

## China's Expanding Geopolitical Influence and Its Implications for Peace, Security, and Regional Order in East and Central Asia

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### Abstract

This study examined China's expanding geopolitical influence and its implications for peace, security, and regional order in East and Central Asia between 2013 and 2024. Using a qualitative multiple case study design, the research analyzed policy documents, institutional frameworks, and security cooperation patterns to assess how China's economic, institutional, and military engagement reshaped regional dynamics. The findings indicated differentiated subregional outcomes. In Central Asia, economic integration under infrastructure initiatives and institutional participation within China-led organizations reinforced political alignment and contributed to relative regime stability. In contrast, East Asia experienced intensified strategic competition, particularly in maritime domains, where economic interdependence coexisted with balancing behavior and alliance reinforcement. The study demonstrated that China's geopolitical expansion operated through economic leverage, institutional embedding, and selective security cooperation; however, its effects were contingent upon geographic context, alliance structures, and historical rivalries. The research concluded that China's rise neither uniformly destabilized nor stabilized the region but instead produced layered and complex transformations within the regional order. Policy recommendations emphasized diversified partnerships, confidence-building mechanisms, and inclusive institutional engagement to sustain regional peace.

**Keywords:** Balance of Power, Belt and Road Initiative, Geopolitical Influence, Regional Order, Security Cooperation, Strategic Competition

### Introduction

Geopolitical influence in China had also grown considerably in the past 20 years to include the East and Central Asia, shifting the regional security structures, economic practices and balances of power. This growth was not simply a result of an economic expansion, but the effect of strategic policies of the state to integrate both economic diplomacy, military modernization, and personal guidance towards the restructuring of regional order in the best interests of China (Ansary et al., 2026). In East Asia, the changing security policy in China was more of a proactive power orientation, as the Beijing government attempted to achieve a face of reinventing the already existing strategic frameworks and establishing a dominant voice in the security environment (Ansary et al., 2026). The neighbors of China were not exempt as this change triggered reactions of other countries in the region and outside forces with the goal of balancing, hedging, or aligning their strategies to the Chinese course of action. The central Asia that has been historically located

at the center of the geopolitical competition between the Eurasians also experienced a significant rise in the levels of the Chinese economic and geopolitical activity, and this was especially true with regard to the projects that enhanced the intimacy of relations and interdependence (Mahmud & Hossain, 2025). One of the most significant platforms through which China grew its influence was the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which connected infrastructure, trade, and energy connections throughout the region and established new routes of influence over resource-abundant countries, including Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (Javed & Shah, 2025). These changes marked an end of the time of traditional influence on security to the period of geoeconomic interactions and strategic capitalization (Javed & Shah, 2025).

At the same time, researchers also noted the entry of China into these areas and how this met greater power politics. China turned to Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and other multilateral organizations, where it could advance multipolar visions and institutional cooperation, neutralizing the US dominance and enhancing control over Eurasia (AP News, 2025). However, this multilateralism also raised concerns on how stable the region is and the consequences of this to the existing rules-based order systems. The studies of individual elements of China ascendancy like security policy in East Asia or the economy in Central Asia had increased, research that would provide research integration to assess how these combined strategies would affect the peace, security and order in the region were still required. This paper was thus an analysis of China and the growing geopolitical influence and its consequences to stability and regional governance in both East and Central Asia.

