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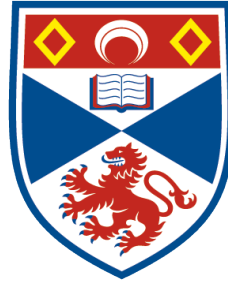
Тема исследования:

**Domestic-Foreign Legitimacy Nexus within Central Asian Context:
Comparative Analysis of Various Aspects of ‘China Factor’ in Kazakhstan
and Kyrgyzstan**

Краткое резюме (не более 200 слов):

The present research study investigates the understanding of legitimacy within Central Asian context, its dynamics and its implications. It was undertaken using the prism of Domestic-Foreign Nexus, an approach to foreign policy analysis, within the framework of Sino-Central Asian relations. Both aims of this study were reached. First, the demonstration of domestic-foreign interplay even in neopatrimonial-authoritarian states provided an important pretext for the principal arguments of the entire work. There is limited space for internal factors to influence Sino-Central Asian state-to-state relations, directly or indirectly. But, conversely, the pervasiveness of the impact of foreign policy on the very inner circles of the two of Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, was much more evident. Second, this study found that the concept of foreign policy exists in symbiosis with legitimacy notions, the two intertwining, in one way or another. Utilizing a multilevel comparative approach that specifically considered three dimensions of China factor (land; entrepreneurship; and socio-culture related) in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the present research further contributed to the existing Central Asia scholarship. Central Asians’ perceptions of the China factor or the presence of China in the region can serve as a determinative variable in political and socio-economic trajectories of the region. As such, it represents an important lens through which to view Central Asian understandings of legitimacy both as an idea and in practice.

**School of International Relations
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St Andrews

MLITT IN: MIDDLE EAST AND CENTRAL ASIAN SECURITY STUDIES

**Domestic-Foreign Legitimacy Nexus within Central Asian Context:
Comparative Analysis of Various Aspects of ‘China Factor’ in
Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan**

By Diana Durusbek kyzy

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I hereby certify that this dissertation, which is approximately 14,400 words in length, has been composed by me, that is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree. This project was conducted by me at the University of St Andrews from June 2013 to August 2013 towards fulfillment of the requirements of the University of St Andrews for the degree of M.Litt, under the supervision of Professor Sally N. Cummings.

Date of submission: August 22nd, 2013

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Abbreviations.

CAFMI	Central Asian Free Market Institute
CIS	Commonwealth Independent States
CU	Customs Union
EEC	Eurasian Economic Commission
EurAsEC	Eurasian Economic Community
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IRI	International Republican Institute
PRC	People's Republic of China
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
USSR	The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organization
XUAR	Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Republic

Notes.

Mazhilis	The Parliament of Kazakhstan
Jogorku Kenesh	The Parliament of Kyrgyzstan

Abstract.

The present research study investigates the understanding of legitimacy within Central Asian context, its dynamics and its implications. It was undertaken using the prism of Domestic-Foreign Nexus, an approach to foreign policy analysis, within the framework of Sino-Central Asian relations. Both aims of this study were reached. First, the demonstration of domestic-foreign interplay even in neopatrimonial-authoritarian states provided an important pretext for the principal arguments of the entire work. There is limited space for internal factors to influence Sino-Central Asian state-to-state relations, directly or indirectly. But, conversely, the pervasiveness of the impact of foreign policy on the very inner circles of the two of Central Asian countries, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, was much more evident. Second, this study found that the concept of foreign policy exists in symbiosis with legitimacy notions, the two intertwining, in one way or another. Utilizing a multilevel comparative approach that specifically considered three dimensions of China factor (land; entrepreneurship; and socio-culture related) in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the present research further contributed to the existing Central Asia scholarship. Central Asians' perceptions of the China factor or the presence of China in the region can serve as a determinative variable in political and socio-economic trajectories of the region. As such, it represents an important lens through which to view Central Asian understandings of legitimacy both as an idea and in practice.

Introduction.

Central Asia is considered as a core of the ‘New Great Game’ and has been for long studied through this perspective.¹ Whilst this is important, Central Asia scholars have most recently focused on the domestic-foreign linkage emphasizing the role of local actors and politics, directly or not, influencing the foreign policy outcomes. Scholars such as Roy Allison, Kathleen Collins and Alexander Cooley have argued that it is regime security, which is the primary goal behind many foreign policies of Central Asian states.² Furthermore, Marlène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse, senior research fellows at the *Central Asia-Caucasus Institute* and *Silk Road Studies Program*, have conducted critically important field research on the role of an external influential factor, namely the presence of China in Central Asian entities.³ They have highlighted the complex interplay between different kinds of China factor and domestic order, social changes, and emerging national narratives in Central Asia.⁴ Not disagreeing with existing assertions as such, this study carries out a multidimensional journey, firstly, further explaining why close interactions between internal and external dynamics occur even in neopatrimonial-authoritarian states, and secondly, how this in turn feeds in Central Asian peculiar understandings of legitimacy. Recognizing the presence of numerous dimensions of China factor and its multifaceted impact on the very Central Asian internalities, this research asks the following questions:

¹ Rajan Menon, “New Great Game in Central Asia,” *The International Institute for Strategic Studies* 45, no. 2 (2003): 187-204, accessed June 21, 2013. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00396338.2003.9688581>.

