Landlocked between two Giants

A case study of Kazakhstan’s behavior in relation to the rise of China, vis-à-vis Russian relations

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Abstract

This thesis is set to explore Kazakhstan’s behavior in relation to China’s rise, vis-à-vis Russian relations – Kazakhstan’s traditional patron. It examines if Kazakhstan engages in balancing or bandwagoning behavior through the lens of Stephen M. Walt’s balance of threat theory. This theoretical framework is considered particularly appropriate, given its consideration of geographic position and perceived intentions. By conducting a comprehensive study of indicators linked to the military, economic, official and social sphere, this thesis finds that Kazakhstan conducts balancing behavior against China, predominantly in the military sphere. Likewise, the economic sphere finds evidence of Kazakhstan engaging in internal balancing behavior against China, by passing legislation that place limits on China’s economic influence in the energy sector. The findings however, are drawn into question as the majority of the energy deals points more in the direction of a détente, meaning that the parties involved consider the exchanges to be roughly equal and based on legitimate interests. Similarly, Kazakhstan has taken measures to reduce its dependence on Russia in this sphere. Lastly, the official sphere indicates that Kazakhstan is open and keen on further economic integration with China. This stands in contrast to the findings in the social sphere, which finds that the Kazakh media and the Kazakh population largely perceive China as a threat.
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List of Acronyms

AIIB—Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
BRI—Belt and Road Initiative
CIS—Commonwealth of Independent States
CNPC—China National Petroleum Corporation
CSTO—Collective Security Treaty Organization
EEU—Eurasian Economic Union
KMG—KazMunayGas
RATS—Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SCO—Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SOE—state-owned enterprise
SREB—Silk Road Economic Belt
1. Introduction

Since independence, Kazakhstan has pursued a “multi-vector” foreign policy (Hanks, 2009, p. 257). The term “multi-vectorism” refers to a policy that develops foreign relations through a framework based on a pragmatic, non-ideological foundation (Hanks, 2009, p.259). Its pragmatic nature allows Kazakhstan to act on its self-interest when it comes to state security and economic development, based on the relevant benefits and costs related to cooperating with any particular state (Hanks, 2009, p. 260). Similarly, conducting a multi-vector foreign policy includes preventing any vector becoming too strong – the various vectors should be balanced so that no other state holds significant leverage able to influence Kazakhstan’s policy (Hanks, 2009, p.264).

In relation to this, China’s comprehensive engagement with Kazakhstan and the other Central Asian states, has not gone unnoticed. Likewise, it triggers the question of whether or not the Chinese vector is becoming too strong (Haas, 2013, p.1; Makocki & Popescu, 2016, p. 8). Kazakhstan established diplomatic ties with China in 1992 and since then they have developed a comprehensive relationship. Today, they cooperate in political, security, trade, energy, and cultural areas. Beijing and Astana have signed over 200 bilateral agreements since Kazakhstan’s independence, including the “China-Kazakhstan Treaty of good Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation”, and the “China-Kazakhstan Cooperation Strategy in the 21st century” (Olimat, 2015, p. 101). Moreover, Kazakhstan shares a 1700-kilometer border with China. Similarly, Russia has strived to maintain its influence and traditional role as a security provider in the post-Soviet era through a set of political, economic, cultural and security agreements (Olimat, 2015, p. 60). It too, shares a long border with Kazakhstan and is regarded as Kazakhstan’s main partner– particularly in the security domain (Nazarbayev, 1997).

China’s growing presence in Russia’s traditional realm has yielded the question of a New Great Game in Central Asia– where the two proximate great powers compete for influence in states like Kazakhstan (Cooley, 2012; Olimat, 2015, p.218). Likewise, researchers have asked
whether or not China’s growing presence will eventually push Russia out of its traditional realm (Haas, 2013, p.1; Makocki & Popescu, 2016, p. 8). Furthermore, China’s comprehensive engagement in Central Asia has caused questions regarding its “genuine motive”, evident “win-win” approach and expansionist intentions (Olimat, 2015, p.218-219; Chen, 2017; Phillips, 2017).

While the Kazakh- China relationship appears to be prosperous and multifaceted in the official discourse, one might wonder if Kazakhstan is concerned over China’s growing presence, financial empowerment and the military upgrade that has followed its development path? Therefore, this thesis is set to explore whether or not Kazakhstan perceives China as a threat, and whether or not Kazakhstan’s behavior can be characterized as “balancing” or “bandwagoning”. As bandwagoning behavior refers to alignment with the most threatening power in order to provide security (Walt, 1987, p. 17), extensive bandwagoning behavior with China implies replacing Russia as a security provider. Likewise, as balancing behavior refers to alignment with others against the prevailing threat (Walt, 1987, p. 17), balancing behavior in the case of Kazakhstan would likely include aligning with Russia in order to balance China. Thus, Russia’s traditional position in the region calls for an examination of Kazakhstan’s behavior towards China, vis-à-vis Russian relations.

In relation to the chosen theoretical framework, Kazakhstan represents an interesting case. Balance of threat theory argues that an external threat is expected to increase the more aggregate and offensive power the threatening state possesses, the closer it is, and the more aggressive intentions it displays (Walt, 1987, p. 32). Faced with external threats, secondary states may choose to bandwagon or balance, depending on a number of variables. While a great power can contend in a war with any other state in the system, a secondary state cannot independently provide for its security against the great powers (Ross, 2006, p. 357). China’s recent economic development, increased military spending and newly displayed assertiveness in the South China Sea (Fravel, 2017), thus – according to theory, pose a direct external threat to Kazakhstan, especially due to the close proximity. The same argument applies to Russia. Russia’s recent activity at the Crimean Peninsula displays offensive power and aggressive intentions – that to some extent can be transferred to the current situation in Kazakhstan (Birnbaum, 2015; Weitz, 2014). Kazakhstan, like Crimea, hosts a large diaspora of Russians in its northern territory. Thus, Kazakhstan’s geographic location and demographic composition, could also according to theory, pose a direct external threat to
Kazakhstan – particularly due to Russia’s substantial aggregate and offensive power. Thus, Kazakhstan behavior towards either giant is likely to be determined by how Kazakhstan perceives their intentions, given that all else is roughly equal.

Having a case that relies on finding evidence of perception is challenging, but not without reward. This case allows for going beyond the official narrative of Kazakh-China relations, to investigate if Kazakhstan perceives China´s rise as peaceful and without complications. But, why is it important to do so? While cooperation with China obviously has its perks in terms of economic development, developing asymmetrical relationships with a strong proximate state can possibly result in loss of autonomy, and in the worst-case scenario it can result in colonization (Olimat, 2015, p.218). Given the strong presence of Sinophobia in the Kazakh population (Peyrouse, 2016, p. 14-23; Boldurukova, 2015), Kazakhstan would most likely face turmoil and upsurge distorting every aspect of Kazakh society if Kazakhstan bandwagoned and subjected too much of its autonomy to China. On the other hand, if Kazakhstan engages in balancing behavior against China, being able to indicate this holds value in itself given that the official narrative is portrayed otherwise. Furthermore, if Kazakhstan balances against China, it indicates that China has failed in its policy towards promoting a peaceful rise. Lastly, balancing behavior would according to the theory imply that the world is safer, as the cost of an intervention increases to the point of the unacceptable (Walt, 1987, p.17). Thus, by being able to indicate whether Kazakhstan bandwagons or balances, one can indicate whether or not Kazakhstan is most likely to face conflict or peace in the future.

1.1 Research question

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze and explore the Kazakh-Chinese relationship through the lens of balance of threat theory, to answer the following research question:

To what extent and how does Kazakhstan balance against or bandwagon with the rising power of China?

The purpose of asking this question is not to identify how Kazakhstan has officially reacted to China’s rise, but rather to identify its de facto behavior. Why? On the surface of Kazakhstan-China relations we find a number of agreements and treaties that portraits a
convincing picture of China as a partner. Under the surface however, Kazakhstan may perceive China differently than what is portrayed to the world. According to Walt (1987, p.25-28) how a weak state perceives the intentions of the strong state, is what determines how it acts in relation to it. But Kazakhstan’s perception of China’s intentions is not transparent. Thus, examining Kazakhstan’s de facto behavior will produce answers of Kazakhstan’s real perception of China – is it considered a threat? For instance, while Kazakhstan did not declare any particular states as a threat in its 2017 Military Doctrine, the placement of Kazakhstan’s military assets can provide an indication of where Kazakhstan most likely expects a conflict or attack (Military Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2017). Thus, Kazakhstan’s de facto behavior can represent an attempt to balance China’s power, if we find that Kazakhstan’s military assets are placed along the Chinese border.

Given Kazakhstan’s multi-vector foreign policy, geographical position, and its historical ties to Russia, the research question will be explored vis-à-vis Kazakhstan–Russia relations. This will be more fruitful because Kazakhstan may have balanced the two great powers against each other through its pragmatic multi-vector foreign policy. One might also find evidence of Kazakhstan bandwagoning with Russia to balance China and vice-versa.

The main emphasis is on the years from 2000, with the 1990s serving as a background, unless specified under the relevant area of empirical interest.

1.2 Previous research

Previous research has been studied, evaluated and used as inspiration throughout this thesis. The indicators in particular, are derived from previous research.

To begin with, Stephen M. Walt studied the Middle East (1987), Southwest Asia (1988) and South Asia (1991) using balance of threat theory to determine how the states within these regions have responded to great and rising powers, particularly during the Cold War. He found that the states in the Middle East and Southwest Asia tended to balance each other rather than the great powers, because the close proximity made the offensive power of the regional states more threatening (Walt, 1987, p.178-179; Walt, 1988, p. 308). Thus, he asserts that balance of threat theory is more applicable than balance of power theory, which stipulates that states balance solely against power (Walt, 1987, p. 5; Walt, 1988, p. 311-313).
Walt however, has not analyzed the Central Asian region using the same theoretical framework.

In relation to China’s rise, a number of works deserves mention. Cooley (2012) for instance, has studied China’s influence in Central Asia vis-à-vis Russia and the U.S. He found that the Central Asian governments have proven themselves to be critical agents in their own rights and developed strategies to fend off and balance foreign interests. He also found that the external competition has merely reinforced the sovereign authority of the individual Central Asian governments.

Likewise, Laruelle and Peyrouse (2012) studied the multifaceted impact of the China factor on domestic orders in Central Asian states. They considered border disputes, the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), trade relations, energy cooperation, investments, public perception of China, and security concerns in their analysis, and found that the growing Chinese presence has drastically challenged the traditional influence of Russia and weakened that of the United States and Europe (Laruelle and Peyrouse, 2012, p. 189-203).

Furthermore, Olimat (2015) studied the relationship between China and the Central Asian states. He made use of a tripartite approach (political, economic and social), which included political partnerships, energy cooperation, oil and gas industry, pipeline construction, trade relations, cultural relations, and security cooperation in his case study of the China-Kazakhstan relationship (Olimat, 2015, p.101-123). He found that their economies are increasingly integrating in a complementary fashion, that they coordinate their efforts against regional threats and that they emphasize the importance of cultural relations (Olimat, 2015, p. 122-123).

The impact of China’s rise on Kazakhstan has also been studied separately in relation to the energy sector, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the media, public perception, foreign aid, and military cooperation– but the articles usually focus on one or two of these areas, not all. For instance, Bhavna Dave (2018, p.97-109) studied the effects of China’s soft power diplomacy in Kazakhstan in relation to the BRI and found that China’s symbolic and rhetorical assurance supporting state sovereignty and territorial integrity offers important psychological assurance to Kazakhstan and also enhances the elites legitimacy. Haas (2016; 2017) studied the role of the SCO vis-à-vis the CSTO in order to determine which organization is more important to the Central Asian states in terms
of security, and found that the CSTO and Russia remains their main allay. Henriksen (2013) and Olcott (2011) studied Kazakhstan's oil and gas development, and found that the energy sector has been used as a tool by the Kazakh administration to balance the interest of great powers, like for instance China and Russia. Burkanov and Chen (2016) conducted a discourse analysis of Russian and Kazakh state-owned and private newspapers in Kazakhstan and found that the official discourse in state sponsored papers concurs with the country’s policy of further engagement with China, while private Kazakh newspapers depicted negative stereotypes and sinophobia.

However, none of the abovementioned studies applied balance of threat theory, except for, of course, Walt (1987; 1988; 1991). Thus, a comprehensive study that takes into account political, economic, military and social considerations to evaluate Kazakhstan’s behavior towards China vis-à-vis Russia, using balance of threat theory, is left wanting.

1.3 Relevance of this thesis

First of all, Kazakhstan is interesting in relation to the theoretical framework, because it is in the unique position of being landlocked to two great powers. Examining a secondary state that is not separated from the rivaling superpowers by water or land barriers diverges to some extent from previous research. According to scholars (Tunsjø, 2017, p. 52), water barriers have an appeasing effect while landlocked regions with proximity to a great power are more vulnerable – hence more likely to bandwagon (particularly if it is a weak state with no available allies). On the one hand, the lack of appeasing water or land barriers between Kazakhstan and China might produce clearer balancing or bandwagoning behavior. On the other hand, Kazakhstan’s balancing/bandwagoning behavior might be indistinct as a consequence of the fact that it borders two great powers. Bordering two powerful states may produce a different behavioral pattern than if Kazakhstan only bordered one powerful state. It leaves Kazakhstan in a position where it can play the two powerful states up against each other to promote its own national interests. Regardless of what behavioral pattern I will find, it will speak to the validity of the theory and it will help expand the existing literature on secondary states and how they adjust to rising powers in accordance with their own national interests.
Moreover, while there is not a lack of studies of Kazakhstan in relation to China’s rise, there is a lack of such studies applying balance of threat theory with a comprehensive variation of indicators. Olimat (2015) makes use of similar indicators in his study of Kazakhstan, but applies a tripartite approach without the guidance of any theory. In addition, previous research has not focused particularly on identifying Kazakhstan’s behavior in a balancing or bandwagoning manner. Thus, this thesis, by making use of balance of threat theory, will add to our understanding of how Kazakhstan’s behavior can be characterized in relation to China’s rise making use of accredited theoretical terms.

Furthermore, since the independence of Kazakhstan in 1991, President Nazarbayev has described his foreign policy as multi-vector. The term ‘multi-vector’ refers to a policy that promotes and develops foreign relations through a framework based on a pragmatic, non-ideological foundation (Hanks, 2009, p.259). In principle, this means Kazakhstan’s foreign policy is motivated by the perceived interests of the state in achieving its policy objectives (Hanks, 2009, p. 259). Given that Kazakhstan has an official multi-vector foreign policy, it will be interesting to examine whether or not the findings in this thesis concurs with the official narrative. For instance, if Kazakhstan were found to be balancing China in all three spheres of investigation, its claim to pursue a multi-vector foreign policy would be less convincing.

In addition, Russia has not been the most welcoming to the thought of China lurking around in what it considers its backyard and sphere of influence. There are concerns that China’s rise will cause rivalry with Russia, constituting a “New Great Game” for power, influence and resources in Central Asia, and a concern that the ultimate Chinese goal is regional hegemony (Ross, 2006, p.357; Cooley, 2012). The findings of this thesis might help indicate whether or not this a valid concern, or if it’s mostly a rhetoric one exaggerating China’s position in the region.

Lastly, like Walt (1987, p.13) argues himself, many propositions about alliance formation have been derived from European history. Choosing a Central Asian state allows me to test the utility of a theory that was first applied to the Middle East. If the theory holds, it is a testimony to its explanatory power and value.
1.4 Theoretical framework and definition of main concepts

This thesis will rely mainly on the works of Walt from 1987 and 2005. *The Origins of Alliances* (1987) volume will be used for the purposes of determining level of threat, identifying conditions for balancing and bandwagoning behavior, and identifying various areas of interest to this study. It will also be used to place emphasis on the role of perceived intentions and to form expectations of what behavior one might expect of Kazakhstan. Likewise, the *Taming American Power* (2005) volume will be used to identify various behavioral patterns linked to balancing and bandwagoning behavior and to identify important indicators relevant to the study of such behavior.

Obviously, given the research question, the main concepts of this thesis are “balancing” and “bandwagoning”. Thus, this thesis will rely on the following main definition of balancing behavior outlined in Walt (2005, p.120):

> “States may balance externally, by combining their capabilities with others, or they may balance internally, by mobilizing their own resources in ways that will enable them to resist stronger states effectively. Or they may do both. In any case, the goal is the same: to ensure that a more powerful state (or coalition) cannot use its superior capabilities in ways that the weaker side will find unpleasant.”

Additional strategies that can be linked to balancing behavior and examples of what such strategies might entail, is explored in depth in the “analytical framework” chapter of this thesis.

Likewise, this thesis will rely on the following main definition of bandwagoning behavior outlined in Walt (1988, p. 282):

> “Bandwagoning involves unequal exchanges where the vulnerable state make asymmetrical concessions to the dominant power”

Bandwagoning occurs when a state chooses to align with the strongest or most threatening state it faces (Walt, 2005, p.183). Additional strategies that can be linked to bandwagoning behavior and examples of what such strategies might entail, is explored in depth in the analytical framework.
1.5 Methodological considerations

Case study approach

The central feature of any case study is the intense focus on a single phenomenon. In investigating this phenomenon, researchers must be concerned with all possible sources of data that may shed light on the phenomenon. Yin (1984, p.23) defines the case study research method “as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.” A case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interests than pure data points, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion. It also benefits from prior development of theoretical propositions, to guide data collection and analysis (Yin, 1984, p. 13).

Case studies can be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory (Yin, 1984). This case study is mostly descriptive, as it aims to describe and identify Kazakhstan’s behavior in three different spheres. Descriptive studies seek to reveal patterns and connections, in relation to theoretical constructs, in order to advance theory development. In so doing, robust concepts emerge, conflate, and expand to inform, confirm, refute, and further shape a priori theories (Tobin, 2012, p. 2). Studies are considered to be descriptive cases if there are no analytic comparisons between groups and no attempts to make causal statements or to describe unexplored territory.

However, given that this thesis draws on balance of threat theory, it to some extent explanatory in nature because the conditions for balancing and bandwagoning behavior are outlined in the theory. Thus, as I identify Kazakhstan’s pattern of behavior I might be able to identify conditions that either converge or are inconsistent with the conditions outlined by the theory. In addition, as I draw on broad relist literature to define various concepts of relevance, I also open up for rival explanations, a key characteristic of explanatory and descriptive cases (Harder, 2012, p.2; Tobin, 2012, p. 3). Hence, I might be able to explain why Kazakhstan chose to bandwagon/balance in some instances. It is important to note however, that the aim of this study is not to infer casual relationships.
Strengths & Weaknesses

The most apparent strength of conducting a case study is that it can draw on a variety of evidence from primary and secondary sources. If such sources converge in a triangulating fashion it further enhances the robustness of the study. In addition, the case is further strengthened if it opens up to competing hypothesis and theories about the phenomenon in question (Yin, 1994; Harder, 2012).

A key issue in any case study is to be able to distinguish evidence from interpretation. This has led to the criticism that investigators only present the data that supports their own interpretation (Harder, 2012, p. 3). Given that I have derived two distinctive concepts from balance of threat theory and aim to distinguish Kazakhstan’s behavioral pattern in either way, I find this problem to be of little concern.

Another weakness of this case study, and case studies in general, are their inability to generalize the findings to other states of interest. A quick glance on the world map however, makes it clear that Kazakhstan and Mongolia are the only two states that are land locked between two great powers (India and Brazil being emergent powers as they lack military diversity in comparison to the U.S, Russia and China (Global Firepower.com)). Thus, it is not in my interest to generalize any findings, but to shed light on Kazakhstan’s behavioral pattern given its particular circumstances.

Research methods

The research question suggests mainly using qualitative data, as they are better suited for analytical descriptions. A qualitative approach is well suited to study phenomena in depth, as is the aim of this study (Grønmo 1996, p. 80; Johannessen, Tuft and Christoffersen, 2010, p. 32). However, a mixture of methods in collecting data was chosen here to explore the research question as statistics and quantitative data were available in relation to my chosen indicators. This promotes a degree of method triangulation, as the phenomenon is explored from more than one perspective. Thus the data base for the analysis is strengthened by using more than one method.

Data, sources

This study has been based on a large collection of different primary and secondary data sources. Primary sources include data from UN Comtrade, the World Bank, SIPRI and the
Eurasian Development Bank. These sources are considered valid and reliable as they are
guided by professional and international standards in the collection, compilation and
dissemination of data to ensure that all data users can have confidence in the quality and
integrity of the data produced. Other primary sources that have been of use are presidential
speeches, letters, official statements, and various Governmental documents such as
Kazakhstan’s 2017 Military Doctrine, 2030-strategy and the Nurly Zhol program.

Secondary sources include scholarly literature from books, journal articles and reports. These
sources could possibly lead to a problem of reliability given that other authors have
interpreted the data. This problem of reliability was limited by triangulating sources –
checking that various sources converge on the information/data of interest. Newspaper
articles from the Internet have been used to study relevant events related to the research
question. Some of these sources originate from Kazakhstan, where the media is under strict
government control (Freedom House.org, 2016). This might pose a direct threat to reliability
given its probable bias. However, these sources are primarily used for retrieving presidential
or other state officials testimonies regarding Kazakh- China/Russia cooperation. Thus,
considering that the aim is to retrieve information on how the elite perceives a certain
issue/agreement/event – the Kazakh newspapers fulfill their purpose.

Considering that Kazakhstan is an authoritarian regime, I have encountered the problem of
lack of transparency, especially related to the energy sector. As a result, this section of the
analysis is primarily based on secondary sources – which have been triangulated whenever
possible to reduce the problem of reliability. However, the exploration rights of oil and gas
fields as well as the ownership of various companies operating in this sector changes hands
very frequently, thus the information conveyed in this thesis might not be absolutely accurate.
I have done my best to draw on various sources to encounter this problem to the best of my
ability. The same is true for military exercises as not all war games and individual
contributions are traceable.

Construct validity

An important test for judging quality of a research design is construct validity (Yin, 1994, p.
32- 33). This validity refers to “establishing correct operational measures for the concepts
being studied” (Yin, 1994, p. 32-33). To ensure construct validity, I have used multiple
sources of evidence using both qualitative and quantitative methods. However, because of the
subjective nature of qualitative method and data collection the study may be weakened by the
researcher’s potential biases. I have sought to be as objective as possible in my role as a researcher and to minimize this threat to both the validity and reliability of the findings. Therefore I have sought to find multiple sources whenever in doubt about the reliability of especially secondary sources.

1.6 Thesis Outline

The research question is studied in tree separate spheres to uncover patterns of balancing and bandwagoning behavior: the military, the economic and the “official and social” sphere. Historically, Russia has held a dominant position in all three, but China’s growing economic, political and military clout may have distorted this traditional balance (Haas, 2013, p.1; Makocki & Popescu, 2016, p. 8).

First, I will examine the military sphere. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is analyzed to identify commitments of mutual support (collective security defense mechanisms) and the extent of security integration through joint military and security structures. It also analyzes the objectives of these organizations to determine to what extent they are committed to the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan. In addition, it analyses military exercises and to what degree these exercises are aimed at countering external threats and devoted to portraying a unified front. Exercises that are conducted near the Chinese border are of particular interest, especially if the scenarios focus on combating and deterring an aggressor state. Furthermore, I examine Kazakhstan’s level of commitment in the two organizations by investigating its resource allocations to the various exercises. Next, the analysis focuses on bilateral defense cooperation, in terms of evaluating bilateral exercises and arms trade. If Kazakhstan has engaged in bilateral exercises with Russia and China outside the organizational frameworks it might reveal developments in Kazakhstan’s security orientation – does Kazakhstan continue to rely on Russia or can we detect a possible shift in preferred security cooperation? Arms trade is examined for the same reason. In addition, the military sphere will examine and evaluate foreign military bases on Kazakh territory, Kazakhstan’s military spending, and Kazakhstan’s deployment of military assets. This is in part to establish which of the “rivaling” states holds the strongest military presence in Kazakhstan, and in part to uncover information regarding Kazakhstan’s threat perception and possible balancing behavior.
Second, I will examine the economic sphere in order to determine if Kazakhstan has developed a dependence on the Chinese economy. Realist political economy literature argues that an economic great power develops political power from the secondary states dependence on export markets—because export promotes economic growth, employment opportunities and stability (Ross, 2006). Such political power can be used to compel a secondary state into alignment, according to Walt (1987, p. 46). Therefore, I will examine Kazakhstan’s import and export pattern in relation to Russia and China. Furthermore, Walt (1987, p.46) argues that dependence on important commodities makes weak states more likely to bandwagon, thus I will examine what commodities they trade as well (1987, p.46). In addition, I will explore the energy sector. The same arguments of dependence apply, but it will also be used for the purpose of identifying balancing and bandwagoning behavior. Last, but not least, I will examine The Belt and Road Initiative, because it is of vital importance to Kazakhstan and its further development. Does the initiative converge with Kazakhstan’s national interest, and can we detect some scientism regarding China’s intentions?

Third, as perceptions of a great power’s intention hold a particularly important place in balance of threat theory, I will examine the official and social sphere to uncover the official policy towards China and how the media and the population perceive China as a partner. If a state is perceived as aggressive, the theory holds others will balance against it (Walt, 1987, p. 25-28). However, given that Kazakhstan is an authoritarian state with limited press freedom, the population may not have the ability to express its discontent with the elite’s “China policy”. If the population perceives China as a threat, while the elite perceives China as a partner through it official policy, it can cause problems for further integration between the two countries (Peyrouse, 2016, p.14). Consequently, incongruent perceptions can put constraints on the elite, possibly pushing it towards a balancing strategy. On the other hand, if there is an overall agreement of China’s benign intentions, it can promote a bandwagoning strategy – enabling the elite to reap the awards of further integration with a rising power.
Map 1: Central Asia

(“Map of Central Asia” [Picture], 2018)
2. Analytical Framework

This chapter will start by reviewing central elements of Stephen M. Walt’s balance of threat theory and his findings. It will then proceed by presenting what variables constitutes “level of threat”, before assessing the “level of threat” in relation to Kazakhstan. This is done to determine Kazakhstan’s position vis-à-vis China and Russia and to arrive at the conclusion that the case of Kazakhstan relies a great deal on perceived intentions – as Russia and China are roughly equal on the other “level of threat” variables. Furthermore, the concepts of balancing and bandwagoning will be defined, and additional strategies linked to these behavioral strategies will be described. This is done for the purpose of creating a pattern of identification, which will be applied later in the analysis.

2.1 Stephen M. Walt and Balance of Threat Theory

A common neorealist argument is that states balance against power. Contrary to this traditional view of international relations and balance of power theory, Walt argues that states balance against threat and that his balance of threat theory gives a better account and explanation for states’ alliance choices (Walt, 1987, p. 5). One of his most central arguments is that if states were concerned solely with balancing power, the nations of Western Europe should have aligned with the Soviet Union after World War II to curb America’s predominant position. Instead, they chose to balance the Soviet Union by aligning with the U.S because the former’s impressive military capabilities, proximity and perceived aggressive aims made it more threatening (Walt, 1987, p.viii).

Walt’s (1987, p. 22-28) theory takes into account aggregate power, proximity, offensive capabilities and intentions to determine level of threat and thus reasonable alliance choices. Walt draws upon diplomatic history and provides a detailed study of alliance formation in the Middle East between 1955-1979. A central task in his book is to explain why states sometimes choose to balance and sometimes choose to bandwagon in the face of threats. He finds that balancing is most common, but that bandwagoning can happen under certain conditions (Walt, 1987, p.5). He also investigates the impact of ideology, foreign aid and transnational penetration on alliance choices. His analysis however, shows that these motives for alliance are weaker as certain conditions are necessary to give them valid explanatory
power (Walt, 1987, p. 5-6). His overall point is that states form alliances to balance against threat and not power, and that his theory better explain alliance formation and state behavior today.

**Level of Threat**

Walt (1987, p.5) argues that balancing and bandwagoning behavior are more accurately viewed as response to threats and that several factors contribute to the perceived level of threat. The first of these factors is aggregate power. The total power that states can wield is an important component of the possible threat they pose to others. Aggregate power can induce both balancing and bandwagoning behavior as it can be used to punish or reward other states (Walt, 1987, p. 22).

The second factor is geographic proximity. The ability to project power declines with distance, hence the alliance choices of states in near proximity to a great or a rising power will likely be affected. Proximate threats can trigger both balancing and bandwagoning behavior, just like aggregate power can. On the one hand, if states choose to bandwagon, it can produce a sphere of influence for the powerful state, on the other hand, if states choose to balance, it can produce alliance networks where surrounding states align against a central power (Walt, 1987, p. 23).

The third factor to be considered is offensive power (Walt, 1987, p.24). States with great offensive power and capabilities are more likely to provoke an alliance than those unable to attack and project power. Offensive power is related to proximity and aggregate power, but according to Walt one must not mistake them to be identical (1987, p.24). Offensive power and proximity are related because it is easier to threaten a neighbor than a foe across the ocean. If you are to threaten a distant state you must possess the credibility that you are able to follow up on your threats. This is where offensive power comes in – if you are able to project your power over a far distance, you possess offensive power (Walt, 1987, p.24). It is also related to aggregate power because the aggregate power determines how far the state can project its power. That said, aggregate power does not necessarily produce great offensive power. This depends on how easily aggregate power can be converted into offensive power. Problems can arise during such a process, for instance if you are unable to mobilize the population towards a pending war, if you have a military unable to mobilize or if
the economic power of the state is eaten by corruption. Offensive power is the ability “to threaten the sovereignty or territorial integrity of another state at an acceptable cost” (Walt, 1987, p. 24). Offensive power can trigger bandwagoning behavior if vulnerable states see little hope in resisting or are unsure of whether or not their alliance will be able to provide assistance in time. On the other hand, offensive power can trigger balancing behavior where states cooperates to curb the central power before it is too late.

The final factor is aggressive intentions. Walt writes that states that are viewed as aggressive are likely to provoke others to balance against them (1987, p.25). Substantial power combined with dangerous ambitions have caused countervailing coalitions in the past, hence perceptions of intent is an important element, even if the state in question just possesses modest capabilities. Walt writes that when a state is believed to be unbelievably aggressive states are unlikely to bandwagon because even allied states are likely to become victims somewhere down the line (Walt, 1987, p. 26). Balancing presents itself as the only sane option.

The four factors above help determine the level of threat and prescribe available alliance choices. The external threat is expected to increase the more aggregate and offensive power the threatening state possesses, the closer it is, and the more aggressive intentions it displays (Walt, 1987, p. 32). Given the nature of China’s rise, Kazakhstan’s geographical position and Walt’s theory, the expectation so far is that Kazakhstan will attempt to balance China’s power.

2.2 Level of Threat Assessment

Kazakhstan is considered a secondary state, given that it would not be able to defend itself against China or Russia. This section will examine in short the aggregate and offensive power of China and Russia, in order to determine if either state is considerably more powerful than the other, and more likely to pose a threat to Kazakhstan.

When it comes to aggregate power, the global firepower index takes into account 55 individual factors that concur with the variables in Walt’s theory of aggregate power (1987, p. 22-23). For instance, it takes into account financial stability and strength, weapon
diversity and numbers, technological prowess, geographical factors, logistical flexibility, natural resources, and available manpower (Globalfirepower.com, 2018). Nuclear capabilities are not included. The index scores are judged against a perfect value of "0.0000" which is realistically unattainable due to the number of factors considered per country. The Index ranks the U.S first, Russia second and China third. Kazakhstan is ranked in the 50th place, which proves the point of Kazakhstan being a secondary state.

Table 1: The Global Firepower Index 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The United States</td>
<td>0.0818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>0.0841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>0.0852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>0.8599</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Globalfirepower.com, 2018)

Considering aggregate power according to this Index though, one could argue that the “score” distance between Russia and China is not great enough (0.0011) to determine which great power constitutes the greatest threat to Kazakhstan. Both countries are equally dangerous thus both powers are able to “induce both balancing and bandwagoning behavior” in accordance with Walt (1987, p.22).

When it comes to offensive power, states with great offensive power and capabilities are more likely to provoke an alliance than those unable to attack and project power (Walt, 1987, p. 24). Offensive power is related to proximity and aggregate power. Given how Russia and China are roughly equal in aggregate power, one should assess if the powers have projected offensive power before. China has, despite its intentions of a peaceful rise, provided evidence of its offensive power in the South China Sea (Phillips, 2017; Chen, 2017; Economy, 2014; Zhang, 2015). In addition, it is not hard to imagine that increased military spending and military reforms have provided China with an improved ability to project power, particularly in its near vicinity. “Graph 1: China’s military expenditure 1992- 2016” provides a steady picture of China’s increased military capabilities (TradingEconomics.com/ SIPRI, 2018a).
Russia on the other hand has proven its ability to project power several times, most recently by annexing Crimea and intervening in Syria. Moreover, Russia proved its offensive power in 2008 in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, Georgia (Kolstø & Holm-Hansen, 2018). Russia’s military expenditure has also reached new heights in recent years, as depicted in “Graph 2: Russia’s military expenditure 1992-2015” (TradingEconomics.com/ SIPRI, 2018b). Note, that both Russia and China in recent years have projected power in their near vicinity. Kazakhstan borders both great powers, thus the nature of Russia and China’s power projection might be considered a threat.