## **Research Background**

The spread of China in East and Central Asia had their basis in the multi-polar foreign policy where economic relations and strategic influence were intertwined. In 2013, one of the most examined tools of this strategy became Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It was observed that the BRI was not only aimed at enhancing the connectivity and economic integration, but also provided China with the opportunity to extend its geopolitical influence as partner states were incorporated into interconnected infrastructure and trade systems that enhanced China's strategic position (Garlick, 2020; Ansary et al., 2026). This repositioning in Central Asia increased the level of economic dependence between China and the host states that, although enabled the creation of development opportunities, also redefined the agency of political actors as well as conducted real-time political and strategic calculations in the area (Javed & Shah, 2025). Besides economic instruments, Chinese involvement in the form of its dominant influence in Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was an indication that it was even trying to institutionalise influence and offer alternatives to the Western-dominated orders. The enlarged membership together with the agenda of the SCO was a demonstration of how China had aimed to show leadership in the area of diplomatic cooperation, which focused on issues relating to security, economic integration, and combating terrorism, along with balancing its relations with other key powers (AP News, 2025). This institutional growth served in discourses of multipolarity which wronged the classical Western paradigms of regional order. The rising security status that China adopted in the East Asian region was also a key ingredient to its geopolitical approach. Studies recorded the development of the security policy of Beijing based on the offensive realist consideration that resulted in more aggressive deployment and strategic deterrence stance of the military in the disputed areas like the East and South China Seas (Ansary et al., 2026). The politics complicated the peacing efforts in the region as the nationals such as Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines rebalanced their defense-level and alliance-level commitments due to the perceived aggressiveness. In addition to the direct geostrategic competition, researchers emphasized the effects that the efforts of China had on the ideas of regional order by combining economic integration and security co-operation. Such integration developed special acuity when the states in Eurasia tried to conduct

their foreign policies in the context of new polarizations and the attraction of the perspectives on future management of the region.

### **Research Problem**

In spite of the fact that many researchers had studied the separate aspects of the Chinese geopolitical growth such as economic power, military development, and foreign relations, the assessments of the overall impact on the peace and security situation in the region were under-researched. Systematic analysis which would have reduced these multi faceted dimensions into a logical image of how the growing influence of China reconfigured the regional order more so in the interwoven realms of East and Central Asia was lacking. The available studies were either unsophisticated in the scope of the economy as a statecraft, or the various issues related to security dilemmas, and failed to be thorough enough in highlighting their entwining effects on peace and institutional norms that these dilemmas shaped inter-state relations. This distinction prevented a comprehensive interpretation of how the policies of China were destabilizing or solidifying the region and whether new other ways of order are being created that did not follow the established rules based scheme.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To analyze the economic and security instruments employed by China and how these tools expanded China's geopolitical influence in East and Central Asia.
2. To evaluate the implications of China's geopolitical strategies for regional peace and security.
3. To examine the effects of China's expanding influence on regional order and institutional arrangements.

### **Research Questions**

- Q1. What were the primary economic and security mechanisms through which China expanded its geopolitical influence in East and Central Asia?
- Q2. How did China's expanding influence impact peace and security dynamics in the region?
- Q3. In what ways did China's geopolitical role shape emerging regional orders or governance structures?

### **Significance of the Study**

The research was effective in enhancing international relations since it incorporates various aspects of China geopolitical strategy and evaluates the combined impacts on regional peace, security and order. Linking economic and security approaches in a manner that offers a deeper understanding of how the Chinese influence changed the standards of state interaction and strategic balance. The study provided policy-related implications on the aspect of stability in Asia to the regional actors, international organizations and those policymakers interested in the topic. It was also realized in this study, which focused on identifying the complex interactions between cooperation and competition by the rise of China, that future regional alliances and institution might evolve to deal with tensions and facilitate sustainable peace.

### **Literature Review**

#### **China's Goeconomic Strategies in East and Central Asia**

The goeconomic expansion of China, and specifically the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), established itself in the literature as a fundamental tool of geopolitical capability that was changing the economic relationships and the orders of the regions. Researchers believed that the diplomacy of infrastructure that the BRI facilitated allowed China to become more connected to the partner countries, making the economies more interdependent and extending the influence across Asia and even further (Azizi, 2025; Mahmud & Hossain, 2025). This landslide not only caused very

significant infrastructure streams but also had a changing impact on the priorities of the national policies as states that received Chinese investment stimulus regularly altered their economic policies. Transnational studies in the ASEAN settings depicted why BRI interactions generated a hybridized environment of economic prospects and political crises. Azizi (2025) stated, ASEAN states were pragmatic in their approach towards the BRI as they considered both the benefits of the economical perspective with the strategic autonomy, but applied hedging strategies to exist in such a way that they do not jeopardize their economies. Such dynamics were manifesting that the economic projects undertaken by China were not merely related to infrastructures, but also strategic presence and dominance in regulating structures in the region.