² See: Roy Allison, “Virtual regionalism, regional structures and regime security in Central Asia,” *Central Asian Survey* 27, no. 2 (Sep., 2008): 185-202; Kathleen Collins, “Economic and Security Regionalism among Patrimonial Authoritarian Regimes: The case of Central Asia,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 2 (Feb., 2009): 249-281; Alexander Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

³ Note: the term ‘China factor’ implies the presence of China in Central Asia. It is also indicated in terms definition section.

⁴ Marlène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse, *The Chinese Question in Central Asia*, London: Hurst and Company, 2012.

Research question: How does the way domestic-foreign nexus is played out as for different aspects of China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan explain the notions of legitimacy within Central Asian context?

Sub-question: What implications do various kinds of China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have on domestic politics and foreign policy outcomes of the two Central Asian republics?

Thesis statement: The main argument of this present research is in fact two-fold. 1) The Domestic-Foreign Nexus approach to foreign policy analysis demonstrates that depending on timing and the very kinds of China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, *de facto* limited internal-external interplay takes place. Domestic actors and politics do not directly influence foreign policies of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan towards China, *per se* it is internal determinants of the two Central Asian states that respond to the foreign policy decisions. 2) By virtue of which the studies of foreign policy can shed light on Central Asian peculiar understandings of legitimacy or what it means to be legitimate. Having stated that, it will be argued that legitimacy in Central Asia is exploited as another means serving specific ends, commonly, aimed at benefit-extractions.

This present research pursues two **aims**:

- 1) To explicitly show the link between domestic-foreign nexus within the framework of foreign policies of Kazakhstan in comparison with Kyrgyzstan towards China;
- 2) To further contribute to an understanding of existing legitimacy notions within the Central Asian context.

Research rationale:

Close Sino-Central Asian relations have re-emerged with the dissolution of the USSR in the 1990s when Central Asian states gained ‘catapulted’ independence and

sovereignty.⁵ This can be observed not only in the enhanced cooperation on regional security and stability matters, but also in the rapidly increasing economic interactions. Such phenomena have attracted worldwide attention, especially due to the contemporary global debate on ‘China’s Rise’.⁶ Scholars and policymakers alike have revisited geopolitical concepts such as ‘New Great Game’, Sir Halford Mackinder’s ‘Heartland Theory’, and Zbigniew Brzezinski’s ‘Grand Chessboard’, in all of which, for its geostrategic importance, Central Asia is perceived as a region of competing interests of world powers now including China. According to John J. Mearsheimer, following the logic behind the Offensive Realism theory, in this contemporary world of multipolar nature, China seeks regional hegemony that includes Central Asian states.⁷ These systemic paradigms of International Relations (IR) studies offer a filter for understanding of the complex configuration of the international system. Nevertheless, in this radically changing world politics, they fall short of explaining the intertwining character of domestic and international politics.

Another achievement in political science, Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) is a complex theoretical framework of levels of analysis.⁸ The mainstream literature on foreign policy analysis of Central Asian states suggests that it is *presidents* who are key foreign policy decision-makers.⁹ This is not incorrect. Yet, this present research undertakes the domestic-foreign nexus analysis, therefore further filling that lacuna of

⁵ Martha Brill Olcott, “Catapult to Independence,” *Foreign Affairs* 71, no. 3 (1992): 108-113, accessed June 20, 2013. <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/47979/martha-brill-olcott/central-asias-catapult-to-independence>.

⁶ See following on ‘China’s Rise’ debate: John J. Mearsheimer, “China’s Unpeaceful Rise,” *Current History* 105, (2006): 160-162; John G. Ikenberry, “The Rise of China: Power, Institutions, and the Western Order,” in *China’s Ascent: Power, Security, and the Future of International Politics*, ed. by Robert S. Ross et al. (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008), 89–114; Qin Yaqing, “International Society as a Process: Institutions, Identities, and China’s Peaceful Rise,” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3, (2010): 129–153; Barry Buzan, “China in International Society: Is ‘Peaceful Rise’ Possible?” *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3, (2010): 5-36; and others.

⁷ John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: Norton, 2001), accessed July 30, 2013. <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~plam/irnotes07/Mearsheimer2001.pdf>.

⁸ Valerie M. Hudson, *Foreign Policy Analysis: classic and contemporary theory* (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 3.