Graph 2: Russia’s military expenditure 1992-2015.
Given how Russia and China possess roughly equal aggregate and offensive power and how both countries border Kazakhstan, one could argue that the case of Kazakhstan relies a great deal on perceived intentions. This coincides well with Walt findings. He finds that the principal criterion for which secondary states choose between great powers is that of perceived intentions (1987, p. 169). However, he exerts that the one great power that is perceived to have the most aggressive intentions, is the one the secondary state will balance. As neither Russia nor China has conveyed any aggressive intentions towards Kazakhstan, I find it necessary to modify this term. I believe Kazakhstan is more likely to engage in balancing behavior if it is uncertain of either great powers intention. Its balancing behavior would thus represent a precaution rather than a response to an external threat.

2.3 The Concepts of Balancing and Bandwagoning Behavior

Introduction

Throughout this thesis Kazakhstan´s behavior will be examined in three different spheres in order to find empirical evidence of balancing and bandwagoning behavior. This section will identify several balancing and bandwagoning strategies by relying mainly on Walt´s definitions and examples of types of behavior described in The Origins of Alliances (1987) and Taming American Power (2005) volumes. Thus, all the strategies that are identified might not be explicitly stated by Walt, but is based on examples of behavior described by Walt. The selected strategies are based on their relevance to the case study.

External Balancing

As presented in the introduction, external balancing refers to combining capabilities with others in order to ensure that a more powerful state cannot use its superior capabilities in way the weaker side may find unpleasant (Walt, 2005, p.120). External balancing can be done by political and military means and is focused on limiting the ability of the dominant power to impose its preferences/will on others (Walt, 2005, p. 126-132).

The Alliance Strategy

The primary purpose for most alliances is to combine the members´ capabilities in a way that furthers their respective interests (Walt, 1997, p. 157). Thus, forming alliances is a natural strategy for weaker states to ensure their security. Walt (1997, p.157) defines an alliance as
“formal or informal commitments for security cooperation between two or more states”. Furthermore, he argues that the precise arrangements embodied in different alliances can vary enormously, but that “the defining feature of any alliance is a commitment for mutual military support against some external actor(s) in some specified set of circumstances” (Walt, 1997, p.157). More often than not alliances may also include technology sharing – such as missile attack warning systems, space monitoring systems, intelligence sharing and military exercises aimed at protecting territorial integrity/enhancing defense capabilities (Walt, 1997, p.157). It may also include having military bases of an allied state to increase the potential cost of military conflict (Walt, 2005, p. 127-129, 131). Thereof, examining the military sphere is paramount in order to find evidence of Kazakhstan’s potential external balancing behavior.

**Balking Strategy**

This strategy includes opposing initiatives put forth by the dominant power through collective opposition in political, economic and military domains (Walt, 2005, p. 130, 141). This can include opposing loans, foreign direct investment, military bases and opposing to cooperate on common political issues, where the dominant power’s interest does not converge with the other states. This balancing strategy is included due to the triangular nature of this thesis. Russia, China and Kazakhstan’s interests’ may not converge in all areas of cooperation– thus by including this strategy one can account instances where Kazakhstan may have aligned with one great power to balance the other.

**Internal Balancing**

Internal balancing refers to how weaker states may increase their own capabilities by mobilizing their own resources in ways that will enable them to resist stronger states effectively (Walt, 2005, p. 120). This can be done in the following ways:

**Military Spending Strategy**

The most obvious way to balance internally is by increasing military spending (Walt, 2005, p.136). It also includes acquiring weapons of mass destruction and/or acquiring weapons that will make it difficult for China to perform a successful attack (for instance anti-aircraft warfare units or anti-missile systems).
Deployment Strategy

Another way to mobilize resources is to deploy military forces and equipment where the weaker state finds it most necessary (in line with Walt, 2005, p.120). In the case of Kazakhstan, the placements of military assets are of particular relevance as it demonstrates where Kazakhstan wants its internal capabilities to be strongest. It also provides information regarding Kazakhstan’s threat perception.

Binding Strategy

Binding can be used both in the external and internal balancing context. In the international context, binding refers to how powerful states are bound by international law and norms for economic and political behavior (Walt, 2005, p. 145). Transferred to a bilateral level, one could argue that using existing internal institutions to place limits on the dominant powers exercise of political/financial/military influence, represents a way to balance internally.

Reduce Asymmetrical Dependence Strategy

Dependence on one particular state for export routes, trade, energy, technology and security makes secondary states vulnerable. Attempts to decrease such dependence should be regarded as an internal balancing strategy as it is represents a way of mobilizing their own resources in a way that enables them to resist stronger states (Walt, 2005, p. 120). If Russia for instance, held monopoly over Kazakhstan’s crude oil export route, and Kazakhstan was dependent on export income, Russia would hold extensive leverage over Kazakhstan. By deliberately diversifying export routes, Kazakhstan would increase its ability to resist Russian demands.

Bandwagoning

Bandwagoning is defined as unequal exchanges where the vulnerable state makes asymmetrical concessions to the dominant power (Walt, 1988, p. 282). Such concessions can be political and economical, thus examining energy deals for instance will be particularly interesting. Furthermore, the following strategies may indicate bandwagoning behavior.

The Realignment Strategy

This strategy refers to how weaker states are willing to realign their foreign policy with that of the dominant power in order to support the threatening power and avoid being punished (2005, p. 183).
The Bonding Strategy.

Bonding refers to how close personal relationships between state officials are aimed at influencing the greater powers foreign policy initiatives (Walt, 2005, p. 191). Close and personal relationships between presidents might fuel the idea of bandwagoning behavior, particularly because we know that unless the weaker state is able to back its claims up with raw capabilities, the weaker state is at a disadvantage (Walt, 2005, p. 193). Moreover, a consequence of close relationships can be that the weaker state visibly aligns its policy with the great power – as the realignment strategy stipulates. However, if these relationships are based at mutual respect and converging interests, visibly aligning ones foreign policy should not be regarded as bandwagoning behavior, but rather as bonding. Especially is there is no punishment involved. This distinction is important.

Assessment and Implications

When applying balance of threat theory, it is important to keep in mind that balancing and bandwagoning are ideal types, and that actual behavior will only approximate either model. States that engage in a balancing strategy may simultaneously seek friendly relations with their opponents, and states that choose to bandwagon may not offer the dominant power their full support (Walt, 1988, p.282).

It is also important to distinguish between a bandwagoning strategy and a détente. Bandwagoning involves an unequal exchange where the vulnerable state makes asymmetrical concessions to the dominant power, while détente, by contrast, involves roughly equal concessions in which both states benefit (Walt, 1988, p. 282). Another difference is that détente involves a mutual recognition of legitimate interest, while bandwagoning implies willingness to support or tolerate illegitimate actions taken by the dominant power. Thus, the term “détente” will not necessarily be applied in relation to easing strained relations, it might also be applied in relation to outcomes of agreements or energy deals.

To sum up, this chapter has argued that the case of Kazakhstan relies a great deal on how it perceives the intentions of its two neighboring giants, as they score roughly equal in the Level of Threat assessment. Furthermore, the balancing and bandwagoning strategies outlined in this chapter will serve as an analytical tool in the following analysis of the various spheres. Nevertheless, we should examine the conditions for balancing and bandwagoning behavior in order to form some expectations before embarking upon the analysis.
2.3 Conditions for balancing and bandwagoning behavior.

What conditions favors balancing and bandwagoning behavior? Walt (1987, p. 28-32) points to how the conditions for balancing and bandwagoning behavior varies based on whether the state in question is a strong or a weak state, has available allies, and the context surrounding the state – is it a time of peace or war? His argument is that the stronger the state in question the more likely it is to balance when threatened by great powers. Weak states are likely to balance other weak states, but might bandwagon when threatened by great powers (Walt, 1987, p. 29). When it comes to alliance support, he argues that the greater the probability of such support, the greater the tendency to balance (Walt, 1987, p. 30). If however, allied support is certain and adequate, the tendency will shift towards free-riding and buck-passing (letting others bare the cost of their security). Balancing is argued to be the most reasonable choice for statesmen as there is no telling of what other states in the system might do (Walt, 1987, p. 29). Intentions can be hidden and questioned, but there is no guarantee of a truthful answer. Hence, the reasonable thing to do is to form alliances and increase ones own capabilities before the central power in question is to powerful to oppose (Walt, 1987, p. 29). As for context, Walt argues that if the threatening state is perceived to be very aggressive, balancing is the natural tendency in the system. If however, it is wartime and one side is very close to victory, there will be a tendency towards bandwagoning with the winning side (Walt, 1987, p 28-32).

These conditions put into Kazakh context and how it is at a disadvantage compared to the strength of China, it is clear that the availability of allies, and the perceived threat of China’s rise is paramount to whether Kazakhstan choose to engage in bandwagoning or balancing behavior. Thus, one of the primary goals of this thesis is to establish if China is in fact perceived as a threat, as Kazakhstan has had close alliance ties to Russia ever since its independence (The General Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 1997, p.16). Given Kazakhstan’s alliance ties to Russia, it appears that according to the theory of Walt, we should expect balancing behavior in most cases– also in the case studied here. Likewise, we should expect bandwagoning behavior only under certain conditions.
3. The Military Sphere

3.1 Introduction

The military sphere will address to what extent Kazakhstan combines its capabilities with others and mobilizes its own resources to promote its ability to resist stronger states more effectively, in line with Walt’s (2005, p. 120) definition of balancing behavior. This chapter will analyze the CSTO and the SCO, bilateral defense cooperation, foreign military bases, Kazakhstan’s military spending, and Kazakhstan’s deployment of military assets.

In line with Walt’s definition of an alliance (1997, p. 157), the CSTO and the SCO is analyzed to identify commitments of mutual support (collective security defense mechanisms) and the extent of security integration through joint military and security structures. Moreover, analyzes the objectives of these organizations to determine to what extent they are committed to the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan. In addition, it analyses military exercises and to what degree these exercises are aimed at countering external threats and devoted to portraying a unified front. Exercises that are conducted near the Chinese border are of particular interest, especially if the scenarios focus on combating and deterring an aggressor state. Furthermore, I examine Kazakhstan’s level of commitment in the two organizations by investigating its resource allocations to the various exercises. Given how these organizations are multilateral in nature, one should be aware of “balking” behavior—refusal to comply with requests (Walt, 2005, p. 141). If balking behavior is present, one should be aware the initiator – Russia might be pulling strings to contain China’s influence in the SCO.

Bilateral exercises and arms trade are two important components of defense cooperation. In this section I explore if Kazakhstan has engaged in bilateral exercises with Russia and China outside the organizational frameworks because it might reveal developments in Kazakhstan’s security orientation – does it continue to rely on Russia or can we detect a possible shift in preferred security cooperation? Does Kazakhstan’s security orientation represent an external balancing strategy towards China, or does it indicate a realignment of foreign policy – perhaps indicating a bandwagoning tendency in line with Walt (2005,
The exercise scenarios are of particular importance in this case, as they can indicate whether or not China is considered a partner or a threat.

Arms trade is one way to share technology and security. I choose to include this indicator because according to SIPRI China’s arms trade has been booming since year 2000, and China is currently ranked as the third largest arms exporter in the world (Bender & Gould, 2015). Thereof, if Kazakhstan were in a position seeking to bandwagon, it would be reasonable to expect it to buy more arms from China – as sharing weapon systems and technology has a clear advantage. If however, Kazakhstan continues to rely on Russian arms, it would be a further confirmation of their close alliance ties and security cooperation. Furthermore, if Kazakhstan has not placed any orders or heavily decreased its orders of Russian arms, it can represent an attempt to decrease asymmetrical dependence – an internal balancing strategy (Walt, 2005, p. 120). In addition, the weapons purchased from Russia might indicate what possible threat Kazakhstan is preparing to counter. Can it be related to the rise of China?

*Foreign military bases* are identified and analyzed to determine if they are aimed at increasing Kazakhstan’s ability to resist military force from an outside aggressor. Foreign military bases with technology/capabilities aimed at countering China would represent an external balancing strategy as it is aimed at increasing the secondary states ability to resist military force through joint military cooperation with an ally (Walt, 2005, p. 127-129, 131). Thus it relates to the “alliance strategy.

Kazakhstan’s *military spending* is analyzed in order to establish whether or not it has balanced internally through the spending strategy.

*Placement of Kazakhstan’s military assets* is identified and analyzed to determine where Kazakhstan wants its internal capabilities to be strongest – hence where it perceives its largest threat to be. If Kazakhstan’s military capabilities are found to be located near the Chinese border, it represents an internal balancing strategy in line with Walt (2005, p.120). This is especially true if the capabilities are aimed at countering conventional military force. On the other hand, if the military assets are placed elsewhere, it could indicate that China is not considered a threat. If this is a result of recent developments, it could indicate a realignment of Kazakhstan’s foreign policy to that of China’s, or bonding – how converging interests visibly leads to the alignment of foreign policy (Walt, 2005, p. 191).
Each domain of the military sphere will have a separate introduction that underlines the main focus of investigation. The introduction of the CSTO extends to the SCO, as they will be evaluated on the same matters. Moreover, it summarizes the findings in short, before presenting the evidence. After each domain has been properly analyzed, there will be a short evaluation of the main findings in relation to the research question.

3.2 The CSTO

Introduction

Chapter 3.2 and chapter 3.3 will discuss the relevance and importance of two of the most prominent organizations Kazakhstan holds membership in, the CSTO and the SCO (Haas, 2016). They will examine the objectives of these two organizations, whether or not they have a collective security defense mechanism, and to what extent they have joint military and security structures in order to determine which organization Kazakhstan is more committed to, and vise versa. Subsequently, they will evaluate resource allocations and exercise scenarios of the CSTO and SCO, in order to understand the scope, intensity and nature of the security cooperation.

In light of the research question, examining the nature of military and security organizations in which Russia and China plays a central role provides us with information regarding Kazakhstan’s alliance choices and strategy. In relation to the nature of these alliances, one could argue that there are several important factors that strengthen an alliance in terms of security.

First of all, the scope of the security cooperation is determined by the organizations objectives, commonly stated in the charter of the organization. As Walt (1997, p.) argues, the defining feature of an alliance is a commitment for mutual support against some external actor, thus it is important to note whether or not the security organization focuses on internal or external threats, or if it has a security clause for both situations. Thereof, it strengthens an alliance if it has a collective security defense mechanism, like for instance NATO’s Article 5 (Walt, 1997, p.157; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1949). Second, the alliance is additionally strengthened if it has joint military and security structures, as the extent of these structures indicate the degree of security integration between member states (Walt, 1997, p.
Third, one could argue that the frequency of exercises, resource allocations made by member states and exercise scenarios reveals important information about the intensity and scope of the security cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia and Kazakhstan and China.

By examining these factors, this section will reveal that both the CSTO and the SCO is under Russian influence by political, financial or military means. The Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which is led by Russia, has clear military objectives, a collective security defense mechanism and a military operational structure far superior to that of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which is arguably led by China (Grace, 2016; Stein, 2017, p. 20; Haas, 2007, p.31; Haas, 2017). In addition, the scope and nature of the military exercises reveal that Kazakhstan contributes and participates more in CSTO exercises than those initiated by the SCO, and that the CSTO is more committed to the sovereignty of Kazakhstan. This is because the CSTO exercise scenarios reflect the organizations willingness to protect its members from outside aggressors as well as regional terrorist and separatist groups. In contrast, the SCO focus only on combating terrorism, extremism and separatism. Furthermore, this section identifies an increase in resource allocations and an expansion in scope related to the CSTO exercises, which to some extent indicates intensified external balancing behavior. In relation to these exercises, this section identifies three exercises that arguably represent balancing behavior towards China. As such, this section finds that the CSTO serves as a balancing tool for Kazakhstan. Moreover, it finds that Kazakhstan and Russia engaged in balking behavior as they have displayed reluctance to provide China with economic leverage within the SCO. Moreover, Kazakhstan and Russia have conducted three exercises within the SCO that excluded China. If Kazakhstan was in a bandwagoning position one would expect the opposite behavior—more military exercises with China at the expense of Russia, and a higher acceptance of increased Chinese economic leverage within the SCO. Therefore, this section does not support a bandwagoning hypothesis, but rather points in the direction of external balancing against China.

**The CSTO**

The CSTO is a Russian-led military alliance (Haas, 2016, p.389). Six former Soviet republics make up the organization: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan. It was founded in 1992 as the CST – the Collective Security Treaty but evolved into the CSTO in 2002 when the former treaty expired (Haas, 2016, p. 389). The CSTO affirms the member states desire to abstain from the use or threat of force against one another.
Furthermore, the treaty forbids parties from joining other military alliances (Collective Security Treaty Organization, 2002; Haas, 2016, p. 389).

**Objectives of the CSTO**

The main objectives and responsibilities of the CSTO are cooperation in defense, training of military personnel, the manufacturing of weapons and peacekeeping activities (Haas, 2016, p. 389). It also has a clear focus on cooperation in areas of energy security and the fight against terrorism and narcotics. Moreover, it seeks to establish a common integrated air defense system (Kucera, 2014a). Thus, the objectives reflect a broad scope of security cooperation between member states.

**Collective Security Defense Mechanism**

The charter of the CSTO (from 2002) is made up of 10 chapters that state the organization’s purposes, principles and areas of activity. Article 7 underlines the military aspect of protecting independence and territorial integrity on a collective basis:

> “The Member States shall take joint measures to achieve the purposes of the Organization to form thereunder the efficient system of collective security providing collective protection in case of menace to safety, stability, territorial integrity and sovereignty and exercise of the right to collective defense, including creation of coalition (collective) forces of the Organization, regional (united) groups of armies (forces), peacekeeping forces, united systems and the bodies governing them, military infrastructure. [...]”

(Collective Security Treaty Organization, 2002)

The creation of collective forces and military infrastructure holds that the organization is prepared to go to war on the behalf of a member state if necessary. This article also makes it clear that the organization views it as a right to exercise a collective defense in order to protect safety, stability, territorial integrity and sovereignty. As such, Article 7 of the CSTO treaty resembles Article 5 of NATO’s treaty (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 1949). Thus, in line with Walt’s argument of how combining capabilities with others represent an external balancing strategy (2005, p. 120), the CSTO holds great external balancing potential.

In addition, there have been several amendments added to the charter in recent years that
broadens the scope of cooperation. In 2007, an amendment allowed the CSTO to conduct peacekeeping missions under a UN Security Council resolution. This amendment brought the organization out of the regional scope and on to the international stage where the CSTO can act as a stabilizing force in international conflicts (Stein, 2017, p.13). In 2010, the CSTO added an amendment allowing the organization to respond to an internal threat to security of a member state (Stein, 2017, p.13). This amendment broadened the scope of what is to be considered a threat, as the charter previously only allowed the organization to respond to external threats. Finally, in 2011 an amendment required all members to agree before any member hosts a foreign military on its territory (Stein, 2017, p.13). Although Russia gave its consent to Washington and its NATO allies to use Central Asia as a staging post for the Afghan war after 9/11 attacks, it later became increasingly wary of foreign military presence (Dzyubenko, 2014). Thus, the 2011 amendment is probably a result of Russia’s discontent of having U.S military bases on Central Asian territory. One could argue that this amendment strengthens regional security ties as the collective interests are prioritized over the individual ones.

Thus far, we find that the CSTO objectives defines security cooperation in broad terms, that it has a security clause for both internal and external threats, and that there exists a collective security defense mechanism. Judging by this, the CSTO represents an extensive security alliance – which is one way to balance externally according to Walt (2005, p. 127-129, 131).

_Military and Security Structures_

The CSTO has its joint headquarters in Moscow. The top body of the organization is the Council for Collective Security, in which all the heads of states are members of. This council makes all major decisions. The Standing CSTO Council implements these decisions. Next are the Secretary General, a Secretariat and a Joint military Staff (Collective Security Treaty Organization, 2002; Haas, 2016, p. 389). In addition, the CSTO has several consultative and executive bodies: the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, the Council of Ministers of Defense and a Committee of the Secretaries of the Security Councils (Collective Security Treaty Organization, 2002; Haas, 2016, p. 390). Furthermore, supporting bodies have been developed in order to prepare for and counter other threats that cannot be defined as conventional. These bodies deal with counter narcotics, information security, counter terrorism, illegal immigration, disaster relief, Afghanistan and military economic cooperation (Haas, 2016, p. 390; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Kazakhstan, 2018).
Haas (2016, p. 390) argues that the structure and evolvement of the CSTO is congruent with that of NATO as it continues to broaden its scope from conventional warfare to more modern security threats, such as terrorism and cyber warfare. As we can see, the broad scope of security cooperation outlined by the objectives in the charter is represented in the structure of the organization.

Regarding military, the CSTO has several Collective Forces. In order to secure its ability to deal with internal and external threats the CSTO created the Collective Rapid Deployment Force for the Central Asian Region (CRDF CAR) in 2001 (Stein, 2017, p.13). CRDF CAR is a Special Forces unit with the goal of averting external aggression and terrorism. Every member state contributed to the force by either a battalion and/or a special force unit (Stein, 2017, p.13).

Moreover, in 2007, at the initiative of Putin, the CSTO decided to form a peacekeeping force, which could be deployed at the request of the UN. A Russian brigade dominates the peacekeeping contingent, and Kazakhstan is the only other member state that has made a valuable contribution besides Russia. Kazakhstan contributed with a battalion while other members contributed with smaller units (Haas, 2016, p. 391).

In 2009 it created the Collective Operational Reaction Force (CORF), which can be deployed to deal with threats from conventional militaries and non-state armed groups. It can also be deployed for emergency or disaster situations and peacekeeping (Stein, 2017, p.13). CORF is permanently based in Russia and placed under a single command. Currently CORF consists of 25 000 military, mainly from Russian and Kazakh military units. Russia contributes with an airborne division and airborne brigade, while Kazakhstan contributes with an air assault brigade. Other member states offer no more than a battalion (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Kazakhstan, 2018; Haas, 2016, p. 391). Interestingly, the official site of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan claims this force was created at the initiative of President Nazarbayev. The site also claims that Kazakhstan initiated the creation of Collective Air Forces in 2014 (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Kazakhstan, 2018). The Collective Air Force draft resolution was largely harmonized by October 2014. CSTO Press Secretary Vladimir Zainetdinov, informed that the Collective Air Force will include aviation units of military transport and special aviation of the armed forces, law enforcement agencies (police), interior troops, security agencies and special services (Belarus News, 2014; Haas, 2016, p.392). Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan would be the main
contributors of this unit as well, as they are the only member states with the financial and military means to do so. The CSTO also aims to create a united air and missile defense system (Haas, 2016, p. 392).

As previously argued, the extent of these structures indicates the degree of security integration between member states. As the presentation of these structures has shown, the CSTO is prepared for conventional warfare, peacekeeping missions, disaster relief, non-state armed groups and terrorist threats. Russia and Kazakhstan are the main contributors to the various collective forces, and according to the official site of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan (2018), Kazakhstan has initiated a number of proposals to further enhance the role and capabilities of the CSTO. Again, this behavior represents an external balancing strategy, yet it is not clear to what extent these measures were taken to counter the rise of China. However, contemporary risks and threats were discussed at the CSTO Summit in Dushanbe 2015 (Presidential Executive Office, 2015). It reflected a clear focus on the potential terrorist threats coming from Afghanistan and ISIS, in terms of returning militants. Nevertheless, even if the increase in CSTO capabilities were in part a preventative measure against China, it would not have been officially stated. Perhaps CSTO exercise scenarios can reveal some information of threat perception.

**CSTO Military Exercises and Resource Allocations.**

According to Walt (2005, p. 127-129, 131) military exercises aimed at protecting territorial integrity/enhancing defense capabilities should be considered an external balancing strategy—but does the nature of these exercises indicate that China is perceived as a possible threat? This will be the focus in the subsequent part. This section will start by presenting general information—commenting on the number of exercises, participation rate, resource allocations, the nature of exercise scenarios and the location of the exercises. Then it will elaborate in more detail on the Cooperation, Rubezh and Unbreakable Brotherhood exercises. These exercises have been conducted by the CSTO annually or every other year. The regularity of these exercises can provide information regarding development in terms of intensity, scope and resource allocations and help indicate an increase or decrease in security cooperation within the CSTO. Unfortunately, however, reports and news regarding each member states contribution to the exercises are unknown in many instances (Stein, 2017; Haas, 2016). The evaluation of Kazakhstan’s contribution will therefore be somewhat imprecise due to lack of
information. However, the information provided in the following section is deemed adequate enough to draw some rough conclusions regarding Kazakhstan’s contribution to CSTO exercises. As mentioned before, the exercise scenarios are of particular importance, as they might reveal what security threats the CSTO are willing and able to conquer together.

**General information of all CSTO exercises**

By examining CSTO exercises listed in Stein (2017) and Haas (2016) following deductions can be derived:

*Number:* since 2004, the CSTO has carried out at least 38 military exercises, an average of about three exercises per year. Over this time period, the number of exercises has increased remarkably. For instance, in 2006 the CSTO conducted two exercises, while in 2012 and 2013 five exercises were held annually. It reached an all time high in 2015 with six exercises. The exercises however, are not equally distributed. In the 14 years under inspection, 23 of the 32 exercises – 73% of them, were conducted during the last seven years (2010-2017). The remaining 27% of the exercises were conducted between 2004 and 2010. In other words, the intensity of security cooperation between member states has increased (Stein, 2017, p. 31-33, 43-45, 50-51; Haas, 2016, p. 392-402).

Table 2: Number of CSTO exercises in which Kazakhstan has participated, by year

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
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(Compiled from: Stein, 2017, p. 31-33, 43-45, 50-51; Haas, 2016, p. 392-402)

As for *participation*, Russia has participated in all of the exercises. Kazakhstan has participated in at least 32 of them (Stein, 2017, p. 31-33, 43-45, 50-51; Haas, 2016, p. 392-402). On average, in the period between 2004 and 2017 Kazakhstan has participated in 2.3 exercises pr. year.

Not surprisingly, Russia is the main contributor to the exercises in terms of *resource allocations* such as military personnel and equipment (Haas, 2016, 391). However, by
examining the most commonly held exercises, such as Cooperation, Rubezh and Unbreakable Brotherhood exercises, it is clear that Kazakhstan is the second largest contributor (Haas, 2016, p. 391). It is usually Russia and Kazakhstan that supplies the exercises with most of the personnel and aircraft forces (Stein, 2017, p. 31-33, 43-45, 50-51). Kazakhstan has even contributed more than Russia in some exercises, like for instance the Unbreakable Brotherhood exercise held in 2012 and the 2011 Tsentr exercise (Stein, 2017, p. 49, 50).

Regarding the scope of CSTO exercises, they drill on a variety of scenarios like for instance conventional warfare, peacekeeping, anti-terror, anti-narcotics and disaster relief (Stein, 2017, p. 31-33, 43-45, 50-51; Haas, 2016, p. 401). The Tsentr exercises have become the showcase of CSTO military power, as reflected by the huge amount of resource allocations. The 2015 Tsentr exercise included 95 000 soldiers, 7000 pieces of military equipment, over 170 aircraft and 20 ships (Stein, 2017, p. 50; Haas, 2016, p. 102). Besides noticing the vast amount of resources spent on this exercise, it is also worth mentioning that Kazakhstan and Russia were the only participants and they drilled on multiple Russian locations and the Caspian Sea.

As for location, Russia has hosted at least 14 of the exercises, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan has hosted exercises eight times, Kyrgyzstan has hosted them six times, and Uzbekistan has hosted none (Haas, 2016, p. 401; Stein, 2017, p. 31-33, 43-45, 50-51). The exercises hosted in Kazakhstan will receive emphasis in the following analysis of exercises.

In the following, there will be a presentation of the Cooperation, Rubezh and Unbreakable Brotherhood exercises in order to provide a more thorough and detailed picture of the scope of these exercises and how they have evolved. Additional exercises (not held as frequently) are also included. There is a detailed overview of the exercises in the Appendix (Table 1-4). The tables in the Appendix contain information of the year the exercises were held, total resource allocations made to the exercise, Kazakhstan's contribution (if available) and information regarding the exercise scenario.

**Cooperation Exercises**

Cooperation exercises were held in 2009, 2010 and annually from 2012. Kazakhstan has participated and contributed in all (Stein, 2017, p. 31-33). These exercises are the ones that often include the Collective Operational Reaction Force (CORF) and the Collective Rapid Reaction Force (CRRF).
Generally the exercises are concerned with terrorist attacks, but within these exercises we can
witness a change in the scope of the operations. The 2009, 2010, 2012, 2014 exercises were
concerned with eliminating terrorist groups, while the 2014, 2015 and 2016 exercises drilled
on a conflict near the border of a member state and combating foreign military (Stein, 2017,
p. 31-33). For instance, the 2014 exercise was held at the Spassk range in Kazakhstan (close
to Astana), and focused on a scenario of a CSTO member (named “Karaniya”) dealing with a
situation in a non-member, bordering state (named “Irtishiya”). A separatist movement in
Irtishiya threatened the territorial integrity of Karaniya (Stein, 2017, p. 31-33).

Likewise, the 2016 scenario involved a conflict near the border of a member state, combating
an outside force that had invaded under a “peacekeeping” mission that was not sanctioned by
the UN. The member state and outside aggressor was not identified, but the exercise was held
in the Leningrad and Pskov Oblasts – which border Belarus, Latvia and Estonia (Stein, 2017,
p. 33).

The widened scope in exercise scenarios is accompanied by higher resource allocations. The
highest amount of resource allocation can be found in 2016, where 6000 personnel and an
unknown, but large, number of pieces of equipment and aircraft were used during the
exercise. The 2014 exercise has the second highest amount of resource allocations.
Kazakhstan often contributes with various aircraft, and did so in at least 5 of 7 cooperation
exercises, in addition to military personnel (Stein, 2017, p. 32-33).

Thus, within the cooperation exercises – which usually conduct anti-terrorist operations, we
can witness a change in scope and resource allocations. If we assume the exercise scenarios
to reflect perceived threats, we find that the CSTO has shifted its focus away from traditional
domestic terrorist groups towards foreign separatists, armed foreign military and covert
invasions.

*Rubezh Exercises*

Rubezh exercises were held annually from 2004-2008, and after that they were held every
actively participate in the exercise but in all the other exercises it was an active and
contributing participant. The exercises often include several phases where the forces are able
to practice and drill on several scenarios (Stein, 2017, p. 43-45). The exercises focus mainly
on destroying terrorist groups, but in 2008 it drilled for the first time on a scenario where a
member was threatened by an outside aggressor state.

The highest level of resource allocations can be found in 2006 and 2016. In 2006 the exercise included 2,500 soldiers, 60 armored vehicles, 35 aircraft, and 14 warships and it drilled on a scenario of destroying a terrorist group through a combined arms assault (Stein, 2017, p. 43-45). The 2016 exercise involved about 1000 personnel and 200 aircraft and pieces of equipment, which included drones, bombers, transport helicopters and close air support aircrafts (Stein, 2017, p. 45). The scenario of the exercise was combating and eliminating an armed group that had infiltrated the border of a member state in mountainous terrain (Stein, 2017, p. 43-45). What is interesting about this exercise is its location – it was held in the Issyk Kul Oblast, Kyrgyzstan – which directly borders China’s Xinjiang autonomous region. The city of Aksu in Xinjiang is separated by mountainous terrain from the Issyk Kul Oblast, Kyrgyzstan. Aksu has experienced several terrorist attacks by Uighurs. In 2009, at least 198 people were killed when a protest by 10 000 Muslim Uighurs – the biggest ethnic group in Xinjiang – turned into a rampage against Han Chinese settlers (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2011, p.230; Watts, 2010). In 2010, an Uighur man threw a bomb into a group of people. He killed 7 people and injured 14 (Watts, 2010; Summers, 2010). In 2015, a group of people, allegedly Uighurs, attacked a local mine, killing at least 16 people of Han Chinese background. Other reports claim casualties of 50 people (Hunt & Rivers, 2015).

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are similarly situated – they both border the Xinjiang region, and they are both worried about how a Chinese crackdown on the Uighur population could spill over across the borders to their own Muslim population (Camilli, 2014). Thus, one could argue that this particular exercise, in light of the context, reflects an external balancing strategy towards China’s Xinjiang region.

*Unbreakable Brotherhood Exercises*

Unbreakable brotherhood exercises have been held annually under the banner of the CSTO since 2012. Kazakhstan has participated and contributed in all of them, although the exact number of soldiers and pieces of military equipment contributed by Kazakhstan sometimes remain unknown (Stein, 2017, p. 50-52; Haas, 2016, p. 393-401). These exercises generally focus on peacekeeping missions in member states, but in recent years the exercises have increased in scope and intensity in terms of exercise scenario and resource allocation (Stein, 2017, p. 50-51; Haas, 2016, p. 393-401). Exercises held between 2012 and 2015 were
manned with personnel ranging from 600 to 2500 soldiers and equipment pieces ranging from 50 to 70 (that are known of) (Stein, 2017, p. 50-51; Haas, 2016, p. 393-401). The 2016 exercise included 1500 personnel and around 300 aircraft and pieces of equipment and practiced on intervening in a non-member state with a UN mandate, which represent an expansion in terms of scope and intensity (Stein, 2017, p.51). However, this was nothing compared to the 2017 exercise, which involved 12,000 personnel, over 1,500 pieces of hardware and 90 aircraft (Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, 2017). Two of these exercises are of particular relevance to the research question – the 2012 and the 2017 exercise.

