

**Daniel Schmidt**

Current Sino-Russian Relations.  
Authoritarian Symbiosis, Strategic  
Partnership or Fragile Intermarriage of  
Limited Duration?

**Bachelor Thesis**

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Faculty of Society and Economics

Current Sino-Russian Relations:  
Authoritarian Symbiosis, Strategic Partnership, or Fragile  
Intermarriage of Limited Duration?

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by  
Daniel Schmidt

## Abstract

In times of global political cataclysms, where the old Washington-led Western liberal order is stumbling – with nationalism and protectionism on the rise and old alliances being challenged – a new kind of super heavy Sino-Russian diplomatic ‘double star system’ is apparently rising in the east since 2001. Thus, I dedicated this paper to the examination of the quality of contemporary Sino-Russian relations. The hypothesis is, that if Sino-Russian relations live up to the high level that is reiterated by their respective officials and state sponsored media, it needs to be observable that such is thoroughly beneficial for both sides’ core and long-term interests. Therefore, I have come up with a two-tracked approach. First, I will quantitatively analyze (i) their voting behaviors at the UNSC and UNGA; (ii) the development and composition of their bilateral trade levels; and (iii) the two state’s comparative classical indicators of strength – i.e. population size, GDP levels, and defense spending levels. Second, I will qualitatively analyze how Sino-Russian relations unfold within the context of (i) the military-security focused SCO; (ii) the regional economic agenda of the two concepts of EAEU and SREB; and (iii) the multilateral global order aspirations of the BRICS and their recent process of institutionalization via the NDB and CRA. My research implicates that the relationship has already passed its point closest to equilibrium, with Russia becoming increasingly marginalized since. Hence this thesis argues that, albeit there are areas of matching interests, the indicators point towards a questionable long-term durability of the Sino-Russian relationship.

## Keywords

China; Russia; Sino-Russian relations; United Nations voting; bilateral trade; power indicators; asymmetric relationship; SCO; EAEU; BRI; BRICS; NDB; international order

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## List of abbreviations

A2/AD	anti-access/ area-denial
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa
CAGP	Central Asia-China Gas Pipeline
CES	Common Economic Space
CICA	Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CoEAEU	Court of the Eurasian Economic Union
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
CRA	Contingent Reserve Arrangement
CST(O)	Collective Security Treaty (Organization)
ECU	Eurasian Customs Union
EDB	Eurasian Development Bank
EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EU	European Union
EurAsEC	Eurasian Economic Community
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTA	Free Trade Area
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
GPV	State Armaments Program
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
MSR	21 <sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDB	New Development Bank
OBOR	One Belt One Road
PRC	People's Republic of China
RATS	Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure
RIC	Russia-India-China
RMB	renminbi
S5	Shanghai Five

SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SREB	Silk Road Economic Belt
SU	Soviet Union
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USD	United States Dollar
WB	World Bank

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