

ШЕЛКОВЫЙ ПУТЬ: ПРОШЛОЕ И НАСТОЯЩЕЕ

Аннотация¹

Статья С. Тогана посвящена теме «Шелковый путь – его настоящее и прошлое». В начале речь идет о механизме образования стоимости товаров, экспортируемых из одной страны в другую. В результате увеличения стоимости товара из-за транспортных и прочих расходов при экспорте товар, произведенный в одной стране, в другой может по своей стоимости возрасти с 100 до 270 \$. Подобные транспортные расходы и т.д. находятся в центре внимания автора статьи.

Знаменитый Шелковый путь из Азии в Европу свой расцвет переживал в период с 1250 до 1350 гг. В XII веке политическая ситуация в Средней Азии была нестабильной. Имелась вражда между народами, на караванных дорогах случались нападения и грабежи. В итоге расходы по перевозке товаров были очень высоки. Чингис-хан добился в XIII веке объединения монгольских и тюркских племен. Мирные условия способствовали развитию торговли. Шелковый путь достигал длины 8 тыс. км (от Крыма до Китая), дорога занимала от 8 до 11 месяцев (на лошадях, верблюдах). В Италии китайский шелк стоил в три раза дороже, чем в Китае. Предметами торговли были также пряности и меха. Из Китая везли ткани, фарфор, из Индии – пряности, х/б изделия. Европейские товары оплачивались серебром и медью, также шерстяными изделиями, часами и посудой. Шелковый путь насчитывал 3 маршрута: *Северная дорога* через Чёрное море (находилась в руках генуэзских купцов); *Средний путь* через Палестину (контролировался Багдадом); *Южная дорога* по Красному морю (курировалась Каиром и Венецией). По северному пути имелась система караван-сараев. Этот путь по суше был более безопасным. На южном маршруте имелось много перекупщиков. Путь через порт Аден был опасным, требовалось знание торговых ветров. Перевалочным пунктом был Бомбей, далее шли Молуккским проливом. Средний маршрут лежал через Багдад, это была старейшая дорога. Различные причины привели к спаду торговли между Азией и Европой. Транспортные издержки возросли. Караванные пути пришли в упадок, все большую роль стала играть дорога южная, по морю.

Современное состояние Шелкового пути описывается во второй части статьи. Век техники и глобализации оказал большое влияние на современное состояние торговли. Основными факторами стали телекоммуникации и интернет. Большую роль играют ВТО, международные инвестиции и обмен ноу-хау. Основные экономические выгоды получила КНР. Валовой национальный продукт страны вырос с 1,2 млрд. амер. долл. в 2000 г. до 10,3 млрд. в 2014. Основной торговый партнер КНР – страны Евросоюза. Экспорт союза в Китай достигает 148,1 млрд. амер. долларов. Основной процент торговли между Европой и Китаем приходится на морские перевозки, цифра достигает 87%, наземный транспорт составляет 1,8%. По стоимости доля морской торговли 62%, воздушных перевозок 23%, сухопутных 7%, автотранспорт перевозит 0,4 %. Основное преимущество морских перевозок – их дешевизна. Однако ж/д перевозки идут быстрее: путь контейнера по морю занимает 35 дней, а по железной дороге около 15 дней. Авиационные перевозки – самые дорогостоящие. Перевозки поездами возрастают, но проблему создает вопрос несовпадения ширины ж/д колеи в Китае, Европе, Иране и Турции. В большинстве стран СНГ колейная колея составляет 1520 мм, в других странах ее ширина 1435 мм. Возникает проблема перевалки грузов на границах. Современная торговля между Китаем и Евросоюзом идёт, главным образом, морским путем. Железнодорожный транспорт между Востоком и Западом идет по 3 основным магистралям. Здесь автор имеет в виду северный, центральный и южный коридоры (магистрали). Северный коридор проходит главным образом по российской территории, часть через Казахстан. Центральный маршрут имеет 2 ответвления, он значительно короче. По южному ответвлению товары идут через Казахстан, и через Каспий, далее путь пролегает через Кавказ в Турцию, конечный пункт – Западная Европа. Южный коридор берет начало в Кашгаре (КНР), идет через страны Средней Азии, далее через Иран и Афганистан и через Турцию в Европу. Кратчайшей считается именно эта дорога, самый длинный путь – северный. Каждый из маршрутов имеет свои преимущества и недостатки. Имеется ряд экономических программ по эксплуатации современного Шелкового пути. Они нацелены на уменьшение транспортных расходов. России принадлежит большая роль в транспортной кооперации стран Востока и Запада.