In Central Asia, experts observed that the BRI activities of China led to the redefined power relations and multilateral forms of cooperation. Mahmud and Hossain (2025) noted that the greater economic influence exerted by China via trade and infrastructure changed the balance of power amongst traditional players and forced the Central Asian states to embrace multi-vector foreign policies in line with the competing Russian, Western, and Chinese effects. These works highlight the fact that geoeconomic approaches have played a significant role in determining the larger geopolitical scope of China in Eurasia.

### **Soft Power, Public Diplomacy, and Regional Perceptions**

Other than infrastructure and trade, there were other aspects of Chinese geopolitical influence in Asia, as reported in research, which included the aspect of the Chinese soft power and public diplomacy, which were emerging, yet complex dimensions of Chinese geopolitics. Research revealed that heavy investment and political participation in China did not necessarily lead to desirable normative impact and cultural acceptance. Based on the idea of soft power, scholars claimed that the BRI failed to attain coherent popular backing as much of the time as local beliefs were divided depending on historical grievances, identity politics, and national media priming. Indicatively, as illustrated by Vanderhill et al. (2025), although China has widest economic relationships, Chinese soft power does not easily fit the culture content of the Central Asian discourse, especially the views of sovereignty and identity influence the masses in their views concerning strategic involvement. This study also proposed that soft power projection is an issue that is still disputable in the territories with different cultural and political backgrounds. The fact that China has focused on economic success and model of development as a propagation of accessibility has not invariably been translated into greater appeal, partly due to the fact that the levers of such an aspect are diverse in diverse societies. Therefore, researchers pointed to the fact that the effects of soft power are determined by both policies of the government and receptive abilities of local communities. Studies of Chinese public diplomacy in the framework of BRI pointed to the fact that communication campaign, cultural exchange and media endeavors are important factors that determined bilateral relations, but also there are issues associated with narrative coherence and buy-in. In this respect, these results indicated that the economic presence of China and the concept of its normative impact on the region interacting with each was complex.

### **Security Dynamics and Implications**

The researchers stressed the fact that the growing geopolitical presence of China had significant security conclusions to regional peace and stability. The studies of the China security posture in East Asia indicated that the changing military and strategic activities in China led to emergence of new security dilemmas and realignments within the region. Though the official literature on ASEAN at the time mostly concentrated on economic relationships, other research directions pointed to the fact that Chinese strategic efforts (such as defense cooperation, infrastructure investments with the dual-use opportunities, etc.) overlapped with the issues of security, which triggered a recalculation of alliances and combined reactions by neighboring states. The neorealist perspectives of Central Asian trends focused on ways of establishing the roles of the great-power

competition as well as the multi-vector foreign policies, in shaping the geopolitical future. The study by Mahmud and Hossain (2025) elaborated that the relationship between the economic influence of China and the historical presence of Russia in security form of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) was in a dynamic environment in which the individual state of the region traded off conflicting needs through diversification of its security and economic relationship. This multi-vector strategy was an attempt to maintain autonomy in the overlapping spheres of influence. Research also emphasised the influence of institutional cooperation - involving such mechanism as Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) - in the process of creating security discourse. Such structures gave China platforms to have security collaboration, counterterrorism as well as regional coordination thus cementing its geopolitical footprint using economic and security tools. This kind of multidimensional involvement implied that the Chinese role in influencing order in the region was more than limited to economics, but also more of distributing peace and stability in the governance system.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This paper strategic research design employed the qualities of a qualitative explanatory research design to understand the growing geopolitical presence of China and its consequences on peace, security and regional order in Eurasian East and Central Asia. Qualitative method was found to be the most suitable one due to the fact that the work of the research was to explain the geopolitical strategies, institutional behaviors and security dynamics and not to quantify some measurable variables. A causal relationship between economic statecraft in China, the institution engagement, military position, and its long-term regional ramification were explored by use of an explanatory design. The research was based on analytical reading of policy reports, academic writings, and reports of the institutions and strategic succession in the development of a complete knowledge of geopolitical transformation within the chosen areas.

