

Belt and Road Initiative for environmental economic development: A Case Study of cooperation between China and Russia in transport sector

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Abstract

The impact of climate change and COVID-19 pandemic on the global economy is indeed powerful; this determines particular relevance of low-carbon economy and environment-oriented development, drawing considerable public attention to these issues. China and Russia as the two largest neighboring countries have a centuries-old history of relationship and fruitful cooperation. Transport industry plays an essential role in promoting trade and economic development between the two countries and its expansion may also contribute to achieving sustainable development and carbon neutrality goals. This paper aims to assess the prospects of cooperation between China and Russia in transport policy with regard to the environmental component through the study of the environment-oriented processes using the transregional theory, and Kuznetsov' transregional model of interaction between Russia and China in the transport sector. The results of the present research show that China and Russia can be expected to further strengthen their cooperation in the field of transport infrastructure building and renovating roads railways, ports, and border crossings to expand traffic capacity and improve efficiency — all this with a focus on new green technologies.

Keywords

China-Russia interaction, sustainable development, transport policy, environmentally-oriented transport policy.

JEL: L91, O12, R40, Q56.

1. Introduction

Since its inception in 2013, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has become a focal issue in international transportation and global logistics because infrastructure development and economic and transport corridors influenced connectivity among the countries along the Belt and Road (Fang, 2020; Lee et al., 2020, Wang et al, 2021). Today, the essential question is how to develop the green Belt and Road initiative, because, being green, it could yield enormous benefits in terms of environmental protection. (BRI IGDC, 2022).

Transport is an integral part of the environment. Transport accounts for a relatively large amount of energy consumption, leading to severe environmental pollution. Greenhouse gas emissions generated by the transport system account for about a quarter of total global emissions, so achieving clean, efficient and sustainable transportation worldwide is a real challenge and the analysis of how the transport industry affects the environment or the environment affects the transport industry is timely and important. The coronavirus epidemic has dramatically influenced the development of the world economy, showing how closely all countries are connected in the modern world. Transport plays a vital role in cooperation and exchanges between different countries. From 14 to 16 October 2021, Beijing hosted the Second United Nations Global Conference on Sustainable Transport, which proved that the sustainable and environmentally-oriented transport development had become a vital issue of concern worldwide (Thürer et al., 2020).

Russian-Chinese economic and trade cooperation has a long history. On June 28, 2021, the two states issued a joint statement officially announcing the extension of the Sino-Russian Treaty of Good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation. In particular., both sides cooperate and exchange experience in the transport sector and the vast land border opens up broad prospects for cooperation between China and Russia in developing transport corridors (UN, 2021). In order to predict the future environmentally-oriented development of cooperation between Russia and China in transport it is necessary to, first, examine the regulatory documents China and Russia have regarding sustainable and environmentally-oriented transport development and, second, explore the ways in which green innovations can be introduced.

The first part of the paper is a theoretical background literature review concerning transregional cooperation between China and Russia. The second part represents the sample, dataset and methodological background. The third part presents results concerning transport industry economic modeling. At the end of the paper can find some concluding remarks.

2. Literature review

2.1. Transregional transport cooperation between China and Russia

China and Russia play an essential role in the international economy and politics. The international community also regards their interaction as an exemplary model of relations between major powers. On June 5, 2019, the heads of state of China and Russia decided to raise the level of relations between the two countries to that of “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and Coordination between China and Russia in the New Era.” The Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the “Joint Statement of the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Developing Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and Coordination in the New Era” and “Joint Statement of the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Strengthening Modern Global Strategic Stability.” These documents identify the following targets for cooperation between the two countries in the field of transport:

1. Strengthen cooperation in information and communication technology, digital economy and radiofrequency resource management, and carry out in-depth exchange and cooperation between the Chinese BeiDou navigation system and the Russian GLONASS system regarding orbital positions and frequencies.
2. Deepen cooperation in transport. Adhere to the principle of mutual benefit and, to the mutual benefit, build and upgrade the existing cross-border transport infrastructure, and promote the implementation of landmark major collaboration projects in railways and border river bridges. Strengthen cross-border transport cooperation between the two countries, promote the simplification of transport customs clearance, and improve the quality and efficiency of transport services.
3. Strengthen active practical cooperation in customs inspection and quarantine and port operation, constantly improve the level of synchronous support to the construction of port infrastructure, optimize the customs clearance environment in the port, and carry out the necessary exchange of customs information.