Ключевые слова: Шелковый путь, история, современная экономическая ситуация, расходы, экономическая выгода, фактор риска



¹ Перевод с английского на русский язык канд. фил. Н.Ш. Нафикова.

SILK ROAD: PAST AND PRESENT

Abstract

Silk Road is the subject of the article presented by noted scholar in the field of economics from Turkey. Silk Road possesses its glorious history, the road was at its prime in the middle Ages. Then and nowadays this major transportation artery serves to link economies of Western, Central Europe with the Far Eastern countries of China, Mongolia, Iran, Afghanistan and some other countries of the region, the CIS lands included. In the past the route was very profitable: items made of silk in China brought profit thrice of the original price when imported to Western Europe.

Actually Silk Road consisted of 3 itineraries – the Northern, middle and the southern one. The goods traffic was and is effected not by land alone but by rail, sea and air as well. The turn-over between East and West now runs to billions of US dollars and is likely to grow. The author presents in his article a thorough economic analysis concerning transportation costs, traffic hazards, trade costs, etc. The modern Silk Road through Central Asia is and will be a major Euroasian connection in the era of globalization.

Key words: Silk Road, history, modern economic situation, costs, economic gain, risk factors.

One of the main determinants of the volume of trade of a country and thus of the country's GDP is trade costs defined as costs related to policy barriers (such as tariffs and non-tariff barriers (NTBs), transportation costs (consisting of freight and time costs), costs related to ensuring security of commercial activities, contract enforcement costs, costs associated with the use of different currencies, legal and regulatory costs, and local distribution costs (such as wholesale and retail costs). According to Anderson and van Wincoop (2004), the tax equivalent of trade costs for industrialized countries is 170 percent indicating that a commodity sold by the producer in industrialized country A for US \$100 costs to the consumer in the industrialized country B US \$270. When trade costs decrease trade volume increases. Because of the existence of a positive relation between the volume of trade and gross domestic product of the country, the decrease in trade costs results in an increase in gross domestic product. Empirical research confirms the existence of a negative relation between trade costs and GDP, indicating that decreases in trade costs lead to increases in volume of trade which in turn increases GDP. Jacks et al. (2008), who analyze the relation between trade costs and trade, report that trade cost declines roughly 55 percent of the pre-World War I trade boom and 33 percent of the post-World War II trade boom. According to the authors, the precipitous rise in trade costs experienced during the interwar period explains the entire trade bust.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the Silk Road trade in terms of developments in trade costs. Of the various components of trade costs we first

consider the costs related to ensuring security of commercial activities by analyzing the Silk Road trade at its golden age namely during the period 1250–1350. Thereafter we study the policies pursued for reviving the current Silk Road trade.

During the 12th century the political environment in Central Asia was not conducive to trade. When travelling in Central Asia demands for protection money by different rival tribal groups could reach prohibitive levels. Merchants had to pay transit duties and tribute, and they were subject to simple extortion. As a result trade costs were very high in East-West trade, and trade volume was adversely affected. The unification of Central Asia was achieved under Genghis Khan and his confederation of Mongol and Tatar tribes during the early 13th century. Under his descendants a large part of the Eurasian landmass was conquered and *Pax Mongolica* was established, creating an environment conducive to trade. As a result, trade volume increased considerably.

According to the accounts of Ibn Batuta the 8,000 km long journey from Crimea, on the Black Sea, to China by camels and horses taking between eight and 11 months was perfectly safe during day and night. Chinese silk in Italy was selling for three times its purchase price in China, and it was possible to make huge profits. The East-West trade involved general items with a high ratio of value to weight, such as spices, silk, and furs. While China was exporting porcelain, silk, and other textiles, India was exporting spices such as black pepper, as well as cotton textiles. European imports were largely paid for by silver and copper, as well as by fine linen,

woolen cloth, mechanical clocks, glassware, and beads.

There were many routes, called Silk Roads, connecting China and India with Europe. Although these roads consisted of a constantly shifting network of pathways, three of these routes dominated East-West trade. The northern route through the Black Sea was controlled by Genoa, whose merchants acted as middlemen between Western Europe and Asia. The middle route via Anatolia/Palestine was dominated by Baghdad. Finally, the southern route through the Red Sea gave life to Cairo and its Mediterranean partner, Venice.