The 2012 exercise was held in the Almaty Oblast, Kazakhstan – which directly borders Xinjiang. This region is interesting because after Xinjiang was fully integrated with China in 1955, Uighur leadership and opposition movements fled to Turkey and Almaty (Steele & Kuo, 2007, p.4). These opposition groups still exist in Almaty and since 2011 the Almaty Oblast has experienced at least six major incidents of violence and civil unrest (Stein, 2017, p. 61-67). Some of these incidents involved militants, extremists with Islamic ties, criminals and clashes between local police and protesters (Stein, 2017, p. 61-67). One could argue that the link between terrorist attacks and the Almaty and Xinjiang region have been acknowledged to some extent by China and Kazakhstan – because in 2006 they conducted a bilateral exercise under the banner of the SCO, where the first phase was held in Almaty and the second was held in Xinjiang (Stein, 2017, p.49). Thus, this exercise reflects concerns from both sides of possible spill over effects. However, if we return to the Unbreakable Brotherhood exercise – the exercise scenario included peacekeeping tasks in the event of a conflict involving a terrorist or extremist group, or between different ethnic groups in a country in Central Asia. The exercise included a total of 950 soldiers (535 from Kazakhstan, including the 35th Air Mobile Brigade) and 70 vehicles (Stein, 2017, p. 50; Haas, 2016, p. 397). Given the context surrounding the Xinjiang region, Kazakhstan’s contribution in terms of resources, and how the exercise scenario practiced on delivering humanitarian aid, repelling armed attacks on convoys, protecting vital infrastructure, and riot control – this appears to be an external balancing strategy aimed at increasing Kazakhstan’s ability to manage a possible spillover effect originating from China (in line with Walt, 2005, p. 127-129, 131).
The 2017 exercise, which involved over 12,000 personnel, over 1,500 pieces of hardware and 90 aircraft – conducted its second phase in the Almaty Oblast, Kazakhstan – which directly borders Xinjiang (The Astana Times, 2017). The exercise involved attaining a UN mandate to intervene with peacekeeping forces in a non-member state. The main goal was to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation between the peacekeeping contingents of the CSTO member states, increase practical skills of commanders and staff and effectively end local conflicts and eliminate militant training camps (The Astana Times, 2017). This supports an external balancing strategy where the alliance is committed to portraying a unified front and where military exercises are used as a tool to enhance the weaker states ability to resist military force – from both non-state and state actors (in line with Walt, 2005, p. 127-129, 131).

Dmitry Stefanovich (2018), an independent military expert, analyzed recent CSTO exercises and argued that, “[…] the key task of exercises is the demonstration of capabilities to prevent the interference of extraregional players in conflicts that may break out in the Russian zone of responsibility.” Demonstrating capabilities through military exercises, as Stefanovich (2018) argues, can have a deterrent effect on other regional players who might be in a position of wanting to interfere. Such a regional player could be China, as the bilateral exercise between Kazakhstan and China in 2006 evidenced (Stein, 2017, p.49). However, because the bilateral exercise was carried out under the banner of the SCO, it provides Russia with some degree of control and insight in the operations. One cannot be sure if Russia would have accepted such an exercise outside the SCO framework.

That said, although the exercise was located along the Chinese border and the exercise scenario resonates well with the problems surrounding Xinjiang, it might be aimed at other regional challenges as well. The withdrawal from Afghanistan and the return of foreign fighters from Syria can serve as examples (Presidential Executive Office, 2015). Nevertheless, the location and exercise scenario of the 2012 and 2017 Unbreakable Brotherhood exercises suggest an external balancing strategy aimed at enhancing the weaker member states ability to manage the Xinjiang situation – and at deterring other regional players to interfere in Russia’s sphere of influence.
Additional Exercises

The CSTO has conducted eleven additional exercises that have not been held on an annual basis (See Appendix, Table 4). These exercises are usually smaller in scale than the exercises that are held annually, and focus primarily on targeting and destroying terrorist groups and drilling the special forces of the organization. However, three exercises stand out: the 2008, 2011 and 2015 Tsenter exercises.

First of all, they stand out because there has been a remarkable increase in resource allocations, particularly when it comes to personnel involved – from 9000 to 12000 to 95 000 in 2008, 2011 and 2015, respectively (Stein, 2017, p. 49-50; Haas, 2016, p. 393-401). These exercises have certainly become the showcase of CSTO’s military power (Haas, 2016, p.402). Second, these exercises stand out because the Tsenter exercises enhance the visibility of the Russian-Kazakh relationship. Tsenter 2008 and 2015 were solely Russian-Kazakh exercises that allowed the two countries to test their combined strategic abilities and combat readiness (Stein, 2017, p. 50, Haas, 2016, p.402). The 2008 exercise focused on a scenario in which an enemy had penetrated around 60 km into Kazakhstan (Stein, 2017, p.49). The 2015 exercise focused on eliminating a terrorist group in Central Asia and was centered in and around the Caspian Sea (Stein, 2017, p.50). Observers and journalists of the Tsentr 2015 exercise raised questions regarding the exercise scenario, and how the exercise could possibly have a clear practical application to situations in Ukraine or Syria (McDermott, 2015).

Thus, not only do these exercises demonstrate close alliance ties where Russia is willing to come to the rescue of Kazakhstan, they may even signal how the CSTO is preparing to make their military power more offensive in character. The characteristics of the Tsenter exercises and their exercise scenarios reflect an external balancing strategy in two important ways. First, showcasing Russian-Kazakh combined capabilities like that must have a deterrent effect on other regional players. Second, demonstrating a unified front against an outside aggressor that has violated the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan signals that there are great costs associated with such an action (in line with Walt, 2005, p. 127-129, 131).

Assessment

In the introduction to these exercises, I asked if the nature of these exercises indicate that China is perceived as a possible threat and if the exercise scenarios could reveal what security threats the CSTO are willing and able to conquer together?
The presentation revealed three exercises held in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan that directly border the Xinjiang autonomous region in China. The scenarios reflect concern over a possible spill over effect from Xinjiang, as they focus on conflicts involving terrorist or extremist groups and conflict between different ethnic groups – which frequently occurs in CSTO member states and Xinjiang (Stein, 2017, p. 61-67; Steele & Kuo, 2007, p.4). The scenarios also reflect a willingness to conquer such a threat regardless of where it originated – it could be internal or external. As the context surrounding Xinjiang and the nature of the exercises converge, one could argue that these exercises in particular reflect external balancing aimed at deterring internal and external groups with ties to China.

Moreover, the general trends within the CSTO exercises have value to the research question as well. If one had found that the frequency, scope and resource allocations had decreased in recent years, it would indicate a decline in Kazakhstan’s external balancing behavior because the CSTO member states were reluctant to combine its capabilities to deter and balance other states. This however is not the case.

The overall trend that can be detected from the presentation of the various exercises is that there is an increase in frequency of conducted exercises, and increase in resource allocations and an expansion in the scope of exercise scenarios. From 2004 to 2017, 73 % of CSTO exercises Kazakhstan participated in were conducted during the last seven years. As for the highest level of resource allocations, it can be found in 2006 and 2016 for the Cooperation exercises, in 2016 for the Rubezh exercises, in 2017 for the Unbreakable Brotherhood exercises and in 2015 for the Tsentr exercises (Stein, 2017, p. 31-33, 43-45, 50-52). The latter is the most remarkable as the number of soldiers went from 9000 to 12 000 to 95 000, in 2008, 2011 and 2015 respectively (Stein, 2017, p. 49-50; Haas, 2016, p. 393-401).

Similarly, it becomes clear from several exercises that the CSTO aims to become a meaningful organization able to operate and serve the international community as well. The Unbreakable Brotherhood exercises held in 2016 and 2017 reflects this point as they both practiced on receiving a UN mandate to act as a peacekeeping force (Stein, 2017, p. 50-52). Another trend reflected by Cooperation (2014, 2016) and Rubezh (2008, 2016) exercises is how the organization increasingly practice on exercise scenarios in which a member state is threatened by an outside force, be that a separatist group, unsanctioned peacekeeping force or an aggressive neighboring state (Stein, 2017, p. 31-33, 43-45). In addition, the Tsentr exercises reflects Russia’s need to display offensive power on the international stage,
something Kazakhstan seems to play along with given the vast amount of resources allocated to these exercises.

To sum up, the CSTO serves as a balancing tool to Kazakhstan. It has a collective security defense mechanism and a clear military structure, which enhances Kazakhstan’s ability to resist military force. The frequency, scope and resource allocations of the military exercises reveal strong alliance ties and a willingness to fight both internal and external threats. In addition, three CSTO exercises confirm how the Xinjiang region is considered a threat to the territorial integrity and security of Kazakhstan.

3.3 The Shanghai Cooperation Organization

In this section I will examine the objectives of the SCO, whether or not it has a collective security defense mechanism, and to what extent it has a joint military and security structure. I will also address the question of leadership within the SCO, as it might have consequences for China’s dealing with Kazakhstan. Subsequently, I will evaluate resource allocations and exercise scenarios of the SCO, in order to understand the scope, intensity and nature of the security cooperation.

The SCO was originally called the “Shanghai Five” and was formed in 1996 with China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as original members. In 2001 the “Shanghai Five” changed its name to the “Shanghai Cooperation Organization” and Uzbekistan was added to the fold. In 2017 India and Pakistan also joined. The SCO’s official languages are Russian and Chinese (The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, 2018; Stein, 2017, p. 20).

Objectives of the SCO

The main objective of the SCO is to strengthen mutual trust and neighborliness among the member states through promoting cooperation in politics, the economy, trade, energy, environmental protection, transport, tourism, research, education, technology and culture (The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, 2018). According to the SCO charter, making joint efforts to maintain peace, security and stability in the region, and promoting the establishment of a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order is also a top priority (Article 1, The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (A), 2002).
The SCO focuses on military-security issues between member states, but in recent years there has been a lot of focus on trade and economic cooperation—much due to China’s interest in the Central Asian region in terms of resource extraction (Stein, 2017, p. 20; Yuan, 2010, p. 855; Lain, 2015).

**Collective Security Defense Mechanism**

The SCO Charter does not stipulate anything resembling a collective security defense mechanism. It does however, elaborate on where the focus of security cooperation will be placed:

“to jointly counteract terrorism, separatism and extremism in all their manifestations, to fight against illicit narcotics and arms trafficking and other types of criminal activity of a transnational character, and also illegal migration”

(Article 1, The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (A), 2002, p.2)

The means to achieve this end is rather vaguely formulated. Article 3 holds that the SCO will develop and implement measures aimed at countering these threats in a cooperative manner, but does not specify if such measures can include mutual support and assistance upon request (Article 3, The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (A), 2002, p. 3).

The SCO thus far seems dedicated to portraying a unified front against terrorism, separatism and extremism, but one might be tempted to ask what value that has, when there is no promise of mutual support? One could argue that the absence of a collective security defense mechanism weakens the potential of the SCO to act as an external balancing tool for the member states. Due to principles of “internal affairs” and “territorial integrity”, member states are prohibited to combine forces against a prevailing threat in time of need— which is Walt’s main definition of external balancing behavior (Walt, 2005, p.120). This calls for a closer examination of the military and security structures as they might reveal the SCO’s balancing potential.

**Military and Security Structures**

The Heads of State Council is the supreme decision-making body in the SCO. Meetings are held once a year, where it adopts decisions on important matters concerning the organization. Likewise, The SCO Heads of Government Council meets once a year to discuss the
multilateral cooperation strategy and priority areas, to approve the annual budget and discuss relevant economic issues (The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (A), 2002, p. 4-5). Furthermore, the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs holds consultations on international problems within the organization. In addition, meetings are held at the level of heads of parliament in which particular issues in various sectors of cooperation are discussed (The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (A), 2002, p. 5-6).

There are two permanent bodies in the organization, the SCO Secretariat based in Beijing, China, and the Executive Committee of the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan (The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (A), 2002, p. 7-8). The Secretariat is the main executive body of the SCO and carries out coordination, information-analytical, legal and organizational and technical support of activities of the Organization. It also develops proposals on enhancing of cooperation within the SCO and international relations of the Organization and supervises the implementation of decisions of SCO bodies (The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (B), 2002, p. 7-8).

RATS main duty is to deal with the “three evils” the SCO consider great threats to regional stability and security: terrorism, separatism, and extremism. The RATS unit conduct counter-terrorism exercises and search operations, drafts legal documents against the threats, gather and analyze information of the threats and jointly respond to global challenges and threats (The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (B), 2002, p. 3-4; Stein, 2017, p. 20). RATS has a separate treaty that clarifies the goals and means to end terrorism, extremism and separatism. Article 6 presents ten main functions of the RATS, in which three of them hold relevance in explaining the extent of security cooperation between member states. The first one holds that concerned parties can request assistance in preparation and carrying out anti-terrorist command, staff and battle exercises. The second holds that the parties can request assistance in the preparation and holding of operational searches. Third, it holds that parties can ask for assistance in training of specialists and instructors for anti-terrorist divisions (The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (B), 2002, p. 3-4).

One might notice how the structure of the SCO does not exactly lay a solid foundation for military cooperation between member states in the face of external or internal threats, as it does not have a Joint Military Staff or collective forces. RATS hold promise of assistance upon request, but only concerning exercises and operational searches. As such, the military
and security structures of the SCO fade in comparison to the CSTO. However, the military and security structures do indicate that the SCO possess some degree of balancing potential. Through RATS, the member states share information and conduct exercises aimed at enhancing the combat readiness and defense capabilities of member states—which resonates well with Walt’s argument of external balancing (Walt, 2005, p. 127-129, 131). Another possibility also presents itself—perhaps the SCO serve Kazakhstan’s interests primarily in a “binding” capacity. By engaging with China on a multilateral level, China obliges to follow the “rules of conduct” to a larger degree than it does on a bilateral level where it can apply its economic leverage to promote its interests.

Who leads the SCO?

There is a continuous debate regarding who holds leadership in the organization that needs to be addressed because the power struggle between Russia and China has had consequences for the Sino-Kazakh relationship (Haas, 2017, p. 1-2; Yuan, 2010, p. 856; Lain, 2015). Originally, Russia and China were the two leading nations in the SCO. Russia however, mainly offers political and military cooperation. This stands in contrast to China, which has its primary focus on economic cooperation within the SCO (Haas, 2017, p. 1). For the Central Asian member states, economic cooperation with China is highly attractive and as a consequence, China is now becoming the primary leader of the SCO (Haas, 2017, p. 1-2; Yuan, 2010, p. 856; Lain, 2015). Through the SCO, it is claimed China has promoted its national agenda in several areas (Yuan, 2010, p. 855; Lain, 2015). It has addressed the external threats to its vulnerable Western border by non-state actors, its need for Central Asian energy, its need for new infrastructure, markets, transport routes and finally—stability in the Xinjiang region (Yuan, 2010, p. 855; Lain, 2015).

Nevertheless, China cannot yield its economic power unchecked within the organization, and surly is obligated to consult with Russia on matters in which the two great powers can have conflicting interests. For instance, in 2005, Chinese Premier Wen Jibao wanted to heavily subsidize the SCO economies by giving US$ 900 million toward financing joint development projects. Kazakhstan and Russia refused the proposal in fear of allowing China to turn the SCO into a Chinese economic protectorate—providing China with additional leverage over
the region (Laumulin, 2006). If Laumulin is correct in his assessment of why this proposition was rejected— it should be characterized as balking (Walt, 2005, p. 141).

Furthermore, Russia decided to block China’s proposal of an SCO development bank and free trade zone in 2010 (Gabuev, 2017; Lain, 2015). Chinese negotiators proposed forming the bank’s capital from proportional contributions by each participating country (Gabuev, 2017; Rickleton, 2015). The size of a contribution would depend on the size of a member country’s economy. For Russia, this would mean granting China the dominant position within the bank, hence granting China major influence in its decision-making. Russia opposed this proposal and the establishment of the bank was put on hold. Kazakh Prime Minister Masimov however, urged the SCO should consider the creation of a new financial body, a joint multilateral reserve bank, in 2011 (Blagov, 2011). Considering how Kazakhstan refused Prime Minister Wen Jibao’s proposal of subsidiaries in 2005, it might not be far-fetched to assume that Kazakhstan prefers to sort these thing out within the SCO framework, instead of on a bilateral level where its bargaining power might be weaker. Richard Weitz (2010) argues this is the case for most Central Asian states. Thus one might detect a preference for multilateral frameworks over bilateral ones, as it binds the dominant power. Nevertheless, China responded by launching the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) outside the SCO framework in 2014. At first, Russia declined the invitation to join. After a year of consideration however, it decided to join in 2015 and became the third largest stakeholder after China and India, respectively (Egorova & Korabinov, 2015). The consequence of Russian reluctance is that smaller member states such as Kazakhstan had to broker their own bilateral deals in relation to the AIIB with China.

Another step taken by Russia to counter China’s growing economic clout and influence within the organization was to advocate SCO expansion (Gabuev, 2017). By proposing India as a member in 2011, Russia hoped to dilute Beijing’s clout within the group. India is also a key buyer of Russian weapons and nuclear power equipment (Harada, 2017; Gabuev, 2017). India has vocally opposed a key part of China's Belt and Road Initiative that passes through an area of Kashmir administered by Pakistan but claimed by India (Harada, 2017). China’s response was to propose Pakistan as a member, and in 2017, they both joined.

Recent developments though, might lead to us to believe that Russia is starting to embrace China’s leading role within the SCO. In 2017, China and Russia joined hands in proposing to
develop a free trade zone and establish a SCO development bank – which Russia originally opposed in 2010 (The Shanghai Cooperation Organization, 2017). Kazakhstan, represented by President Nazarbayev, welcomed the idea (Kazpravda, 2017).

Needless to say, whenever there exists a disagreement between Russia and China, Kazakhstan has to vote for or against proposals. It is reasonable to believe that Kazakhstan would prefer to accept agreements within the SCO framework instead of on a bilateral level, as its close alliance ties to Russia might improve its bargaining position. However, as demonstrated in 2005, Kazakhstan was reluctant to receive subsidiaries from China, likely because it did not converge with its national interest to provide China with additional economic leverage. On the other hand, Kazakh reluctance could have been induced by Russia. Still, Kazakhstan remains positive to other Chinese proposals that promote regional economic cooperation such as a SCO development bank and free trade zone.

**SCO Military Exercises and Resource Allocations.**

This section will start by presenting general information–commenting on the number of exercises, participation rate, resource allocations, the nature of exercise scenarios and the location of the exercises. Then it will elaborate in more detail on the “Peace Mission” exercises, which were held in 2005, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016 (Stein, 2017, p. 39-41; Haas, 2016, p. 382-386). The 2005 and 2009 exercise only included China and Russia and is therefore excluded from the analysis. The regularity of these exercises can provide information regarding development in terms of intensity, scope and resource allocations and help indicate an increase or decrease in security cooperation within the SCO. Kazakhstan’s contribution to these exercises will be evaluated. Furthermore, this section will examine eleven additional exercises that have been held under the banner of the SCO since 2003, in order to further our understanding of Kazakhstan’s priorities. As mentioned before, the exercise scenarios are of particular importance, as they might reveal what security threats the SCO are willing and able to conquer together.
General information of all SCO exercises

In regards to number of exercises, the SCO has conducted at least 24 exercises since 2002. Like the CSTO, the number of exercises conducted by the SCO has increased in recent years, particularly in 2015 (Haas, 2016, p. 382-386; Stein, 2017, p. 26, 37, 39-41, 48, 52, 56).

Table 3: Number of SCO exercises in which Kazakhstan has participated, by year

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(Compiled from Stein, 2017, p. 26, 37, 39-41, 48, 52, 56; Haas, 2016, p. 382-386)

In regards to participation, China has been absent from 4 (Haas, 2016, p. 382-386), Russia has been absent from at least 7 exercises (Haas, 2016, p. 382-386) and Kazakhstan has been absent from at least 8 exercises (Haas, 2016, p. 382-386; Stein, 2017, p. 26, 37, 39-41, 48, 52, 56). On average, since the creation of the SCO in 2002, Kazakhstan has participated in one exercise pr. Year, and participated in 16 exercises in total.

In regards to resource allocations, China and Russia should be considered equal contributors. While China was the main contributor to the Peace Mission exercises in 2012 and 2014, Russia was the main contributor in 2007 and 2016, at least in terms of manpower (Stein, 2017, p. 39-41; McDermott, 2012A; McDermott, 2012B; Urchick, 2016). They should also be regarded as equals in terms of supplement of military equipment. Both countries contribute with roughly equal numbers of aircraft, armored vehicles and artillery (Stein, 2017, p. 26, 37, 39-41, 48, 52, 56).

The scenarios are in line with the objectives of the SCO and focus on combating terrorist, separatist and extremist movements. In addition to eliminating such groups, the forces are often tasked with hostage rescue and protection of vital infrastructure, like for instance nuclear facilities (Stein, 2017, p. 39-41; Haas, 2016, p. 382-386).

As for location, SCO exercises have been held six times in Russia and China and three times in Kazakhstan (Stein, 2017, p. 39-41).
Peace Mission Exercises

Next, there will be a presentation of the relevant Peace Mission exercises Kazakhstan has participated in and additional exercises that have been carried out over the years by the SCO. Examining the individual contributions to the exercises may further our understanding of Kazakhstan’s priorities. If both the CSTO and the SCO drills on scenarios Kazakhstan finds valuable, is there a discrepancy in terms of which organization receives the most resources from Kazakhstan?

The SCO has conducted seven Peace Mission exercises over the years, in which two of the exercises only included Russia and China (in 2005, 2009). In the remaining exercises Kazakhstan was an active participant (Stein, 2017, p.39-41; Haas, 2016, p. 382-386). Table 5 in the Appendix contains information of these exercises.

The Peace Mission exercise held in 2014 is thus far the most comprehensive one, including 6800 personnel and various pieces of equipment and aircraft (Stein, 2017, p. 40). Although the number of pieces of military equipment is unknown, the scope of the exercise was vast as it included anti-aircraft systems, rocket launchers, self propelled artillery, armed personnel carriers, Su-25 support and Su-27 fighter aircrafts (Stein, 2017, p. 40). In this particular exercise, China contributed 5000 soldiers, BMD infantry fighting vehicles, Xian H-6 bombers and Z- 8 transport helicopters (Stein, 2017, p. 40). Russia contributed 800 soldiers from the 36th Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade, and “Shilka” anti-aircraft systems among other things (Stein, 2017, p. 40). Kazakhstan contributed 300 soldiers from the 37th Air Assault Brigade, armored personnel carriers and Su-27 fighter aircraft (Stein, 2017, p. 40).

Given how this exercise was rather large in scale, Kazakhstan’s contribution of 300 soldiers is not particularly impressive. Like argued before, the impact of the SCO’s balancing potential relies a great deal on Kazakhstan’s participation. Thus it is questionable to what extent the participation of these 300 soldiers contributes to enhance Kazakhstan’s defense capabilities. Furthermore, the exercise practiced on a scenario combating a large group of terrorists that took over an urban area and held hostages. It was held in Inner Mongolia, China (Stein, 2017, p.40). Given that the location of the exercise was not in Kazakhstan’s near vicinity, it might be reasonable to assume that Kazakhstan did not perceive it to be particularly relevant to its national interest. The 2010 exercise which was conducted in Kazakhstan, might further this view.
The highest Kazakh contribution is found in 2010, where Kazakhstan contributed 1000 soldiers and an unknown amount of military equipment. The exercise scenario focused on how to respond to an attack on a member state from terrorists, extremists, or separatists and it was held on the Matybulak Range in southern Kazakhstan (Stein, 2017, p. 40). The reason for Kazakhstan´s higher resource allocation in this instance is probably related to the fact that it was located on its territory. In all the other Peace Mission exercises, Kazakhstan has only contributed between 143-300 soldiers (Stein, 2017, p.39-41). If Kazakhstan were serious in wanting to use the SCO for the purpose of strengthening its ability to resist military force, it is reasonable to assume that it would donate more resources to large-scale exercises. After all, the Peace Mission exercises usually include between 2000 and 6000 soldiers (Stein, 2017, p.39-41). Nevertheless, the exercise practiced on eliminating terrorist groups that had infiltrated the border of a member state. One might ask, what is the point of such exercises if there is no collective security defense mechanism that allows for helping each other in a time of need?

In general, the location choices of the Peace Mission exercises are not as telling as the CSTO exercises, given that Russia is a member of the SCO as well. However, the 2016 exercise was held at the Issyk Kul Oblast, Kyrgyzstan– which directly borders Xinjiang (Stein, 2017, p. 41). Like mentioned before, Aksu in Xinjiang is separated by mountainous terrain from the Issyk Kul Oblast, and Aksu has experienced several terrorist attacks by Uighurs. Thus, this particular exercise might signal a willingness on China´s behalf to cooperate on issues surrounding this region.

The 2012 and 2016 Peace Mission exercises are the ones with the lowest amount of resource allocation (Stein, 2017, p.39-41). They both included 2000 personnel, and between 300 and 500 pieces of military equipment. The 2012 exercise practiced on destroying an armed group of terrorists that seized a village in mountainous terrain and removing civilians, while the 2016 exercise practiced on eliminating an armed group that had infiltrated the border of a member state through a combined arms assault (Stein, 2017, p.39-41). The 2016 exercise scenario once again demonstrates willingness to conquer threats together by combining capabilities, but as we know, the charter of the SCO prohibits it. If such actions were allowed it could clearly be characterized as external balancing behavior, but given that the charter prohibits the realization of such actions, the external balancing behavior loses its momentum.
Additional Exercises

The SCO has carried out more exercises that are not held annually than the CSTO – at least 11 in which three or more member states have participated (bilateral exercises within the SCO will be addressed later). Of these 11 exercises, Russia and Kazakhstan have participated in all, while China has participated in 8. Thus, Kazakhstan and Russia have conducted exercises within the SCO without China on three occasions (Stein, 2017, p. 26, 37, 39, 48, 52, 56; Haas, 2016, p. 382-386). See Table 6: “Additional exercises” in the Appendix.

China did not participate in the 2008 Volgograd Anti-terror exercise, the 2010 SCO Law Enforcement exercise, and the 2013 Stikiya exercise (Stein, 2017, p. 48, 52, 56). These exercises concentrated on disaster response, hostage rescue and neutralizing terrorist groups and involved an unknown number of personnel from the Ministry of Emergency Situations, law enforcement agencies and anti-terrorist units. Given that these exercises are smaller in scale and has a more limited focus in terms of exercise scenarios, it appears that Russia prefers to conduct its large-scale exercises within the CSTO. This might be because within the CSTO Russia can decide the level of transparency or because it does not want to reveal important strategies, new advancements in military technology or potential weaknesses. The fact that Russia and China have not conducted any large-scale bilateral military exercises within the SCO since the 2009 Peace Mission exercise furthers this view to some extent (Stein, 2017).

Kazakhstan has hosted 1 of the 11 exercises (Haas, 2016, p. 382-386). It hosted first phase of the Coalition 2003 exercise in the Almaty region, in which around 1,300 total soldiers from China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan participated (Stein 2017, p. 26). The first phase dealt with a scenario of taking a plane back from hijackers and eliminating terrorists across borders, while the second phase in Ili, Xinjiang Province, dealt with hostage rescue operations and destroying terrorist camps (Stein 2017, p. 26). Thus, this exercise might signal a willingness on China’s behalf to cooperate on issues surrounding this region.

To sum up, the scope, intensity and resource allocations to these exercises are limited in comparison to the Peace Mission exercises – which are the showcase for SCO military power. China has not participated in all of the additional exercises including three or more member states for unknown reasons. Russia and Kazakhstan however, seems committed to conducting military exercises also within the SCO framework, although neither contributes the same amount of resources to the SCO as they do to the CSTO.
Assessment

Like initially stated, Kazakhstan has participated in one SCO exercise pr. year on average. However, although the average is not very impressive, it is worth noticing the increase of exercises in 2015 and 2016. The SCO conducted three anti-terrorist exercises in 2015 and two in 2016, which is remarkable considering the average of one. If the SCO charter included a collective defense security mechanism, one could argue that the increase in exercises reflected intensified balancing behavior against non-state actors. However, given that the SCO member states are prohibited to combine forces against a prevailing threat due to the principles of “internal affairs” and “territorial integrity”, I am leaning more towards how these exercises are aimed at enhancing internal capabilities through strategy exchanges.

In regards to resource allocations, one might find it odd that an organization containing two major military powers does not include more soldiers and pieces of military equipment. This might be related to the limited scope of exercise scenarios which has a clear focus on combating terrorist groups and not conventional armies – yet other military exercises drilling on similar scenarios displays far more offensive power than the ones conducted by the SCO (like for instance Tsentr exercises). Moreover, this section finds that Kazakhstan’s contributions to the exercises are limited. The highest level of Kazakh contributions was during the 2010 Peace Mission exercise when it contributed 1000 soldiers and an unknown amount of military equipment (Stein, 2017, p. 40). This might indicate a lower level of commitment or it might be a pragmatic consideration – if Kazakhstan has limited resources to spend on military exercises, which organization provides the better security guarantee and should therefore be prioritized? If the latter is the case, Kazakhstan certainly prioritizes the CSTO over the SCO.

After all, the exercises suggest that the SCO is willing to counter threats together, but the legal framework of the SCO specifies that they are not able.

Assessment and Comparison of the CSTO and the SCO

First and foremost, it has become clear throughout the presentation that the CSTO and the SCO is under Russian influence by financial and military means. While there are several arguments claiming China’s leadership in and influence of the SCO, one cannot escape the fact that Russia is an equal contributor in terms of resource allocation to military exercises – hence the SCO is under Russian financial and military means to some extent.
Moreover, when comparing the SCO and the CSTO, we find some important differences. The CSTO, which is led by Russia, has clear military objectives, a collective security defense mechanism and a military operational structure far superior to that of the SCO, which presumably is led by China (Haas, 2017, p. 1-2; Yuan, 2010, p. 856; Lain, 2015). The differences reflect that the SCO is more of a political-economic organization with a security component compared to the CSTO – which is a full-fledged military alliance. Thus, the SCO does not qualify for the alliance definition provided by Walt which stipulate that the where defining feature of any alliance, is a commitment for mutual military support against some external actor(s) in some specified set of circumstances (1997, p.157). Taking this fact into account, it is not surprising that Kazakhstan has conducted more military exercises with the CSTO than the SCO over the years (32 versus 16) and that it devotes more resources to CSTO exercises (Stein, 2017; Haas, 2016).

Furthermore, the examination of military exercises within these two organizations, have revealed that the CSTO practice on a variety of scenarios, including both internal and external threats. In contrast, the SCO practice exclusively on fighting terrorism, extremism and separatism (Stein, 2017; Haas, 2016). This section has also identified an increase in resource allocations and an expansion of scope in relation to CSTO exercises, which can indicate intensified external balancing behavior. The same can be said for the SCO given its recent increase in military exercises, but the absence of a collective security defense mechanism weakens its external balancing potential. Thus, one might argue that the SCO contributes to increasing secondary states internal capabilities by sharing strategies and information.

In regards to the SCO, this section has established that Kazakhstan and Russia have displayed reluctance to provide China with economic leverage within the SCO (Laumulin, 2006), which points in the direction of balking – an external balancing strategy (Walt, 2005, p. 130, 141). If Kazakhstan was in a bandwagoning position with China, one would expect the opposite behavior– more military exercises with China at the expense of Russia, and a higher acceptance of increased Chinese economic leverage within the SCO.

Moreover, this section has identified three CSTO exercise scenarios that indicate China as a perceived threat. Given the location and exercise scenario of the 2012 and 2017 Unbreakable Brotherhood exercises conducted in the Almaty Oblast, and the 2016 Rubezh exercise held in the Issyk Kul Oblast (Stein, 2017, p.43-45, 50-52; Haas, 2016, p. 393-401), one could argue
explicit balancing behavior towards China. I make this statement with caution however, given that these Oblasts border the Xinjiang Autonomous Region, which is known to harbor extremist and separatist opposition groups. As these groups represent the threat that needs to be balanced, the external balancing on Kazakhstan’s behalf might not be aimed directly at the Chinese state per se.

Nevertheless, I find that the CSTO serves as a balancing tool to Kazakhstan. It has a collective security defense mechanism and a clear military structure, which enhances Kazakhstan’s ability to resist military force by collective means in accordance with Walt’s argument of external balancing and alliance strategy (2005, p.120). The frequency, scope and resource allocations of the military exercises reveal strong alliance ties between Russia and Kazakhstan and a willingness to fight both internal and external threats together.

All this taken into consideration, one can rule out the possibility of Kazakhstan attempting to replace Russia for the benefit of a closer relationship to China and its growing power and influence. I find no evidence in this subsection supporting a bandwagoning hypothesis. The evidence points in the other direction – China is considered a threat, and the CSTO is occasionally used as a balancing tool to display and project military power at the Chinese border.