### **Research Approach**

The research was conducted in a deductive manner of analysis which was based on the international relations theory including Realism, Power Transition Theory and Regional Security Complex Theory. Existing theoretical frameworks were applied to explain the China behavior as status-quo or revisionist or hybrid. The deductive methodology helped the researcher explore the views of whether theoretical underlying assumptions on the rising powers and shift of regional order were supported by empirical evidence found in East and Central Asia. This method guaranteed theoretical rigor and also offered flexibility of interpretation in the contexts.

### **Scope of the Study**

The geographical area of the research was East Asia (China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and ASEAN member states) and Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan). These areas were chosen as they were two geopolitical areas which were interrelated yet strategically different which had been enhanced by economic, institutional and security activities of China influence. The timeframe represented the period between 2013 and 2025, which represents the beginning and growth of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the changing status of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

### **Data Collection Methods**

The source of the study had been secondary data that had been collected in systematic manner using peer-reviewed journal articles, books, research reports, official government publications, and policy briefs. To achieve scholarly credibility, academic databases, which included Google Scholar, journal archived on Scopus, ResearchGate publications and institutional repositories,

were consulted. Regional policy papers, official white papers of the Chinese government and think tank strategic evaluations of international bodies were also analyzed. The sources that were used to ensure reliability and validity were limited to the publication in reputable academic journals. A systematic review procedure was used in the data collection. The keywords that were used in identifying relevant literature are China geopolitical influence, Belt and Road Initiative, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, regional security East Asia, and Central Asia power dynamics. Relevance, credibility in publications and recency were the basis through which selected materials were screened. Such a systematic selection process also spared the data being obsolete in regards to the contemporary academic discussions and empirical advances.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

The study employed thematic content analysis to interpret the collected data. Textual materials were coded and categorized into major analytical themes, including:

- i. Geoeconomic expansion and infrastructure diplomacy
- ii. Institutional influence and multilateral engagement
- iii. Security posture and military modernization
- iv. Regional responses and balancing strategies
- v. Implications for peace and regional order

Resurring patterns were found through theoretical interpretations, professional trends and recurrent patterns in the analysis of the literature. East Asia and Central Asia were also compared to analyze the similarities and differences of the strategic impact by China. The discussion sought to pull in the economic, institutional, and security aspects into a unified concept on the explanation of the transformation in the region.

### **Results and Analysis**

This paper has provided the results of thematic content analysis and process tracing of policy documents, institutional records, and security agreements between 2013 and 2024. The evaluation concentrated on three main aspects of geopolitical growth of China including economic influence, institutional engagement, and security cooperation. The case studies in East Asia and Central Asia were revealed to identify patterns on how the increased role of China affected the regional peace, regional security, and the overall order of the region.

### **Economic Influence and Regional Dependency Patterns**

The analysis revealed that China's economic engagement significantly reshaped regional economic alignments. Infrastructure financing, trade expansion, and investment flows under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) created asymmetric interdependence across several Central Asian states, while East Asian states demonstrated more diversified economic strategies.

Table 1. Patterns of Economic Engagement under China’s Belt and Road Initiative (2013–2024)

Country	BRI Infrastructure Projects	Trade Growth with China	Level of Economic Dependency	Observed Political Alignment
Kazakhstan	High	Significant Increase	High	Strong Alignment
Kyrgyzstan	High	Significant Increase	High	Strong Alignment
Uzbekistan	Moderate	Moderate Increase	Moderate	Cooperative Alignment
Vietnam	Moderate	High Increase	Moderate	Strategic Balancing
Philippines	Moderate	Moderate Increase	Moderate	Mixed Alignment
Japan	Low	Stable	Low	Strategic Counterbalance