The northern route passed through Constantinople via the Black Sea. From ports in Crimea and from ports towards the eastern end of the Black Sea, goods were transferred through the caravan routes to China and India. These routes crossed the newly unified Central Asian steppes and deserts. The road network included way stations and points around which *caravanserais* flourished, and it was the greater safety and stability of this area that facilitated the marked expansion of overland trade.

The southern route started at the Egyptian port of Alexandria, from which connections were made via Cairo to the Red Sea and from there farther eastward through the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. Trade between Alexandria and Europe was controlled by the Venetians. European merchants were stopped in Egypt and not permitted to cross the Nile to the Red Sea. They had to transfer their goods to local *Karimi* (wholesale) merchants, who were engaged not only in the Red Sea trade, but also in trade with the Far East. Towards the end of the thirteenth century the connections between Egypt and Venice strengthened until the *Karimi* merchants virtually monopolized trade between Europe and India and between Europe and the Far East. Transport up the Red Sea was protected by Egyptian sultans, and Aden at the mouth of the Red Sea was the entrepot for traffic heading to the East as well as for goods arriving from the East. The route to India from Aden was quite treacherous, requiring skilled knowledge of monsoon winds and careful navigation techniques to cross the open sea. The winds imposed stringent schedules for sailing the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal, and the South China Sea. Ships departing Aden sailed in the spring and autumn, and in summer and winter merchants settled in ports to conduct business. They arrived in Gujarat (near present-day Mumbai) or on the Malabar Coast in India (at Quilon and Calicut). From there merchants had to cross the

Bay of Bengal to the Strait of Malacca. Since monsoon winds reversed at the strait, long layovers were required for boats traveling to the East. In addition to the frustrations of optimal timing, merchants faced the risks of product and life loss from storms and piracy.

The middle Silk Road route started at the Mediterranean coast of Syria/Palestine and Anatolia, and crossed the Mesopotamian plain to Baghdad. From there one could follow either the land route or the sea route. The former crossed Persia and then branched off to either Northern India or eastward to Samarkand and then China. The sea route followed the Tigris River to Basra. From there it followed the Persian Gulf route and passed Oman to the Indian Ocean and beyond. Until the conquest of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258, the middle route was the oldest, easiest, cheapest, and most-enduring among the three options connecting West and East.

During the time of the Umayyads (661–750 A.D.CE) Arab sailors were active in the Persian Gulf, in the Indian Ocean, and up to Canton. After the establishment of Mongol rule, Tabriz became the capital of Il-Khans. As Baghdad and Basra lost their privileged positions, international trade shifted to Tabriz, and Hormuz became the off-shore port of Il-Khans. At the same time, Crusader ports on the Mediterranean, hosting Italian merchants who transhipped Eastern goods to Europe, were destabilizing, and the last one was gone by 1291. All these factors led to the decline of the middle route through Palestine by the end of the thirteenth century, and Anatolia became more important in middle route trade.

The golden age of the Silk Road trade ended with a pandemic, which started in the Himalayan mountain region between China, India, and Burma. The plague bacillus (or bubonic plague) spread to China and then to Central Asia. Since the populations exposed to the plague had little or no natural immunities to it, mortality was very high, especially among Mongol soldiers. Demographically weakened, the Mongols were less able to exert control over their domains, which one by one began to revolt.

In China, the political effects of the plague were dramatic. The Ming Rebellion of 1368 deposed the Yuan Dynasty of Kublai Khan, grandson of Genghis Khan, and replaced it with the indigenous Ming Dynasty. During the Ming reign, Chinese attitudes toward trade and maintaining a strong navy were subjects of heated debate. Some in the palace favored

withdrawing from the world system, which had facilitated a free flow of goods under the Mongols. Around the 1430s, the palace started to support opponents of free trade and as a result, China withdrew from the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, leaving the area defenceless. With the withdrawal of the Chinese from the thirteenth-century world system during the fifteenth century, the disintegration of Il-Khan's regime in Persia, and the internal conflicts of Mongol states in Central Asia, security problems in international trade began to arise, and trade was adversely affected. The increase in trade costs caused by increases in transit duties, tribute, and extortion lessened the free flow of goods. Caravan trade declined, and East-West trade reverted from land routes more and more to the sea routes.