3.4 Defense cooperation – bilateral exercises and arms trade.

Introduction

This section will examine bilateral exercises and arms trade – two important components of defense cooperation. Bilateral exercises are interesting because it can reveal information regarding the relationship between Kazakhstan and China that the SCO exercises cannot. Russia is after all a member of both organizations, so even if the SCO exercises were more intense than the CSTO exercises in terms of frequency, resource allocations and exercise scenarios, it would not necessarily mean that Kazakhstan preferred cooperating with China over Russia on security issues. It may be argued, however, that if there is evidence of bilateral exercises between Kazakhstan and China, both outside and under the banner of the SCO, it is more likely that Kazakhstan is trying to “diversify its security”, meaning that its in
a position where it seeks to reduce its asymmetric dependence relationship with Russia. The exercise scenarios are of importance in this case, as bilateral exercises focused on protecting the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan could indicate that China is considered a partner in regards to external threats. If however, the exercises are revolved around common security issues that do not necessarily threaten the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan, where both parties benefit from enhanced cooperation, the exercises should not be regarded as a possible turn towards China. In order for Kazakhstan to be in a position where it seeks to bandwagon, China would have to considerably commit itself and its resources to the protection of Kazakhstan as a sovereign state, or China would have to pose itself as an overwhelming threat.

Arms trade is of interest because according to SIPRI, China’s arms trade has been booming since year 2000, and China is currently ranked as the third largest arms exporter in the world (Bender & Gould, 2015). Given China’s rapid increase of arms export it would be reasonable to expect Kazakhstan to place more orders from China if Kazakhstan were in a bandwagoning position—thus a sudden shift in Kazakhstan’s arms trade pattern could indicate this. After all, allying with the strongest party has a clearer advantage if they share weapon systems and have similar military technology to further cooperation. On the other hand, selling weapons is basically sharing security—hence the giant that shares the most of its military technology should be considered less of a threat than the other.

This section finds that none of the bilateral exercises with China have focused on protecting Kazakhstan from external threats, thus it does not support a bandwagoning strategy. Furthermore, it finds that four out of six bilateral exercises with Russia are conducted in regions bordering China, in which the 2011 Shygys exercise scenario points towards direct external balancing against China. Arms trade confirms Kazakhstan’s alliance strategy towards Russia and does not indicate a shift from Russian to Chinese arms.

**Bilateral Exercises**

Kazakhstan and China have conducted bilateral exercises twice under the banner of the SCO. The first one was held in 2006, and named Tianshan-I (Stein, 2017, p.49; Haas, 2016, p. 383). This exercise was conducted under the banner of the SCO, most likely in order to avoid provoking Russia. It was conducted in two phases, where the first exercise was held in the
Xinjiang Autonomous Region of China and the second phase was held in the Almaty region of Kazakhstan. The exercise included 700 soldiers from China and an unknown number of soldiers from Kazakhstan. It involved Anti-terror special forces, border police, helicopter gunships and armored vehicles. The exercise scenario focused on a battle between border police and terrorists and was an effort to enhance cooperation between the security services on the Chinese-Kazakh border (Stein, 2017, p.49; Haas, 2016, p. 383).

The second bilateral exercise “Okhota na lis “ was held in 2015 under the banner of the SCO, and was carried out in the Xinjiang Province in China. The scenario focused on combating a terrorist group through a joint operation in mountainous terrain. There were about one hundred total personnel from Kazakh and Chinese Special Forces involved in the exercise (Stein, 2017, p.39).

Neither of these exercises focused on protecting the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan from an external aggressor, thus China should not be considered a partner in regards to external threats. These exercises are clearly concerned with common security issues in the Xinjiang Province and the Almaty region from which both parties benefit from enhanced cooperation. As such, these exercises do not represent a possible turn towards China.

Russia on the other hand has conducted six bilateral exercises with Kazakhstan, of which two of them were held under the banner of the CSTO. Two exercises were held in 2008, one Aldaspan exercise and one Tsentr exercise. The Aldaspan exercise took place in the Almaty region, Kazakhstan (Stein, 2017, p.23). The exercise aimed to enhance joint operational readiness between the two countries and had a clear focus on Special Forces command and aviation units.

Tsentr-2008 was a bilateral CSTO exercise that took place at several military facilities in Russia. The exercise included 2500 soldiers, Su-24 bomber aircrafts, Mi-8 and Mi-24 helicopters, various transport planes and paratroopers. The exercise focused on destroying an enemy that had violated the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan (Stein, 2017, p.49).

In 2011, an exercise called Shygys took place at the Matybulak, Koktal, and Kyzyl-Agash ranges located in the Almaty region, Kazakhstan (McDermott, 2011B). Almaty, borders Xinjiang, China. The exercise included over 3,000 soldiers, over 500 armored vehicles, tanks, and artillery pieces, and 30 aircraft. The exercise focused on enhancing joint operability
between the East, South and Astana Regional Commands of Kazakhstan and the Russian forces (Stein, 2017, p.45; McDermott, 2011B). The exercise scenario focused on intercepting cruise missiles from a foreign state that threatened Kazakhstan.

In 2012, another Aldaspan exercise was held at the Koktal range, Kazakhstan (Stein, 2017, p.23). Koktal is located in the Almaty region – which borders Xinjiang. The exercise included airmobile forces and aviation units and focused on destroying a group of militants in a mountain village.

This exercise was followed by an additional Shygys exercise in 2013 that took place at the Shygys, Koktal, Maylino, and Novo-Akmirove ranges of Kazakhstan. Shygys directly borders Xinjiang, and Koktal is located in the Almaty region – which also borders Xinjiang (Maylino cannot be identified by Google Maps) (Stein, 2017, p.46). The exercise included an unknown number of soldiers, and focused on coordinating an assault on an enemy force, utilizing Kazakhstan’s Regional Command “East” with motorized infantry, artillery, airborne, and air defense (Stein, 2017, p.46).

The final bilateral exercise that took place was the Tsentr 2015 exercise held under the banner of the CSTO. It was held on multiple locations on Russian territory and in the Caspian Sea near the Kazakh city Aktau. It focused on eliminating a terrorist group in the Central Asian region. It involved 95 000 soldiers, 7000 pieces of equipment, over 170 aircraft and 20 ships. The exercise focused on destroying a terrorist group in the Central Asian Region (Stein, 2017, p.50).

The bilateral exercises between Russia and Kazakhstan once again demonstrates their close alliance ties and devotion to Kazakhstan’s territorial integrity – given that at least three of the exercises drilled on protecting and restoring Kazakhstan’s territorial integrity. If we take into consideration that external balancing refers to combining capabilities with others in order to ensure that a more powerful state cannot use its superior capabilities in way the weaker side may find unpleasant (Walt, 2005, p.120), the 2011 Shygys exercise is of particular importance. Enhancing joint operability between the East, South and Astana Regional Commands of Kazakhstan and the Russian forces clearly represent such an attempt.

Furthermore, the fact that it practiced on intercepting cruise missiles that threatened Kazakhstan, yields the question of whom the hypothetical opponent is. McDermott (2011B),
specialist in Russian and Central Asian defense and security issues, analyzed this particular exercise. In his article, Lieutenant-General Saken Zhassuzakov, the Chairman of Kazakhstan’s Joint Chiefs of Staff, pointed to how cruise missiles are always used in the first strikes of an attack, if one considers “recent events”. McDermott believes he referred to the situation in Libya, and that Zhassuzakov thus implied the idea of a possible NATO intervention in eastern Kazakhstan. However, McDermott (2011B) finds the range factor of long-range cruise missile systems perplexing. If NATO were to engage in such an intervention, the missiles would reach its upper limit, as they can be fired from the range of one and a half, two and three thousand miles. In addition, he found the location of the exercise to be odd in such an instance. Thus, he concludes that the missile range and location implies that the “hypothetical opponent” is more likely of closer proximity (McDermott, 2011B). Thus, I find it interesting that the 2008 and 2012 Aldaspan exercises and the 2011 and 2013 Shygys exercises are located in the Almaty or Shygys region, which borders China. Furthermore, it is interesting that the 2011 and 2013 Shygys exercises focus on combating a foreign enemy. This appears to be active external balancing behavior aimed at boosting Kazakhstan’s abilities to resist military force from a foreign state. However, arms trade might be able to confirm or reject if especially the 2011 exercise was in fact aimed at China.

Arms trade

The 2011 Shygys exercise scenario involved intercepting cruise missiles from a foreign state, thus one might ask if China possess such missiles? And if they do, were they purchased from Russia or did China manufacture them themselves? Cruise missiles are designed to deliver a large warhead over long distances with high precision (Missile Defense Project, 2018A), so if Russia has supplied China with cruise missiles, it would be unlikely that they at the same time would feel the need to balance these capabilities.

According to SIPRI (Arms Transfers Database, 2018C), China bought the majority of its missiles from Russia since 2000. However, these missiles are defensive in nature. Russia has mainly supplied China with Surface to Air missiles (SAM), which are launched from the ground to hit aircraft or other missiles, and Anti-Ship missiles. Russia has, on two occasions (ordered in 1999, 2000) supplied China with Air to Surface missiles (ASM) as well. These missiles are launched from a military aircraft to hit ground or sea targets – thus they are more offensive in nature. These were delivered in the period of 2001-2006. However, after the
delivery of the ASM’s, Russia has not supplied China with other offensive missiles that can be used to attack targets on the ground.

China however, does possess cruise missiles, and a variety of other missiles perfectly capable of targeting both Kazakhstan and Russia. According to the Missile Defense Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (2018A), Washington, China has three types of operational cruise missiles. In the picture below, the range of two of these missiles are depicted, missile nr 2 (the HN-2) and missile nr 5 (HN-3A). These cruise missiles are developed by China, and according to the Missile Defense Project (2018B), China is the only state to possess them. They can also carry nuclear warheads. In order to answer the question of whether the 2011 Shygys exercise were aimed at China, could other states in Kazakhstan’s near vicinity threaten it or Russia with cruise missiles?

Map 2: China’s ballistic missiles, and their reach.

(China’s ballistic missiles [Picture], 2018).

India does possess cruise missiles, but these can only reach the borderline of Kazakhstan (Missile Defense Project, 2018C). The same is true for Pakistan (Missile Defense Project, 2018D). North Korea, South Korea, France, Taiwan, Israel and the U.K do not possess cruise missiles. Iran does (Missile Defense Project, 2018E), but given Iran’s close relationship to Russia, an attack or even military exercise aimed at countering missiles from Iran seems
implausible. After all, when the UN Security Council wanted to sanction Iran's ballistic missile activity earlier this year, Russia and Kazakhstan opposed. They argued that the evidence of how an Iranian missile had been used to fire at Saudi-Arabia by Yemini rebels had been tampered with (Falk, 2018).

Thus we are left with China– which has a vide variety of missiles able to reach Kazakhstan. Given that Russia has mainly supplied China with missiles that are defensive in nature, and given McDermott’s (2011B) argument of how the 2011 Shygys exercise was aimed at a more proximate threat– I find it fully plausible that it could be an external balancing strategy aimed at China, especially knowing that there are no other potentially threatening states able to attack Kazakhstan with cruise missiles.

**Arms trade – Kazakh import from Russia and China.**

Arms trade is examined in order to investigate a possible shift in Kazakhstan’s arms trade pattern. As mentioned before, a shift towards China could indicate a bandwagoning strategy as allying with the strongest party has a clearer advantage if they share weapon systems and have similar military technology to further cooperation.

This subsection however, once again confirms the close alliance ties between Kazakhstan and Russia. Since the millennium, Kazakhstan has placed orders of 631 items from Russia, ranging from transport helicopters to Surface to Air Missile systems (SIPRI, Arms Transfers Database, 2018A). An overview of the weapons purchased from Russia can be found in the Appendix, Table 7. As for China, Kazakhstan placed an order for 2 UCAVs – unmanned combat areal vehicles, commonly known as drones, in 2015 (SIPRI, Arms Transfers Database, 2018B). Given the vast difference in arms trade between Russia and China to Kazakhstan –these 2 UCAVs do not indicate a shift in arms trade pattern for Kazakhstan.

The fact that Kazakhstan can buy Russian arms through the CSTO at preferential prices might have something to do with this fact (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Kazakhstan, 2018). Other reasons why Kazakhstan has not placed more orders from China might be due to language barriers and differences in military technology and understanding (Peyrouse, 2016, p. 16).

Furthermore, as Kazakhstan has not decreased its orders of Russian arms, one once again confirm their strong alliance ties.
**Overall Assessment of Defense Cooperation.**

This subsection has confirmed the findings in the previous section investigating the CSTO and the SCO – Kazakhstan actively pursues the alliance strategy with Russia to provide for its security. Likewise, Russia has displayed a willingness to protect Kazakhstan’s territorial integrity through the bilateral exercise scenarios. Furthermore, the 2011 Shygys exercise points very strongly towards an external balancing strategy aimed at intercepting cruise missiles from China – further indicating that Chinese capabilities are considered a threat. The fact that four out of six bilateral exercises were conducted in regions bordering Xinjiang accentuates this view. “Map 3: CSTO and bilateral exercises conducted near the Chinese border” depicts the location of seven exercises that have taken place since 2008. China on the other hand, has not conducted any bilateral exercises that suggest China being committed to protecting the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan.

Map 3: CSTO and bilateral exercises conducted near the Chinese border.

(“Map of CSTO and bilateral exercises conducted near the Chinese border”. [Picture] 2018)
3.5 Military Bases

Introduction

Granting foreign powers territorial access in terms of military bases can be considered a symbol of strong alliance ties and represent an external balancing strategy, where the added capabilities provided by the strong power is believed to have a deterrent effect on adversaries. Similarly, if the foreign bases cooperate with the hosting state it can enhance the weaker state’s capabilities, which according to Walt is also classifies as external balancing (Walt, 2005, p. 127-129, 131). On the other hand, granting foreign powers territorial access can be considered part of a bandwagoning strategy if there are asymmetrical concessions present (Walt, 1988, p. 282). In this section I will examine if Russia and China holds military bases in Kazakhstan and evaluate whether or not they are aimed at increasing Kazakhstan’s ability to resist military force from an outside aggressor. I will draw on Kazakhstan’s 2017 Military Doctrine to determine whether or not the bases and their capabilities are compatible with Kazakhstan’s military objectives. Compatibility suggests strong alliance ties, while incompatibility might suggest that there are asymmetrical concessions involved, or a realignment of foreign policy. Foreign military bases with technology/capabilities aimed at countering China would represent an external balancing strategy (in line with Walt, 2005, p. 127-129, 131).

This section finds that Russia holds six large military bases on Kazakh territory, while China holds none. Furthermore, it finds that Kazakhstan engages in external balancing behavior by combining its assets with Russian capabilities. In addition, the Russian Balkhash radio base is found to specifically target Chinese offensive power in terms of missiles. Instead of receiving increased rents for these facilities, Kazakhstan has chosen to renegotiate the contracts with Russia based on a desire for participation. This, I argue reflect intensified balancing behavior.

Military bases in Kazakhstan

Currently, China does not possess any military bases in Central Asia, Kazakhstan included. In fact, until recently, China did not have any military bases on foreign soil. In 2017 however, China established its first base in the Republic of Djibouti, located in the Horn of Africa. The Chinese push into Africa has been compared to the Chinese push into Central Asia, where massive investments have been the key common denominator. Thus, the
establishment of China’s first base might just be the very beginning of China consolidating its rise in foreign countries, in order to exert influence (Calamur, 2017; Blank, 2016).

In relation to Russia, after the collapse of the USSR, former Soviet republics such as Kazakhstan, found themselves hosting military divisions that fell under the command of the Russian Federation. Some countries, like Latvia, decided they wanted the Russians to withdraw from their territories, while others, like Kazakhstan, decided to lease the land to the Russian Defense Ministry (Aliyev, 2016). As a result, Kazakhstan hosts the largest number of Russian foreign military objects in Central Asia. In fact, Russia holds six large military bases in Kazakhstan that accounts for approximately 11 million hectares of leased land area, all of which were constructed during the 1960s (Aliyev, 2016). Russia and Kazakhstan aim to use these bases if the sovereignty of their countries ever were to be threatened (Aliyev, 2016). The map below depicts the location of the Russian military bases, and in the following there will be a presentation of the capabilities they possess and the level of Kazakh involvement.

Map 4: Russian Military Bases in Kazakhstan

(“Map of Russian Bases in Kazakhstan” [Picture], 2016)

In the South of Kazakhstan, Russia’s Ministry of Defense leases the Baikonur Cosmodrome, from which military and civilian missions are launched into space. This base is of high strategic importance to Russia as 70 % of its space mission programs have been launched
from this site (Aliyev, 2016). Under the current Russian space program, Baikonur remains a busy spaceport, with numerous commercial, military, and scientific missions being launched annually. It is jointly managed by the Russian space agency ROSCOSMOS and Russia's Aerospace Forces (Blinov, 2016). ROSCOSMOS ensures the implementation of the Russian government’s space program and its legal regulation, while the Aerospace Forces perform a wide range of other important tasks, according to the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation (2018). Tasks of the Aerospace Forces include:

- Repelling of aerospace threats and protecting posts of state management and military control, groupings of troops, infrastructure, administrative and political centers etc. from aerospace strikes of the enemy;
- Aviation support of troops from other services and branches;
- Engaging ballistic missile warheads of the potential enemy attacking important state facilities;
- Providing the highest command and control bodies with reliable information concerning ballistic missile launches and warning about missile attack;
- Space facility observing and detecting threats against Russia happening from space;
- Launching spacecraft, controlling military and dual-purpose satellite systems during the flight.

Information regarding specific cooperation projects and the level of Kazakh cooperation with the Russian Aerospace forces is hard to come by due to a lack of transparency, yet as mentioned in the introduction to this section, added capabilities provided by the strong power are believed to have a deterrent effect on adversaries and thus could represent an external balancing strategy (Walt, 2005, p. 127-129, 131). The capabilities and responsibilities of the Russian Aerospace Forces are due to have some deterrent effect on adversaries as it would increase the cost of a military attack on Kazakhstan considerably. According to the Defense Intelligence Agency (2017, p. 36):

“Russia believes that having the military capabilities to counter space operations will deter aggression by space-enabled adversaries and enable Russia to control escalation of conflict if deterrence fails. Military capabilities for space deterrence include strikes against satellites or ground-based infrastructure supporting spaceoperations”.

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Thus, it is clear that the capabilities are aimed at having a deterrent and deescalating effect in case of conflict. This resonates well with Chapter 3.2 of Kazakhstan’s 2017 Military Doctrine, which lists “maintaining the military potential and power of the state at a level that provides deterrence from aggression” as a main activity to provide security for Kazakhstan (Military Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2017). But what states can be considered “space-enabled adversaries”? According to the Defense Intelligence Agency (2017, p. 36), the U.S and China are the only two states with more satellites than Russia, and surely Russia has noticed how the U.S in recent years has focused on non-contact operations that rely on long-range, space-supported precision-guided munitions. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Russia’s engagement in space operations are particularly aimed at the U.S, though one cannot rule out China as a possible threat due to their increasing space capabilities. Furthermore, because space deterrence include strikes against satellites or ground-based infrastructure supporting space operations it is reasonable to assume that Russia will be protective of the Baikonur base in the case of conflict. Thus, this base serves as a balancing tool to Kazakhstan because it has a deterrent effect on possible “space-enabled adversaries” such as the U.S and China, and because Russia would have great incentives to protect the base because it is essential in space operations that are important for the ability to conduct modern warfare (Defense Intelligence Agency, 2017, p. 35).

There have been several developments in the management and cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan in relation to this base, which may also shed light on the research question. In 2004, Russia and Kazakhstan renegotiated the terms of use of the base, which granted Russia control of the base until 2050. Moreover, they agreed on a joint venture in which Russia would help Kazakhstan construct a national launchpad for Angara rockets (Putz, 2016B). Furthermore, in 2013 the countries signed a “road-map” for the 2014-2016 period, granting Kazakhstan some permits to the rocket launch facilities and restricting Russia to take more measures to reduce the environmental impact of its Proton rockets (Kucera, 2014B). In 2016, Russia and Kazakhstan signed a cooperation agreement over Baikonur, and signed a “road-map” up to 2025. Cooperation involved developing commercial space launch infrastructure to launch spacecraft, scientific equipment and manned space flights (Al-Ekabi & Ferretti, 2016, p.95). This is considered to be an important step in Kazakhstan’s effort to improve their own competence and control in relation to Russian space activities (Kucera, 2014C).
The head of Kazakhstan's National Space Agency, Musabayev, told Russian newspaper Izvestia that his country wanted more control over Baikonur and that Kazakhstan is planning to become a space power in the future (Kucera, 2014B). It remains unclear however, how Kazakhstan is planning to proceed with this plan as it lacks the technology and experience to develop a launching pad on its own– although it seems recent negotiations on cooperation with Russia is the first step towards a Kazakh space program (Kucera, 2014C). Still, while some regard Kazakhstan’s ambitions as a first step towards taking back Baikonur from the Russians, the head of Kazakhstan's National Space Agency, Musabayev, said:

“Neither I nor any sane person in Kazakhstan wants Russia to leave Baikonur. We are partners and allies and at this level of international cooperation it’s normal to have joint strategic projects.”

- Musabayev (Kucera, 2014B)

Thus, it is not reasonable to assume this to be an internal balancing strategy against Russia aimed at reducing asymmetrical dependence. Nevertheless, Russian presence at the Baikonur site has been a public debate in Kazakhstan. Not because Russian presence is unwelcomed but because Kazakhstan only receives 115 million dollars a year (Aliyev, 2016). This sum has not been adjusted since 1994 and is considered by the public to be a Russian steal. Can this be regarded as an asymmetric concession and represent Kazakh bandwagoning behavior? I would argue that the answer is no. According to the 2010 Russian military doctrine, militarization of outer space is considered to be the main external military danger (Defense Intelligence Agency, 2017, p. 36). This is because modern warfare is increasingly dependent on information from space, due to the expansion of the geographic scope of military action and the reliance on precise information for precision weapons (Defense Intelligence Agency, 2017, p. 35). Similarly, Kazakhstan’s 2017 military doctrine highlights how the nature of modern military conflict is moving into space (Military Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2017, point 2.2.11). Given that Kazakhstan and Russia are close allies, it is not unlikely that Kazakhstan is trying to enhance its capabilities to meet this threat, which can explain why Kazakhstan has pushed for further cooperation and permission to use the base in negotiations with Russia. It may also explain the low price as a trade-off for knowledge and experience. This is additionally supported by the fact that Russian presence is welcomed by the head of Kazakhstan's National Space Agency, Musabayev and chapter 3.2 of
Kazakhstan’s 2017 Military Doctrine, which lists “maintaining the military potential and power of the state at a level that provides deterrence from aggression” (Military Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2017). Thus it is more likely that cooperation at his base represents external balancing in line with the alliance strategy.

In the South East of Kazakhstan lies the Balkhash radar station, which provides Russia with advanced notice of missiles coming from China, India and Pakistan (Piven, 2015; Aliyev, 2016). Prior to 2014, the test range was solely used by Russia, but on January 31, 2014, after contractual negotiations, Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu announced that Kazakhstan would be able to participate in tests at the Balkhash base. Since then, the Balkhash radar station has been obliged to provide the military administration of Kazakhstan with information from the missile-attack and space monitoring systems of this nature:

“Information from the systems of missile-attack warning includes information about the time, the area of the launch and trajectory of fall of a ballistic missile. Space monitoring system provides information about the situation in outer space, including information on dangerous approaches to space objects with our spacecraft, impact area of burning parts of space objects that pose a threat to our country, and flights of foreign intelligence satellites over the territory of Kazakhstan.”


Getting access to such information and to participation in tests was an important first step towards establishing a joint Air Defense system for ballistic missiles with Russia, which is mentioned as a top priority in chapter 3.3 of Kazakhstan’s 2017 Military Doctrine (Military Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2017). In addition to getting valuable information, Kazakhstan was given five divisions of the S-300PS anti-aircraft missile system – a Russian gift that greatly enhances Kazakhstan’s Air Defense (Kucera, 2014A). This was not only to enhance Kazakhstan’s security, but also that of the CSTO. Kazakh military personnel would also receive training and education at the base, which facilitates joint operability in the event of a military conflict (Aliyev, 2016; Kucera, 2014A). In fact, many Kazakhs have received military education and training in institutes that belong to Russian Defense Ministry, Federal Security Service, Foreign Intelligence Service and Ministry of Emergency Situations (Aliyev, 2016).
Under chapter 3.1 in Kazakhstan’s 2017 military doctrine it is stated that the military might of the state should correspond to the nature of military threats posed against it (Military Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2017). Given that the Balkhash radio station receives advance notice of missiles from China, India and Pakistan, one might ask which state poses the largest threat to Kazakhstan and Russia in terms of missile firepower?

China has the most active and diverse ballistic missile development program in the world (Missile Defense Project, 2018A). Currently it possesses at least ten operational missile types able to reach Kazakhstan and Russia (Missile Defense Project, 2018A). Pakistan currently possesses four operational missile types able to reach Kazakhstan, in which one can reach Russia, but one more is under development – which can target both (Missile Defense Project, 2018D). India possesses two operational missile types able to reach Kazakhstan and Russia, but is in the process of developing two more (Missile Defense Project, 2018B).

Thus, in terms of missile firepower China definitely represents the largest threat, as its offensive power is superior to Pakistan and India. At this point, one should remember the findings under “defense cooperation”, which examined bilateral exercises. The 2011 Shygys exercise scenario involved intercepting cruise missiles from a foreign state, and China and Iran were found to be probable hypothetical opponents because they both possess cruise missiles able to reach Kazakhstan. The section found it plausible that the exercise scenario reflected an external balancing strategy against China – thus the contractual developments in relation to Balkhash radar station are very interesting. First of all, the developments reflect increased defense cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia in establishing a joint Air Defense system aimed at detecting missiles coming from China. This represents an external balancing strategy because they combine their capabilities and assets to increase their ability to resist military force (Walt, 2005, p. 120). Second, one could argue that the Russian gift of five divisions of the S-300PS anti-aircraft missile systems to Kazakhstan, represent an attempt to increase the secondary state’s ability to resist military force, in line with Walt’s argument of external balancing (2005, p. 127-129, 131). The exchange of information, technology and training of Kazakh officers also represent external balancing. Third, one could argue that Kazakhstan balances internally too, because by renegotiating contracts it attempts to increase its internal capabilities by drawing on Russian competence.
Russia is present at additional four bases, but due to a lack of transparency surrounding the lease, it is hard to uncover information regarding Kazakhstan’s involvement. Thus, one can only provide information regarding the functions they serve. The Sary-Shagan test range is Russia’s main facility for testing strategic anti-aircraft defense, anti-ballistic missile defense, and anti-satellite systems (Piven, 2015). As previously established, the U.S and China are the main threat in this domain, thus these capabilities are important to keep Russia’s defensive power on track. Located in the East is the Karaganda Aviation Command Center (Aliyev, 2016). This base has provided logistics support for operations based in the Baikonur base, and consist of 50 military personnel (Aliyev, 2016). In the north, an air regiment of the Russian Armed Forces is located at the Kostanay Airport. The regiment provides transportation for the need of the other Russian military facilities in Kazakhstan (Aliyev, 2016). Thus, these two bases are more concerned with logistics than defensive power. In the West, we find The Russian Defense Ministry 929th Chkalov Flight Center. This center is used for the purposes of testing new weapons and aircraft, in addition to training pilots. Kazakhstan holds the right to test their weapons at this site as well (Aliyev, 2016).

**Assessment**

This section has found that the military capabilities of Russian military bases converge with Kazakhstan’s interests outlined in the 2017 military doctrine – thus one should consider the grating of territory to Russia as a *détente* and not bandwagoning behavior. By providing Russia with testing ranges and military facilities, Kazakhstan enhances its capabilities through increased cooperation—especially in regards to launching its own space program and establishing a joint Air Defense with Russia. Russia on the other hand, gains a strategic advantage by being present at these bases. Thus, we can exclude bandwagoning behavior on Kazakhstan’s behalf, as there appears to be no unequal concessions. In contrast, the situation is more compatible with external balancing behavior because Russia and Kazakhstan bring their capabilities, assets and strategic advantages together— in order to resist possible adversaries more effectively than if they were facing them alone (Walt, 2005, p. 120). Furthermore, by providing these facilities to Russia, Kazakhstan increases Russia’s incentive to help in the event of a military conflict. This is because these military bases, especially the Baikonur Cosmodrome and the Balkhash radio station, are an essential part of Russian military infrastructure (Defense Intelligence Agency, 2017, p. 35-36).
In relation to the research question, the Balkhash radio station is of particular importance because it embodies the perception of China as a threat. Neither China, India or Pakistan are mentioned specifically as a threat in the 2017 Military Doctrine, but Kazakhstan’s de facto behavior points in the other direction (Military Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2017). If China were not considered a threat, why need an Air Defense system particularly aimed at detecting Chinese activity? It is therefore reasonable to assume that Kazakhstan negotiated its way into the Balkhash military base to develop capabilities able to oppose the offensive power of China, as it has the worlds most diverse ballistic missile development program.

Furthermore, one could argue that the way Kazakhstan has chosen to renegotiate the contracts of these military bases reflects intensified external and internal balancing behavior as well. Kazakhstan has been renegotiating the contracts on the bases based on a wish for participation, not on increased revenue of rent. By initiating participation, Kazakhstan increases its capabilities more than if it simply increased the annual rent – especially in a long-term perspective. After all, if Russia were to withdraw from the bases at some point in the future, at least Kazakhstan would be left with knowledge and expertise able to operate on its own. Thus, the intensified balancing behavior is external because Russia and Kazakhstan combine their assets and capabilities, and internal because Kazakhstan increases its internal capabilities by participating with, and learning from Russia.

3.6 Military spending

Introduction

In order to establish whether or not Kazakhstan has applied the spending strategy, one must evaluate its military spending. Although one might not be able to determine what threat it aims to counter, one will get an indication of whether or not Kazakhstan finds it necessary to upgrade its military assets.

Military Expenditure

Like Graph 3 reflects, defense spending was a low priority during the 1990s, and it was only addressed after improved national economic performance (Pike, 2013). Kazakhstan, like other post-Soviet states, relied mainly on old and outdated military equipment from the
Soviet era after independence (Pike, 2013). Thus, after year 2000, when Kazakhstan’s economic situation improved, one can witness a rather steady and rapid increase in military spending (TradingEconomics.com/ SIPRI, 2018c). The increased spending is largely a result of military reform, where Kazakhstan has sought to update its military equipment and quality of military staff, in order to establish a modern military force able to respond to the international situation and possible threats to Kazakhstan (Pike, 2013).

Graph 3: Kazakhstan Military Expenditure 1992-2017

Today, Kazakhstan continues to rely on Russia when it comes to acquiring new military assets to upgrade its military (Ospanova, 2018). The increased spending has paid off though, because according to Global Firepower (2018), Kazakhstan now ranks as the 50th most advanced military in the world. In 2014, Kazakhstan was ranked in the 80th place (KZNewline, 2016).

Thus, it appears Kazakhstan engages in internal balancing through the spending strategy, aiming to be prepared for future threats and challenges. The terrorist threat continues to be a main concern, but the 2017 military doctrine of Kazakhstan puts greater emphasis on armed conflict along the border and measures to mitigate it, than the one before it (2011) (Gussarova, 2017). Some attribute this change to a growing concern over Russian and Chinese expansionism, others to Kazakhstan’s vulnerability at its Caspian border (Gussarova, 2017). Nevertheless, Kazakhstan has taken internal measures to improve its capabilities. While the main threat remains unclear, perhaps the next section can reveal some answers.
3.7 Placement of military assets

Introduction

Where a state chooses to place its military assets can provide important information regarding threat perceptions and security priorities. This section will provide an analysis of the placement of Kazakhstan’s military assets and what capabilities are placed near the Russian and Chinese border. While the 2017 Military Doctrine of Kazakhstan demonstrates a reluctance to declare any other state as an enemy or threat, the placement of military assets can provide us with information regarding where Kazakhstan most likely anticipates a conflict or a possible attack (Military Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2017). This is of importance to the research question as it displays Kazakhstan’s “de facto” behavior towards the two giants.

The main finding in this section, as Kazakhstan’s limited placement of military assets near the Russian border so beautifully demonstrates, is that when a great power is not considered a threat, the weaker state does not feel the need to balance its power. When there exists uncertainty regarding the level of threat however, Kazakhstan feels the need to take internal balancing measures to ensure its own security – as the case of China demonstrates.

The military assets of the four regional commands of Kazakhstan

In 2003 President Nazarbayev issued a decree “On measures on further improvement of the Armed Forces structure”. This involved a reorganization of the military, creating four regional commands. In the map below we see the four commands: “Astana” (red), “East” (blue), “West”(green) and “South” (yellow). The East and South region border China (Bykov, 2015).
The military assets of the four regional commands demonstrate a clear discrepancy in military capabilities. As depicted in "MAP: Placement of Military Assets", most of Kazakhstan’s military assets are placed in the Eastern and Southern region which borders China. But what capabilities are found in these two regions and what purpose do they serve?