Cooperation between China and Russia contributes to the development of the two countries; moreover, regional cooperation of this type generates valuable experience that may help maintain peace and stability throughout the world, which explains why the regional cooperation between China and Russia has attracted worldwide attention. The border between the two countries exceeds 4,300 km, of which the land border between the Russian Far East and northeast China is about 3,200 km (Dai et al., 2021). On January 10, 2021, the Information Bureau of the State Council of China released the White Paper “China’s International Development Cooperation in the New Era” (Korolev, 2022). It notes that “connectivity is the key to the joint construction of the Belt and Road” emphasizing that cooperation in the transport field plays an essential role in the international status of cooperation.

Currently, the cooperation between China and Russia in transport is carried out in the Russian Far East and Northeast China. Existing cross-border transport infrastructure, such as the Tongjiang-Leninskoye railway bridge, the Heihe-Blagoveshchensk Road bridge and cable car, is being built and modernized,, the international transport corridors Binhai No. 1 and Binhai No. 2 are being developed and close cooperation is planned in the sphere of transit transportation of goods. Implementing major cooperation projects, such as railways and border river bridges, is one of the primary measures of the two countries to strengthen cross-border transport cooperation, facilitate customs clearance and improve the quality and efficiency of transport services. Both parties are also planning and implementing a series of measures to improve the efficiency of transport operations, such as processing visas for drivers and passengers in international road transport between China and Russia; it is planned to improve the efficiency of railway ports between China and Russia, increase the volume of cargo transportation, promote the use of carriers and checking department for legal electronic transport documents.

The two countries also have ideas for cooperation in information exchange as, for example, the exchange of information between China's BeiDou satellite navigation system and Russia's GLONASS satellite navigation system, the construction of 5G mobile communication network technology and infrastructure, the cooperation between the two countries in network security, and the cooperation between post offices of the two countries in postal services.

Policies pursued by China and Russia promote expansion of sustainable transport, development of the Russian Far East, revival of the old industrial base in the northeast China, and strengthening of regional economic cooperation between China and Russia.

There is no standard point of view about transregionalism in the studies of international relations. One comes across various terms: transregionalism, interregionalism, crossregionalism, pan-regionalism, macroregionalization, network regionalism, global regionalization, and others. The most widely used term is "interregionalism," which was defined by Söderbaum and Langenhove (2013) as the "creation of interrelation process between two regions". Reiterer (2006) defines "interregionalism" as contractual relations between regions. Yeo (2007) regards this term as concerning the processes of institutionalization between regions. Roloff (2005) considers "interregionalism" to be a "process of extension of political, economic, and social relation links between international regions".

Transregionalism represents the institutionalization of cooperation between different regions where the parties are involved in regional integration clusters; cooperation may also occur at the state level.

We assume that transregional processes are the basis for today's Chinese-Russian transport cooperation. Transregionalism includes interaction of regional associations and individual states belonging to different geographical regions. It can assume different forms depending on the actors involved. Transregional cooperation becomes a specific area of foreign economic, political, environmental, cultural, educational, and other international activities carried out at the regional level and, being similar in form, differs

in needs and opportunities for its more active use. Other possible features include the presence and arrangement of borders, joint use of natural resources and collective solutions to problems of environmental safety, wider mutual communication between populations of neighboring states, and personal connections of people. Transregional cooperation is a stable and developing system of relations between neighboring states, based on shared principles and within the framework of coordinated strategies following international agreements on transregional cooperation. The world is witnessing the development of transregional ties between particular regions and powers within the global system. We argue that the development of transregional ties with China over energy can provide a useful example of transregional practice and contribute to transregional theory.

2.2. Environmental component of China's environmentally-oriented transport policy

Over the past 40 years, China has pursued reforms and opening-up policy achieving remarkable economic success, which, however, was accompanied by serious problems, caused, among other things, by the neglect of environmental protection. The report of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed green development, cyclical development, and low-carbon development. "Green development" is the new requirement for development; cyclical development is a way to increase resource use efficiency, and low-carbon development is the goal of adjusting the energy strategy. All three goals require saving resources and energy, as well as improving the efficiency of resources and energy use; they all require environmental protection. It was expected that complete account would be taken of the ecosystems' carrying capacity and the impact of pollution on human health would be reduced (Vasiev et al., 2021).

In October 2021, the Ministry of Transportation of the People's Republic of China published the "Sustainable Development Report of the PRC Transportation Industry". This report outlines the current general progress of the PRC, discusses the ideas of sustainable transport development, and indicates the direction of the future development of sustainable transport. The fourth part of the report is devoted to the transition of transport to clean and low-carbon technologies. The fifth part concerns developing international corridors, exchanging experience between countries and strategic cooperation.