The Modern Silk Road

Since the middle of the 1980s the developments in telecom and internet triggered a suite of information-management innovations that have made it easier and cheaper to coordinate complex production activities from a distance. With the revolution in information and communications technology some production stages previously performed in close proximity were dispersed geographically. Consider the case of the Japanese company Toyota. In the past Toyota was producing all parts of the cars in Japan, either by Toyota itself or sub-contracting. When the company determined that it would be cheaper to produce some of the parts abroad, it made use of it. Today Toyota is producing about 10 million cars world-wide, and each car consists of 20,000 – 30,000 parts. Some of these parts are produced in Thailand, some in other South East Asian countries, and the South-East Asian region is called factory Japan. In economic literature this process is called 'offshoring or international outsourcing'. As a result of these developments, manufacturing today is increasingly managed through global value chains (GVCs), which according to the World Trade Organization is one of the major developments in the world economy. Thus, manufacturing is increasingly managed through GVCs, and the heart of GVC trade is an intertwining of trade in goods; international investment; and cross-border flow of knowhow.

China is the country that has benefitted enormously from GVC trade. Her GDP has increased from \$1.2 trillion in 2000 to \$10.3 trillion during

2014. Its exports during 2013 have amounted to \$2.2 trillion and its imports \$1.95 trillion. A large share of her exports is GVC trade, and the main trading partner of China is the EU. On the other hand, for EU China is the second most important trade partner. Chinese exports to the EU amount to \$279.9 billion, and EU exports to China \$148.1 billion. Thus, trade volume amounted to \$428 billion. The amount of FDI from EU to China over the period 2009–2013 has amounted to \$141 billion.

Currently, a very large proportion of EU-China trade is carried out by maritime transportation. The share of maritime trade in the quantity of total EU-China trade is calculated as 87 percent, the share of road transportation 5 percent, the share of rail transportation 0.5 percent and the share of air transportation 1.8 percent. In value terms the share of maritime trade is 62 percent, air 23 percent, road 7 percent, and the rail trade 0.4 percent. The main advantage of maritime transportation is its low transportation cost. To transport a one twenty foot equivalent unit (TEU) container from China to the EU costs about 22,000 Euro by air, and 1850 Euro by sea, and 2,500-3,500 Euro by rail. But the advantage of rail is that the goods can be transported in a shorter time period compared to that of maritime transportation. While a container is transported by sea over 35 days, it takes about 15 days to transport the same container by rail. Thus, air transport is the most expensive one, and maritime transport is the most cheapest to transport the goods.

With industrial development on the eastern shore of China land and labor started to become scarce, land and labor costs increased, and simultaneously eastern ports became congested. As a result, the Chinese government has been inducing foreign investors and domestic producers to move inland. Mega cities in Central China such as Chongqing and Chengdu have been booming as major destinations for large new manufacturing projects. Bringing the goods produced in Central China to coastal regions and shipping them by sea to Europe is getting expensive and time consuming. Thus, demand for rail transportation has increased. But major problems are faced on the rail roads as gauges are different in different countries. Whereas the gauge is 1,435 mm in Europe, China, Iran and Turkey, the gauge in the former Soviet Union countries is 1,520 mm. Hence, the containers have to be transferred at borders to freight cars with new gauges or the gauge length of waggons have to be adjusted to the new

circumstances. There are also differences in signalling systems among the countries, and most of the railroads remaining from Soviet times are not electrified and single track (the author's data-ed). To overcome these factors is costly and takes time increasing the trade costs. However, the existing and potential benefits for China and other countries on the rail routes will motivate them to co-operate and tackle the hurdles.

Since trade costs by maritime transportation are the lowest among all modes of transport, EU-China trade currently is carried mostly by maritime transportation, and the share of rail transportation is very low. To revive the Silk Road trade and increase the share of rail transportation in total EU-China trade, the trade cost by rail transportation has to be decreased further, and considerably so. How this goal will be achieved is a major problem. To study the associated problems we now turn to consideration of the rail routes connecting China with the EU. There are three major routes: the northern route, the middle route and the southern route.