Map 6: Deployment of Kazakhstan’s Military Assets

("Placement of military assets" [Picture], 2015)
The majority of Kazakhstan’s airborne capabilities are placed in the Southern and Eastern region— 9 of Kazakhstan’s total 13 Air Force units, 2 of Kazakhstan’s 3 Airborne Special Forces, 2 of Kazakhstan’s 3 anti-aircraft warfare units and the one and only armored warfare unit (Bykov, 2015). Airborne capabilities provide Kazakhstan with strategic reach – it enables Kazakhstan to drop bombs, weapons, equipment and troops to the location it desires, possibly behind enemy lines. It also provides Kazakhstan with an immediate response capability (McDermott, 2009, p.9, 23). The two anti-aircraft warfare units provide Kazakhstan with air defense capabilities in case of a hostile airborne attack. The majority of Kazakhstan’s artillery units are also placed in the Eastern and Southern region— 4 of total 6 units. Artillery is a large class of military weapons built to fire from a long distance (Bellamy, 2001).

This includes mounted projectile-firing guns and missile launchers, which can be mobile or stationary, light or heavy. Artillery provides the army with the largest share of firepower used to fight and win conventional wars. Since the Industrial Revolution, artillery has been the most lethal form of land-based armament. Stalin did not refer to artillery as “the God of War” for nothing (Bellamy, 2001).

Not surprisingly, the majority of Kazakhstan’s mechanized infantry are also found the Eastern and Southern region. 4 of total 6 units, which includes combat tanks, armored personnel carriers and infantry fighting vehicles for transport and combat use.

It should be noted though, that some of the military assets placed in the southern region might be due to concerns regarding terrorist and criminal activity in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (Stein, 2017, p.67-74).

In comparison, a limited amount of military assets are placed along the Russian border. In the Western region, close to the Russian border, we find one Air Force unit and one artillery unit. Needless to say, it would be an easy match for a determined Russia if it decided to expand into Kazakh territory. In the Astana region, we find no military assets placed close to the Russian border. The assets in this region are located around the capitol. The Eastern region borders Russia as well, thus the military assets located close to the Russian border should be examined. As mentioned earlier, 9 of Kazakhstan’s total 13 Air Force units are placed in the Eastern and Southern regions, but two of these units are actually closer to the Russian border than the Chinese. There is also one unit of airborne forces, one unit of artillery, one unit of mechanized infantry and one unit of missile troops close to the Russian border.
Assessment

This section is particularly interesting because it reflects the very essence of Walt’s theory. States act in response to threats, and the level of threat is determined by aggregate power, offensive power, proximity and aggressive intentions (Walt, 1987, p. 22-24). Both China and Russia borders Kazakhstan, and both are superior to Kazakhstan in terms of aggregate and offensive power. Thus, aggressive intentions is left as the factor most likely able to explain Kazakhstan’s divergent approach towards China and Russia.

The placement of limited military assets along the Russian border demonstrates that Kazakhstan does not perceive Russia to have aggressive intentions – at least not to the extent where Kazakhstan feels the need to balance against it by rearranging its military assets. Considering how Russia has acted towards Georgia and Ukraine, this demonstrates a very high level of trust, especially given the similarities between Kazakhstan’s northern region and Crimea (large ethnic Russian population) (Weitz, 2014). In addition, if Russia were considered a threat to the territorial integrity of Kazakhstan, it would make sense for Kazakhstan to place more military assets in the western region, as this region holds most of Kazakhstan’s natural resources and is vital to the Kazakh economy (Hanks, 2009, p. 258). Nevertheless, only one Air Force unit and one artillery unit is placed close to the Russian border in this region. The same argument can be made about Astana. Protecting the capitol and the ruling regime would be a top priority in the case of an outside aggressor, yet there are no military assets placed along the Russian border in this region (Bykov, 2015).

In the case of China, one could argue that there exists uncertainty regarding the level of threat, which is why the majority of Kazakhstan’s military assets are placed in the eastern and southern region. One factor that contributes to this uncertainty is the Xinjiang autonomous region, which is inhabited by Uighur separatists who want to achieve secession from China using violent acts (Golunov & McDermott, 2005). This population is transboundary and roughly 250 000 Uighurs live in the eastern and southern region of Kazakhstan (Weitz, 2014). This means that if the Xinjiang region were to break out in civil unrest caused by separatist and/or extremist movements, it is likely Kazakhstan would have to manage a possible spillover effect on its own territory. This spillover effect could include an upsurge in Islamist movements on their own territory and territorial claims to Kazakh land (Golunov & McDermott, 2005). According to the theory, states balance against threat, and the threat can
be posed by states and by groups. Therefore, one might ask if Kazakhstan’s behavior should be regarded as a balancing act against the Uighurs or the Chinese state? Or are they one and the same?

If Kazakhstan’s behavior should be regarded solely as a balancing act against the Uighurs, I find it odd that Kazakhstan has placed most of its military assets capable of conducting conventional war close to the Chinese border. As demonstrated by SCO exercises, fighting terrorist, extremists and separatist groups usually involve Special Forces, Law enforcement, reconnaissance units and border control units, rather than purely conventional forces (Stein, 2017, 26, 37, 39-41, 48, 52, 56). They also require fewer resources in terms of aircraft firepower, artillery and mechanized infantry. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Kazakhstan’s placement of military assets cannot be entirely because of the Uighur threat, but must also be due to other factors linked to the Chinese state. Such a factor could be China’s rapid increase in aggregate and offensive power since the 1990’s (TradingEconomics.com/ SIPRI, 2018a). China’s military expenditure has more than doubled during the last ten years, and as established in the previous section, China possess a large and diverse arsenal of missiles (Missile Defense Project, 2018A). As a result, China has increased its ability to play an offensive role in ongoing and future conflicts. The Philippines, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, to mention some, has already noticed China’s offensive capabilities in the disputed waters of the South China Sea (Jaishankar, 2018; Ross, 2017, p. 281-283; Fravel, 2017, p. 243-246).

Walt (2005, p.120) wrote that states may balance internally, by mobilizing their own resources in ways that will enable them to resist stronger states effectively. It has become clear throughout the presentation that Kazakhstan has mobilized its resources in a way that will increase the relevant cost of breaching its territorial integrity, to the best of its ability. Thus, the placement of these assets reflects an internal balancing strategy in line with Walt’s definition.
3.8 Evaluation of findings in the military sphere

This section is aimed at summarizing the main findings in relation to the research question. As this chapter did not identify any bandwagoning strategies, only balancing strategies will be presented. Thus, this section will address the various strategies Kazakhstan has applied to ensure its security and address what findings point in the direction of China being perceived as a possible threat— and to what extent Kazakhstan has taken measures to balance it.

The examination of the CSTO, bilateral exercises, arms trade and military bases confirms Kazakhstan’s alliance strategy with Russia. Walt (1997, p.157) argues that the defining feature of any alliance is a commitment for mutual military support against some external actor(s) in some specified set of circumstances. The CSTO fulfills the requirement of mutual military support through its article 7 (CSTO, 2002). Thus, in line with Walt’s (2005, p. 120) argument of how combining capabilities with others represent an external balancing strategy, the CSTO serves as a balancing tool for Kazakhstan.

Likewise, the examination of bilateral exercises can be related to the alliance strategy. According to Walt (2005, p. 127-129, 131), military exercises aimed at protecting territorial integrity/enhancing defense capabilities should be considered an external balancing strategy. The section on bilateral exercises identified at least three bilateral exercises between Kazakhstan and Russia that drilled on protecting and restoring Kazakhstan’s territorial integrity (Stein, 2017, p. 45, 49, 50; McDermott, 2011B). This is also in line with the alliance strategy that stipulates a promise of mutual military support in the case of conflict. Furthermore, arms trade confirmed that Kazakhstan continues to rely on the alliance strategy with Russia.

The third domain of examination, military bases, found additional evidence of Kazakhstan’s alliance strategy. Kazakhstan engages in external balancing behavior by combining its assets with Russian capabilities at two military bases – the Balkhash radio base and the Baikonur Cosmodrome (Piven, 2015; Aliyev, 2016). Instead of receiving increased rents for these facilities, Kazakhstan has chosen to renegotiate the contracts with Russia based on a desire for participation. This, I argue reflect intensified balancing behavior. In addition, Kazakhstan was given five divisions of the S-300PS anti-aircraft missile system – a Russian gift that
greatly enhanced Kazakhstan’s Air Defense (Kucera, 2014A). This should be regarded as an attempt to increase the secondary state’s ability to resist military force by combining capabilities, thus it falls under the alliance strategy.

When reviewing the evidence, one is able to detect a discrepancy in Kazakhstan’s official narrative of China as a partner. In contrast, several findings in the military spheres points in the direction of China being perceived as a threat to Kazakhstan. Furthermore, they indicate that Kazakhstan has taken measures to balance Chinese power and influence.

First of all, the examination of the SCO identified Kazakhstan and Russia engaging in a balking strategy against China, when they both opposed Chinese subsidiaries (Laumulin, 2006). This represents an external balancing strategy where Kazakhstan and Russia collectively try to block Chinese influence.

Likewise, the section on the CSTO identified an expansion in scope related to the CSTO exercises (Stein, 2017, p. 31-33, 43-45, 50-51; Haas, 2016, p. 392-402), which to some extent indicates intensified external balancing behavior. In relation to this, three exercises were identified to represent external balancing behavior towards China – the 2016 Rubezh exercise, and the 2012 and 2017 Unbreakable Brotherhood exercises (Stein, 2017, p.45, 49; The Astana Times, 2017).

Similarly, the bilateral exercises between Russia and Kazakhstan points in the direction of China being perceived as a threat. This section was able to identify that four out of six bilateral exercises were located in the Almaty or Shygys region. If we assume that the locations of the exercises are of importance given that they are aimed at displaying capabilities to their surroundings, they indicate that China is perceived as a threat. The 2011 Shygys exercise is of particular importance in this case, as the exercise scenario drilled on intercepting cruise missiles (Stein, 2017, p.45; McDermott, 2011B). The examination of arms trade found that Russia has not supplied China with missiles that are offensive in nature in recent years and that China has the most advanced and diverse arsenal of missiles in the world (SIPRI Arms Transfer Database 2018C; Missile Defense Project, 2018A). Given that Iran is the only other country in Kazakhstan’s vicinity able to reach both Russia and Kazakhstan using cruise missiles, the section concluded that the exercise was most likely aimed at intercepting cruise missiles from China. Kazakhstan’s cooperation with Russia at
the Balkhash radio base supports this idea. The base specifically target Chinese offensive power in terms of missiles (Piven, 2015; Aliyev, 2016).

The idea of China as a threat is also confirmed by the deployment of Kazakhstan’s military assets. Walt (1987, p. 169) argued that when secondary states are in a position of choosing between two great powers, the secondary state will choose to balance the one it perceives to have the most aggressive intentions. Kazakhstan has used the deployment strategy to balance China internally as Kazakhstan has placed the majority of its military assets able to conduct conventional warfare close to the Chinese border (Bykov, 2015). As mentioned before, Kazakhstan’s limited placement of military assets near the Russian border demonstrates the very essence of Walt’s (1987) theory—when a great power is not considered a threat, the weaker state does not feel the need to balance its power.

Provided the information above, it has become clear that Kazakhstan’s *de facto* behavior is aimed at balancing Chinese capabilities. The most convincing evidence is perhaps how Kazakhstan has placed most of its military assets capable of conducting conventional war close to the Chinese border (Bykov, 2015). Moreover, it has become clear that Kazakhstan relies a great deal on its relationship to Russia through the CSTO and bilateral agreements. Throughout the analysis it is confirmed at several occasions that their close relationship and cooperation is aimed at countering China – which represents an external balancing strategy for Kazakhstan.
4. The economic sphere

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine various domains of the economic sphere, in order to detect patterns of balancing and bandwagoning behavior. The import and export pattern of Kazakhstan will be analyzed first. According to Walt (1987, p. 43), great power leverage will be enhanced if the supplier enjoys an asymmetry of dependence vis-à-vis the recipient. Likewise, realist political economy literature argues that an economic great power develops political power from the secondary states dependence on its market for export because export promotes economic growth, employment opportunities and stability (Ross, 2006, p.365). If there is a difference in relative dependence between the two trading partners in which the great power holds the power to interrupt commercial and financial relations, the secondary state can be compelled to align with it – especially if it lacks alternative export routes.

Next, important commodities are analyzed because Walt (1987, p.46) argues that dependence on important commodities makes it more likely for weak states to bandwagon. This makes it necessary to explore what commodities they trade, and if Kazakhstan is in a position to receive them from anyone else if the supply were to be interrupted. Therefore I will examine the top three commodities of each country, and if these commodities can be used as leverage by Russia and China. This too can provide evidence of an asymmetric relationship which might further a bandwagoning hypothesis.

Furthermore, the energy sector of Kazakhstan will be analyzed. By examining the development of this sector one might find important evidence of balancing and bandwagoning behavior. Kazakhstan’s landlocked position, limited experience extracting natural resources, lack of technology and lack of transportation infrastructure put Kazakhstan in an unfavorable position from the very beginning. Kazakhstan’s strategy to overcome these challenges and how it has used its energy sector to manage its relationship to Russia and China can reflect Kazakhstan’s position and possibly help answer the following questions; Is there evidence of any unequal exchanges at the expense of Kazakhstan as the weaker state? Has Kazakhstan ever favored China at the expense of other states? Has Kazakhstan become dependent on the Chinese market to export its oil and gas, or does it have alternative routes? If the answers to these questions are “Yes”, it might support a bandwagoning hypothesis.
Other questions might be helpful to find evidence of balancing behavior. Has Kazakhstan taken any measures to reduce Chinese influence in this sector? Has Kazakhstan ever voted against a Chinese proposal to develop this sector further?

Last, but not least, I will examine *The Belt and Road Initiative*, because it is of vital importance to Kazakhstan and its further development. It examines the converging and conflicting interests of Kazakhstan in relation to the BRI in order to detect balancing and bandwagoning behavior.

Like in the previous chapter, each domain of the economic sphere will have a separate introduction that underlines the main focus of investigation. Moreover, it summarizes the findings in short, before presenting the evidence. After each domain has been properly analyzed, there will be a short evaluation of the main findings in relation to the research question.

### 4.2 Import and export patterns.

This section is focused on examining asymmetry of dependence in Kazakhstan’s import and export patterns. The thought is that it might reveal possible attempts at balancing behavior through diversification of trade. Likewise, it might indicate a bandwagoning tendency if there are significant changes in Kazakhstan’s import/export pattern in favor of dependence on China. This section examines the percentage of Kazakhstan’s total import value from Russia/China and the percentage of Kazakhstan’s total export value to Russia/China over the past 20 years. The data used in this section are originally from The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) (2018) Comtrade database, but is downloaded from The Observatory of Economic Complexity, which has a very user-friendly visualization monitor. The Observatory of Economic Complexity is listed as an approved visualization monitor at the UN Comtrade Database homepage, thus I consider the reliability of the data to be intact (comtrade.un.org, 2018).

This section finds that Kazakhstan continues to rely on Russia for import, although the import ratio vis-à-vis China has been significantly reduced. It also finds that Kazakhstan has shifted its export pattern in favor of China since 2007. This resembles internal balancing behavior in relation to the strategy of reducing asymmetrical dependence relationships (Walt, 2005, p.120), where Kazakhstan exploits the trade opportunities provided by China to reduce
dependence on Russia. The findings in this section however, do not indicate that China holds enough leverage to compel Kazakhstan into alignment.

The first thing to notice on both the import and export graph is how sensitive the Russian economy is to financial shocks. The Russian financial crisis of 1998 and the world financial crisis of 2008 are clearly reflected by a Russian decrease in both graphs (UNSD, 2018). China on the other hand proved to be a more robust trading partner during these crises (Peyrouse, 2008, p. 36). When import from and export to Russia decreased in the late 90’s, import from and export to China increased. The same pattern can be discovered in 2008.

Graph 4: Percent of Kazakhstan’s total import value from Russia/China, 1997-2016 (UNSD, 2018).

Graph 5: Percent of Kazakhstan’s total export value to Russia/China, 1997-2016 (UNSD, 2018).
However, despite economic setbacks, we can see from the graph that Kazakhstan continues to import more from Russia than from China. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that Kazakhstan’s import ratio between Russia and China has dropped significantly over the past 20 years. On average, in the 1997-2001 period Kazakhstan imported seven times more from Russia than from China, while during the last 10 years, Kazakhstan has only imported twice as much from Russia than from China. One reason why Kazakhstan does not import more from China than from Russia could be due to the how the influx of Chinese goods are viewed as a threat to local products by the Kazakh population (Burkhanov & Chen, 2016; Syroezhkin, 2009; Sadovskaya, 2007).

The same cannot be said for Kazakhstan’s export industry. In 2007, Kazakhstan’s export pattern changed and Kazakhstan started to export more to China than to Russia (UNSD, 2018). The export ratio between the two great powers is not particularly significant though. On average, Kazakhstan has exported 1.7 times more to China than to Russia during the last ten years. This shift has been facilitated by cooperation in the oil and gas industry and improvement of transport infrastructure to China, as the energy section will demonstrate. Nevertheless, this does resemble internal balancing behavior in relation to the strategy of reducing asymmetrical dependence relationships (Walt, 2005, p. 120), where Kazakhstan exploits the trade opportunities provided by China to reduce dependence on Russia.

These findings however, should not be exaggerated. First of all, the total export value for China were at 11% in 2016, thus Kazakhstan should not be regarded as dependent on China for economic survival. Second, alternative pipelines and railway infrastructure makes it possible for Kazakh oil and gas to be transported to Russian, European and Middle Eastern markets, thus Kazakhstan is not reliant on the Chinese market (Henriksen, 2013). Thus, the findings in this section, while interesting, does not indicate that China holds enough leverage to compel Kazakhstan into alignment, as the realist political economy literature argues could be possible if Kazakhstan relied on export to Chinese markets (Ross, 2006, p.365). Russia on the other hand, is found to represent 36% of Kazakhstan’s total import value in 2016. Whether or not this finding indicates that Russia holds leverage over Kazakhstan is determined by the nature of these commodities.
4.3 Strategic Commodities

Introduction

Walt (1987, p.46) argues that dependence on important commodities makes it more likely for weak states to bandwagon. Thus, one might ask if Kazakhstan imports certain commodities from the two competing parties that are particularly important to Kazakhstan’s security. Can any of these commodities possibly compel Kazakhstan into alignment? Russia is of particular interest in this section as 36% of Kazakhstan’s import value originated from Russia in 2016. The data used in this section are originally from the UNSD (2018) Comtrade database, but is downloaded from The Observatory of Economic Complexity.

The findings in this section indicate that neither China nor Russia holds any significant leverage over Kazakhstan that can compel it to align. Russia however, are found to be in an advantageous position given that it supplies Kazakhstan with refined petroleum to make up for Kazakhstan’s national deficit of 30 percent (Smirnov, 2017). Nevertheless, internal and external circumstances are found to reduce the effect of this advantage.

What does Kazakhstan import from China?

Of the top 5 commodities imported from China, machines and metals had a consistently high import percentage over the last ten years. Both categories are important to Kazakhstan oil and gas industry. For instance, machinery used in the oil and gas industry include valves, turbines and pumps, and certain types of metals are important to protect the pipelines against corrosion, like for instance coated flat rolled iron (Daleel Oil and Gas Supply Chain Portal, 2016).

![Figure 1: Top 5 Commodities imported from China, average percentage of total import value, 2007-2016 (UNSD, 2018).](image-url)
Thus, the question is if Kazakhstan is dependent on supply from China to sustain its oil and gas industry? Machines made up 26% of Kazakhstan’s total import value on average during the last decade (UNSD, 2018). Of this total, the value on machines imported from China is at 38% on average, as presented by Figure 1. Given the rather large share of imported values in machinery coming from China, one should ask if other countries could provide Kazakhstan with these commodities if China were to stop? If not, depending on the nature and necessity of the commodities, China could hold some leverage over Kazakhstan.

Under the “machines” category, broadcasting equipment was the primary commodity imported from China in 2016 (5.8%), computers (4.1%) the second largest and telephones (2.8%) the third largest (UNSD, 2018). Given their nature, these commodities do not pose a threat to the economy or security of Kazakhstan and cannot be used as leverage. After all, Russia, the United States and other European countries could provide such commodities if necessary (UNSD, 2018).

Under the “metals” category, iron structures were the primary imported commodity from China in 2016 (1.9%), while large iron pipes (1.6%) and “other iron products” (1.5%) made up the second and third most imported commodities of 2016 (UNSD, 2018). As the low percentages of total import value implies, Kazakhstan is not reliant on the supply from China. Germany, Italy, the U.S and Japan can export the same commodities (UNSD, 2018), thus China holds no leverage over Kazakhstan that can be used to compel alignment.

**What does Kazakhstan import from Russia?**

Of the top 5 commodities imported from Russia, mineral products, metals and machines had consistently high import value percentages over the last ten years (UNSD, 2018). This is reflected in Figure 2. When it comes to mineral products, refined petroleum accounts for the highest import value percentage from Russia (7%). Kazakhstan has to import energy from Russia and Uzbekistan to satisfy its demand in the eastern region due to the lack of pipelines connecting the western and eastern part of the country (Henriksen, 2013, p.36). In addition, it is reported that the domestic oil refineries only meet domestic demand by 70%, relying on Russia for the remaining 30% (Smirnov, 2017). Kazakhstan imported 82% of its refined petroleum from Russia, 5.8% from Kyrgyzstan and 2.1% from Germany in 2016 (UNSD, 2018). Import of refined petroleum from Russia has been stable over the past decade, ranging from 70-89 % (UNSD, 2018).
Relying on Russian import to secure its domestic energy demand can be compromising for Kazakhstan. A stop in Russian export of refined petroleum could get severe consequences, as practically every part of society is dependent on energy supply.

This finding can pose a threat to Kazakhstan, but I find no records of Russia ever threatening to pull refined petroleum off the Kazakh market. Besides, of the world’s total refined petroleum exports, the U.S accounted for 15%, Russia for 11%, Singapore for 8.6%, the Netherlands for 8.3%, India for 6.1%, South Korea for 5.8% and China for 4.7% in 2016 (UNSD, 2018). The likelihood of finding another country to import refined petroleum from should be regarded as high due to the following three reasons.

First, plenty of the countries that export refined petroleum are in proximity to Kazakhstan. Second, Kazakhstan has an extensive rail network able to facilitate transport of refined petroleum from various destinations to the wanted location (Aliyeva, 2017B; Nurgaliyeva, 2016, p.99). Third, if Russia were to use its refined petroleum export as a bargaining chip to coerce the policy of Kazakhstan in a certain direction, it is likely, due to Kazakhstan’s long standing multi-vector policy, that China or another western country would come to its aid.

However, even though Kazakhstan relies on energy import from Russia to secure its domestic demands, it is important not to exaggerate this finding and immediately assume that this poses an imminent threat to Kazakhstan’s security. After all, Russia and Kazakhstan are close partners, and their interests coincide in most cases making a Russian “interfriendsion” unlikely.
Returning to the import commodities, precious metal ore was the second largest import commodity under the “mineral products” category in 2016 (2.2 %). Rhodium, platinum and gold are not used in any particularly important industries vital to the economy of Kazakhstan, so even if Russia were to pull its precious metal ore from the Kazakh market, it would not pose a threat to Kazakhstan’s security.

In the “metals” category, iron blocks made up 1.1%, iron pipes made up 1% and iron structures made up 0.95 % of total import value as the top three imported commodities from Russia. In the “machines” category, insulated wire was the main commodity imported from Russia in 2016 (1.3%). Russia accounts for 48% of Kazakhstan imported insulated wires, but as the low percentage in import value reflects, the import from Russia in this category is very diversified (UNSD, 2018). All the other subcategories in this category have import value percentages between 0.88 and 0.0000027. Given the low percentage of import value in the “metals” and “machine” categories, it is needless to say that these import commodities does not pose a threat to Kazakhstan’s security and does not represent any Russian leverage over Kazakhstan.

Overall, Kazakhstan has a highly diversified import industry where no commodity has a particularly high import value percentage from any one nation, indicating that Kazakhstan has created some space for maneuver.

4.4 Energy sector

Introduction

In this section I will study the development of Kazakhstan’s oil and gas industry since the early 1990’s for the purpose of identifying balancing and bandwagoning behavior. Henriksen (2013, p. V) found that both economic and political considerations have played a part in Kazakhstan’s decisions on energy development and that the selling rights has been used in relation to its multi-vector policy. Furthermore, he finds some support for the view that energy can have a role as a driver for Kazakhstan’s foreign policy. Thus, studying the decisions made by Kazakhstan regarding investments and development of its resources and export routes is relevant to the research question because one might find evidence that can be linked to the strategies outlined in the theory.
The findings in this section indicate that Kazakhstan perceives cooperation with China in this sector as mutually beneficial. Furthermore, they indicate that Kazakhstan has attempted to reduce dependence on Russian infrastructure by diversifying export routes.

There are some concerns regarding the reliability of the findings in this section due to a lack of transparency surrounding energy deals. This in turn causes problems of validity of the findings. Triangulation of sources has been used as a tool to counter this problem where possible, thus the threat is not considered to be overwhelming.

**Current ownership status of onshore and offshore projects.**

About 90 percent of Kazakhstan’s proven oil reserves are located in 15 large fields concentrated in the western part of the country and in the Caspian Sea. These fields are the Tengiz, Kashagan, Karachaganak, Uzen, Zhetybai, Zhanazhol, Kalamkas, Kenkiyak, Karazhanbas, Kumkol, North Buzachi, Alibekmola, Prorva Central and East, Kenbai and Royal. As for the gas fields, about 80 percent of gas reserves are located in the four fields of Kashagan, Tengiz, Karachaganak and Imashevskoe (U.S Energy Information Administration, 2017; Henriksen, 2013, p. 30).

Of the onshore projects, China is involved in 10, Russia in 5, the UK in 3 and the U.S in 2. Of the offshore projects in the Caspian Sea, Russia is involved in 6 projects, while France, China and the UK are involved in 2 projects each (Henriksen, 2013, p. 55). There is an overview of the current ownership status of onshore and offshore projects in the Appendix, Table 8 and 9. What becomes clear from this overview is that currently China is represented in the majority of the onshore oil and gas fields, while Russia dominates the Caspian Sea. This is due to the fact that China arrived late to the Kazakh oil market, and had to settle for onshore projects given that Chinese presence were unwelcomed by many other companies already settled in the Caspian Sea (Junmian, 2017; Henriksen, 2013, p. 55). Nevertheless, China has managed to become one of, if not the main, partner of Kazakhstan in the energy sector in 20 years (Junmian, 2017). Today, energy accounts for approximately 30 percent of bilateral trade between the two countries, and Chinese companies are heavily invested in Kazakhstan’s energy sector. About 25 % of Kazakhstan’s total output of crude oil are developed by Chinese companies. China has invested nearly US$43 billion in Kazakhstan’s
energy sector making Kazakhstan the main investment destination along the Belt and Road routes (Junmian, 2017).

**Development of Kazakhstan’s oil and gas resources during the 1990’s.**

Since its independence in 1992, Kazakhstan has been faced with how to best develop its natural resources. Four challenges were particularly great (Henriksen, 2013, p.25). First, development of the oil resources in the Caspian Sea were hindered by disagreement over delimitation of national territories. Second, there was the issue of high costs related to transportation of oil and gas to foreign markets. Third, the oil pipelines running through Russia were and still are, controlled by Russia’s state-controlled company, Transneft. Transneft has discriminated against non- Russia oil before by demanding higher prices for transit (Henriksen, 2013, p.25; Marten, 2013, p.18). Kazakhstan was dependent on this infrastructure to transport its oil through Russia to the world market, thus, as the only export route Kazakhstan were at the mercy of Russian good will for a long time. Lastly, the oil and gas resources of Kazakhstan are located in particularly challenging areas – demanding a high level of expertise and technology to bring it above ground (Henriksen, 2013, p. 25; Nurgaliyeva, 2016, p.97).

Given these challenges it became natural for the Kazakh government to invite foreign states and companies to provide assistance. In order to attract foreign investments, most of the existing oil and gas industry were privatized during the 1990’s (Henriksen, 2013, p.26; Nurgaliyeva, 2016, p.97). Kazakhstan could decide who and how many actors it wanted to sign development contracts with, and chose mainly capable companies from Western Europe, the U.S and Canada (Henriksen, 2013, p. 51).

Russia became a slightly passive participant for a number of reasons. First of all, it was struggling with financial problems as a result economic recession in the late 1990´s. Second, it did not have the expertise and finances to develop projects in Kazakhstan’s challenging field areas. Lastly, it was primarily occupied by developing its own oil and gas fields in the Siberian area (Henriksen, 2013, p 25, 51; Yergin, 2011, p. 65). Nevertheless, Russian dominance continued to be a challenge for Kazakhstan, especially because Russia controlled the only available pipeline at the time – the Caspian Pipeline Consortium. As a response, Nazarbayev took active measures to improve the investment environment for other foreign
companies. In 1996, he established the State Committee on Investments and in 1997, he formulated a Law on State Support of Direct Investment and established priority sectors for attracting domestic and foreign direct investments (Nurgaliyeva, 2016, p.97). This was reportedly done to counterbalance Russian influence and for the purpose of facilitating new export routes—effectively reducing dependence on Russia for transit (Alvares, 2016; Olimat, 2015, p. 104; Nurgaliyeva, 2016, p. 93). While Kazakhstan’s main goal was to diversify its export routes, this does resemble an attempt to reduce asymmetric relationships—an internal balancing strategy (Walt, 2005, p. 120). Nevertheless, although Russia was slightly passive during the 1990’s, Russia was not completely uninterested in the Kazakh energy sector. For instance, in 1995, Russian Lukeoil signed a contract with the Kazakh government to develop the Kumkol field and to supply oil to Kazakh refineries in Pavlodar and Shymkent (Henriksen, 2013, p. 51). Still, Russian foreign policy towards central Asian countries under Yeltsin can be described as inconsistent at best.

Moreover, the measurements taken by Nazarbayev to reduce dependence on Russia materialized in 1998, when President Nazarbayev supported the proposal for the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline, which stretches from the Azeri–Chirag–Gunashli oil field in the Caspian Sea to the Mediterranean Sea (Henriksen, 2013, p. 47; Nurgaliyeva, 2016, p.99). This pipeline represented an alternative route—Kazakh crude oil from the Tengiz field could be shipped to Baku across the Caspian Sea, be pumped through the BTC pipeline to Turkey's Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, and then go on to European markets. Russia opposed the pipeline, of course, because it bypassed its territory. Europe could now receive oil and gas from Central Asia, without any Russian involvement (Henriksen, 2013, p. 47; Mouawad, 2008; Nurgaliyeva, 2016, p.99). Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Georgia and Turkey all went along with the proposal and the pipeline was operational in 2005 (Mouawad, 2008). The pipeline is depicted in “MAP: 7, Central Asian Pipelines” on page 90. President Nazarbayev’s decision to vote “yes” for the BTC pipeline, even when Russia opposed, resonates well with a balking strategy, where Kazakhstan aligned with other states to collectively oppose the will of a great power—an external balancing strategy (Walt, 2005, p. 130).

The new legislation on direct foreign investments might have provided a security mechanism for China to perceive it as safe to invest in Kazakhstan. China entered in 1997, when its national oil company (NOC), China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) purchased a
60.34 percent stake in AktobeMunaiGas, one of Kazakhstan’s most prominent oil companies. By doing so it obtained the production license for the Zhanazhol, Kenkiyak Oversalt and Kenkiyak Subalt oilfields. A few months later, China and Kazakhstan agreed to establish the Kazakhstan-China Oil Pipeline, which were to stretch from the Caspian Sea to the Xinjiang province. This was a joint project between CNPC and Kazakhstan’s national oil and gas company KazMunayGas (KMG), although China financed and constructed the entire project on its own (Olimat, 2015, p, 104; Henriksen, 2013, p.78). The ownership of the pipeline was divided 50/50 and it was completed in 2009 (Alvares, 2016). This pipeline was an important component of Kazakhstan’s strategy to diversify its export routes and become less dependent on Russian infrastructure. This exemplifies a way for Kazakhstan to counteract Russian influence by cooperating with outside actors, hence active pipeline diversification represent a mechanism to balance externally in line with Walt’s (2005, p.120) argument. This pipeline served China’s interests as well, as it helped China diversify its energy sources. The Kazakhstan-China pipeline is depicted as the green line in the map below.

Map 7: Central Asian Pipelines

(“Map: Connecting Central Asia” [Picture], 2016)
To sum up the 1990’s, we find that Kazakhstan balanced externally against Russian influence by cooperating with others to construct two alternative pipelines – the BTC pipeline and the Kazakhstan-China Oil Pipeline. Furthermore, we find that Kazakhstan has balanced internally by decreasing its asymmetrical dependence relationship with Russia and by passing legislation to attract Western companies to develop Kazakhstan’s challenging oil and gas industry.