China's current sustainable transport policy aimed at achieving a "carbon peak" and a "carbon neutrality" mainly focuses on conserving energy, reducing emission, and introducing new technologies to improve transport efficiency. Petroleum products dominate the energy structure of China's transport energy consumption, where oil products accounted for almost 86%, while natural gas, electricity and other alternative fuels accounted for 6.1%, 3.8% and 4.2%, respectively. The energy mix dominated by petroleum products has led to a steady increase in carbon emissions from the transport sector. Among emission sources, petroleum products such as gasoline, diesel and kerosene have the highest carbon emissions, accounting for almost 95%.

What is China planning to do in this case? First, in terms of energy conservation and emission reduction, low carbon energy sources will replace high emission energy sources. For example, electric vehicles will replace traditional oil and gas equipment. According to the China Transportation Sustainability Report, by the end of 2022, the number of new energy vehicles for urban public transport, taxis and urban logistics in China will reach 466,000, 132,000 and 430,000, respectively. The total operating mileage of China's high-speed railway exceeds 40,000 kilometers, ranking first in the world, and the electrification rate of national railways reaches 74.9%. In the shipping industry, the use of liquefied natural gas (LNG) for the construction of LNG-powered ships, and the construction and use of ship-based coastal power plants in ports, are used to achieve emission reduction targets.

According to statistics, China's transportation sector accounts for more than 10% of the country's total carbon emissions every year: roads account for about 74%, water transport for about 8%, railways for about 8%, and aviation for about 10%. As concerns the road transportation with the most significant carbon emission, heavy goods vehicles produce the largest carbon emission, accounting for about half of the total road transportation. Heavy goods and passenger vehicles are the keys to reducing carbon emissions in China's transportation industry. According to data from the Ministry of Public Security of China, as of the end of 2021, the number of new energy vehicles in China will reach 7.84 million, and 2.95 million new energy vehicles will be newly registered nationwide in 2021, an increase of 1.78 million or more 151.61% compared with 2020. China's production of new energy vehicles has shown rapid growth in recent years (Kuznetsov, 2016) (see figure 1).

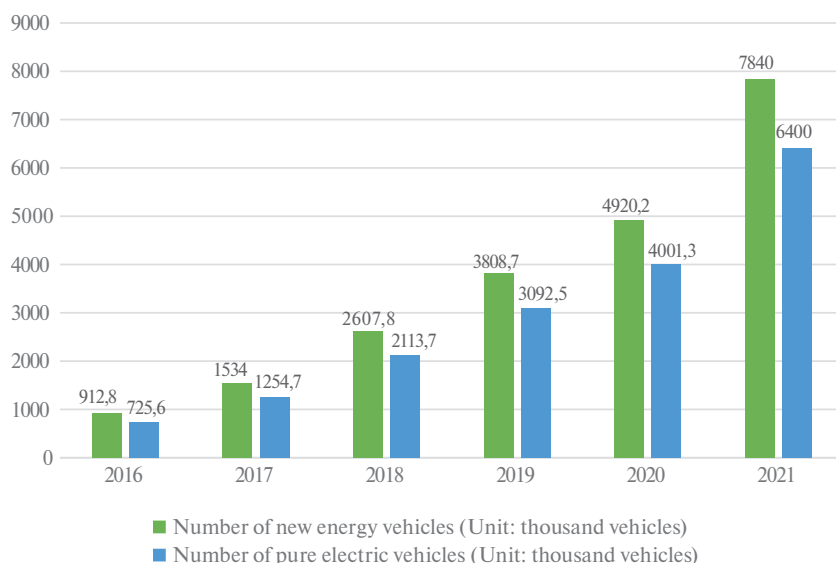


Figure 1. 2016-2021 China's new energy vehicle ownership. *Source:* Ministry of Public Security of the People's Republic of China

Secondly, there are unprecedented plans to achieve high level of new technologies using the big data, Internet, artificial intelligence and other technologies to develop intelligent transport and smart logistics, improve the overall operational efficiency of transportation, and achieve the goal of energy-saving and emission reduction.

2.3. The environmental component of Russia'environmentally-oriented transport policy

Russia has permanently attached great importance to environmental protection. Even before the advent of the Soviet Union, the "Law of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic on Nature Protection" was adopted, the first law on nature protection in the history of Russia. In 2002, the government passed the latest Russian Federal Law on Environmental Protection. Russia has taken measures to develop sustainable transport, mainly in terms of energy saving, emission reduction and introducing new technologies to improve transport efficiency.