⁹ “Pros’ess prinyatiya vneshnopoliticheskikh reshenii: Kyrgyzstan i opyt drugih stran,” in *Sostoyanie i perspektivy razvitiya vneshnei politiki Kyrgyzstana*,” *IPP*, (Rektaim: 2009): 95-106, accessed August 9, 2013. http://ipp.kg/uploads/publications /NED_book_final_ru.pdf.

existing field of studies. This will be illustrated through comparative analysis of various case studies drawn from both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan that deal with miscellaneous China factor.

It is legitimate to further discuss the multifarious impact of numerous China factor on the very Central Asian domestic order. According to Laruelle and Peyrouse, short, medium, and long-term influence of China on Central Asian societies is significant as the rise of both Sinophile and Sinophobe sentiments became part of national narratives challenging the internal circumstances of the states.¹⁰ Central to the main hypothesis of this research, tracing and considering the nature of the Central Asians' legitimacy claims on China factor is essential for understanding the continuing transformation of the region.

The findings and conclusions of this study can also serve as basis for other research directions as how different Central Asian perceptions of China are compared with how United States of America, Russia, India, Iran, European Union, Japan, and others are understood.

Defining key terms:

China factor or the presence of China in Central Asia does not imply problems with China. But China has become, voluntarily or not, vital to, if not a catalyst of, the extensive debates and stakes that have thrilled the very inner circles of Central Asian entities. Opposition, represented by political parties, interest groups, business elites and even individuals, are now visible calling for legitimacy or illegitimacy of China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. On the other hand, Central Asian legitimacy claims on China factor are closely interlinked with regime legitimacy, its ability to preserve order, development, and policies considering national-interests and public opinion. Nevertheless, the fluctuating nature of the legitimacy claims both in their meaning and

¹⁰ Marlène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse, *The Chinese Question in Central Asia* (London: Hurst and Company, 2012), 9.

their exploitation serve as a pretext for fulfillment of Central Asians' everyday life realities. Thus, there is no common social consent on legitimacy of China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Consistent legitimacy notions in the region are yet to be preserved. Understanding such complex realm is the essence of this present research.

Research Methods and Limits:

The main difficulty of this research is the measurement of legitimacy claims in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in relation to China factor. It is predominantly due to the hybrid nature of the state, which is as Sally N. Cummings stated, "...temporality and templates, mixed with independent, globalized protectorate status..."¹¹ Limited empirical analysis indicating the determinants of what it means to be legitimate within Central Asian terms infer there is a need for social survey updates and anthropological field of studies. Yet this research will attempt to fill that gap specifically looking at the internal sources of Sino-Kazakhstan and Sino-Kyrgyzstan relations. Furthermore, there is a lack of fully reliable information on Sino-Central Asian entrepreneurial trade relations. Available primary and secondary literature will be frequently used. Content analysis within a cross-sectional research method is a major component of this study.

Methodology:

This research carries out a multilevel comparative analysis. It is comparative because it involves comparing two of the Central Asian countries and their understanding of legitimacy in relation to various kinds of China factor. Both states are in the same region and both deal with China factor. However, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are clearly different in many dimensions, especially in their economies. Yet, these different settings will generate important contrasts for better understanding the domestic-foreign nexus in relation to legitimacy and policy.

¹¹ Sally N. Cummings, *Understanding Central Asia: Politics and contested transformations* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 180.

It is multilevel analysis because: 1) there are numerous types of China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan depending on the aspect of Sino-Central Asian relations (land, trade, socio-cultural and others); 2) there are various ways the foreign policies influence domestic circumstances and *vice-versa*; 3) different understandings of legitimacy exist in Central Asian entities.

Chapters Breakdown:

The first chapter of this research will provide a theoretical framework and overall literature review relevant to this study. Two closely interrelated subjects will be considered. First, Domestic-Foreign Nexus as an approach to foreign policy analysis will be discussed. Second, its symbiotic correlation with the concept of legitimacy will be underlined. It is intended to incorporate this framework into each chapter leading to conclusive penultimate chapter of this present research.

In the second chapter, briefly on historical origins, development, and post-independence rapprochement of two of the Central Asian republics with China as regards to land deals will be considered. It will be argued that the China factor in border-territorial and agricultural land foreign policy decisions has rather spurred domestic turmoil in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The very questions of legitimacy exploited by political opposition were appropriated to reach their own objectives. Thus, domestic-foreign nexus analysis within Sino-Central Asian relations can in turn explain Central Asian communities' logic on legitimacy.

The third chapter is to review the revitalization of entrepreneurial trade relations between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and China. Perhaps somewhat bringing to mind the ancient Silk Road, the expansion of trade routes connecting Xinjiang hub with its Western neighbors was inevitable. There is no objection to the many gains, which China as well as Central Asian states have experienced. However, the costs are intriguingly bound with the very conditionality that the Russia-dominated Customs Union dictates.

Kazakhstan being one of the founding member-states of this economic block, the mass media coverage is now filled with Kazakh dissatisfactions and opposition awakenings to politicize such dilemma. On the other hand, Kyrgyzstan is rushed to make decisions. This further confirms internal-external policy linkage even in neopatrimonial-authoritarian states.