The results showed that the Central Asian states especially Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan had a high level of infrastructure engagement as well as growing dependency on trade with China. The evidence indicated that economic integration sustained the BRI helped in gaining of political alignment to Beijing. The tracing of the processes indicated that massive investments in infrastructure were usually implemented before the increased formalization of multilateral institutions. The East Asian states were less aggressive in their levels of engagement. Despite a significant rise in trade with China, these states continued to have diversified trade associations with the United States, the partners of the Asian continent and the European Union. This diversification lessened the immediate economic dependency and allowed behaving in a way of strategic balancing as opposed to complete alignment.

The analysis also implied that economic dependency had a way of affecting the order within the region by directing the states on their diplomatic standpoints on the regional forums. The states that had significant infrastructure footprint were inclined to promote the local Chinese projects, and the economy diverse states were following the hedging strategies to stay independent in the developing regional set up.

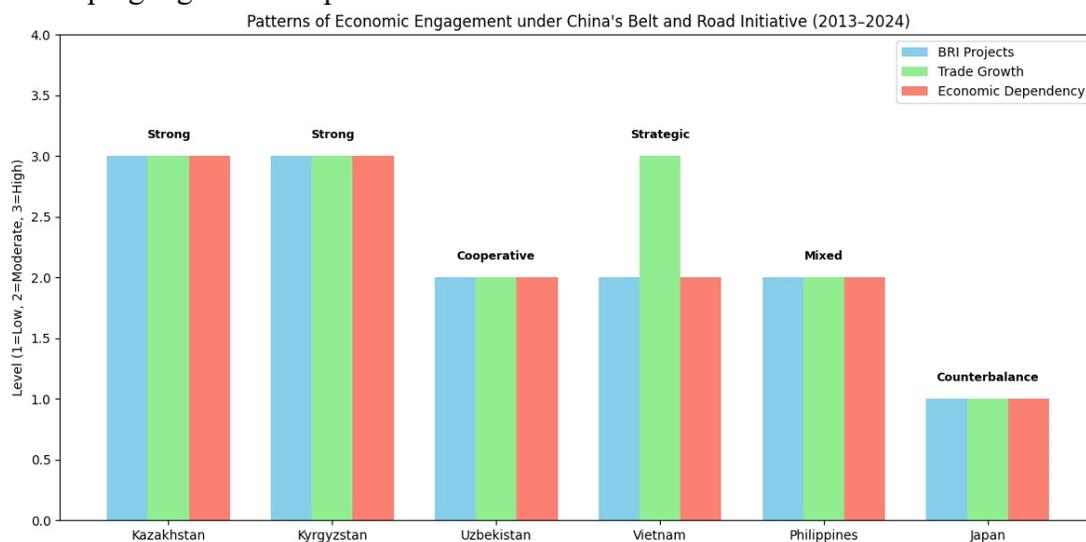


Figure 1. Patterns of Economic Engagement under China’s Belt and Road Initiative

## Institutional Engagement and Governance Alignment

The study found that institutional engagement through organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) served as mechanisms for embedding China's influence within regional governance structures.

Table 2. Institutional Participation and Strategic Alignment

Country	SCO Membership	AIIB Membership	Participation in China-led Forums	Governance Alignment Trend
Kazakhstan	Full Member	Yes	High	Increasing Alignment
Kyrgyzstan	Full Member	Yes	High	Increasing Alignment
Uzbekistan	Full Member	Yes	Moderate	Cooperative Alignment
Vietnam	Observer	Yes	Moderate	Selective Engagement
Philippines	No	Yes	Low	Limited Alignment
Japan	No	No	Minimal	Independent Governance

The analysis has shown that the member states of Central Asia which were full members of the SCO portrayed growing institutional proximity with China. The engagement in China based security consultations and economic conferences strengthened the common norms of the shared governance with the accent on the principle of non-intervention and stability of the regime. The intensity of political cooperation appeared to be enhanced by institutional embeddedness overtime. States in East Asia were more discriminative in engaging in institutions. Some got into the AIIB to have economic cooperation whereas they did not want complete incorporation into China based security structures. This discriminatory interaction was similar to both strategic caution and issues of balance of sovereignty and security within the region. The results indicated that the institutional mechanisms played a role as long-term geopolitics instruments. Instead of a forceful expansion, the Chinese strategy was based on the high level of institutional socialization and integration of economic rulemaking in the formation of regional standards, norms, and decision-making patterns.