**Development of Kazakhstan’s oil and gas resources since the millennium.**

Several important developments have changed the energy sector of Kazakhstan since the millennium. First of all, Russia’s orientation towards Kazakhstan changed when Putin came to power. Unlike Yeltsin, he prioritized more top-level meetings between the two nations and actively sought to improve relations and restore Russian influence in the “Near Abroad”. During Putin’s first and second term as president (2000-2008) he met with President Nazarbayev 15 times, often discussing energy issues (Sorbello, 2011, p.113).

Moreover, one of the most important developments in this era includes the delimitation of the Caspian Sea. As the Caspian Sea contains major deposits of oil and gas, reaching an agreement in terms of exploitation rights were challenging to the littoral states. Kazakhstan, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Iran struggled to reach an agreement in terms of “who owned what” after the fall of the Soviet Union (Sorbello, 2011, p. 37-38, 48-51; Henriksen, 2013, p.46). In 1998 however, Russia and Kazakhstan signed an agreement stipulating what they considered their part of the Caspian Sea, which were followed by an agreement between Putin and Nazarbayev in 2002 (Henriksen, 2013, p. 46). The agreement determined the jurisdiction of the Kurmangazy, Tsentralnoe and Khvalynskoe offshore fields, in which Russia was grated jurisdiction over the two latter ones. The Kurmangazy field was to be developed on a 50/50 basis. In 2003, Russia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan signed a joint agreement for the adjacent sectors of the Caspian Sea. Iran opposed to these agreements because it wanted the Caspian Sea to be divided on an equal basis between the littoral states (Henriksen, 2013, p. 46). Even if the legal status is still not settled regarding the Caspian Sea, it is now divided into de facto national sectors as depicted Map 8 (Olcott, 2011, p. 117).
The nature of these agreements however, demonstrates how Kazakhstan was in somewhat of a bandwagoning position because Kazakhstan gave concessions to Russia. In order for the 2002 agreement between Kazakhstan and Russia to go through, Kazakhstan granted Russia full jurisdiction over the oil and gas fields Khvalynskoe and Tsentralnoe in exchange for access to the Kashagan field (Henriksen, 2013, p. 46). These fields were divided by a “modified median line”, giving Russia access to gas fields that could, by the use of other division methods, belong at least in part to Kazakhstan. As demonstrated by the map above, the Kashagan field is surrounded by Kazakh land and by no other division methods could Russia stake a claim to this field. At this point in time, no alternative export routes for Kazakh oil were operational, only under construction. This probably weakened Kazakhstan’s bargaining position during negotiations. Russia on the other hand, well aware that Kazakhstan would not be dependent on Russian export routes much longer due to construction of alternative pipes, may have decided to exert its leverage one last time. The decision to agree and acknowledge Russia’s rights to the two fields was commented by a Kazakh official shortly after (O’Lear, 2005). He said that Kazakhstan agreed to the agreement because the approximate reserves in the Kurmangazy field balanced the reserves of the other two. His statement indicates that Kazakhstan perceived the division of the
Caspian Sea as a détente– where the parties involved consider the concessions to be roughly equal and based on a mutual recognition of legitimate interest (Walt, 1988, p. 282).

Another rather significant development took place in 2002, when the Kazakh state decided to become more involved in the production and development of its national resources. It founded the national oil company KazMunaiGas (KMG) and passed new legislation that required 50 percent of all new strategic oil and gas projects to be owned by Kazakhstan through a Kazakh firm in a joint venture or by KMG (Henriksen, 2013, p.26; Olcott, 2011, p. 115-116). Thus, all foreign companies had to cooperate with KMG. In 2004 KMG’s rights were promoted even further as the Kazakh government decided it should be given the right to participate in any oil and gas project it favored (Henriksen, 2013, p.26; Kaiser & Pulsipher, 2007, p.1311). Having national oil companies in resource rich countries are not unusual because it provides the state with control and extra income (Henriksen, 2013, p.26). However, it can be argued that the new regulations improved Kazakhstan´s internal balancing capabilities, as they clearly can be used as a binding strategy– where the secondary state creates a legal framework to place limits on a greater powers financial influence (Walt, 2005, p.125).

On the other hand, creating this legal framework might not have been about limiting foreign states’ financial power at all. During the research process of the energy sector, I realized that it is composed of two dimensions. In plain sight, Kazakhstan appears to manage its energy sector in line with its multi-vector policy. Behind the curtains however, I find that Nazarbayev’s son-in-law, Timur Kulibayev, controls a large part of Kazakhstan’s resource wealth through the Chairmanship of KMG, Kazakhstan’s national oil and gas company (O’Neill, 2014, p. 149). Thus, the legislation passed in 2002 and 2004, granting KMG privileges, might not have been about balancing the influence of foreign companies at all – it can just as easily have been about boosting private gain! The same argument can be made about bandwagoning behavior. Given the lack of transparency around these energy deals, what might appear to be an unequal exchange on the surface, might actually be the equivalent of an elite payday.

Furthermore, there was a development in Kazakhstan’s oil export deal with Russia. In June 2002, they signed the “Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Oil Transit” (Nurgaliyeva, 2016, p.98-99).
According to Article 5 of the agreement, “the destination and amount of Kazakhstan’s oil transit will be determined by the Russian authorities” (Nurgaliyeva, 2016, p.99). This agreement gave Russia the ability to control the oil coming from Kazakhstan and regulate the volumes. As oil export is closely linked to GDP and growth in general, having Russia in control must have been painful for Kazakhstan. However, with a lack of alternative routes, Kazakhstan most likely had no other options than to comply. This points in the direction of bandwagoning, underlined by the argument of how asymmetric dependence relationships can promote bandwagoning behavior (Walt, 1987, p. 43-44).

Kazakhstan’s energy sector also experienced a shift in U.S priorities after 9/11. The U.S engaged more with other Central Asian countries as a result of the situation in Afghanistan, and over the years one can witness a decrease in American presence in Kazakhstan (Henriksen, 2013, p. 47). Kazakhstan has not suffered as a consequence but rather strengthened its relationship to Russia and China, as is reflected in the following developments and acquisitions (Henriksen, 2013, p. 47-48).

In 2001, Kazakhstan and Russia embarked upon a joint venture in Kazakhstan. Russia’s Gazprom and KMG formed a company called “LLP KazRosGaz”. This company was tasked with developing the Karachaganak oil-gas condensate field on a mutually beneficial basis. This is one of the largest fields in the world, with reserves of more than 1,2 billion tons of liquid hydrocarbons and 1,3 trillion cubic meters of gas (Kazinform, 2015). As this large venture reflects, cooperation in the energy sector continues to be an important component of their relationship, regardless of their sporadic disagreements.

Next, in 2003 CNPC embarked upon the most ambitious pipeline project in the region: the Central-Asia Gas Pipeline (also known as the Turkmenistan- China pipeline). According to the plans, the pipeline will provide China with about 40% of its imported gas by 2020 (Olimat, 2015, p. 111). In order for Kazakhstan to enjoy the benefits of this pipeline the CNPC and KMG constructed two domestic gas pipelines to be connected with the Central-Asia Gas Pipeline (Olimat, 2015, p. 111).

Today, these two domestic pipelines, the Benyneu-Bozoy pipeline and the Bozoy- Shymkent pipeline, provide three very important advantages to Kazakhstan. First, it enables Kazakhstan to function as a gas supplier to China instead of just serving as a transit country—which
greatly benefits the economy of Kazakhstan. Second, the pipelines have made it possible for Kazakhstan to provide energy security for its southern region instead of relying on import from Russia (Aliyeva, 2017B). Third, it represents yet another important strategic step for Kazakhstan to be less reliant on Russian transportation routes. As the Kazakh Energy Minister Kanat Bozumbayev said himself (Aliyeva, 2017B):

“Historically, Kazakh gas was supplied to Europe through Russia, and it is very important that we have an alternative today.”

As mentioned before, Russia have been known to apply pressure to Central Asian states before by threatening to shut down transit routes, leaving the Central Asian states with no other alternative than to comply with Russia’s demands of lower gas prices (Vladimirov, 2015). Given all the advantages in Kazakhstan favor, this can obviously not be defined as a bandwagoning strategy – no unequal concessions in favor of China were made. As a matter of fact, it points in the balancing direction – but towards Russia. Becoming self-sufficient in the southern region, gaining another export route directed towards energy hungry China and connecting with Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan – greatly reduces Russia’s importance and leverage. This development represents an external balancing strategy for Kazakhstan, as the countries involved pool their resources to construct a pipeline that reduces dependence on other export routes (for China it reduces dependence on other gas suppliers). Furthermore, it represents an internal balancing strategy – Kazakhstan mobilizes its own resources in a way that enables it to resist stronger states by decreasing its asymmetrical dependence relationship with Russia (Walt, 2005, p. 120). The pipeline provided China with its first Kazakh gas in October 2017. The red line in Map 6 depicts the Central-Asia Gas Pipeline.

In addition to the pipeline project, CNPC launched a wave of new acquisitions in 2003, starting with strengthening its position in AktobeMunaiGas by acquiring an additional 25 percent of formerly owned government shares (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2012, p.70). At this time, AktobeMunaiGas controlled one seventh of Kazakhstan’s oil production. This energy deal raised a lot of eyebrows in Kazakhstan. Apparently, the CNPC acquired the additional 25 percent for approximately half of its market value. Former Kazakh Energy Minister and former head of Kazakhstan’s BTA Bank, Mukhtar Albyazov, claimed that Timur Kulibaev, President Nazarbayev’s son-in-law, received bribes of $170 million as part of this acquisition.
Naturally, media reports on this matter were banned in Kazakhstan and CNPC strongly refuted the allegations. Albyazov was exiled and now live in Europe. On the one hand, selling below the asking price could represent bandwagoning behavior, as it involves an unequal exchange. On the other hand, I lean towards defining it as bonding behavior – a cousin of bandwagoning behavior (Walt, 2005, p. 191). Bonding happens when close personal relationships between state officials are aimed at influencing the foreign policy of the weaker party or aimed at influencing the stronger state initiatives (Walt, 2005, p. 191). If the deal that is brokered is based on mutual respect and converging interests, and if there is no punishment involved – it qualifies as bonding. Obviously, to Kulibaev, granting China additional 25 percent of government shares in exchange for a $170 million bribe was considered a deal of converging interests.

Another suspicious deal went down in 2005. CNPC acquired Petrokazakhstan, a Canadian oil company that possessed 12 percent of Kazakhstan’s oil production and managed twelve oil-bearing fields. The Kazakh government invoked the legislation from 2002 and 2004 and only allowed Petrokazakhstan to sell to CNPC if KMG received a third of the shares. According to O’Neill (2014, p.152), it was important to the Kazakh government to gain enough shares to have some control of the strategic development decisions within the company. CNPC accepted the terms of the agreement and transferred 33% of its shares to KMG (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2012, p.71; O’Neill, 2014, p. 152). With that, CNPC gave the Kazakh national oil company a direct stake in its investment (O’Neill, 2014, p. 152). In so doing, China secured its investment by giving Kazakh political leaders and institutions an incentive to protect it. According to O’Neill (2014, p. 152-153), this is not an unusual strategy for China, which the next Chinese acquisition also will demonstrate.

On the one hand, invoking the legislation from 2002 and 2004 could represent the first example of Kazakhstan trying to balance Chinese ownership through the binding strategy (Walt, 2005, p. 145). On the other hand it could represent a bonding in terms of a bribe. However, given that it was Kazakhstan’s national oil company KMG that received the shares, and not Kulibayev in person like the 2003 AktobeMunaiGas acquisition, I lean towards the first alternative.

The next huge Chinese acquisition happened in 2009, as part of a loans-for-oil agreement during the global financial crisis. Mangistau Munay Gas came up for sale, a Kazakh company
that exploits and explores thirty sites and account for approximately 24% of Kazakhstan’s oil production and a quarter of the export (Amineh & Guang, 2012, p.97). The CNPC and KMG purchased the company together, in which KMP was granted 51% of the shares and the CNPC the remaining 49%. While it is difficult to gain information regarding the circumstances of the agreement surrounding the sale, the CNPC evidently loaned KMG $1.3 billion in order to ensure its own role in the Kazakh oil industry (O’Neill, 2014, p.153). Furthermore, additional loans of $11.7 billions were given by China to Kazakhstan in order to cope with the crisis.

Thus, China and the CNPC secured its investment once again by giving Kazakh political leaders and institutions an opportunity to participate like O’Neill argued before (2014, p. 152-153). If the circumstances were different, it is hard to tell whether or not the KMG would have exploited its right of first purchase and purchased the whole company itself or pursued cooperation with other national oil companies than China. Therefore, it is hard to evaluate whether this particular situation should be regarded at a détente, where both parties equally benefit, or if it points in the direction of bandwagoning behavior. I lean towards a détente, given that Kazakhstan were granted the controlling interest in the company, which also indicates that the CNPC recognized Kazakhstan’s legitimate interests.

All these acquisitions made China in control of about 25% of Kazakhstan’s oil production by 2010 – a rather large share considering how China had only been active in Kazakhstan for 13 years (Laruelle & Peyrouse, 2012, p.72; Junmian, 2017).

Moving on, CNPC secured its most ambitious oil project in 2013 by purchasing an 8.33% share in the Kashagan Caspian Offshore project for USD$5 billion. The shares belonged to ConocoPhillips and were supposed to be sold to India, but the government of Kazakhstan has the right of first purchase on priority bases, which it decided to exercise by selling to CNPC. This purchase represented the largest overseas acquisition by the CNPC and contributed greatly to China’s standing in Kazakhstan’s energy sector (U.S Energy Information Administration, 2017; Gordeyeva, 2013; Junmian, 2017). Even more important is the fact that the Kazakh government chose to exercise its right of first purchase in favor of China. This goes against its multi-vector policy to some extent. China was already well represented in Kazakhstan’s energy sector in 2013, thus letting India, a less involved partner, purchase
the shares would have been more in line with its multi-vector policy as it would have prevented the Chinese vector of becoming too strong.

Why favor China over India in this case? Further inquiry makes it clear that the CNPC agreed to cover half of Kazakhstan’s financing costs of the second phase of development in the Kashagan field – amounting to approximately $3 billion. Furthermore, China would provide additional loans from The China Development Bank and The Export-Import Bank of China worth respectively $3 billion and $5 billion - to Kazakhstan’s state holding firm Baiterek, which promotes innovation and industrial projects (Gordeyeva, 2013). Moreover, Xi Jinping announced this deal during his visit to Kazakhstan – where 22 agreements, worth $30 billion were concluded (Gordeyeva, 2013). Thus, one might argue that Kazakhstan’s behavior in this case also resembles a détente, where the opportunities provided by China most likely outweighed the need to balance its economic clout.

**Assessment**

If China continues the trend of developing transportation routes and continues to take part in oil extraction in Central Asia, the International Energy Agency estimates that 50% of Central Asia’s oil and gas exports could go east by 2020 – representing a historic shift in energy flows which used to go to Russia and Western Europe (Shaku, 2017). The main advantage Kazakhstan has gained by cooperating with China is obviously the alternative export routes – being landlocked have turned from a disadvantage to an advantage! The new infrastructure makes Kazakhstan a center for trade and commerce, and enables Kazakhstan to increase its export revenues. Furthermore, Chinese aid, loans, and partnerships with Kazakh oil companies enhance the Kazakh leadership’s ability to stay in power (Tian, 2018, p.29-30). Since government officials are often directly or indirectly involved in the most profitable sectors of the national economy, like for instance Timur Kulibayev, their private interests orient them toward China (Tian, 2018, p.29-30). China, on the other hand, offers development assistance and concessional loans in order to ensure its energy needs (Tian, 2018, p. 24).
4.5 The Belt and Road Initiative – the agony of golden opportunities?

Introduction

This section examines the converging and conflictive interests of Kazakhstan in relation to the BRI in order to detect balancing and/or bandwagoning strategies. It utilizes the government-affiliated *Blue Book of Non-Traditional Security* (2014-15, in: Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 5), which stipulates China’s interests in relation to the BRI, in order to evaluate whether or not Kazakhstan’s national interests converges with that of China. It finds that while the Kazakh elite is positive to further integration with China through the BRI, the Kazakh population regards China’s increased influence as a threat to their livelihoods and autonomy (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 27; Jochee, 2018, p. 74-75; Lain, 2018, p.7). Furthermore, it finds that the Kazakh population reacted to its government’s deficiency to balance Chinese influence through the BRI.

The BRI

The BRI is made up of the land based Silk Road Economic Belt represented by the red line, and the sea-based Century Maritime Silk Road, represented by the blue line in Map 9. It aims to connect Asia with Europe and eventually Africa (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017).

Map 9: China’s Belt and Road Initiative

(“China’s Belt and Road Initiative” [Picture], 2018)
Xi Jinping proposed the BRI during his visit to Astana in 2013. The main objectives of the BRI are to expand and connect transport networks and markets. By investing in pipeline systems, road, rail, port and areal infrastructure it aims to facilitate the transport of goods, capital, energy, raw material, people, information and culture (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 2).

These objectives are usually portrayed as a win-win situation for all the countries involved, but it has been suggested that the implementation of the BRI can expand China’s strategic political and economic influence in the participating states (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 5). For instance, Alexander Wolters (2018) argues that through the BRI, China is progressing unimpeded toward uncontested economic and political hegemony. Likewise, Paulo Duarte (2018) argues that the BRI expresses China’s desire to securitize its access to energy and mineral resources and that the BRI aims to achieve military, political and cultural objectives by increasing China’s capacity to project influence. It has also been argued that the BRI does not carry the characteristics of a multilateral project, as it primarily serves Chinese interests (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p.11). Similarly, it has been suggested that over the long term, the BRI’s implementation can erode Russia’s traditional dominance in the region (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 20).

Despite all these concerns over growing Chinese influence in the region, this section will argue how Chinese and Kazakh interests converge in most aspects of the BRI.

The government-affiliated Blue Book of Non-Traditional Security (2014-15) stipulates China’s interests in relation to the BRI (in Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 5). First, the BRI is expected to “safeguard China’s national economic security”. China has a particular interest in diversifying its energy suppliers in case of conflict along the Malacca strait, China’s main sea route (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p.7). It is also related to the Xinjiang autonomous region. Chinese policy holds that economic and societal development is the key to stability, and stabilizing the Xinjiang region are at the very top of domestic priorities (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p.8). By implementing the BRI, Xinjiang will become a large economic hub and core area connecting China and the Eurasian markets. As mentioned before, Kazakhstan has been worried of a possible spillover effect from the Xinjiang region, thus stabilizing efforts also serves Kazakhstan’s interests (Golunov & McDermott, 2005).

Second, the BRI is expected to promote energy security through alternative shipping routes (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 5). As evidenced in the energy section of this analysis, Kazakhstan
have taken active measures to promote alternative export routes (Aliyeva, 2017B), thus China and Kazakhstan’s interests coincide also in this matter.

Third, the BRI is expected to help combat the “three evils” within and abroad through economic development and wealth redistribution (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 5). Kazakhstan’s national strategy “Nurly Zhol” resonates well with this objective. Nurly Zhol aims at strengthening and diversifying the industrial basis of the country, distributing investment projects across different regions and sectors to further wealth distribution (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 27).

Fourth, the BRI is expected to help mitigate U.S led geopolitical machinations (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 5). As China seeks Eurasian integration as a means to achieve resource resilience and balance western influence, Kazakhstan welcomes the BRI as a means to reduce dependence on Russian export routes and markets. Another aspect of this interest has been to form an alternative to the Bretton Woods system/ the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which in China’s opinion limits developing countries opportunity to participate in decision-making (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 7). As a reaction, China launched the “Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank” in 2013. AIIB is a development bank in which all the members hold voting power over which projects are to be realized. Obviously, the voting power is distributed according to contributions made by each member state, which leaves China with 26% of the votes. This said, 75% of the votes are held by Asian countries – providing them with a greater opportunity to influence the decisions, than for instance in the IMF (Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, 2018). To demonstrate this, Chinas voting power in the IMF is 6% (International Monetary Fund, 2018). Thus, one can understand Chinas argument of how the voting power within the IMF does not reflect the current global power status.

Lastly, the BRI is expected to build a new international system of discourse and a new international security order that enhances China’s comprehensive national power and cultural soft power (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 5). This aim is also reflected in China’s 2014 “New Asian Security Concept” (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 9). In this paper the Jinping administration takes a more active stance on how China should establish a new Asian security order, in which China would have an agenda-setting role. This objective is not as overlapping with Kazakh interests as the other ones discussed above.
First of all, one must consider the strong security relationship Kazakhstan has with Russia. Russia has been, and continues to be, Kazakhstan’s main ally, as evidence provided in the third chapter concludes. If China were to seek a leading security position in Kazakhstan, Russia would most likely oppose, as is its right. Remember, through the CSTO Russia has the veto power to oppose any foreign militaries on CSTO soil, and the CSTO has a clause on how its members are not allowed to enter any other alliances (Collective Security Treaty Organization, 2002; Stein, 2017, p.13). If there were to develop any “new security concepts”, Russia would most likely secure its own role through the framework of the CSTO, SCO or the EEU. This argument can be exemplified with the introduction of the BRI. Russia was not overly enthusiastic when the BRI was proposed. It took two years before Russia officially endorsed it, and it only endorsed it after ensuring its own role through BRI cooperation with the EEU (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 39). The official argument is that the EEU and the BRI compliment each other.

Second, one must consider the Sinophobic sentiments in the Kazakh population. China is still viewed through the prism of distrust and fear – Soviet clichés of China as an enemy still lingers (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 27). As will be presented in the next chapter, political discourse and public opinion of China’s increased influence differs a great deal. While the ruling elite in Kazakhstan welcomes Chinese initiatives and investments, the local population is worried about Chinese migration, loss of national identity, loss of local products competitiveness and loss of autonomy (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 27; Jochec, 2018, p. 74-75; Lain, 2018, p.7). These fears were demonstrated by the Kazakh population in 2016, when government contracts proposing to rent agricultural land to China sparked the largest protest Kazakhstan has seen since independence (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 27; Lain, 2018, p. 7). Apparently, the Kazakh population has grave concerns regarding the effect of the BRI according to Dave (2018, p. 102);

“The protests were ignited by the fears about the rapid pace of Chinese investment under SREB (Silk Road Economic Belt), which was seen as turning Kazakhstan into a vast transit corridor, opening up the country’s rich resources for exploitation by China, and making the country a “dumping ground” for China’s surplus production”

Nazarbayev took measures to ensure his people were heard – he fired his national economy and agriculture ministers, placed a moratorium on land reform, and created a special
committee on the issue (Toktomushev, 2018). As a result of the civil unrest, the next BRI agricultural agreement of US$ 1.9 billion with China had to publicly emphasize that Chinese companies were not allowed to own land (Bizhanova, 2018). This demonstrates that even if the Kazakh elite is ready for China to take a leading role, the Kazakh population is not.

All in all, most of China’s objectives for the BRI resonate well with the leadership in Kazakhstan. It facilitates investments and development of Kazakhstan’s agricultural sector and modernization of manufacturing industry, which is specifically targeted in its national “Nurly Zholy” strategy. In fact, President Nazarbayev signed a declaration of coordination between BRI and “Nurly Zholy” in 2015 during his visit to Beijing (Tian, 2018, p. 26, 30). During a presidential meeting in Akorda in June 2017, President Nazarbayev expressed his gratitude towards China and praised Xi Jinping in relation to the BRI:

"You put forward this initiative here [BRI, in Kazakhstan] and we actively supported the Silk Road route and the Nurly zholy program. Over these years Kazakhstan linked China, the Caspian Sea, the Khorgos Gateway and Almaty city by railway. As a result, we've solved the issue of bridging Kazakhstan and the entire Central Asia with China"

(Kazinform.kz, 2017)

However, nationalistic sentiments in the population proved to be somewhat of a turning point for Kazakhstan in relation to the BRI – Nazarbayev basically had to make a choice between “striking” down his own people or give concessions to nationalistic sentiments in order to calm the civil unrest (Dave, 2018, p. 102). He chose the latter. This has symbolic value. It signals Nazarbayev, and the elite, are somewhat constrained by nationalistic sentiments in the population, thus not able to engage in the level of integration China desires. This cannot be regarded as state balancing behavior per se, but rather as a public reaction to the lack of it. To the Kazakh population, Chinese investments, migrant workers, goods and culture represent a threat. A threat they deemed it necessary to oppose, and if you will, balance by the means of protesting. This poses a challenge to the Kazakh government in its future relations with China, particularly related to the BRI. It may have to balance its national interests alongside the conflicting interests of its population – embodying the very agony of golden opportunities. In any case, for the implementation and development of the BRI to go as smoothly as possible, it is clear that Kazakhstan has to take measures to change the public perception of China.
Assessment

In short, this section finds that Kazakhstan’s interests converge with those of China. Furthermore, it identifies no attempts of Kazakhstan engaging in balancing or bandwagoning behavior. For Kazakhstan, the BRI should be regarded as a win-win situation, as Kazakhstan greatly benefits from new infrastructure that facilitates further economic development. Thus, it would be unreasonable to characterize President Nazarbayev’s decision to sign a declaration of coordination between the BRI and “Nurly Zhol” as a realignment strategy – most of all because there is no punishment involved. In regards to the reaction of the Kazakh people, one could argue that they reacted to the Kazakh government’s failure to balance the impact that follows Chinese investments, such as migrant workers and Chinese culture. As such, Kazakhstan’s response of promoting land reforms and creating a special committee on the issue, should probably be regarded as a response to the people, and not as a response to increased Chinese influence.

4.6 Evaluation of findings in the economic sphere

This section will address the various strategies that have been identified throughout this chapter. It will discuss the main findings, and to what extent they indicate balancing or bandwagoning behavior. The main emphasis is on the energy sector, as the energy deals provide the most convincing evidence in relation to the research question.

The economic sphere has found evidence of Kazakhstan engaging in internal balancing behavior through the strategy of reducing asymmetrical dependence relationships. By cooperating with China, amongst others, Kazakhstan has sought to reduce its dependence on Russian infrastructure through diversification of export routes like the BTC pipeline and the Central-Asia Gas pipeline (Henriksen, 2013, p. 47; Nurgaliyeva, 2016, p.99). Likewise, Kazakhstan has diversified its export and import, evidenced by how Kazakhstan’s export pattern changed in favor of China in 2007 (UNSD, 2018).

Furthermore, the energy sector provided evidence of balking behavior– an external balancing strategy where weaker states collectively block the will or influence of a greater power (Walt, 2005, p. 130, 141). When Kazakhstan voted yes to the BTC-pipeline (Mouawad, 2008),
Despite Russian opposition, it signaled a willingness to act against Russian wishes in order to provide national energy security.

Nevertheless, the energy sector of the analysis has also identified evidence that point in the direction of bandwagoning behavior with Russia, as what appears to be unequal concessions were made. First of all, when the development rights of the Caspian Sea were divided among the littoral states, Kazakhstan granted Russia access to sites that could, by other division methods, belong at least in part to Kazakhstan (Henriksen 2013, p.46). A statement from a Kazakh official in relation to this deal however, draws this finding into question, as he argued that the exchanges were balanced in terms of volumes (O’Lear, 2005). The second finding indicating bandwagoning behavior with Russia, is the transit deal of 2002. When Kazakhstan decided to sign the “Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Oil Transit” (Nurgaliyeva, 2016, p.98-99), it gave up its right to influence the amount of transit volumes going through Russia. As no other alternative route were in place by then, one might even argue that Kazakhstan’s weak bargaining position left it with no other alternative than to comply with Russian demands.

Through the strategy of binding, Kazakhstan has ensured its own role in the energy sector by passing legislation that requires KMG to partake in strategic development projects. In relation to this, Kazakhstan exercised its rights in relation to energy deals with China in 2005 and 2009 throughout the sale of Petrokazakhstan and Mangistau Munay Gas (O’Neill, 2014, p.152; Amineh & Guang, 2012, p.97). This does to some extent represent an internal balancing strategy against Chinese ownership, although one might argue that it resembles more of a détente – as both parties’ involved benefitted from cooperation.

The energy section also found evidence of Kazakhstan possibly engaging in a bonding strategy with China. Bonding happens when close personal relationships between state officials are aimed at influencing the foreign policy of the weaker party or aimed at influencing the stronger state initiatives (Walt, 2005, p. 191). When Timur Kulibayev received a bribe in relation to the sale of additional 25 percent of AktobeMunaiGaz to the CNPC (O’Neill, 2014, p. 152), one might argue that China influenced Kazakhstan’s foreign policy through personal relationships in the energy sector.
In relation to the research question, this chapter has not found convincing evidence of bandwagoning behavior in relation to China’s rise. The evidence in favor of balancing behavior, through the binding strategy, may be drawn into question, as the majority of the deals points more in the direction of a détente, meaning that the parties involved consider the concessions to be roughly equal and based on legitimate interests. After all, the fact that China on occasions has transferred shares to the KMG can be interpreted as China acknowledging Kazakhstan’s legitimate interest to partake in the strategic development of its national resources. Likewise, when Kazakhstan has exercised its right of first purchase in favor of China, it has not done so by coercion, but rather because it benefits from granting China access.
5. The Official and Social sphere

5.1 Introduction

Perceptions play a huge part in Walt’s theory, thus examining the perceptions of China in various levels of Kazakh society might provide important evidence of whether or not China is perceived as a threat. Of course, one might also find evidence of certain bandwagoning or balancing strategies. Likewise, if there is a discrepancy in the findings at the various levels, it might indicate that further integration with China can become problematic in the future. This section will examine how the official policy towards China, and how the media and population of Kazakhstan perceive China as a partner.

It finds that the perception of China is dual. In terms of the state-to-state relationship, political and economic cooperation between China and Central Asia is developing well and is positively promoted in Kazakhstan’s official policy. However, any expansion of Chinese involvement in Kazakhstan’s economy also trigger pushbacks and enhances the negative perception of China in the local public discourse. Likewise, the media is divided. Private papers prove to be more negative and suspicious of China, than state-owned papers, which are mainly positive.

5.2 Kazakhstan’s Official Policy towards China

The political elite has displayed a positive image of China ever since President Nazarbayev announced his Kazakhstan-2030 strategy in 1997. The following transcript highlights Nazarbayev’s perception of Chinese policy:

“To ensure our independence and territorial integrity, we must be a strong state and maintain friendly relations with our neighbours, which is why we shall develop and consolidate relations of confidence and equality with our closest and historically equal neighbour – Russia. Likewise we shall develop just as confident and good-neighbourly relations with the People’s Republic of China on a mutually advantageous basis. Kazakhstan welcomes the policy pursued by China for it is aimed against hegemonism and favours friendship with neighboring countries”.

It is not surprising that Kazakhstan welcomes the policy of China, given the nature of its regime. The policy pursued by China, which Nazarbayev refers to, has a clear emphasis on the principles of non-interference, regime support, and an aversion to any form of externally induced regime change. The inflow of Chinese money has bolstered state power and the firm grip of authoritarian political elites in Kazakhstan (Dave, 2018, p.97, 100; Tian, 2018, p. 28, 33). Thus, the political elites in authoritarian states are more receptive to Chinese development assistance than others.

In 2002 the President Nazarbayev and President Jiang Zemin signed the “China-Kazakhstan Good-Neighborly Treaty of Friendship”, which formulated a long-term plan for the future development of bilateral ties. During the signing of the document, Nazarbayev stated that Kazakhstan supports the One-China policy and that there would be no official talks with Taiwan (en.people.cn, 2002). One might ask why Kazakhstan was willing to support the One-China policy and if this represents an alignment of foreign policy in line with Walt (2005, p. 183), where Kazakhstan risks being punished if it refused? In other words, does it represent a bandwagoning strategy? According to Laurelle (2018, p. x, xi), Beijing expects recipient countries of aid and financial support to be loyal to the “One-China” policy, which includes refusal to engage with Taiwan, silence on the Tibetan issue, and cooperation or support on the Uighur issue. During Nazarbayev’s visit to Peking University in China later that year, he spoke highly of the treaty and said that:

“There are no conflicts but many similarities between Kazakhstan and China. The two countries share the same stand on such issues as combating terrorism, separatism and extremism, and establishing new political and economic orders in a fair and rational way”.

(China.org.cn, 2002).

As President Nazarbayev demonstrates, he has a clear focus on the similarities between the two countries and he opens up for a new political and economic order. With this in mind, it is not unreasonable to draw the conclusion of how affirming the One-China policy might have been the price to pay for additional Chinese financial support – and that a refusal might have caused China to respond by withholding financial means or by orchestrating sanctions. India has refused to acknowledge the One China policy before, which resulted in suspension of all forms of bilateral military ties and joint exercises from 2010 to 2012 (Smith, 2016).
Similarly, Beijing has posed sanctions related to the Tibetan issue. When Mongolia hosted the Dalai Lama in 2017, Beijing responded by imposing fees on commodity imports from Mongolia, and by charging additional transit costs on goods passing through a border crossing into China’s northern region of Inner Mongolia (Shepherd, 2017). Likewise, Norway was punished with sanctions towards its salmon industry, when Liu Xiaobo was granted the Nobel Peace price (Huang & Steger, 2017). As diversifying trade and political affiliations has been an important strategic step for Kazakhstan, it is not unlikely that it feared being punished and therefore chose to accommodate China on this matter. Thus, the decision to publicly embrace the One China policy might be related to the bandwagoning strategy of realignment (in line with Walt, 2005, p. 183).