Central to the core hypothesis of this research, the application of broad understanding of legitimacy to specifically Sino-Central Asian entrepreneurial trade relation *vis-à-vis* their accession to the Customs Union suggests that legitimacy should not be regarded as something that is singularly understood. Instead, legitimacy claims carried out by opposition in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in relation to this China factor, are substantially rooted in benefit-extractions aims within everyday life milieu.

The fourth chapter examines the role of China factor in socio-cultural life of these two Central Asian entities. How legitimately China is viewed and with what implications will be closely examined. The existent Sinophobe sentiments across the region is easily penetrated and discoursed within national narratives by particular interest groups or individuals. In spite of Beijing's soft power exercise in the region, this might be a noteworthy constraint for China's long-term strategic goals towards the region. Central to discussions within this present study, how ordinary citizens in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan perceive such aspects of China factor has an important impact on domestic changes in Central Asian realms.

The final chapter is a decisive part of this entire work. It seeks to provide comparative analysis of previously considered three dimensions of China factor (land; entrepreneurship; and socio-culture related) in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Given that, it will investigate how the way the domestic-foreign nexus is played out as for different facets of China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan explains the notions of legitimacy within Central Asian context. Such comparison and contrast of the Central Asians'

legitimacy notions as regards to numerous aspects of China factor will be a valuable contribution to the larger field of Central Asia studies. Moreover, the second part of this chapter will also briefly consider a comparative analysis of the possible impact of Central Asians' China factor legitimacy claims on their foreign policy decisions towards China. This will be followed with the findings and conclusions of this present study as well as further research questions for Sino-Central Asia studies.

Chapter 1. Understanding Domestic-Foreign Legitimacy Nexus. Literature Review.

1.1. Domestic-Foreign Nexus as an approach to Foreign Policy Analysis.

To better understand contemporary foreign policy studies one must have read Juliet Kaarbo, Jeffrey S. Lantis, Micheal T. Snarr, and Ryan K. Beasley edited *Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective - Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior*, a comparison-based book that highlights the importance of both internal and external determinants of foreign policy. Scholars yet recognize existing conventional wisdom that the general public simply does not influence foreign policy outcome. Whether leaders would take into consideration the public opinion is not clear even in case the public were aware regarding foreign policy affairs.¹² Official authorities may instead choose to either ignore or shape the public opinion in line with their own preferences.¹³ And, media, an intermediary factor, certainly plays a significant role informing the public as well as influencing the public opinion on foreign policy.¹⁴ Furthermore, the writers indicate that, “many times, evidence suggests that leaders who do ignore the public are not held accountable at the polls because elections typically revolve around domestic rather than foreign policy concerns.”¹⁵ If to agree with that the globalized protectorate status of the contemporary world politics confirms internal-external space contraction, then foreign policy now can be equally internalized and appear as a domestic policy as well. In the end, the ruling regimes are expected to gain and preserve legitimacy from the broader public, in any context as regards to both domestic and foreign policy, or as a combination of the two.

In terms of theoretical framework, Domestic-Foreign Nexus, an approach to foreign policy studies indicate inevitability of the internal-external interplay, *per se* state

¹² Juliet Kaarbo et al., *Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective: Domestic and International Influences on State Behavior*, 2nd ed. (California: CQ Press, 2013), 14.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

and policy reciprocity.¹⁶ It will be argued that the dynamics and scope of the symbiotic phenomena as such substantially depend on specific understanding of the legitimacy both as an idea and in practice. This will be applied particularly to the case studies drawn from both Sino-Kazakhstan and Sino-Kyrgyzstan relations.

The preponderant literature on Sino-Central Asian relations considers regional inter-state security and energy arrangements. Only recent scholarship has provided important contributions going beyond long existent geopolitical erudition. There is now greater availability of the nationwide Kazakhstani and Kyrgyzstani public opinion surveys on the presence of China and the Chinese in Central Asia. Firsthand literature based on personal observations of Sino-Central Asia experts now reveals diverse opinions on the very inner circle interactions that take place within the region. Prominent descriptions and interpretations of the local market communications, exchanges of the subnational perceptions shaped by the media or popular narratives, and attitudes as regards to China factor are now accessible, which otherwise would not be easy to find within respective mainstream studies.¹⁷ It is not to say the available literature is complete. The emerging approach is still subject to substantial advancements. And, because the nature of the regional dynamics itself is a mix of enduring Soviet legacies and fast-transforming inconsistency at the same time, important observations on Sino-Central Asian interactions come from the frequently updated academic blogs.¹⁸

¹⁶ The debate is existent in the field of International Relations and Foreign Policy Analysis studies. See: Herald Müller and Thomas Risse-Kappen, "From the Outside In and from the Inside Out: International Relations, Domestic Politics, and Foreign Policy," in *The Limits of State Autonomy: Societal Groups and Foreign Policy Formulation*, edited by David Skidmore and Valerie M. Hudson, Westview Press, 1993.

