

Abstract

This work delves into the modalities of Chinese economic incentives and their reception in Kyrgyzstan. After tracing the rise of China as the main economic power in Central Asia since 2000, it uses Blanchard's and Ripsman's theory of economic statecraft to evaluate Kyrgyzstan's level of stateness and its susceptibility to economic inducements during president Atambayev's era. The objective is to address the issue of economic statecraft from the perspective of the target state and explain why Kyrgyzstan's co-operation with China has been less successful than in the case of other Central Asian countries. Kyrgyzstan's overall level of stateness was low but it did not result in compliance with Chinese demands. Instead, the low level of stateness prevented the government from overcoming domestic resistance to Chinese projects and implementing compliant behavior. Developmental aid and investment designed to favor the expansion of Chinese enterprises failed to gain the support of public opinion and contributed to the rise of anti-Chinese sentiment due to their involvement in corruption affairs and public scandals. Russia as a third-party actor represented an alternative for Kyrgyz policymakers and might have supported the resistance to Chinese endeavors.