The Northern Corridor uses the Russian Trans-Siberian Railway line, starting in China east of Mongolia and connecting to Russia. Passing through the Russian mainland, the Northern Corridor reaches Belarus and ultimately Europe. This corridor is currently operational, it is double track and fully electrified. It has a branch line linking to Kazakh railways. It crosses through the least number of countries, hence involves least number of border crossings, amongst the three alternatives. However, it crosses terrain with the harshest climate conditions. On the other hand, the Central Corridor has two branches. The northern branch starting at Chongqing in Central China enters Kazakhstan in Dostyk, passes through Astana and Aktobe to Russia, and over Brest in Belarus it reaches Duisburg in Germany. The line is considerably shorter than the northern corridor, and it is used extensively by foreign investors in Chongqing and Chengdu such as Hewlett Packard. On the other hand, the southern branch of Central Corridor crosses Kazakhstan to reach the Kazakh Caspian port of Aktau. Using a sea ferry connection, it reaches the newly built Azeri port of Alat. A branch of this route reaches Turkmenbashi in Turkmenistan and from there by ferry to Baku. In both cases the corridor passes through the South Caucasus and reaches Europe via Turkey. Finally, note that the Southern Corridor starts from Kashgar in China, crosses Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and reaches Iran over

Mezar-i Sherif in Afghanistan. Thereafter through Iran the Corridor reaches Turkey and from Turkey connects with Europe.

Among the three routes connecting China with the EU the shortest route is the southern route going through Mezar-i Serif in Afghanistan. On the other hand the longest route is the northern route. Calculations reveal that the route going from Chongqing in Central China is 6,000–7,700 km, and duration is 10–16 days. The route through Uzbekistan is 5,400–6,000 km and lasts for 13–18 days. Finally the route going through Mezar-i Serif is 4500–6000 km and lasts for 8–17 days.

The main disadvantages of the northern route is on the one hand the length of the route, and on the other hand the fact that the route is very cold to travel during winter months. On the other hand, the southern branch of the Middle Corridor through the Caspian Sea requires considerable investment in infrastructure at ports at the Caspian Sea as well as in rail infrastructure requiring double track rail routes and complete electrification and signalization on the routes. In addition the countries on the routes have to sign international agreements on transit, and observe the international regulations on transit trade. Similar considerations apply to the southern route requiring considerable investment in infrastructure, and solving the security problems on the route. It is emphasized that crossing the borders on the routes is a major problem. In the case of road transport trucks have to wait for a long time, and the time spent at the borders forms about 57 percent of the total travel time, and charges for bribes and protection money amount to 38 percent of the total transport costs. The main disadvantages of the Southern Corridor are the high number of border crossings and political instability in the region. Finally, note that the southern branch of the Middle Corridor although politically a viable alternative, its main disadvantage is the frozen conflicts in the Caucasus region.

To revive the Silk Road trade various initiatives with regional integration and cooperation have been developed such as the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA), Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program (CAREC), United Nations Special Program for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA), and the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road (One Belt One Road Initiative). In the following we shall concentrate our remarks on the CAREC and the One Belt One Road Initiative.

The CAREC program emerged from a regional initiative for Central Asia that had been started by the Asian Development Bank in late 1990s. CAREC founded in 2001 as an international organization has currently ten members consisting of China, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. It supports intraregional economic integration in the priority areas of transport, trade facilitation, trade policy, and energy. Since 2001 the program has mobilized \$24.6 billion in transport, trade and energy infrastructure investments. In 2011 the ministers of the ten CAREC countries at the 10th CAREC Ministerial Conference held in Baku, Azerbaijan endorsed the 'CAREC 2020: A Strategic Framework for Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Program 2011-2020', and a year later at the 11th CAREC Ministerial Conference held in Wuhan in China they endorsed the infrastructure budget amounting to \$23 billion for 68 projects. The plan is to upgrade all six transport corridors in Central Asia to international standards by 2017. Of those corridors two corridors concern the Central Asian countries directly, namely the Europe-East Asia corridor and the Mediterranean-East Asia corridor. The Europe-East Asia corridor linking Europe to China and East Asia traverses from the border with the Russian Federation to the China via Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. It comprises 13,600 km of roads and 12,000 km of railways. On the other hand the Mediterranean-East Asia corridor linking the Caucasus and Mediterranean to East Asia traverses over Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and China. It comprises 9,900 km of roads and 9,700 km of railways. Both projects are financed among others by Asian Development Bank, China, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Islamic Development Bank, the World Bank, and by local authorities. CAREC besides aiming to boost trade with better transport networks through trade facilitation programs also aims to reduce cost and waiting time at borders by encouraging countries to cooperate on customs issues and to harmonize cross-border regulations and practices. The CAREC aims to introduce simpler procedures at the borders, joint border controls, and single windows.