¹⁷ See: Marlène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse, *The Chinese Question in Central Asia*, (London: Hurst and Company, 2012); Elena Y. Sadovskaya, "Chinese Migration to Kazakhstan: a Silk Road for Cooperation or a Thorny Road of Prejudice?" *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (2007): 147-170; Amantur Zhaparov, "The Issue of Chinese Migrants in Kyrgyzstan," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (2008): 79-91.

¹⁸ Raffaello Pantucci and Alexandros Petersen, *China in Central Asia Blog*, <http://chinaincentralasia.com/resources/>.

Overall, there is no shortage of literature on Sino-Central Asian relations. This research cannot be complete without mention of these Sino-Central Asia experts - Marlène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse on close examination of the nature of domestic order, social change, and Chinese question in Central Asia; Raffaello Pantucci and Alexandros Petersen on China's ever fast penetration of the region; Chris Rickleton, David Trilling, Elena Sadovskaya, Konstantin Syroezhkin and others on dynamics of Central Asian social perceptions of China factor; and Niklas Swanström and Zhang Li for geopolitics perspective on Sino-Central Asian relations.

They have paved the way to new research niches deeply engaging in analysis of how domestic conditions of Central Asian states respond to their foreign policies towards China. In one or other way, the scholars suggested looking from inside of Central Asian entities towards neighboring China, which provides important basis for this present study.

1.2. Understanding the others' understandings of 'Legitimacy'.

Understanding the others' understanding of legitimacy both as a norm and practice is key to why certain foreign policy become internalized, others not; why certain public concern on a policy has greater weight on regime security and change in policy; and why in specific cases state-public relationship is persistent, in other times it is vulnerable to devastating consequences breaking the existing social consent, if there is any, on what it means for the regime or policy to be legitimate.

In political science, the concept of legitimacy or what makes the ruling government legitimate or illegitimate is still a matter of both theoretical and policy debates. The idea of legitimacy, if not the term as such has always had a primary importance in political reflections since the very time of Plato and Aristotle. The notion of legitimacy is pervasive in the writings of theorists as from Max Weber to Robert

Dahl, Karl Deutsch, David Easton, Carl Friedrich, Seymour Lipset, Lucian Pye, W. G. Runciman, John Schaar and others.

Of first and foremost importance is the meaning of legitimacy, which comprises many decisions on criteria to define it. But, in simple terms, according to Carl J. Friedrich, “question of legitimacy is a question of fact whether a given ruling regime is believed to be based on good title by most men subject to it.”¹⁹ Correspondingly it was stated by Don Herzog that state could be legitimate even if it captures only certain social stratum as long as it goes beyond the threshold of the majority.²⁰ However, it can be agreed that these are democratic definitions of legitimacy, which can lead to a flawed assumptions on others’ understandings of legitimacy.²¹

David Beetham, yet recognizing classic works on legitimacy emphasized the non-uniformity of the concept, which may not be a democratic one in practice.²² In addition, John Heathershaw in his interchanging debate with Muriel Atkin, specifically looking at a case of Tajikistan, argued that it is an “endurance, not acceptance of the regime...can be considered in terms of legitimacy.”²³ Thus, in order to better understand others’ understandings of legitimacy the very specific features of the society must be taken into account.

Seymour Lipset writing about the essence of legitimacy, as utmost importance pointed out that legitimacy is about the degree the ruling system is capable of persuading the belief that the functioning state institutions are most appropriated to the governed society. And, considering the context of state he is speaking of, he further claimed:

¹⁹ Peter G. Stillman, “The Concept of Legitimacy,” *Polity* 7, no. 1 (Autumn, 1974): 34, accessed June 28, 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3234268?seq=2>.

²⁰ Don Herzog, *Happy Slaves: A Critique of Consent Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 206.

²¹ Check for criticism of democratic definition of legitimacy: Sally N Cummings, *Understanding Central Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 68-69; John Heathershaw, *Post-Conflict Tajikistan* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

²² Cummings, *Understanding Central Asia*, 69.

²³ *Ibid.*

“...In authoritarian states, it is difficult to know whether the belief in the appropriateness of existing institutions is real or whether people merely demonstrate compliant behavior and act as if they believe in the appropriateness of institutions. Moreover, they seldom have a coherent notion of the alternative institutions, which could be better than the existing ones. It is ultimately not possible to be certain: compliant behavior can mask tensions and resentment, but it can also reflect a genuine preference for the prevailing order.”²⁴

Anna Matveeva who is one of the leading Central Asia scholars expressed similar concerns. Yet she further considers the very measurement of social consent on legitimacy since in the case of non-democracies the public opinion is limited, manipulated favorably for the ruling regime.²⁵ “The notion of legitimacy in such states has to include that it is not a normative idea as such, and that it includes a very complex view of consent...the political leadership structures itself is not certain of this consent,” she argued.²⁶ Consequently, legitimacy understandings within Central Asian context are not merely granted. Common social consent as such is rather yet to be established. It is because of the hybridity of the state, which is a combination of authoritarian degree with a democratic façade, and transitional operating within ‘political gray zone’.²⁷ Nevertheless, it can be concurred that the concept of legitimacy can exist, if not in a peculiar way, in non-democracy forms of political structure.

