasting this with liberal or constructivist perspectives to provide theoretical depth and balance.

Kagan's view is referenced multiple times, but it would be helpful to contextualize it within broader IR theory debates (e.g., offensive realism vs. defensive realism).

Although this strengthens the narrative of China's assertiveness, it is tangential to Central Asia. Consider briefly justifying how South China Sea militarization relates to Beijing's Central Asian policy.

While analytically important, ensure this Western-origin stereotype is contextualized within Central Asian discourses. Has this term appeared in local protests or media?

This paragraph is rich with detail but could be split into two: one focused on technical failure (plant explosion) and one on governance failures (corruption and contract mismanagement).

The paper could benefit from citing supporting studies on China's preference for autocratic regimes (e.g., Alden, Gallagher) to bolster this important analytical point.

Consider rephrasing for academic tone. "Understand clearly" may sound speculative—consider using "perceive" or "increasingly recognize," supported by survey data if possible.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor's decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.