Lastly, we consider the Chinese initiative to revive the Silk Road trade in Central Asia called the One Belt One Road Initiative. The initiative was announced by the Chinese President Xi Jinping when visiting Kazakhstan during September 2013.

The initiative includes two elements, a Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Here we concentrate on the Great Silk Road Initiative. President Xi Jinping declared in the meantime that China is establishing a US \$40 billion New Silk Road Fund, and a US \$20 billion Energy Development Fund. Furthermore, the recently established Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank pioneered by China has increased its membership to more than 30 countries. The infrastructure bank is expected to finance the major infrastructure investment projects in Central Asia.

With these resources China intends to improve investment and trade facilitation by removing transport bottlenecks in Central Asia, remove investment and trade barriers for the creation of a sound business environment within the region, and improving road network connectivity. As emphasized above there are three main East-West corridors connecting Asia to Europe via central Asia, the Northern Corridor, the Central Corridor, and the Southern Corridor. But projects to construct and modernize transport infrastructure are exceptionally capital intensive.

Once the infrastructure investments envisioned within the CAREC and One Belt One Road Initiative will be completed and solutions will be found for problems with different gauges and signalling systems, the essential requirements for reducing the transport costs will be satisfied. But there is another problem associated with reducing the trade costs as these costs include not only costs related to transportation (consisting of freight and time costs) and trade facilitation, but also costs related to tariffs and non-tariff barriers other than trade facilitation, costs related to ensuring security of commercial activities, contract enforcement costs, costs associated with the use of different currencies, legal and regulatory costs, and local distribution costs. Once Russia and the countries in Central Asia succeed in reducing the trade costs over time they will be able to revive the old Silk Road Trade, and derive welfare benefits from increased trade by participating actively in Global Value Chains Trade, and increasing their trade with China, Russia and the EU.

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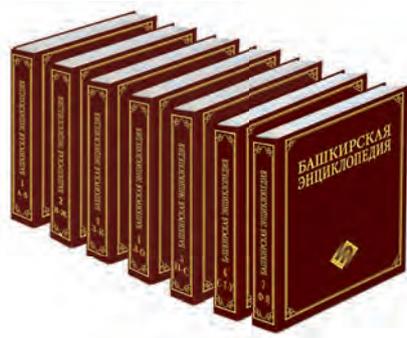
Об авторе

Субидей (Сюбидей) Тоган (р. 21.12.1943, Стамбул, Турция) экономист. Сын выдающегося востоковеда Ахмет-Заки Ахметшаховича Валидова. В 1967 г. окончил отделение экономики факультета управления Ближневосточного технического университета в Анкаре (Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi İdari Bilimler Fakültesi İktisat Bölümü). В 1972 г. защитил докторскую диссертацию в университете Джонса Хопкинса в г. Балтимор, в США (Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, U.S.A.). Преподавал в Техасском университете A&M в США (Texas A&M University), Ближневосточном техническом университете в Турции (Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi), в Кларксоновском университете в Нью-Йорке (Clarkson University in New-York). В 1981–1982 учебном году занимался научными исследованиями в институте мировой экономики Кильского университета в Германии (Kiel Institute of World Economics at the University of Kiel in Germany). С 1986 г. профессор. С 1987 г. работает на факультете экономики и управления Билькентского университета (Bilkent Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi) в Анкаре, одновременно декан (в 1987–1997), является основоположником указанного факультета, ныне – директор Центра Международной экономики данного университета (Bilkent Üniversitesi Uluslararası İktisat Merkezi Direktörü).

Область научных интересов – международная экономика.

Автор многочисленных научных трудов, в том числе: 1) *Foreign Trade Regime and Trade Liberalization in Turkey during the 1980's* (Режим внешней торговли и либерализация торговли в Турции в 1980-ых годах). ALDERSHOT: Avebury, 1994; 2) *Economic Liberalization and Turkey* (Экономическая либерализация и Турция). London - New York: Routledge, 2010; 3) *The Economy of Turkey since Liberalization* (Экономика Турции начиная с либерализации). London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1996; 4) *Turkey and Central and Eastern European Countries in Transition: Towards Membership of the EU* (Турция и Центральные и восточноевропейские страны во время переходного периода: к членству ЕС). Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan Ltd., 2001; 5) *Turkey: Economic Reform and Accession to the European Union* (Турция: экономическая реформа и вступление в Европейский Союз). World Bank and Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR), 2005, 6) *Macroeconomic Policies for EU Accession* (Макроэкономическая политика для вступления ЕС). London: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2007.

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