To sum up, the understanding of the others’ understanding of legitimacy, firstly, exists both as an idea and in practice, in a closely intertwining way; secondly, it is not monolithic; thirdly, it is symbiotic with the very nature of the state system; and lastly, it is rather flawed concept and yet to become customary at least within Central Asian context.

All of these resources in combination with others provide an important ground for conducting the present research.

²⁴ Seymour M. Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1981), 83.

²⁵ Anna Matveeva, “Legitimizing Central Asian Authoritarianism: Political Manipulation and Symbolic Power,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 7 (Sept., 2009): 1097, accessed July 18, 2013. <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09668130903068624>.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 1096.

²⁷ Thomas Carothers, “The End of the Transition Paradigm,” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 1 (2002): 9-13, accessed March 5, 2013. http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_democracy/v013/13.1carothers.html.

Chapter 2. Legitimacy of land related China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

2.1. Foreign policy outcomes of territorial border land negotiations with China.

Domestic-Foreign Nexus as an approach to foreign policy analysis confirms the existence of internal-external policy interactions even in neopatrimonial-authoritarian states.²⁸ This chapter considers land related China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, particularly its impact on the domestic order of these Central Asian states.

The decision of the three Slavic republics leaders who met in Belovezhskaia Pushcha on December 8th of 1991 led to the dissolution of the USSR. As a result of such a transformative event, the Central Asian republics – Kazakhstan (December 16th, 1991), Kyrgyzstan (August 31st, 1991), Tajikistan (September 9th, 1991), Turkmenistan (October 27th, 1991), and Uzbekistan (September 1st, 1991) also gained independence and sovereignty.²⁹ In fact, unlike their ex-Soviet counterparts, the Central Asian republics were forced to leave the Union. Thus, they had to find their own ways of survival with no prior experience of independence at all. Along with the development strategies each Central Asian leaders had opted for, resolving territorial-border issues with neighboring countries stood as one of the most urgent post-independence tasks. In addition to maintaining regional security and stability, control of territory meant control of land and other natural resources.

Tracing back through history, it was Moscow that established the administrative territorial-borders of Central Asian republics in the mid-1920s. Consequently, territorial-border matters with China were directly subject to Sino-USSR relations, Moscow exclusively acting on behalf of Central Asian entities. The impact of enduring imperial legacies on the post-independence space-time continuum has not been uniform.

²⁸ Juliet Kaarbo et al., *Foreign Policy...*, 15.

²⁹ Mohira Suyarkulova, "Reluctant Sovereigns? Central Asian States' Path to Independence," in *Sovereignty After Empire*, ed. Sally N. Cummings et al., (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 127 and 150.

To illustrate, in the case of Kazakhstan, efforts to demarcate the border with China have not been particularly problematic because around 1,400 kilometers had been resolved during the Soviet era.³⁰ Nevertheless, now independent Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have had to deal with China on a considerable number of territorial disputes (2,235km² + 3,728km²)³¹ inherited from the Soviet period.

The creation of the Shanghai Five in 1996, which included Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Russia and China, served as an initial post-independence forum for negotiations and demilitarization of the shared territorial-borders.³² In spite of such regional cooperation efforts and China's willingness to preserve amicable neighborly relations, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan continued to feel a great deal of pressure from Beijing to resolve border disputes favorably for China.³³ In addition, China has appeared willing to provide its military assistance, transportation and trade development initiatives in exchange for advantageous land concessions and water rights.³⁴ Under such expectations, the territorial-border demarcation agreements were achieved through strategically employed bilateral agreements.

In March of 1994, official authorities agreed upon 1,700km² of Sino-Kazakh borders.³⁵ In 1998, consensus was reached on non-delimited border of about 120 kilometers and the status of 946km² total areas of two districts, Sardy-Chelek and the Chagan-Obo Valley.³⁶ A year later, *Mazhilis*, the Parliament of Kazakhstan ratified the territorial-border demarcation agreement with China.³⁷ On May 10th of 2002, the protocol on the "Demarcation of the State Line" was also included in demarcating and

³⁰ "Central Asia: Border Disputes and Conflict Potential," *ICG Asia Report*, no. 33 (April 4, 2002): 22, accessed June 12, 2013. [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/central-asia/Central%20Asia%20Border%20Disputes%20and%20Conflict%20Potential.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/central-asia/Central%20Asia%20Border%20Disputes%20and%20Conflict%20Potential.pdf).