Since 2016 much attention has been paid to the long-term scenarios for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Russia, and the effects that may accompany the implementation of these scenarios, including environmental consequences, impact on the environment and public health, aspects of low-carbon development.. In Russia, new goals were established: keeping the net greenhouse gas emissions below 70–75% of the 1990 level, with a likely shift in targets to 60–65% by 2030–2035. Russia has developed a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions until 2050 (Safonov et al., 2016). The country plans to increase the share of renewable energy from 1% to 10% by 2040, while coal energy will decrease from 15% to 7%. Until 2035, Russia plans to invest about 1 trillion rubles in developing renewable energy. Compared to traditional energy sources such as oil and natural gas, solar and wind energy have not yet gained much development in Russia. However, as Russia intensifies the effects of new energy sources, its energy efficiency is expected to increase and will be comparable to that of traditional energy sources in the next 5-10 years (Porfirev et al., 2020).

In the transport sector, Russia is also experimenting with electric vehicles. For example, since 2018, fully electric buses KamAZ-6282 and LiAZ-6274 of Russian production have been introduced in Moscow. By 2024, Russia plans to produce 25,000 electric vehicles a year, and build and operate more than 9,000 charging stations. In 2025-2030 the production of electric vehicles should account for 10% of Russia's total production of passenger cars. Russia also intends to modernize part of the infrastructure of road and rail transport, including rail transport infrastructure projects: there are plans to expand and upgrade the Baikal-Amur Mainline and the Siberian Railway, increase the capacity of railways, modernize the transport infrastructure of the Azov Railway roads in seaports and develop the railway infrastructure of the Moscow region.

3. Methodology

The theoretical base for this research is transregional theory. Methodologically, the authors use historical analogies in their comparative analyses, and a systems approach. We consider the Chinese and Russian transportation policy not separately, but as one of several critical structure-forming elements of a whole that exerts an impact on regional subsystems.

The authors also develop Kuznetsov’s transregional model (Chinese Government, 2019) of Sino-Russia transport collaboration emphasizing the environmental aspects.

The paper analyzes data on the interaction in the transport sector between China and Russia in recent years. The authors analyze the logistics and traffic conditions based on the data on bilateral trade activities, and assess the traffic conditions, conditions and prospects for cooperation between the two countries. The data regarding bilateral trade between China and Russia are taken from the following sources:

1. Data released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
2. Data from China Customs.
3. Data from the Belt and Road Database.

The diagram of the interaction between Russia and China in the transport sector, taking into account the environmental component is shown in figure 2.

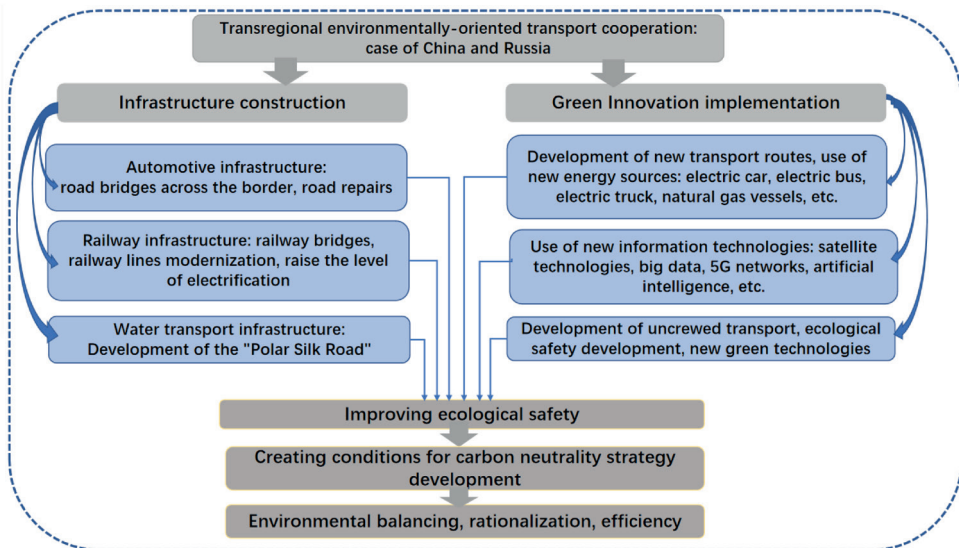


Figure 2. Environmentally-oriented transregional interaction between Russia and China in the transport sector. *Source:* the authors’ vision, based on the Kuznetsov transregional model

Figure 2 shows the system of interaction between Russia and China in the transport sector, with regard to the environmental component. The interaction of factors in such

a system should indicate a strategy for developing the transport industry in the Russia-China system.