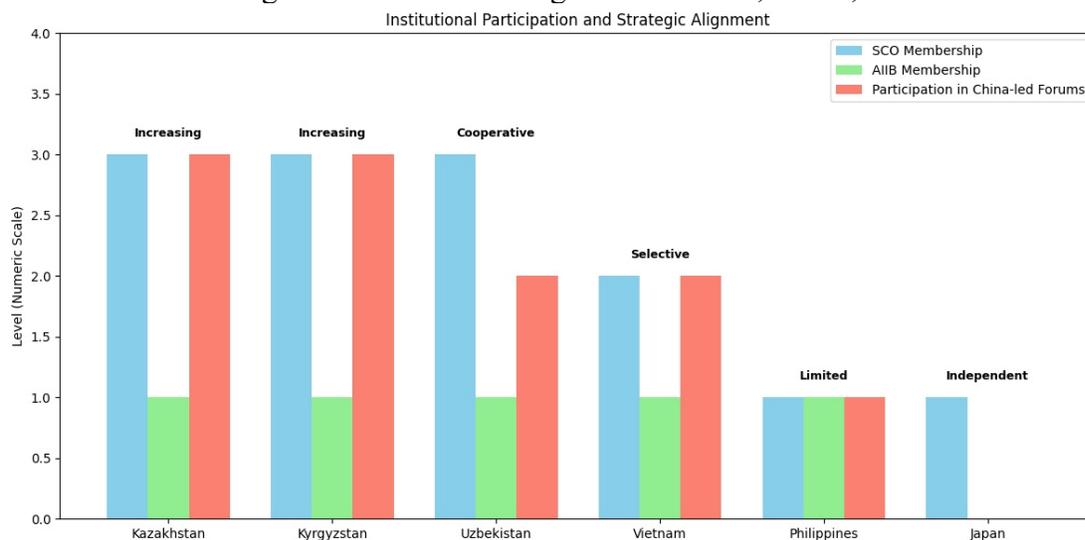


Figure 2. Institutional Participation and Strategic Alignment

### Security Cooperation and Regional Stability Dynamics

Security engagement emerged as a critical dimension of China’s geopolitical expansion. Joint military exercises, arms transfers, and security dialogues increased in frequency, particularly in Central Asia. However, in East Asia, China’s security expansion often triggered counterbalancing responses.

Table 3. Security Engagement and Regional Response Patterns

Country	Joint Military Exercises with China	Defense Agreements	Regional Security Response	Stability Outcome
Kazakhstan	Frequent	Active	Cooperative	Stable
Kyrgyzstan	Frequent	Active	Cooperative	Stable
Uzbekistan	Moderate	Active	Cooperative	Stable
Vietnam	Limited	Selective	Balancing	Moderate Tension
Philippines	Limited	Minimal	External Balancing	Increased Tension
Japan	Minimal	None	Strong Counterbalance	Heightened Tension

The results indicated that the state actors in Central Asia considered the Chinese security cooperation as a stabilizing factor especially in solving the problems of terrorism, extremism and border control. The presence of joint exercises under SCO was a process which enhanced the security of regimes and coordination of counterterrorism in the region. On the contrary, in East Asia, the rising military power of China in seas created more security issues. Even states that seemingly were not assertive like Japan and Philippines strengthened their alliances with outside powers. This trend meant that expansion of security in China had unequal results considering the regional strategic scenarios. This analysis has concluded that security cooperation had a role in bringing stability in continental Central Asia but enhanced balancing competition in maritime East Asia. All these conflicting forces underscored the geopolitical influence of China at subregional levels.