³¹ Necati Polat, *Boundary Issues in Central Asia* (Transnational, 2002), 40.

³² "Central Asia: Border Disputes and Conflict Potential," 5.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Polat, *Boundary Issues in Central Asia*, 40.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁷ *Ibid.* Refer to the footnote.

delimiting the 170 kilometers long boundary between the two countries.³⁸ As a result, Kazakhstan was left with 57% of the disputed territories and freed from Chinese historical assertion over Lake Balkhash.³⁹

Similar steps were followed in Kyrgyzstan. In 1998, *Jogorku Kenesh*, the Parliament of Kyrgyzstan ratified a 1996 bilateral border agreement that ceded 30,000 hectares of the Uzengi-Kuush region to China.⁴⁰ Ratified in 2002 by *Jogorku Kenesh*, as a result of 1999 additional protocol, another 90,000 hectares of the Uzengi-Kuush region were resolved in favor of China.⁴¹

Generally speaking, the defining features of these bilateral agreements are the fact that they are peaceful and mutually beneficial. Thus, Central Asian border settlements with China can be considered as positive examples of territorial-border resolutions in post-Soviet space. Yet, in the realm of Central Asian domestic politics the same cannot be said. The response to the foreign policy outcomes as such proved the opposite triggering social dissatisfactions in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

2.2. Domestic politics response: regime and foreign policy legitimacy claims.

The constitutional provisions of Central Asian states guarantee extensive foreign policy decision-making rights to presidents.⁴² Accordingly, the leaders of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have substantively determined territorial-border agreements with China. Nevertheless, the governments of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were tested as they faced sharp internal political divisions over the territorial concessions. The political oppositions were able to seize the border topic for broader political discussions. As

³⁸ Polat, *Boundary Issues in Central Asia*, 41. Refer to the footnote.

³⁹ Laruelle and Peyrouse, *The Chinese Question in Central Asia*, 15.

⁴⁰ Agreement between Kyrgyz Republic and People's Republic of China on Kyrgyz-China state borders, Kyrgyzstan-China, July 4, 1996, *Toktom*, accessed June 6, 2013.

⁴¹ Additional agreement between Kyrgyz Republic and People's Republic of China on Kyrgyz-China state borders, Kyrgyzstan-China, August 26, 1999, *Toktom*, accessed June 6, 2013.

⁴² Kazakhstan Const. art. 40, §1, accessed July 6, 2013. <http://www.parlam.kz/ru/constitution>; Kyrgyzstan Const. art. 64, §6, cl. 1, accessed July 6, 2013. http://kenesh.kg/RU/Articles/42-Konstituciya_Kyrgyzskoj_Respubliki.aspx.

much as clan, regionalism and other kinds of identities, political opposition cultivated legitimacy claims for political gains. Granted that, closer analysis of the very political oppositions' legitimacy claims in relation to the land China factor is vital for understanding the state of affairs as such.

Firstly, although there is low level risk of the border disputes causing any kind of Sino-Central Asian inter-state military conflicts, controversial border demarcations conducted without transparency can disrupt the very domestic order of Central Asian states. Land deals with China that do not take into consideration the political opposition demands could consequently lead to devastating social disorders directly fueling anti-government attitudes across Central Asian societies. To illustrate, two prominent opposition leaders, namely Murat Auezov and Olzhas Suleimenov opposed the territorial-border agreements between Kazakhstan and China.⁴³ Yet, they were forced to quit politics because of coming into too much disagreement with president Nursultan A. Nazarbayev.⁴⁴ However, cross-border rivers questions with China remain unsolved. Backed by the opposition front "Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan", Mr. Auezov's criticism today resonates throughout the popular media.⁴⁵ Confrontations as such are indeed subject to future political battles in Kazakhstan.

In contrast to the case of Kazakhstan, the territorial-border land agreements between Kyrgyzstan and China have resulted in a critical turning point of the forthcoming political trajectories of the Central Asian republic as well as inadvertently shattering the whole region. To illustrate, the political opposition group led by A. Beknazarov, B. Bekboev, I. Isakov, A. Madumarov, A. Masaliev and others contested the ratification of 1996 territorial-border agreement with China and a supplementary

⁴³ Laruelle and Peyrouse, *The Chinese Question in Central Asia*, 104.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

protocol of 1999.⁴⁶ Initially, the condemnations were pursued based on then functioning Constitutional provisions of Kyrgyzstan. Three Constitutional violations were denoted: the violation of the Article 3 of the Constitution of Kyrgyzstan on territorial integrity of the republic within its boundaries; the first paragraph of the Article 59, which dictates that the change in territorial boundaries of the state require two-thirds of both chambers of the Parliament of the Kyrgyzstan; and the paragraph 6 of the Article 65, which requires at least two considerations by the Parliament in case of change in the status quo of state boundaries.⁴⁷