4. Sino-Russian Cooperation in Transport Sector

In recent years, the trade between Russia and China has grown steadily. As of 2021, China had been Russia's largest trading partner for 12 consecutive years. Judging by the data for 2021, the Russian Federation will continue to maintain its status as the largest source of energy imports for China (Chinese Government, 2008), supplied in the amount of more than 50 billion US dollars per year, which is about two-thirds of the total value of Chinese imports from Russia. Agricultural products and timber also make up a significant share of Russia's exports to China. This year, Chinese exports of mechanical and electrical products to Russia amounted to about three-fifths of the total value (Chinese Government, 2021) (see figure 3).

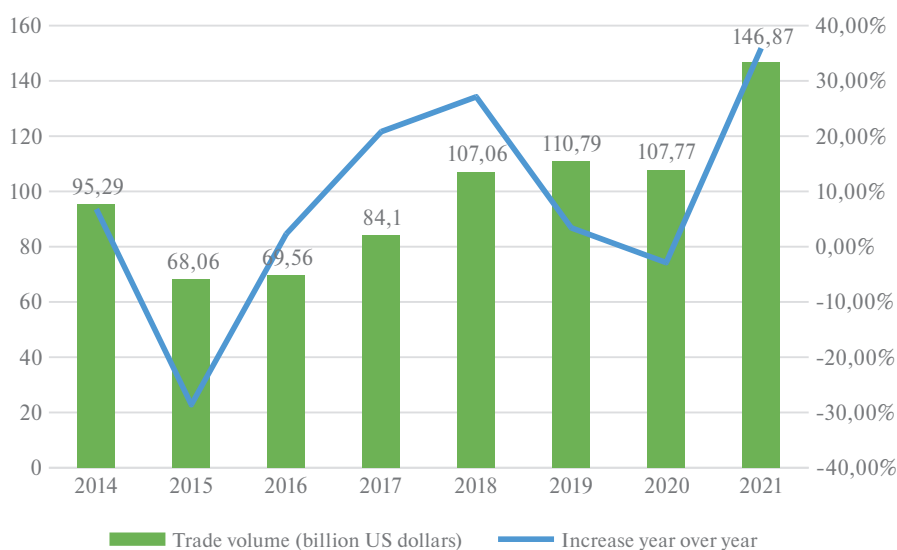


Figure 3. Total volume of import-export trade between China and Russia for 2014-2021. *Source:* PRC General Administration of Customs

In cargo transportation methods (figure 3, 4), water transport accounts for the largest share, followed by rail transport, while air transport and road transport account for a relatively small share. It should be noted that the energy commodities that make up the largest share of Russian exports to China and account for a relatively large share of oil and natural gas transported through pipelines are not included in this data. Due to the geographical location of the two countries, the use of rail transport, road transport and pipeline transport exceeds the average level of using these types of shipping goods

in the rest of the world. The water transport, especially maritime, is becoming more and more popular with the trading companies on both sides of the border.

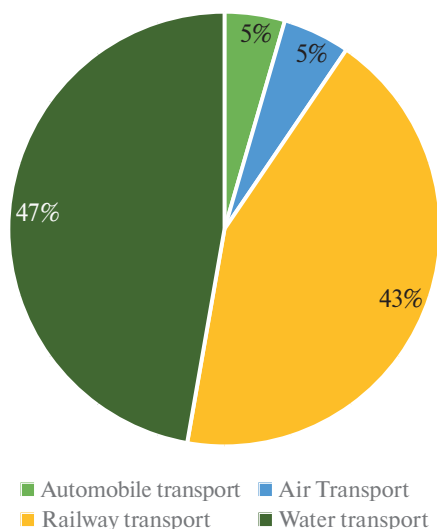


Figure 4. Cargo-transportation methods, Russian exports to China. *Source:* PRC General Administration of Customs

At the same time, we need to pay attention to some characteristics of the 2021 data. Among the goods exported by Russia to China, energy products account for a relatively large share. The global economy, which had suffered from the coronavirus pandemic, began to recover and gain momentum in 2021. Under the influence of economic recovery, energy prices have risen sharply. In 2021, China's total oil imports from Russia decreased yearly, but the overall price increased significantly for the same period.

