

Executive Summary

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Chinese Migration to Central Asia at the Beginning of the 21st Century. China's Economic Expansion and Migration: Challenges and Opportunities (a Case Study of Kazakhstan)

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The book offers a summary of some of the recent research on the linkages between Chinese economic expansion and migration to the five former Soviet republics of Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, and offers an in-depth case study of Kazakhstan, China's key partner in the region. The book covers the 20 years following 1991, when Central Asian republics gained sovereignty, with historical insights as well as a short- and mid-term prognosis.

The current period of Chinese migration to Central Asia started in late 1980s with a rapidly growing flow of petty traders. Although petty trade still plays an important role in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, from 2004 onwards a number of significant joint infrastructural projects emerged (including in energy, transportation, construction and telecommunications), bringing about growing numbers of Chinese labour force to the region.

The book explores some of the key causes of migration from China to Central Asia and identifies predominant migration patterns, including economically motivated migrations such as for labour, trade and entrepreneurship. The book then discusses economic and social implications of Chinese migration for the receiving countries, including its impact on local labour markets and businesses, as well as its social and cultural influences.

The author considers the study of Chinese migration within the migration-development framework and argues that Chinese economic presence, and particularly its investment and trade policies as well as labour migration, are beneficial for the social and economic development of the receiving countries in Central Asia. The comparative perspective adopted in the book helps explore the similarities and differences in China's policies and migration in the region, specifically between Kazakhstan the rest of Central Asia, Kazakhstan and Russian, and Central Asia and the rest of the former Soviet Union. The book also highlights the regionalization of economic relations between the Xingjian-Uyghur Autonomous Region, the north-western region of China, and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The book concludes by outlining opportunities and challenges of Chinese economic presence and migration to the region.

The book incorporates research conducted by the author or under her supervision in 1993-2011, including analysis of official statistics, expert interviews and applied sociological surveys, some of which have been pioneering for the region. The socioeconomic and historical analysis offered in the book is supported by original Chinese sources. The book contains tables, graphs, diagrams, schemes and photos, and is supplemented by an extensive bibliography.

The book is aimed at scholars and students of Chinese, Regional and Migration studies; Sociology; Political sciences; Economics; International relations, as well as general readers interested in contemporary international migration.