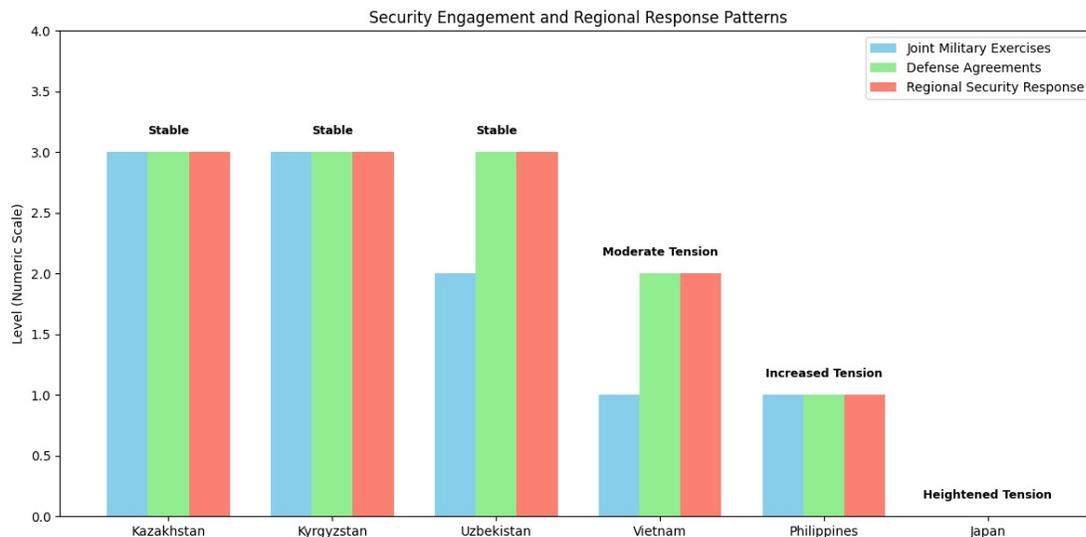


Figure 3. Security Engagement and Regional Response Patterns

## Thematic Coding Results

Thematic content analysis identified five dominant themes that shaped the regional order transformation narrative.

Table 4. Summary of Emergent Themes from Qualitative Coding

Theme Identified	Frequency Across Cases	Regional Variation
Economic Leverage as Strategic Tool	High	Strong in Central Asia
Institutional Socialization	High	Strong in Central Asia
Strategic Hedging	Moderate	Prominent in East Asia
Security Dilemma Dynamics	High	Strong in East Asia
Narrative of Peaceful Development	Moderate	Cross-Regional

According to the results of the thematic coding, the dominant patterns in the case of Central Asia were the economic leverage and institutional socialization. These processes strengthened political affiliation and lowered open security rivalry. Strategic hedging and dynamics of security dilemma were more eminent in East Asia. States continued to look forward to reap financial gains of the Chinese growth at the same time enhancing other security alliances. Such a two-prong approach expressed an undecidedness concerning the future trend of the Chinese power. In both regions, the discourse of the peaceful development was observed quite often in the official Chinese discussion, but local understandings significantly differed. Whereas the states in Central Asia mostly welcomed this discourse, the states in East Asia were cynical, especially in matters of maritime security.