This price dynamics affected the volume of freight traffic and the method of transportation, too. The pandemic disrupted operations of most of the ports on both sides; work had been suspended or the scope and efficiency of work had been reduced. As a result, the volume of road transport had decreased. Owing to the increase in the world energy prices and the rising prices for maritime transport, the volume of rail transport increased. As the economy began to recover, the boom in freight traffic led to congestion in international shipping ports and inefficient container handling, which in turn led to a sharp rise in shipping prices. This also caused an increase in demand for rail transport. Now the total amount of rail freight shipped by China to Europe via Russia is expected to increase by 20%.

When the pandemic is under control, the working conditions of the ports of the two countries will return to normal, and the cargo logistics conditions of China and Russia are expected to do the same. China's goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2060 will also impact cooperation between the two sides. China plans to achieve

a “carbon peak” by 2030, which means changes in the current energy mix (Ministry of Transport, 2021). Coal accounts for more than half of China’s primary energy consumption, much higher than US and European countries. In 2030, the share of coal in its primary energy consumption is projected to decrease, while the share of low-carbon and clean energy sources will increase (see figure 5).

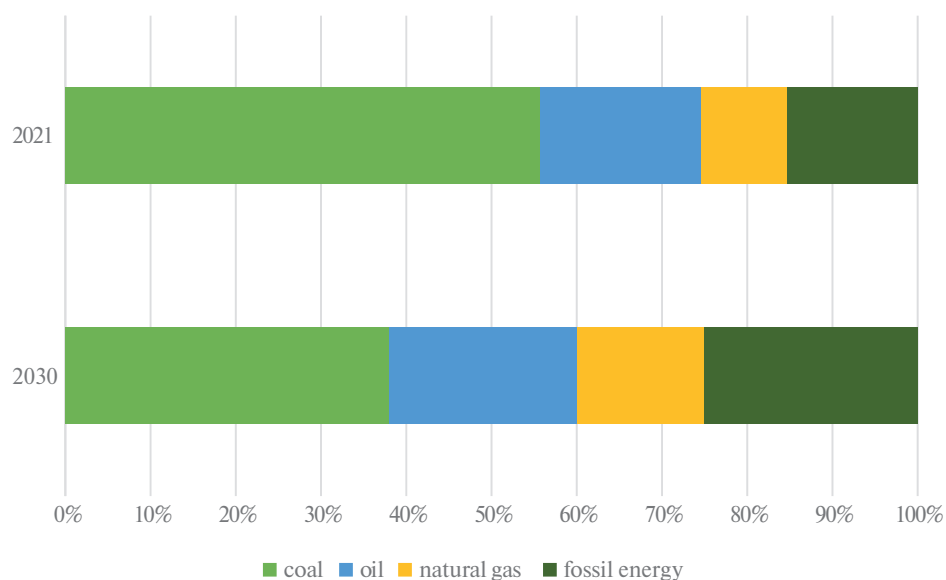


Figure 5. Share of primary energy consumption in China in 2021 and 2030. *Source:* PRC General Administration of Customs

The volume of import and export trade between China and Russia in 2021 increased significantly compared to the previous year, and the data shows that the situation in bilateral cooperation is good. Although the data for 2021 have some peculiarities, they may still reflect the momentum of excellent and environmentally-oriented development of cooperation between the two parties.

In 2021, the lack of transport capacity, low efficiency and rising freight rates also gave rise to the ideas about new directions for future development and cooperation between China and Russia.

On November 30, 2021, the “Joint Communiqué 26th Regular Meeting of the Prime Ministers of China and Russia” was published (Lin, 2017). This communiqué sums up cooperation between the two parties in transport and outlines prospects for future activity. For several reasons, some Sino-Russian cross-border infrastructure projects do not work as planned, for example, the Heihe-Blagoveshchensk Road bridge was initially planned to be fully operational in 2020, but due to the coronavirus epidemic, it is practically not used. In the future, after the cross-border infrastructure projects planned by the two countries are fully completed and put into operation, this will significantly improve the transport efficiency and help achieve

the goals of sustainable transport development. On February 4, 2022, the parties signed the "Joint statement of the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation on the completion of the development of the "Plan for the qualitative development of Chinese-Russian trade in goods and services". The "Quality Development Plan for China-Russia Trade in Goods and Services" is conducive to improving the efficiency of China-Russia trade, expanding bilateral investment and strategic cooperation in large-scale projects, and providing clear guidance for the future of economic and trade cooperation, cargo transportation and other directions (Yilmaz & Changming, 2020).