Furthermore, the two parties signed the “Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Kazakhstan on the Establishment and Development of Strategic Partnership” in 2005. This agreement aimed at improving communications and collaboration in protecting the permanent stability and sustainable development of the region (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 2005). Once again Nazarbayev reiterated his support for the One-China policy and the Chinese Anti-Secession Law. President Hu Jintao supported the accession of Kazakhstan to the World Trade Organization in return, pointing more in the direction of a détente.

In 2011, official China-Kazakhstan bilateral ties reached new heights. During President Hu Jintau’s visit to Astana he and President Nazarbayev signed a joint declaration announcing their countries intention to develop an “all-round strategic partnership” (Clarke, 2014, p. 141). The two sides pledged to maintain a frequent exchange of visits between leaders and strengthen comprehensive communication and cooperation between governments, legislatures, political parties, social groups, enterprises and financial institutes. They also pledged to continuously promote mutual understanding and trust (Kazinform.kz, 2011). Once again Nazarbayev reiterated his support for the One-China policy and its goal of peaceful reunification. Jintao expressed his support for the efforts made by Kazakhstan’s government in safeguarding national sovereignty and territorial integrity (Kazinform.kz, 2011; McDermott, 2011). The preamble of the “All-round Strategic Partnership” however, clarifies:
“This partnership is not an alliance. Nor is it targeted at any third nation. Regardless of how the international and regional situations change, the development of an all-round strategic partnership between China and Kazakhstan is a diplomatic priority for both countries.”

(In: McDermott, 2011)

Whether this is an attempt to avoid provoking Russia, remains unknown. Regardless, this represents a deepening of bilateral security ties. While it does not represent any moves towards a security alliance, it is clear from the rest of the text that Beijing is interested in supporting Kazakhstan’s territorial integrity, which implies that China is riding on its economic power to promote its political influence – perhaps leading to more extensive security commitments in the future (McDermott, 2011). This view is supported by Jinping (2017) to some extent. Ahead of Jinping’s visit to Astana in 2017, he published a letter titled “May China-Kazakhstan Relationship Fly High Toward Our Shared Aspirations,” to the Kazakh people. It reads:

“We should put in place bilateral security mechanisms for the Belt and Road cooperation to ensure the security of the oil and gas pipelines and other large cooperation projects undertaken by our two countries. We will protect the legitimate rights and interests and the personal and property safety of our citizens and companies”

(Jinping, 2017)

His suggestion might cause a problem, however, given that Kazakhstan’s population perceives increased Chinese influence as a threat to their livelihoods (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 27; Joche, 2018, p. 74-75; Lain, 2018, p.7). However, both presidents acknowledge this problem, and they intend to counter it by increasing cultural exchanges. Jinping addressed this in the same letter:

“We need to develop programs that help bring our people closer. We will work more actively to promote people-to-people and cultural exchanges. We should promote mutual understanding and mutual appreciation between our people through the establishment of cultural centers in each other’s country, the joint operation of institutions of higher education and the exchange of films, television programs and literature works”

(Jinping, 2017)
Likewise, after the election of President Jinping in 2018, President Nazarbayev underlined the importance of developing friendships between their peoples, and their close and personal relationship, in his congratulatory telegram:

"I believe that under your leadership, China will reach even greater heights on the path of building a moderately prosperous society. I have no doubt that in the future strategic cooperation between Kazakhstan and China in various spheres will continue its dynamic development, and friendship between our peoples will be further strengthened. In this regard, our personal friendship based on trust and mutual understanding is of particular importance. I am confident that our relations and joint efforts will continue to be a solid foundation for fruitful cooperation between Astana and Beijing."

(Kazinform, 2018)

In this paragraph, Nazarbayev refers to the strengthening of the friendship between their peoples, vaguely acknowledging that the current “friendship” might not be optimal for future development. This can be evidenced by how both political elites have tried to improve and promote people-to-people relationships through student mobility, cultural exchanges, and tourism promotion (Xi Jinping, 2017; Laruelle, 2018, p.xi; Dave, 2018, p. 98, 105, 107). Nevertheless, Nazarbayev’s telegram highlights their personal relationship, thus relates to the strategy of “bonding” in accordance with Walt (2005, p. 191, 193). A consequence of close relationships can be that the weaker state visibly aligns its policy with the great power – as it appears Nazarbayev is doing in this case. By promoting mutual trust and a close personal relationship to Xi, Nazarbayev might hope to influence Xi’s future economic initiatives in accordance with Kazakhstan’s national interests. Still, their relationship thus far seems to be based on mutual respect and converging interests, so one cannot label it as direct bandwagoning behavior – one must rather stick to the label of “bonding”, because there is lack of evidence proving that Kazakhstan tolerates illegitimate actions or is trying to avoid punishment by China. Furthermore he stresses the importance of their personal relationship and mutual trust. After all, China has proved to be a reliable provider of loans and assistance in times of need (ref: financial crisis 2008). This has proved to be an invaluable asset for the Kazakh regime and helped them consolidate their rule and promote development in times where the economy normally would have plummeted (O’Neill, 2014, p.153).
Thus, the assessment is that Kazakhstan’s official policy remains positive towards further integration with China, although one might detect some realignment of policies and bonding strategies related to bandwagoning behavior on Kazakhstan’s behalf. These concessions however, are not overwhelmingly unequal—Kazakhstan has gained a great deal on deepening its ties with China as well. Therefore, Kazakhstan’s tendency to bandwagon is considered weak at best.

5.3 The Media

Introduction

Peyrouse (2016, p. 14) argues that China’s growing presence and influence in Central Asia partially structures the domestic orders, social changes, and national narratives of the states involved. Authoritarian states, such as Kazakhstan, can use the media to promote the government’s agenda and direct the national narrative on issues such as “the Chinese question”. Therefore, how China will intensify its presence in the region will depend partly on the Central Asian states themselves (Peyrouse 2016, p. 14). Furthermore, Peyrouse (2016, p. 14) argues that the rise of Sinophilia and Sinophobia will impact the political, geo-strategic and cultural situation in the region, working either to slow down or speed up Chinese integration. In line with this argument, exclusively positive reports across state-owned and private media would indicate advancement in Chinese integration. If however, the reports are found to be exclusively negative, or if there is a discrepancy between state-owned and private media— in which the private is negative, it would indicate that there is a presence of Sinophobia, which can hamper Chinese cooperation.

Thus, exploring the narratives of the Kazakh media on Kazakh-Chinese cooperation becomes important to this analysis. Information on how private and state-owned media portrays the Kazakh-Chinese relationship indicates how the Kazakh elite wants to reflect its relationship with China to the public, and it indicates to some extent how the population holding nationalist sentiments responds to the government’s foreign policy.

The findings in this section reveal that private Russian and Kazakh newspapers are more critical towards the governments foreign policy than state-owned papers, which usually portraits Chinese cooperation in a positive way.
Research on Kazakh media

Burkanov and Chen (2016, p. 2129-2148) conducted a discourse analysis of Russian and Kazakh state-owned and private newspapers in Kazakhstan. They investigated how “Chinese migration and tourism”, “political cooperation” and “economic cooperation” were reported in four of Kazakhstan’s nationwide papers from August 2013 to January 2015. Not surprisingly, the views towards China and the Chinese are divided. They found that the official discourse in state sponsored papers concurs with the country’s policy of further engagement with China, while private Kazakh newspapers depicted negative stereotypes and Sinophobia. The Russian papers also reflect the same trend to some extent, though the private papers are found to be mixed in its perception of China. These trends were consistent in all three categories.

Table 4: Perception of China in Russian and Kazakh Newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Russian language newspapers</th>
<th>Kazakh language newspapers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public/ state-owned</td>
<td><em>Kazakhstanskaia Pravda</em>:</td>
<td><em>Egemen Qazaqstan</em>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td><em>Vremia</em>:</td>
<td><em>Zhas Alash</em>:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mixed views with</td>
<td>Critical and negative</td>
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<td></td>
<td>inclinations towards hidden</td>
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<td></td>
<td>criticism.</td>
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Burkhanov continued to conduct research on the Kazakh media (2018, p. 153-161). In 2018 he published a new discourse analysis of Russian and Kazakh newspapers and some online journals, in which he concentrated on news from 2017. The articles he explored were related to Chinese migration, land ownership, treatment of Kazakh people in Chinese companies, treatment of Kazakh people living in Xinjiang, and cross-cultural marriages. He found that most Russian newspapers portraits Kazakh-China cooperation in positive or neutral tones (particularly state-owned *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda*). In contrast, he found that Kazakh newspapers (*Zhas Alash, Turkestan.kz, Abai.kz, Juldizdar.kz*) took a rather hostile position on cooperation with China. The lack of transparency on the government’s behalf concerning energy deals and loans from China are reported to have a negative impact on already existing fears in the Kazakh population (Burkhanov, 2018, p. 160).
Similarly, Boldurukova (2015, p.1377) conducted a content analysis to discover the presence of Sinophobia in Kazakhstan’s top 10 Internet sites from 2006 -2015. The study focused on how Chinese labor migration were portrayed in the mass media, and found 228 articles related to the following keywords: “the Chinese migration”, “the Chinese migrants”, “Chinese in Kazakhstan”, “the Chinese diaspora”, “the Chinese expansion”, “yellow threat”, and “the Chinese danger”. It further analyzed the character of publications according to the content, and divided them into three categories: “positive”, “negative” and “neutral”. 43 publications were found to have a positive character (19 percent), 119 to have a negative character (52 percent), and the remaining to be neutral.

Boldurukova (2015) does not identify whether the Internet sites are privately owned or owned by the state. Further inquiry however, reveals that all but one are “private”. To some surprise, the “private” ones are affiliated to Dariga Nazarbayeva (daughter of President Nazarbayev), Timur Kulibayev (son-in-law of President Nazarbayev), Karim Masimov (former prime minister), and Bulat Utemuratov (former chief administrator) (Fergananews, 2017).

This has implications for all the presented studies in this section. Bulat Utemuratov owns Zhas Alash, represented in the first and second study. Nazarbayeva (daughter) owns Turkestan.kz and Kulibayev (son-in-law) owns Abai.kz, also represented in the second study (Fergananews, 2017). Thus, one might ask how independent these papers are? This question is close to impossible to answer because we do not know (and will probably never find out) to what extent the owners are involved in the production of news and if their personal ties to the President affects how they report on China. Thus we cannot tell if the critical sentiments expressed in these papers represent the opinions of the Kazakh population or the elite. The close personal ties to the President also beg the question of whether the private newspapers critical stance on certain issues serves a government agenda? Imitating a pluralist media culture might be thought to have an appeasing effect on the nationalist population. On the other hand, if these papers are not independent and do not serve the government’s agenda, could it be that the Kazakh elite is divided on the “Chinese question”? Could the critical assessments concerning China come from the Kazakh elite?
Regardless of the affiliations to the Presidential family, the private newspapers and Internet sites are found to be more critical and negative on matters regarding China. In contrast, the state owned papers, who’s affiliation to Nazarbayev is clear, portraits Chinese cooperation in a way that concurs with the regimes foreign policy. This section could not conclude whether the critical views expressed in private newspapers can be attributed to the population or the elite due to a lack of transparency regarding ownership and control of the papers. In any case, as the next section will make clear: Sinophobia exist in Kazakhstan and it can possibly slow down integration with China, like Peyrouse (2016, p.14) suggests.

5.4 Public perception of China

Introduction

In this section of the chapter, I will examine the Kazakh populations’ preference for Chinese involvement in political, economic and sociocultural spheres. Even though the population of Kazakhstan has limited opportunities for influencing the government’s policies towards China, their preferences might diverge in terms of what role China should be allowed to play in the country. If the population expresses a preference for China, one might assume that the local governments and population supports the Kazakh governments desire to integrate with China. If the population does not express a preference for China, one might assume that the population does not support further integration with China. One might ask if the population’s preferences even matter in an authoritarian state? As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the Kazakh population has publicly opposed the governments leasing policy before (Dave, 2018, p. 102; Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p. 27; Lain, 2018, p. 7). Through massive demonstrations the population signaled its discontent towards the governments “China policy”. Thus, the population’s preferences might provide some answers in terms of whether they accept or oppose Chinese influence. Welcoming Chinese influence might be regarded as an individual’s tendency to bandwagon, while opposing Chinese influence might be regarded as an individual’s tendency to balance.

This section will mainly rely on the "Integration Barometer-2017” report, published by The Eurasian Development Bank (2017). The goal of the report is to measure the public attitudes towards integration in the Post-Soviet space, in particular EAEU member states. The preferences of the respondents are measured in thee dimensions: political, economic and
sociocultural. 1199 people from Kazakhstan responded to the survey (Eurasian Development Bank, p. 98).

This section finds that the Kazakhs population does not express a preference for China in either dimension. The political dimension confirms that the Kazakh population supports Kazakhstan’s official policy and engagement with Russia through the alliance strategy. Moreover, it supports the perception of China as a possible threat, which to some extent accentuates the previous findings in the military sphere of Kazakhstan’s balancing behavior against China. However, the findings in the political dimension also indicate that China’s perceived friendliness has increased, which stands in contrast to China being labeled as the second largest threat. Furthermore, the Kazakh population expresses a preference for Russia and members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in economic and sociocultural dimension.

**Political attraction.**

This dimension will provide us with information about how the Kazakh population perceives its interstate relationships with other countries. By examining which countries the Kazakh population perceives as friendly, unfriendly and a threat, one can get an idea of which countries the Kazakh population feels politically close to and which countries the population prefers integration with. In addition, by examining which countries the Kazakh population would provide military assistance to and are willing to accept help from, one can find out to what extent these close political ties are reciprocated. The first question asked in the survey were related to perceived friendliness:

“Which of the countries listed below do you think are friendly to our country (are likely to support it at a difficult time)?”

The Kazakh respondents placed Russia as the most attractive country, Belarus second and Kyrgyzstan third (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.10). Russia clearly enjoys a high level of trust in the Kazakh population, having 81 % of the respondents listing it as the friendliest country. Common history, language and culture most likely contribute to Kazakh’s perception of Russian friendliness.

1 The three most attractive countries are those with the highest average preference scores for
The report also measured the respondents overall attraction to “CIS countries”, “EU member states” and “other countries of the world”. From 2012-2017 the Kazakh respondents have consistently shown a preference for CIS countries. During these years, between 89-92 percent of the respondents list at least one CIS country as friendly. In comparison, between 14 and 23 percent of the Kazakh respondents named at least one EU member state as friendly, and between 21 and 34 percent named at least one country of the world as friendly. Thus, overall, the Kazakh respondents find CIS countries most attractive (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.27).

The report however, makes it clear that China experienced an improvement in regards to perceived friendliness in Kazakhstan – it went from 9 percent in 2016 to 16 percent in 2017 (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.10). Likewise, China’s perceived unfriendliness went down from 22 percent to 15 percent from 2016 to 2017 (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.32). This decrease signals that the Kazakh population considers China’s propensity to conflict and posed level of threat to be lower in 2017 than in 2016. However, despite the decrease in perceived unfriendliness, China is still considered one of the greatest threats to Kazakhstan by Kazakh respondents. When asked what specific country poses the greatest threat, the Kazakh respondents listed the U.S. as adversary number 1, China as number 2 and Ukraine as number 3, with 17, 15 and 9 percent, respectively (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.31, 33). The report also measured the respondents overall threat perception of “CIS countries”, “EU member states” and “other countries of the world”. From 2013-2017 the Kazakh respondents have consistently reported they feel most threatened by “other countries in the world”. Between 32 and 40 percent of the respondents name at least one country from this cluster they feel threatened by (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.30).

These findings signal that the Kazakh population feels politically close to Russia and prefers integration with Russia and other CIS countries, rather other countries like for instance China. While they signal an improvement in perceived friendliness of China, China is still considered one of the main adversaries by the Kazakh population. As discussed in the media section, the current threat perception of China can be related to Chinese migration flows, the question of land ownership, treatment of Kazakh people in Chinese companies, treatment of Kazakh people living in Xinjiang and fear of China’s hidden expansionist intentions. It can also be related to lack of transparency surrounding Chinese energy deals and loans on the government’s behalf (Laurelle, 2018, p. 107; Burkhanov, 2018, p. 158- 159; Peyrouse, 2015).
Mutual military and political support is a second key indicator of political proximity between countries (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.34). Two aspects were considered in this matter: who is the country in question willing to help and from whom are they willing to accept help from? Kazakhstan was the country most willing to provide military and political assistance to other CIS members – 67% of respondents noted this as a possibility (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.34). In comparison, 54 % of Russian respondents said the same. In more specific terms, the top three countries the Kazakh respondents are willing to help are Russia (57%), Kyrgyzstan (24%) and Belarus (23%). Russians on the other hand, are willing to provide assistance to Belarus (42%), Kazakhstan (33%) and Armenia (23%) (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.36). Thus, the perception of close political ties between Kazakhstan and Russia are mutual.

The respondents of Kazakhstan were unfortunately not asked the reverse question: which country they would be willing to accept help from. The question of perceived friendliness however, does indicate to some extent that Kazakh respondents find it likely that Russia would assist it during a difficult time. Kazakhstan’s CSTO membership also suggests that help is most likely to come from Russia. In fact, Russia is perceived as the country most likely to provide military assistance, with a six-country average of 66% in 2017. Kazakhstan came in a distant second with a 12% six-country average (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.36). Given how Russia and Kazakhstan are considered the most prominent members of the CSTO, this is not surprising. Somewhat unexpected though, the third and fourth positions are held by China (10%) and the U.S (8%) and not by former Soviet republics. Russia (23-31 %), Tajikistan (14-17%) and Belarus (13-16%) listed China as one of their top three preferred countries to receive military assistance from during the 2015-2017 surveys (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p. 40). This might indicate that China is not perceived as an expansionist threat to the populations in Russia, Belarus and Tajikistan.

Given that leasing land to China sparked huge protests in Kazakhstan, I find it unlikely that the Kazakh population would accept military assistance from China in difficult times. A Kazakh expert survey conducted in 2006, reported by Peyrouse (2016, p. 19), might offer some support to this argument. When 30 Kazakh experts were asked about China’s capacity to improve regional security, 44 percent thought Beijing would be unable to yield any interventional capacity at all in a short-term perspective. Only 20 percent of the experts
thought China were going to be a major player in Central Asian security. Furthermore, none of the experts believed that Chinese policy was fully compatible with Central Asian interests, as is repeatedly portrayed in the media (Peyrouse, 2016, p 19). In fact, 75 percent of the Kazakhstani experts reckoned that China’s increasing geopolitical influence could have a contradictory effect and run counter to the interests of the Central Asian republics (Peyrouse, 2015, p 19). The survey also enlightens us in terms of who Kazakhstan considers its number one partner. 50 percent of the experts placed Russia above the U.S and China, and none of the experts placed China first (Peyrouse, 2016, p 19). The majority of the experts also made it clear that if they were ever to be in a situation of serious destabilization, they would only accept a military intervention by Russia. They further hold that the arrival of Chinese troops on Central Asian territory would not only be opposed by local governments, but by the population as well, not ruling out the possibility of violent reactions (Peyrouse, 2016, p. 19).

According to Peyrouse (2016, p.19, 20) the potential of Chinese military presence in Kazakhstan is widely decried in the media and populist books. They are alarmed by China’s military reforms and the massive investments in military technology, and urge the Central Asian governments to act with precaution (Peyrouse, 2016, p.19). Peyrouse (2016, p. 20) also report that Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Tajik newspapers frequently publish discourses on the “Chinese expansion” (tikhaia ekspansia). These ideas are still influenced by Soviet propaganda, where China were the historical enemy that pursuits its imperial objectives in a hidden manner across several centuries.

Assessment of political attraction

The findings of the Eurasian Development Bank (2017) and the expert opinions reported in Peyrouse (2016) converge on a great number of aspects regarding the Kazakh population’s political attraction towards China. First of all, they both reflect the close alliance ties to Russia, by noting that the Kazakh population would provide help to Russia, and only accept help from Russia in case of a crisis. Kazakh experts also list Russia as their number one partner. Second, it becomes clear that the Kazakh population is not politically attracted to China. This is evidenced by a number of findings. First, Kazakh respondents list China as adversary number 2. Second, China is considered to be unfriendly – most likely to pose a threat or enter into conflict with, by Kazakh respondents. Third, Kazakh experts consider China’s military reforms and massive investments in military technology as a threat.
Fourth, none of the Kazakh experts believe that Chinese policy is compatible to that of the Central Asian states. Lastly, the experts hold that the arrival of Chinese troops on Central Asian territory will be opposed by local governments and the population.

Regardless of the improvements in China’s perceived friendliness, Kazakh respondents continue to display an “inwards orientation” as they respond that they would most likely provide political and military assistance to post-Soviet states. Another interesting finding, noted by the Eurasian Development Bank (2017, p. 33), is how Kazakhstan is the only Central Asian country to list China as a possible adversary. This suggests that nationalist sentiments have a strong position in the Kazakh population, which might pose a challenge to the Kazakh government in the future.

**Economic attraction**

Examining the current status of economic interaction is necessary to evaluate public support for integration with any given state. Consumer preferences reveal information of which countries the populaces prefer to be in business with. As the Eurasian Development Bank (2017, p. 41) argues, a consumer indirectly demonstrates a certain level of loyalty to economic cooperation with the country it purchases goods from, thus the consumer’s behavior indicates which country the consumer perceives as an integration partner. Given how the Kazakhstan has pursued economic integration with China, and how the population has expressed worries of loosing their market share to Chinese goods, it will be interesting to examine the preferences of the Kazakh respondents.

Not surprisingly, Russia is by far the most desired country to buy goods from according to 55 percent of the Kazakh respondents. It should be noted that during the last six years, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have demonstrated consistently higher loyalty to Russian goods than the other CIS countries (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.43). Goods from Turkey and Germany come in second and third place according to the Kazakh respondents. Given the disclosed information from previous chapters, it is not particularly surprising that the Kazakh respondents do not prefer Chinese goods.

As for preferred sources of capital, Kazakh respondents list Russia (39%), Germany (26%) and Japan (22%) as their top 3 choices (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.46). Considering the vast investments provided by China in relation to the BRI and Kazakhstan’s
energy sector, I find it particularly interesting that the Kazakh respondents do not list China as one of the top 3 countries. There can be several reasons for why this is. First of all, the report reveals that the best-educated respondents of Kazakhstan were more interested in receiving investments from Arab Islamic states, India, China and the U.S than the respondents with lower education (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.12). It is not unlikely that the respondents with higher education are more aware of the potential benefits related to economic cooperation with China than the respondents with lower education. Second, as mentioned in the media section of this chapter, the lack of transparency surrounding Chinese loans and energy deals might effect how the Kazakh respondents perceive Chinese cooperation (Laurelle, 2018; Burkhanov, 2018, p. 158, 159; Peyrouse, 2016). Deals signed and sealed behind closed doors might fuel suspicions of corruption and Chinese co-optation of the Kazakh elite and energy sector. Third, China often brings Chinese workers to its foreign projects, thus Chinese investments might not be preferable due to fear of Chinese migration (Burkhanov, 2018).

Another indicator of economic attraction in the report is the preference displayed in scientific and technological cooperation. The general trend in the CIS countries is to list Russia as the most desirable partner for scientific and technological cooperation. This is true for the people living in Kazakhstan as well, where the preference for Russia as a partner has increased from 41 percent to 51 percent from 2016 to 2017 (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.49). One would perhaps expect China to make the Kazakh respondents top 3 list, given the extent of technological cooperation on diverse projects in the energy sector – but surprisingly enough the second and third place is occupied by Japan and Germany (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p. 49). This might be due to the same reasons listed above – low levels of education, lack of transparency and fear of Chinese migration.

The fear of Chinese migration is reflected to some extent when the Kazakh respondents were asked: “From which countries would it be desirable to have temporary and permanent workers, students, specialists come to our country in search of employment or education?” Again, the Kazakh respondents answered Russia, Germany and Japan. However, once again the report identifies a discrepancy in answers from respondents with high education. Kazakh respondents with higher education would rather have specialists arriving from EU member states, the USA and China, than would respondents with only secondary education (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.12,14).
Some sociologic studies reported by Peyrouse (2016, p. 21) on the question of Chinese immigration and how it impacts the Kazakh domestic labor market and culture, might enlighten us of why the Kazakh population remains skeptic. Not surprisingly, more than two thirds of the respondents believed Chinese immigration would have a direct or indirect negative effect on the domestic labor market. One respondent commented:

“The more that the question of migration is passed over in silence [by the government], the less chance we will have to prevent the appearance of Chinese provinces: our descendants will therefore be obliged to undertake a struggle of national liberation for the resurrection of Kazakhstan.”

(Peyrouse, 2016, p.21)

This statement is quite alarming. Apparently it is quite common for Central Asian states to attribute increased criminality rates in urban zones to Chinese ghettos in capital cities (Peyrouse, 2016, p. 21). Thus, Chinese migration is opposed for several reasons.

**Assessment of economic attraction**

These findings have made it quite clear that the Kazakh population is not economically attracted to China. At least not enough to list China among their top three preferences. The Kazakh population display no preference for Chinese goods, Chinese sources of capital, Chinese technical cooperation or Chinese workers, students or specialists. Chinese goods are thought to pose a threat to locally manufactured goods. The lack of transparency around Chinese capital, loans and technical cooperation most likely influence the Kazakh population’s perception of China as a reliable partner. Lastly, Chinese migration is considered to be a threat to the domestic labor market and is linked to criminality.

However, as noted, Kazakh respondents with higher education appear to have different preferences in regards to foreign investments and work related migration. They were more interested in receiving investments from Arab Islamic states, India, China and the U.S, and they would rather have specialists arriving from EU member states, the U.S and China. Therefore, it might be fair to assume that the population with low education holds the strongest prejudices against the China and the Chinese people. This finding suggests that education might be key to improve the Kazakh population’s perception of China.
Sociocultural attraction

Social ties between the countries involved in the survey are revealed through the question: “In which of the countries listed below do you have relatives, close friends, colleagues with whom you maintain permanent ties (personally, by mail, by telephone, etc.)?” (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.58). The report revealed that most of the Kazakh respondents have permanent ties with relatives, close friends or colleagues in Russia (40%), Germany (12%) and Uzbekistan (8%).

As for where the Kazakh respondents would prefer to go on vacation, they list Turkey (37%), Russia (21%) and France (19%) (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.71). Russia, the U.S and the United Kingdom are on the top 3 list regarding where the Kazakh respondents would prefer to get a job or an education (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017, p.68).

Given how the Eurasian Development Bank only gives a partial picture of how the Kazakh population perceives Chinese culture, a Central Asian expert survey reported by Peyrouse (2016, p. 22) might offer some insights. According to the expert survey, the Central Asian experts share the feeling of an existing “civilizational difference” between the populations of China and Central Asia. Some argue this difference is due to Soviet acculturation, others claim it’s due to Islam and diverse “national essences”. Regardless the reason for this civilizational difference, all experts agree Sinification of Central Asian societies could never happen unless China used force. Sinification refers to a process where non-Chinese societies come under the influence of Chinese culture through acculturation or assimilation policies that impact all aspects of society (Peyrouse, 2016, p. 22). Furthermore, the experts hold that it is important to maintain this civilizational barrier as falling into the Chinese sphere of influence would mean the ethnic disappearance of Central Asian societies. Peyrouse (2016, p. 22) reports that the experts views are mostly pessimistic, and that a majority of them hold a predominant suspicion that China still has imperial goals in regards to Central Asia, and merely wants to conceal or delay them till the time is right.

Assessment of sociocultural attraction

It is not really surprising that the Kazakh population displays no sociocultural attraction towards China. The Kazakh and Chinese governments have implemented several people-to-people policies to fill the knowledge gaps of Chinese culture and to familiarize the Kazakh
population with it (Laruelle, 2018, p. xi). According to the Kazakh respondents and experts, these policies are yet to bare fruit. China is not one of the top travel destinations, and it is not a desired place to study or work. The Central Asian experts refer to a civilizational difference in their discussion of Chinese culture, implying that their cultures are so intrinsically different that they can never coexist. This might not represent the general opinion of the Kazakh population, but given the lack of interest in Chinese culture and the existing policy programs to promote people-to-people relations, it is fair to argue that the “civilizational differences” represent a problem to further integration with China.

5.5 Evaluation of Findings

This section will evaluate the findings in the official and social sphere in relation to the research question and discuss possible future implications of further integration with China.

The examination of Kazakhstan’s official polity towards China revealed two possible strategies linked to bandwagoning. Kazakhstan’s decision to publicly embrace the “One China” policy in 2002 might be related to the bandwagoning strategy of realignment, which stipulates that weaker states might realign their policy if they fear being punished if they were to refuse (Walt, 2005, p. 183). China has punished other states before in relation to its “One China” policy, thus it is reasonable to assume that Kazakhstan possibly feared a loss of economic agreements had it chosen not to offer its support. After all, the agreement that was signed in 2002 formulated a long-term plan for the future development of bilateral ties. By taking a quick glance at the import and export pattern of 2002 (Graph 4 and 5, at page 81), one can witness an increase in both graphs from 2002 onwards – which to some extent indicates how important this agreement was to the future economic development of Kazakhstan and its bilateral ties to China.

Likewise, this section found possible evidence of Kazakhstan engaging in a bonding strategy when President Nazarbayev congratulated Jinping on his reelection. Bonding cannot be defined as direct bandwagoning behavior if it is based on mutual respect and converging interests, but it does to some extent relate to it, as the close and personal relationships might influence the official policy of the weaker state – which in the long run might lead to realignment. Nazarbayev and Jinping have after all both aligned their policies when it comes
to promoting people-to-people relationships, possibly in order to smoothen their path towards further integration.

The media section of this chapter also offers some intriguing insights. While the public papers are positive towards China, the private papers remain skeptic and critical. As the ownership of the private papers are affiliated to the Kazakh elite, it begs the question of whether or not these papers serve a government agenda or if, in fact, the Kazakh elite is divided in its perception of China and Chinese integration. If the latter is true, having private papers portray China as a possible threat might be considered as internal balancing to some extent, as it fuels the nationalistic sentiments in the population. As previously argued, nationalistic sentiments can place constraints on the Kazakh elite. If the former is true, it might be a strategy of appeasing the population by imitating a pluralist media – making them believe that their concerns are being heard.

When it comes to the population, the survey conducted by The Eurasian Development Bank offers some clear insights of their perception. The sum of all these indicators portraits a convincing argument of how Russia is perceived as Kazakhstan’s closest friend and ally. Russia scores high on all indicators, and is perceived to be very attractive to the Kazakh population. China on the other hand, is not. Even though the Kazakh population perceives China to be friendlier, China only made Kazakhstan’s top 3 list when the respondents were asked which country they perceived as a threat.

In relation to the research question, there is no evidence of how the Kazakh population may favor a bandwagoning strategy with China. On the contrary, the Kazakh population displays and “inward orientation” in terms of security, economic cooperation and sociocultural attraction. Whenever they display preferences for countries outside the CIS, we find that they favor European, Western and to some extent other Asian states, like for instance Japan. Given that Kazakhstan is an authoritarian state, the population’s opportunity to influence government policies are limited. However, with these findings in mind, it is not unlikely that they would favor less Chinese involvement, thus vaguely supporting a balancing strategy against Chinese influence.
6. Conclusion

“The trouble with life isn't that there is no answer, it's that there are so many answers.”

- Ruth Benedict (2011, p.126)

Going beyond the official narrative of Kazakhstan-China relations have been important to this thesis, as China and Russia were found to be roughly equal in terms of proximity, and aggregate and offensive power. Perceived intentions were thus left as the decisive factor to determine the case of Kazakhstan. Thereof, it has been important to this thesis to establish whether or not China is perceived as a threat. As a number of indicators analyzed in this thesis points towards China being perceived as a possible threat by Kazakhstan, this thesis has found multiple evidence pointing in the direction of characterizing Kazakhstan’s *de facto* behavior as balancing against China. Let’s review the evidence in the order of relevance, and answer the research question:

*To what extent and how does Kazakhstan balance against or bandwagon with the rising power of China?*

One answer to how Kazakhstan balances China is found in the deployment of military assets. Kazakhstan balances China by placing the majority of its military assets near the Chinese border. In relation to Walt’s balance of threat theory (2005, p.120) – this behavior clearly reflects an internal balancing strategy because the placement of military assets near the Chinese border represent one way for Kazakhstan to mobilize its resources in a way that will enable it to resist a stronger state more effectively. Kazakhstan have also increased its military spending for this purpose since the millennium (TradingEconomics.com/ SIPRI, 2018c)), and although one cannot be sure it is related to China, the deployment of military assets surely provides an indication of where Kazakhstan considers its main threat to be. Kazakhstan’s close alliance ties to Russia are also confirmed by this section, as only a limited amount of military assets are placed near the Russian border. This finding reflects the very essence of Walt’s (1987, p.169) balance of threat theory: when a great power is not
considered a threat, like Russia in this case, the weaker state does not feel the need to balance it. When however, a great power is perceived to have aggressive intentions, the weaker state finds it necessary to balance it by internal or external means. It also reflects the weakness of balance of power theory, because if Kazakhstan were to balance against capabilities, it would have to balance Russia the same way it does China. When it comes to the extent of the balancing behavior, the section on military assets have not offered answers of how Kazakhstan’s deployment have changed over the years. Given the clear distribution of them however, and how Kazakhstan has increased its military spending since the millennium, one could argue that Kazakhstan’s internal balancing behavior against China is extensive, and possibly increasing along with its military budget.