## Discussion

### Geopolitical Influence and Differentiated Regional Outcomes

The conclusions were that the increasing geopolitical power of China had yielded divergent security and governance effects in both East and Central Asia. In Central Asia, both institutional embedments and economic integration seemed to strengthen regimes and cooperative practices of security. This trend went in line with the arguments that the regional strategy of China focused on the connectiveness of infrastructure and partnerships at the elite level (Cooley, 2016; Lain, 2018). The integration of economic interdependence formed structural incentives to policy convergence especially the continental Eurasian Eurasia. In their turn, East Asia had more balancing tendencies. The results of the research were also aligned with the literature that suggested that the maritime expansion of China aggravated security concerns in disputed areas (Fravel, 2011; Roy, 2016). Instead of creating alignment, growing economic interaction was accompanied by greater distrust toward strategy. This favoured the conclusion that interdependence failed always to lead to political convergence in the situation when territorial issues and alliances existed. The separation of continental and maritime Asia was indicative of wider controversies regarding the boundaries of the statecraft of the economy. Although infrastructure diplomacy increased the power of China, its security stance influenced the perception of the region in antagonistic dimensions (Johnston, 2019; Yahuda, 2013). The results therefore supported the status that China had transformed and but did not homogenously transform the regional order. Normative diffusion through multilateral means of institutional involvement seemed to act as a channel of normative diffusion. The analysis found that the orientation to the development of sovereignty-focused norms of governance was supported by participation in such organizations as Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which reflected conclusions related to the institutional frameworks led by China (Allison, 2018; Ambrosio, 2008). These institutions were focused on non-interference and regime security and that appealed greatly in Central Asia.

Nonetheless, East Asian governments continued to be partially institutionally involved and did not break their connections to U.S.-based institutions. This preferential action could be used to back up claims that regional order in Asia was still layered and overlapping, not differentiated or subordinate (Ikenberry & Lim, 2017; Terada, 2018). The institutional growth of China did not relegate structures that were in existence, rather it coexisted with them. The results as well indicated wider theoretical arguments on norm contestation. The principles to the alternative governance proposed by China brought pluralism as a new concept to the discussion of regional order (Foot, 2014; Shambaugh, 2015). However, the normative convergence was not complete especially in maritime Asia where the commitment to liberal institutional obligations was strong. Central Asia seemed to be stabilizing security cooperation, and especially in counterterrorist coordination. This finding was in accordance with the research which demonstrated that China was practically involved in security activities in Eurasia (Clarke, 2017; Kaczmarek, 2017). The collaboration between the regimes and sharing of intelligence made the regimes more resilient without triggering external balancing. On the other hand, East Asian security trends were characterised by the growing rivalry. The aggressive stance by the China in the sea caused strengthening of the alliances and military modernization by the neighboring countries. Such processes were in line with balance-of-power explanations of Asian geopolitics (Ross, 2012; Suzuki, 2009). The results showed that the Chinese security expansion resulted in the coexisting integration and competition in the subregions. The paper has established that the geopolitical power of China acted as a conglomeration of economic enticement, institutionalization and the selective participation in security.

## **Conclusion**

The analysis came out with the conclusion that China became a growing geo-political power, which brought an altered regional balance in East and Central Asia in divergent manner. There was economic integration, institutional cooperation in Central Asia, which strengthened political alignment, as well as, stability relatively. In East Asia though, economic interdependence coexisted with strategic balancing and increased tensions in the seas. The results proved that there is no uniform destabilization, neither overall stabilization of the area by the emergence of China. Rather, the regional performance was determined by sub regional security architectures, alliances structures and character of territory disputes. Even the approach of China was seen to be multidimensional as it involved economic statecraft and institutional leadership, and selective security engagement. This tactic further increased influence but created a response of competitors in strategic sensitive regions.

## **Policy Recommendations**

To counter-dependence in the form of asymmetry, regional states ought to seek multifaceted economic relations with China without cutting off the positive relations. The institutional dialogue platforms need to be enhanced to resolve conflicts amicably and ensure that security dilemmas do not deteriorate. To increase transparency and crisis management mechanisms to be used in maritime Asia, the measures to build confidence should be considered first. Inclusive regional governance should be encouraged through multilateral forums and not bloc formations.

## **Future Research Directions**

Further studies are advisable to examine micro-level perceptions of Chinese influence based on the interviews with the elite and discourse analysis. It could be more analytically accurate to estimate the performance or performance of Southeast Asia apart from that of Northeast Asia. As well, quantitative longitudinal research might be used to supplement qualitative results to determine the effects of the effects of stability over time. The study of digital infrastructural

diplomacy and technological influence, in particular, would contribute to increased insight into the development of more specific tools of geopolitics.

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