Currently, cooperation between China and Russia in the sustainable development of transport policy is mainly concentrated in the northeast part of China and the Russian Far East. Through the use of scientific and technical innovations both sides hope to increase efficiency, enhance energy saving and reduce emissions. In order to strengthen cross-border transport cooperation and facilitate transportation and customs clearance, the two countries have signed the agreements "Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Russian Federation on the facilitation of the citizens exchange" (signed in March 2013), and the "Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Russian Federation on international road transport" (signed in June 2018); they are now planning to implement measures aimed at improving the efficiency of transportation. The parties have also discussed the formulation of a new Sino-Russian intergovernmental agreement on border ports and continued cooperation in order to boost the construction of port infrastructure, optimize the port working hours, introduce innovative port transport methods, and improve customs clearance conditions at the port (China Government, 2022; General Administration of Customs of PRC; China Communications News, 2022). In the future, it will be possible to make use of the relevant experience of the Customs Union of Russia-Belarus-Kazakhstan to optimize the operation of the ports in China and Russia.

As regards roads, railways, and shipping transportation corridors, China and Russia also have significant room for future improvement and development. Both sides had planned and then built several cross-border infrastructures, such as the Tongjiang-Leninskoye railway bridge, a road bridge, and the Heihe-Blagoveshchensk cable car.

Concerning the rail transportation, in 2021 the "China-Europe freight train" was working effectively: it departed from China and arrived in European countries through Russia. Faster than the sea freight and cheaper than air freight, the China-Europe freight train has become an economical and reliable means of transportation from China to Europe. In the future, the efficiency of cross-border railway transportation will increase with the construction of railway infrastructure, the improvement of the quality of railway lines and increase in their electrification. It will reduce carbon emissions and increase competitiveness. Among the current China Railway Express routes, several port stations at Erenhot, Khorgos and Alashankou, pass through Mongolia

and Kazakhstan, and then re-enter Russia. In the future, Russian Railways also plans to build new railway lines directly linking the Chinese region of Xinjiang with Russia (National Energy Administration, 2021; Chinese Government, 2017; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021). If these railways are built, the efficiency of rail transport will increase significantly. However, the existing plan for constructing a new railway is still influenced by geographic and financial considerations, and has not yet entered the actual design and implementation stage.

Regarding the maritime transport, both parties also have several ideas for cooperation in developing and then exploiting the Arctic Sea Route. This route, also called the Polar Silk Road, is the closest sea route from East Asia to Europe and North America (National People's Congress Deputies..., 2022; Huang, 2021). Going from East Asia to Europe via the Arctic Ocean will save almost half the time and fuel consumption compared to the Malacca-Suez Canal-Mediterranean route. The complexity of navigation in the Arctic is mainly due to the cold and extreme weather conditions. In the context of global warming and gradual reduction of Arctic ice floes, the navigation time in the Arctic region is expected to increase yearly. With the development of the current global warming trend, scientists predict that by about 2030 the Arctic region will be able to enter year-round navigation. China and Russia are also actively building infrastructure along the Arctic route. For example, they are developing railway infrastructure of the ITC "Primorye-2" in the direction of Hunchun - Makhhalino (Kamyshovaya) - Zarubino.

Cooperation between the two countries in sustainable transport policy is also reflected in the development of new technologies in the transport sector. China and Russia are cooperating in energy technology, satellite technology, big data, and autonomous driving. They both are implementing new technologies to make transportation more convenient, efficient and safe. For example, with the help of a range of technologies such as satellites, big data and 5G networks, Russia and China are planning to test uncrewed cargo transportation on the Heihe-Blagoveshchensk bridge (Li, 2021; Xu, 2021; An, 2020; Zhu, 2019).

In April 2022, BYD, the number one car company in China by sales of new energy vehicles, announced that it would stop producing carbon fuel-only vehicles. It will thus become the first traditional vehicle manufacturer to stop producing such vehicles, which will mark another significant step for the automobile manufacturing industry towards sustainable transportation and low-carbon green transportation. Green and low carbonization is a future development goal of the automobile manufacturing industry, but there is still a long way to go before this goal is achieved. About 90% of China's urban transportation energy consumption relies on traditional energy; the pure electric vehicles consume about 15% of green electricity. Therefore, to achieve low-carbon and sustainable transportation, energy generation is to be inseparable from the technological progress and adjustment of energy structure. Active cooperation between China and Russia in many fields and consistent mutual promotion is also conducive to future development of sustainable transportation (see figure 6).