A second answer to how Kazakhstan balances China is found in the examination of military bases. Kazakhstan balances China by cooperating with Russia at the Balkhash radar station and the Baikonur Cosmodrome. The Balkhash radar station provides Russia and Kazakhstan with advanced notice of missiles coming from China, India and Pakistan (Piven, 2015; Aliyev, 2016). China has the most advanced and diverse missile arsenal in the world (Missile Defense Project, 2018A), thus Kazakhstan’s decision to be more involved at this base and its promotion of a joint anti-missile defense system with Russia is most likely a result of an external balancing strategy where Russia and Kazakhstan’s combined capabilities are aimed at balancing China’s offensive power in terms of missiles. This view is supported to some extent by the 2011 Shygys exercise (Stein, 2017), which points very strongly towards an external balancing strategy aimed at intercepting cruise missiles from China – indicating that Chinese capabilities are considered a threat.

Likewise, Kazakhstan’s involvement in the activities at the Baikonur Cosmodrome is found to most likely enhance Kazakhstan’s military capabilities in the future, as operations in space are often concerned with developing precise weapons of lethal nature (Defense Intelligence Agency, 2017, p. 35). According to the 2010 Russian military doctrine, militarization of outer space is considered to be the main external military danger (Defense Intelligence Agency, 2017, p. 36). Similarly, Kazakhstan’s 2017 military doctrine highlights how the nature of modern military conflict is moving into space (Military Doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2017, point 2.2.11). According to the Defense Intelligence Agency (2017, p. 36), the U.S and China are the only two states with more satellites than Russia. Given that states balance against threat in Walt’s theoretical framework, it is likely that these are the two states
posing the most imminent space threat as they hold most offensive and aggregate power. If we include proximity and perceived intentions in this assessment, both the U.S and China might pose such a threat. Given that Russian military bases in general are thought to increase Kazakhstan’s deterrent power, one could argue that Kazakhstan’s decision to renegotiate the contracts based on a desire for participation represents intensified balancing behavior. Furthermore, one could argue that because the activities at these bases are so closely linked to Chinese activity, it also represents increased balancing behavior against China.

A third answer to how Kazakhstan balances China is found in the examination of the CSTO and the SCO. By participating in the CSTO, Kazakhstan engages in external balancing through the alliance strategy. Article 7 of the CSTO holds a promise of combining capabilities in the event of a military conflict, a central element of external balancing (Walt, 2005, p.120). One might argue that the external balancing within the CSTO has intensified, as 73 percent of the exercises were conducted during the last seven years (Stein 2017, Haas, 2016). This trend is additionally confirmed by the increase in resource allocations and expansion of scope. The combined capabilities of the CSTO are displayed through military exercises. The analysis found evidence of three exercises that were possibly aimed at balancing China, indicated by the location, exercise scenario and context surrounding the Almaty region.

When it comes to the SCO, Kazakhstan and Russia have also balanced China by engaging in a strategy of balking when they collectively opposed Jibao’s proposal of subsidiaries worth US$ 900 million in 2005 (Laumulin, 2006). Furthermore, one cannot rule out the possibility of how engaging with China within a multilateral framework relates to the strategy of binding. Engaging with China might be considered safer within a multilateral framework where China has to oblige to the rules of conduct and accept that it might be constrained by voting mechanisms. Russia’s consistent behavior in opposing Chinese initiatives like for instance a SCO Development Bank (Lain, 2015), and Kazakhstan’s desire for multilateral solutions (Weitz, 2010) accentuates this view to some extent. Nevertheless, the extent of Kazakhstan’s balancing behavior within the SCO is not as substantial it is in other sections of the analysis.

A fourth answer to how Kazakhstan has attempted to balance China lies in its close defense cooperation with Russia. The location and exercise scenarios of the bilateral exercises
between Russia and Kazakhstan clearly reflect a concern over China. Four out of six bilateral exercises were conducted in regions bordering Xinjiang, in which three of them drilled on a scenario of restoring Kazakhstan’s territorial integrity (Stein, 2017). The 2011 Shygys exercise are of particular importance as it drilled on intercepting cruise missiles, most likely fired from a state of close proximity. The analysis found it likely that this exercise was aimed at intercepting missiles from China, as China has the most advanced and diverse missiles in the world (Missile Defense Project, 2018a), thus most likely represent the largest threat. The fact that Russia provided Kazakhstan with five divisions of S-300 anti-missile systems for free accentuates the view of China as a possible threat. These systems are designed to intercept various types of missiles, which China possesses a great deal of. Thus, one might argue that this too represents an external balancing strategy through the alliance mechanism of combining capabilities. As two of the Tsenter exercises were bilateral, one might also argue that the huge increase in resource allocations represent intensified balancing behavior, as such exercises clearly project more power and have a larger deterrent effect. The scope of the exercises indicate the same tendency, as at least four of the bilateral exercises drilled on protecting and restoring Kazakhstan’s territorial integrity (Stein, 2017).

Some of the findings in the economic sphere also points in the direction of Kazakhstan balancing China through the binding strategy. However, due to the fact that the outcome of most energy deals appears to be mutually advantageous and based on Kazakhstan’s legitimate interest in the development of its natural resources, I find that I lean more towards characterizing Kazakhstan’s de facto behavior in this sphere as pragmatic and in line with its multi-vector foreign policy.

Furthermore, although the social sphere cannot be directly linked to state behavior, it can relate to how China is perceived. The population of Kazakhstan perceives China as a threat according to the survey of the Eurasian Development Bank (2017). Although it is not possible to answer with the use of official statements, one might ask to what extent these sentiments are present in the elite as well? After all, the media section of the analysis found that most of the private newspapers in Kazakhstan, which are owned by people with close ties to the Presidential family, are critical in their perception of China (Boldurukova, 2015). Thus, although it might not be present in the official narrative, it might not be too far fetched to assume some skepticism towards China’s intentions in the Kazakh elite. One could argue that all the evidence of Kazakhstan’s balancing behavior supports this view.
Given the findings presented above, the conclusion is that Kazakhstan balances China, using various internal and external balancing strategies and that this behavior occurs predominantly in the military sphere. Thus, the official policy of Kazakhstan and its narrative does not concur with Kazakhstan’s *de facto* behavior. In fact, Kazakhstan’s claim of conducting a multi-vector foreign policy does not concur with its security and defense policies, as this thesis finds that the Kazakh regime has deepened and intensified its alliance ties with Russia at the multilateral and bilateral level. This stands in contrast to the findings of the economic sphere, which does not provide sufficient evidence of balancing behavior, but rather indicates that Kazakhstan is committed to its multi-vector policy.

One could of course argue that Kazakhstan’s strategic partnership with China, close bilateral ties, energy cooperation and participation in the SCO contradicts the idea of Kazakhstan engaging in balancing behavior. After all, the SCO provides a platform where member states can cooperate on security related issues as well. Likewise, Chinese initiatives like the BRI and the AIIB have been welcomed in Kazakhstan. Furthermore, the economic sphere identifies some instances where Kazakhstan engaged in what appears to be bandwagoning behavior in terms of unequal exchanges with China. However, by reviewing the economic sphere, one might question if the findings are adequate enough to assume some sort of bandwagoning behavior with China. Considering the nature of some of these energy deals I lean towards “No” and more towards a détente where the parties involved engage in what they perceive as equal exchanges. The one thing that makes me question such a conclusion is the occasions where Kazakhstan has invoked national legislation demanding the “rights to first purchase” in favor of China – like for instance the sale of ConocoPhillips in 2013. As argued before, in order to prevent the Chinese vector of becoming too strong in the energy sector, it would have been more in line with Kazakhstan’s multi-vector policy to sell to a less involved actor, like for instance India. On the other hand, actively granting China such energy deals might be part of a larger consideration, such as receiving loans or investments towards other underdeveloped sectors in Kazakhstan, such as agriculture or innovation. This was most likely the case as Jinping and Nazarbayev signed 22 other agreements worth $30 billion at the same time as the ConocoPhillips deal (Gordeyeva, 2013). Thus, I continue to lean towards a détente.
Throughout this thesis, Walt’s theoretical framework has proved useful and right in many instances. Walt’s assessment of how states balance against threats, rather than capabilities proved right in the case of Kazakhstan. His assessment of how states with available allies tend to balance rather than bandwagon also seems to fit the case of Kazakhstan. Similarly, like Walt finds in his book (1987, p.5), the economic indicators in the analysis suggest that Chinese loans and investments are not sufficient means to compel Kazakhstan into alignment, but rather used for the purpose of gaining access to Kazakhstan’s natural resources.

Likewise, in the introduction chapter, I argued this thesis might help indicate whether or not the concerns resulting from China’s rise are valid. Some have argued that China’s rise will cause rivalry with Russia, constituting a “New Great Game” for power, influence and resources in Central Asia, while others have expressed a concern over how the ultimate Chinese goal is regional hegemony (Ross, 2006, p.357; Cooley, 2012). In the case of Kazakhstan, the concern of Chinese hegemony is valid to some extent, because the population perceives China as a threat – they believe China poses a threat to their autonomy, livelihoods, and culture. In terms of actual economic presence however, this thesis finds that the concern of Chinese hegemony is exaggerated. In fact, they rather support the findings of Cooley (2012), who found that the Central Asian states are exceptionally capable of maneuvering between the giants to further their own national interests.

Lastly, one might ask what the future holds for the Kazakh-Chinese relationship and what future research should concentrate on?

Peyrouse (2016, p. 14) argues that the rise of Sinophilia and Sinophobia will impact the political, geo-strategic and cultural situation in the region, working either to slow down or speed up Chinese integration. Given Kazakhstan’s populations’ propensity to protest rental of land to China and low preference for China in general (Eurasian Development Bank, 2017), one could argue that implementing bilateral security arrangements in relation to the BRI like Jinping (2017) recently suggested, might cause problems if China intends to send specialized personnel, and particularly if they have military background. Such a move would probably ignite the Kazakh population’s fear of an expansionist China. However, as the survey by the Eurasian Development Bank (2017) suggests, education might be the key to changing the populations’ preferences. The respondents with higher education ranked China consistently higher in order of preference than the respondents with low education. Moreover, whether or
not China’s possible future role as a security provider will interfere with Russian interests remain to be seen. It has been suggested that both countries might find it relieving to share the burden of ensuring political, economic and military stability in the region, given that they both have invested substantial resources (Ghiasy & Zhou, 2017, p.20). As long as Russia and China continue to have converging interests in Central Asia, further integration between Kazakhstan and China is unlikely to cause any conflicts – at least not at the international level.

Future research could concentrate on the other Central Asian states. After all, Kazakhstan is one of the strongest of them in terms of aggregate and offensive power (only outranked by Uzbekistan). In order to confirm the validity of Walt’s theory, focusing on a weaker state, which has alienated other possible allies, would present an interesting case in line with Walt’s theory. Likewise, studies on how China’s strategic partnerships promote political stability and social development might also be of interest. Studies on the perception of Chinese migrants might also further our understanding of why these are so feared to begin with. Is it the notion of Chinese expansionism that strikes fears in the population, or is it more related to job security? Certainly, one of the things that have become very clear throughout the research process, is that there are innumerous aspects of China’s rise worth questioning – whether it be in regards to China’s future role in Central Asia or the Artic.
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Map: CSTO and bilateral exercises conducted near the Chinese border [Picture]. (2018). [Exercises plotted by author]. Map downloaded from URL: https://www.google.com/maps/place/Kasakhstan/@42.8481074,73.7122531,6z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x38a91007ecfca947:0x5f7b842fe4b30e1b18m2!3d48.019573!4d66.923684


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# Appendix

Table 1: CSTO Cooperation Exercises (Stein, 2017, p. 31-33).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Resource allocation</th>
<th>Exercise scenario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Few thousand soldiers, a few hundred tanks and armored personnel carriers, around 40 aircraft and helicopters. Kazakhstan contributed 1,500 personnel</td>
<td>Destroying a terrorist group that seized a chemical plant, reconnaissance operations in mountain terrain, hostage rescue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>The CRRF exercise included 1,700 soldiers, an air assault battalion and 5 Su-25 close air support aircraft, unknown number of Su-24 attack and Su-27 fighter aircraft and 20 infantry fighting vehicles Kazakhstan contributed with an air assault battalion and 5 Su-25 close air support aircraft</td>
<td>Destroying an armed group that infiltrated the Ural mountain region.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>CRRF exercise. 2,500 personnel, over 500 pieces of equipment and aircrafts (tanks, armored personnel carriers, and artillery pieces, attack helicopters). First time: unknown number of unmanned aerial vehicles Kazakhstan contributed an airmobile assault unit</td>
<td>Hostage rescue and repelling a terrorist group in the Caucasus region through a combined arms assault.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>CORF exercise. 600 personnel, 60 pieces of equipment Kazakhstan contributed with the 37th Air Assault Brigade</td>
<td>Destroying an armed illegal group of 250 people that had taken control of a natural gas compressor station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>CORF exercise. 3000 personnel, a few hundred pieces of equipment, 30 aircraft and helicopters Kazakhstan contributed with the 37th Air Assault Brigade and a National Guard unit and air defense units</td>
<td>The exercise focused on a scenario of a CSTO member (named “Karaniya”) dealing with a situation in a non-member, bordering state (named “Irtishiya”). A separatist movement in Irtishiya threatened the territorial integrity of Karaniya.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>CORF exercise. 2,000 personnel, 40 aircraft (including the Su-27, Su-24, Il-76,</td>
<td>Scenario of eliminating an irregular armed group and an</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mi-24, Mi-26, and Ka-52) and 200 pieces of equipment
Kazakhstan contributed with airborne and nuclear, biological, and chemical units
irregular armed foreign military contingent

2016
CORF exercise. 6000 personnel, large number of pieces of equipment and aircraft.
Kazakhstan contribution unknown
Conflict near the border of a member state, combating an outside force that had invaded under a “peacekeeping” mission that was not sanctioned by the UN.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rubezh exercises</th>
<th>Resource allocation</th>
<th>Scenarios</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,700 soldiers, special forces unit, Su-25s, MiG-29s, and Mi-8, Mi-24, and Ka-50 helicopters.</td>
<td>Destroying an international terrorist group through ground and air assaults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kazakhstan contributed with a battalion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Su-24 and Su-25 attack aircraft and Su-27 fighters and unknown number of soldiers</td>
<td>Border outpost repelling an enemy attempting to cross the border through retaliatory strikes by fighter aircrafts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kazakhstan contribution unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,500 soldiers, 60 armored vehicles, 35 aircraft, and 14 warships.</td>
<td>Destroying a terrorist group through a combined arms assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kazakhstan contribution unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td></td>
<td>500 soldiers, 50 armored vehicles, and an unknown number of Su-25 attack aircraft and Mi-24 helicopters</td>
<td>Detecting and destroying terrorist groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kazakhstan contribution unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Rubezh Exercises (Stein, 2017, p. 43-45)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Unbreakable Brotherhood Exercises Resource allocation</th>
<th>Scenarios</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>4,000 soldiers troops and aircraft (MiG 29s, Su-25s, Mi-24s, and Mi-8s and an air assault unit. Kazakhstan did not participate</td>
<td>A scenario where a member state is threatened by an outside aggressor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1,000 soldiers and over 150 pieces of equipment and various aircraft Kazakhstan contributed with mechanized infantry units</td>
<td>Operating in a border region against a terrorist group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1,000 soldiers, around 100 pieces of equipment (unknown numbers of tanks, self-propelled artillery) and several aircraft Kazakhstan contributed with a group of officers</td>
<td>Cutting off and destroying logistics, training camps, and bases of terrorist groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Unknown number of personnel Kazakhstan contribution unknown</td>
<td>Deploying a joint force in response to a regional threat with an emphasis on the Afghan-Tajik border</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1000 personnel, around 200 aircraft and pieces of equipment, drones Kazakhstan contribution unknown</td>
<td>Eliminating an armed group that had infiltrated across the border of a member state in mountainous terrain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

from the Ministry of Defense

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Resource allocation</th>
<th>Exercise scenario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>700 personnel, BTR-70 armored personnel carriers, BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles, and Mi-17 transport helicopters</td>
<td>Planning, blocking off and destroying an armed group in mountainous terrain, delivering aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kazakhstan contributed with a battalion consisting of an air assault company, platoons of engineers, medics and sappers, and helicopter and air defense units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>600 personnel, around 50 pieces of equipment, unmanned aerial vehicles</td>
<td>Carrying out various peacekeeping tasks– creating a buffer zone, delivering humanitarian supplies, dealing with improvised explosive devices and minefields, patrolling, hostage rescue and eliminating groups of militants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kazakhstan contribution unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1500 personnel, and 300 aircraft and pieces of equipment</td>
<td>The scenario involved the CSTO peacekeeping force receiving a UN mandate and intervening in a state in which two ethnic groups had been clashing over the results of a disputed election</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kazakhstan contributed with members of KAZBRIG and the National Guard</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>12,000 personnel, over 1,500 pieces of hardware as well as 90 aircraft.</td>
<td>Organizing and conducting of reconnaissance, isolate armed conflict in the Caucasus region of collective security, peacekeeping operation in a non-member State, and advanced warfare in mountain and desert terrain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kazakhstan contributed with units of the Armed Forces, special units of law enforcement agencies, National Guard units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Additional CSTO Exercises (Compiled from: Stein, 2017, p. 27, 36, 59, 50, 54; Norberg, 2015, p. 27; Haas, 2016, p.391-403).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Kazakhstan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cobalt-2010</td>
<td>Special operations units from law enforcements agencies, interior ministries, special forces units for the CSTO’s Rapid Reaction Force&lt;br&gt;Kazakhstan contribution unknown</td>
<td>Target terrorist groups and cut off their sources to traffic drugs and weapons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsentr-2011</td>
<td>12,000 servicemen and “thousands” of pieces of equipment such as MBTs, artillery pieces, air defense, surface-to-surface missiles, some 50 aircraft and 10 ships&lt;br&gt;Kazakhstan contributed 3,500 soldiers, 19 aircraft, and over 40 boats to Phase 1&lt;br&gt;Phase 1: assault against an enemy trying to seize oil fields&lt;br&gt;Phase 2: operation to eliminate an armed group&lt;br&gt;Phase 3: defending against a large combined arms attack</td>
<td>Destroying a terrorist group that infiltrated the border of a member state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobalt-2013</td>
<td>500 personnel (all special units from member states), various armored vehicles and aircraft&lt;br&gt;Kazakhstan contribution unknown</td>
<td>Joint counter-narcotics operation, destroying drug labs, freeing hostages, air strike eliminating the group (with Su-25s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grom-2013</td>
<td>Special Rapid Reaction Unit, Drug Control Agencies, and aircraft from the Kant Airbase&lt;br&gt;Kazakhstan contributed with personnel from Drug Control Agencies, unknown number</td>
<td>Eliminating a terrorist group in the Central Asian region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsentr-2015</td>
<td>95,000 soldiers, 7000 pieces of equipment, over 170 aircraft and 20 ships.&lt;br&gt;Kazakhstan (and Russia) provided Naval Units and infantry</td>
<td>Developing tactics in order to combat armed drug traffickers, including seizures of drugs and weapons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grom-2015</td>
<td>500 personnel from various Russian and Tajik Drug Control Agencies. In addition, Tajik National Security Committee, Interior Ministry, National Guard, and Ministry of Defense&lt;br&gt;Kazakhstan sent a small contingent</td>
<td>Joint counterterrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSTO CRDF CAR</td>
<td>Unknown number of personnel from CSTO’s Collective Rapid Deployment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise-2015</td>
<td>Force</td>
<td>operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSTO CORF Exercise-2015</td>
<td>2500 soldiers, 20 aircraft, and a few hundred pieces of equipment (including armored vehicles, and the Orlan-10 UAV). Kazakhstan contributed with its airborne forces.</td>
<td>Combating and repelling an armed group attempting to infiltrate Tajikistan from Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poisk 2016</td>
<td>1500 personnel, various aircraft, and unmanned aerial vehicles and signals intelligence/surveillance systems Kazakhstan contribution unknown</td>
<td>Conduct reconnaissance on a terrorist group in mountainous terrain and carrying out an operation to eliminate it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cobalt-2016</td>
<td>CSTO CORF, 500 personnel, 20 armored vehicles and 4 aircraft Kazakhstan contributed with units of the National Guard</td>
<td>Joint counterterrorism operations within the CORF. Eliminate a terrorist group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Peace Mission Resource allocation</th>
<th>Exercise scenario</th>
<th>Contributions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2007 | 6,500 soldiers, supported by armored vehicles, artillery, bombers, fighters, and helicopters | Anti-terror exercise | **C**: 1,600 soldiers, six Il-76 aircraft, eight JH-7-A fighter-bombers, 16 JG-9-W and 16 Mi-17 Hip helicopters  
**R**: 2,000 soldiers, 6 Ilyushin Il-76 Candid transport planes, 9 Su-25 Frogfoot ground-attack jets, 14 Mi-24 Hind helicopter gunships and 18 Mi-8 Hip helicopters  
**K**: 143 soldiers, one airborne company |
| 2010 | 5,000 soldiers, 300 military vehicles, 50 combat aircraft, | SCO forces respond to an attack on a member state from terrorists, insurgents, or separatists | **C**: 1000 soldiers, T-99 tanks, H-6 strategic bombers and J-10 fighters, aerial tankers and early warning aircraft  
**R**: 1000 soldiers, 130 tanks, self-propelled artillery systems and infantry fighting vehicles, Su-24 Fencer tactical bombers, Su-25 Frogfoot close-support aircraft and Mi-8 transport helicopters  
**K**: 1000 soldiers, unknown number of |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Personnel, Equipment</th>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Chinese (C)</th>
<th>Russian (R)</th>
<th>Kazakh (K)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2,000 soldiers, over 500 vehicles, and aircraft</td>
<td>Destroying an armed group of terrorists, that seized a village (in mountainous terrain). Removing civilians.</td>
<td>369 servicemen from the PLA, infantry and artillery companies from the PLA Ground Forces, one PLA aviation group</td>
<td>350 soldiers, motorized rifle company, battalion with artillery subunits, 50 pieces of hardware including 15 BTR-80 APCs, Tigr armoured vehicles, Su-24 frontline bombers, and Il-76 and An-124 military transport aircraft</td>
<td>Battalions from an air assault brigade Mi-24 and Mi-17 helicopters and Su-27 fighter aircraft and Turkish Cobra armoured personnel carriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>6800 personnel, various pieces of equipment and aircraft (anti-aircraft systems, BM-21 rocket launchers, Su-25 close air support)</td>
<td>Combating a large group of terrorists that took over an urban area and held hostages</td>
<td>5000 soldiers, BMD infantry fighting vehicles, Xian H-6 bombers and Z-8 transport helicopters</td>
<td>800 soldiers from the 36th Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade, “Shilka” anti-aircraft systems, BM-21 rocket launchers, and Akatsiya self-propelled artillery, Su-25 close air support aircraft, Il-76 transporters, and Mi-8 transport helicopters</td>
<td>300 soldiers from the 37th Air Assault Brigade, BTR armoured personnel carriers, Su-27 fighters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2000 personnel, 40 aircraft, 300 pieces of equipment (an assortment of armored vehicles and artillery)</td>
<td>Counterterrorism exercise. Eliminating an armed group that had infiltrated the border of a member state through a combined arms assault</td>
<td>At least 360 soldiers, 60 pieces armored vehicles and artillery, PLL-09 122mm self-propelled artillery, towed artillery pieces, Type 92 wheeled APCs, Z-9W attack helicopters, Z-8 transport helicopters</td>
<td>500 soldiers, 40 aircraft including Russian Tu-95MS, Tu-22M3 and Su-24M bombers, Su-24MR reconnaissance aircraft, Su-25 close air support aircraft, Mi24 attack helicopters, Mi-8 transport helicopters</td>
<td>Unknown contribution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: Additional SCO Exercises (Compiled from: Stein, 2017, p. 26, 37, 39, 48, 52, 56; Haas, 2016, p. 382-386)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name of exercise/ participants</th>
<th>Resource allocation</th>
<th>Exercise scenario</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td><strong>Coalition 2003</strong></td>
<td>1,300 soldiers</td>
<td>Anti-terror exercise, destroying terrorist camps, taking back airplane from hijackers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan participated.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td><strong>Vostok-Anti-terror 2006</strong></td>
<td>Unknown number of soldiers from special forces and law enforcement units from all participants. RATS exercise.</td>
<td>Protecting nuclear infrastructure from terrorist groups and hostage rescue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China-Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Russia-Tajikistan-Uzbekistan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td><strong>Issyk-Kul Antiterror 2007</strong></td>
<td>Law enforcement and special forces units from all participants, representatives from RATS, CSTO and CIS Antiterrorist Center.</td>
<td>Combating armed militants who seized a village and dam, rescue of hostages, bomb disposal practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China-Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Russia-Tajikistan-Uzbekistan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td><strong>Volgograd Anti-terror 2008.</strong></td>
<td>Anti-terrorist units of the participants, unknown number.</td>
<td>Neutralizing terrorists in an environmentally hazardous facility and hostage rescue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kazakhstan-Russia-Tajikistan-Uzbekistan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td><strong>Norak Anti-terror 2009</strong></td>
<td>Specialized units from participant militaries, unknown number of armored vehicles and Mi-8 helicopters</td>
<td>Special forces drilled on crisis situation and hostage negotiation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>China-Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Russia-Tajikistan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td><strong>SCO Law Enforcement Exercise</strong></td>
<td>Law enforcement agencies from participants, unknown number</td>
<td>Investigation and operation against a terrorist group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Russia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2013

| Year | **Stikhiya 2013** | Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Russia-Tajikistan | 500 personnel from the Ministry of Emergency Situations of each participant | Disaster response to flooding around the Issyk Kul Province, Kyrgyzstan. |

### 2015

| Year | **SCO Counterterrorism Exercise** | China-Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Russia-Tajikistan | Unknown number of soldiers from special forces units of participating countries | Combating an armed group in mountainous terrain and rescuing hostages. |

| Year | **Central Asia Antiterror-2015** | China-Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Russia-Tajikistan-Uzbekistan | Members of the security services of all participants | Joint operation search for terrorist groups in the event of a crisis |

| Year | **Xiamen-2015** | China-Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Russia-Tajikistan-Uzbekistan | Unknown number of personnel from the security services of participants | Countering terrorist groups on the internet, removing the groups’ online presence |

| Year | **SCO Training Exercise** | China-Kazakhstan-Kyrgyzstan-Russia | Unknown number of personnel | Joint training with small arms in mountainous terrain |

### Table 7: Russian arms transfers to Kazakhstan (SIPRI, Arms Transfers Database)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ordered</th>
<th>Weapon description</th>
<th>Year(s) of order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Transport helicopter</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Armored personnel carrier</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Armored personnel carrier</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Light helicopter</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>Infantry fighting vehicle</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Transport helicopter</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Combat ac radar</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Patrol craft</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120</td>
<td>Anti-tank missile</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Armor fire support vehicle</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Infantry fighting vehicle</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8: Onshore projects (Note: modified from the following sources: Henriksen 2013; U.S Energy Information Administration 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Field</th>
<th>Ownership status</th>
<th>Proven reserves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aktobe: Zhanazhol</td>
<td>CNPC Aktobemunaigaz (China)- 85 %. KNOC (South Korea) N/A percent</td>
<td>1.17 billion barrels of oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alibekmola and Kozhasai</td>
<td>KMG (Kazakhstan)– 50 % Caspian Investments Resources (China)– 50 %</td>
<td>Proven reserves of 102 million barrels of oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amangeldy</td>
<td>Amangeldy Gas (Kazakhstan)</td>
<td>22-25 bcm of gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arman</td>
<td>Caspian Investments Resources (China) – 50 %</td>
<td>Proven reserves of 2.8 million barrels of oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Shell (Netherland/UK)– 50 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emba</td>
<td>KMG (Kazakhstan) – 51 % MOL Rt. Vegypszer (Hungary) – 49 %</td>
<td>500 million barrels of oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karachiaganak</td>
<td>BG Group (UK) (joint operator) - 29,25 %, ENI (Italian joint operator) – 29,25 %</td>
<td>Gross reserves of 2.4 billion barrels of condensate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chevron (U.S) – 18 %,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Field</td>
<td>Ownership status</td>
<td>Proven reserves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lukoil (Russia)</td>
<td>KMG (Kazakhstan) – 13.5 %, 10 %</td>
<td>Proven reserves of 56.6 million barrels of oil, 22.7 bcf of gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karakuduk</td>
<td>Lukoil (Russia) – 50 %, Sinopec (China) – 50 %</td>
<td>286 million barrels of oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karazhanbas</td>
<td>Citic Resources Holdings (China) – 50 %, KMG (Kazakhstan) – 50 %</td>
<td>100 million barrels of oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazgermunai</td>
<td>KMG (Kazakhstan) – 50 %, PetroKazakhstan² (China) – 50 %</td>
<td>Proved reserves of 86 million barrels of oil, 29.7 bcf of gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumkol North</td>
<td>Lukoil (Russia) – 50 %, PetroKazakhstan (China) – 50 %</td>
<td>116 million barrels of oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumkol South</td>
<td>PetroKazakhstan (China)</td>
<td>1.4 billion barrels of oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mangistau</td>
<td>KMG (Kazakhstan) – 50 %, CNPC (China) – 50 %</td>
<td>Proved reserves of 134 million barrels of oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Buzachi</td>
<td>CNPC (China) – 50 %, Caspian Investments Resources (Russia/China) – 50 %</td>
<td>6-9 billion barrels of oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tengiz</td>
<td>Chevron (US) – 50 %, ExxonMobil (US) – 25 %, KMG (Kazakhstan) – 20 %, LukArco (Russia) – 5 %</td>
<td>Proved reserves of 134 million barrels of oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzen</td>
<td>Uzenmunaigaz (KMG subsidiary) – 100 %</td>
<td>Proved and probable reserves of 166 million tons of oil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Caspian Sea Projects (Note: modified from the following sources: Henriksen 2013; U.S Energy Information Administration 2017, Junmian, 2017)

² PetroKazakhstan is owned by KMG (33 %) and CNPC (67 %)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Company Details</th>
<th>Reserves/Reserves Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aktobe: Zhanazhol Kenkiyak</td>
<td>CNPC Aktobemunaigaz (China) - 85 %, KNOC (South Korea) N/A percent</td>
<td>1.17 billion barrels of oil</td>
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<td>500 million barrels of oil</td>
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<td>BG Group (UK) (joint operator) - 29,25 %, ENI (Italian joint operator) – 29,25 %, Chevron (U.S) – 18 %, Lukoil (Russia) – 13,5 %, KMG (Kazakhstan) – 10 %</td>
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<tr>
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<td>286 million barrels of oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazgermumai</td>
<td>- KMG (Kazakhstan) – 50 %, PetroKazakhstan(^3) (China) – 50 %</td>
<td>100 million barrels of oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumkol North</td>
<td>- Lukoil (Russia) – 50 %, PetroKazakhstan (China) – 50 %</td>
<td>Proved reserves of 86 million barrels of oil, 29.7 oil, 29.7 bcf of gas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^3\) PetroKazakhstan is owned by KMG (33 %) and CNPC (67 %)
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<th>Ownership Status</th>
<th>Proven Reserves</th>
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<td>1.4 billion barrels of oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Buzachi</td>
<td>CNPC (China)- 50 % -Caspian Investments Resources (Russia/China) – 50 %</td>
<td>Proved reserves of 134 million barrels of oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tengiz</td>
<td>Chevron (US) – 50 %  ExxonMobil (US) – 25 %  KMG (Kazakhstan)– 20 %  LukArco (Russia) – 5 %</td>
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<tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zhemchuzhiny</td>
<td>Shell (UK and Nederland) – 55 %</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(“Pearls Block”)</td>
<td>KMG (Kazakhstan) – 25 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oman Oil Company (Oman) – 20 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makhambet</td>
<td>Atyraumunaigaz.. (KMG subsidiary)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bobek</td>
<td>Atyraumunaigaz.. (KMG subsidiary)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imashevskeo</td>
<td>-KMG (Kazakhstan)</td>
<td>Over 100 bcm of gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Gazprom (Russia)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khvalynskeo</td>
<td>-Lukoil (Russia) – 50 %</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-KMG (Kazakhstan) – 25 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Total (France) – 17 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-GDF Suez (France) – 8 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsentralnoe</td>
<td>-KMG (Kazakhstan) – 50 %</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gazprom/Lukoil (Russia) – 50 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abai</td>
<td>KMG (Kazakhstan)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isatai</td>
<td>-KMG (Kazakhstan)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-ENI (Italy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darkhan</td>
<td>-KMG (Kazakhstan)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese consortium headed by CNOOC.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>