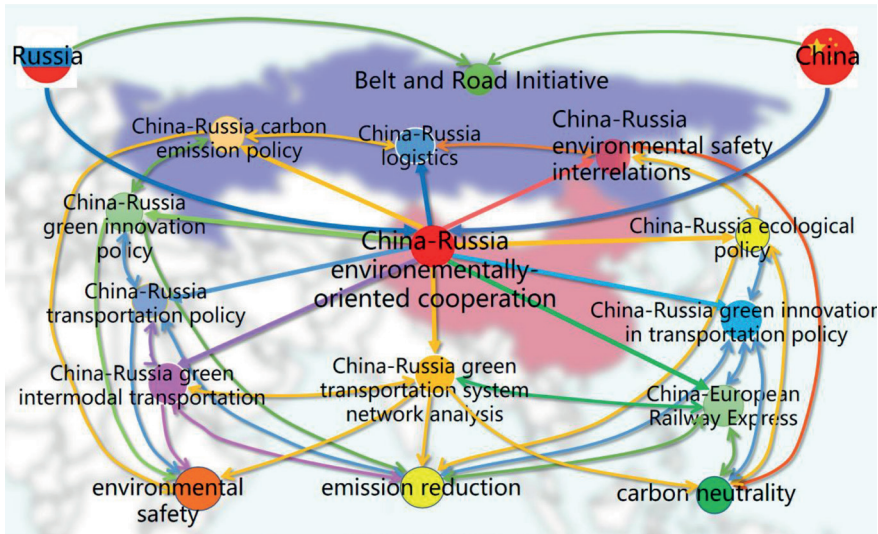


Figure 6. China and Russia's transregional cooperation development. *Source:* the authors' vision

In the future, with the gradual renewal and improvement of infrastructure, the use and popularization of new technologies, there is still tremendous room for development and improvement between China and Russia in the transport sector.

Sino-Russia gas cooperation is stable, judging by the distinctive features of stable systems in international relations, such as a) interactions are not doubted most of the time; b) there is a consensus about rules of competition between the participants; and c) relations are characterized by moderation (Liu & Steblyanskaya, 2022).

Having developed Kuznetsov's transregional framework model and using the case of Sino-Russia transregional cooperation in transport sector, the authors propose priorities for the Russian-Chinese transregional transportation cooperation and the following functions of transport transregionalism: institution-building, skills development for transport cooperation, cooperation in transport technology and safety development, creating conditions for trade and economic cooperation in transport sector, stabilization, balancing, and rationalizing. The authors are confident that Russia and China will gain from their economic cooperation. The advantages of the choice "To be together" will include a long and powerful impulse to develop Siberia and the Far East and tangible benefits from transregional cooperation.

5. Conclusions

Regional economic cooperation has a profound impact on the world trade and global economic development. China and Russia are the large neighbouring countries that enjoy the advantages of cooperation thanks to the geographical conditions, which in many ways determine the future Sino-Russian relationships. The two countries certainly have great potential for regional cooperation. Moreover, the current Sino-Russian relations have generally stabilized, they are in line with the two countries'

fundamental interests as they promote future cooperation and development (Wang, 2019; Wang, 2020; Lang, 2021; Fan et al., 2021). Despite the existence of certain negative factors, such as the sanctions policy of the United States and Europe or coronavirus pandemic, that may have some undesirable influence, the overall trend of development and cooperation between the two countries is unlikely to change. The transport industry plays a critical role in international trade between Russia and China and the transport policy of Russia and China has a direct impact on international trade. Long-standing political, cultural and economic projects between China and Russia contribute to the expansion and development of Sino-Russian relations in transport policy and to the construction of new transport corridors (Zou, 2020; Ministry of Public Security of PRC).

China and Russia will continue to strengthen cooperation in transportation infrastructure, building and renovating roads, railways, ports, border crossings and other elements of the existing transportation infrastructure to improve traffic capacity and efficiency. In the same way, China and Russia will cooperate in information technology in the field of transportation, promoting information exchange of satellite navigation systems, the use of 5G mobile communication networks and adoption of new technologies. Cooperation between China and Russia in the green innovation field is also conducive to the development of transportation cooperation: for example, the cooperation between China and Russia in energy sector is expected to help replace traditional energy with clean energy, it is conducive to reducing carbon emissions in the field of transportation; cooperation in energy technology is also a mode of transportation (Meersman et al., 2021). The green transformation of the China-Russia cooperation in the transport system provides an excellent opportunity for development. Ecologically-oriented economic development is the most crucial for China-Russia cooperation in the transport sector. China pays enormous attention to the creation of China's ecological society through the Belt and Road initiative. The achieving of carbon peak by 2030 and carbon neutrality before 2060 is the top priority for China. Thus, the cooperation between China and Russia in the transport sector will be strengthened with the development of ecological legislation, growing cooperation in environmental protection area and advancement of green technology.

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