Legislators expressed their complaint by arguing: “the vote was conducted without the executive branch having presented a map of the proposed concessions.”⁴⁸ In either way, respectively, the deputies were not provided with a copy of the agreement beforehand for close examination, but were only allowed to briefly look at it before the final voting took place.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the territorial-border agreement ratifications indeed divided Kyrgyzstani public. For instance, in the case of Kyrgyzstan, the culmination of the social discontent reached the peak when one of the prominent opposition leaders Azimbek Beknazarov was arrested in January 2002 for his criticism of the unconstitutional land handover to China.⁵⁰ This led to a hunger strike in Bishkek and riots in Aksy region of Jalalabat province.⁵¹ As Mr. Beknazarov stated, “the issue was not just that the disputed land should be resolved, but more about how (then) president Akayev conducted the affair without addressing all the members of Parliament and informing the general public.”⁵² This served as a pretext for political battles in Kyrgyzstan, predominantly between the government and political opposition.

⁴⁶ “MC – Novaya kitaisko-kyrgyzskaya granis’a. Konstitus’ionnyi sud zadumalsya – kto vinovat?” *S’entrAziya*, February 2, 2003, <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1046335980>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ “Central Asia: Border Disputes and Conflict Potential,” 17.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ David Gullette, *The Genealogical Construction of the Kyrgyz Republic: Kinship, State and ‘tribalism’*, (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2010), 20.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid, 21.

As can be seen, by internalizing the external factor, particularly territorial-border land deals with China, the political oppositions were able to raise legitimacy concerns undermining the ruling regimes of the two of Central Asian republics. This paved the way for opposition legitimacy claims in both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, and even opposition mobilization in the latter.

Secondly, the notion of legitimacy in Central Asian states has to include that it is not purely a normative idea or granted consent as such, but rather it is yet to be further negotiated. For one thing, as evidenced in case of Kyrgyzstan, the political leadership itself is not certain of this social consent. As stated by, Anna Matveeva, one of the prominent Central Asia scholars, "...an authoritarian leader has less ability to see an approaching crisis and is likely to misinterpret symptoms by treating them too leniently or vastly exaggerating the threats."⁵³ Thus, the explicit concept of legitimacy is deficient in an authoritarian context. Moreover, as seen under the rule of president Nazarbayev and ex-president Akayev, the land legitimacy claims carried out by the political opposition cannot be precisely framed. The very measurement of legitimacy "in societies where public expression of political preferences is so restricted, hidden, manipulated or disguised" is questionable.⁵⁴ In any respect, the opposition legitimacy claims were exploited for political oppositions' goals instead of forming strong basis for social consent on what it means the regime or policy to be legitimate.

2.3. Changing nature of land related China factor.

Land remains as a highly emotive issue everywhere in Central Asia. The territorial-border land demarcation deals with China no longer continue to dominate political trending debates in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. This section will review the evolving nature of the land related China factor in recent years, which further triggered

⁵³ Matveeva, "Legitimizing Central Asian Authoritarianism," 1096.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

social discontent in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The overall chapter conclusions will follow.

The 2010 International Republican Institute polling finds that 81% of Kazakhstani citizens would oppose the government's possible leasing of agricultural land to China.⁵⁵ Given that, on January 30th of 2010, close to 1,500 local people in Kazakhstan protested the government's plan "to lease a million hectares of Kazakhstan land for the joint production of soybeans, rapeseed and corn in Kazakhstan with Chinese growers."⁵⁶ Participants of the rally, particularly the leader of the opposition parties and activists viewed the deal as a threat to the national security.⁵⁷ In fact, this was not the first time the Kazakh government rented agricultural lands to Chinese. Back in 2004, the local authorities of the autonomous Kazakh region of Ili in Xinjiang were granted a permission to rent 7,000 hectares of agricultural lands.⁵⁸ The uncultivated agricultural lands were rented to about 3,000 Chinese for a period of ten years to grow soybeans and wheat.⁵⁹ Later at the end of 2009, president Nursultan A. Nazarbayev publicized that, "China had expressed a desire to lease a million hectares of Kazakh land upon which Chinese growers would cultivate soybeans and rapeseed."⁶⁰ This statement provoked a demonstration of 2,000 people, a relatively large number for a non-authorized meeting, comprising prohibited parties, mainly the United Social Democratic Party, Azat Party, as well as Kazakh nationalists and the ethnic Russians-led opposition.⁶¹

⁵⁵ "Kazakhstan National Opinion Poll," *IRI*, (April, 2010): 19. <http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2010%20May%2019%20Survey%20of%20Kazakhstan%20Public%20Opinion,%20April%203-13,%202010%20--%20English%20version.pdf>.

⁵⁶ Joanna Lillis, "Kazakhstan: China Looking to Lease Land for Agricultural Purposes," *EURASIANET.org*, February 3, 2010, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav020410.shtml>.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Laruelle and Peyrouse, *The Chinese Question in Central Asia*, 108.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Unlike in case of Kazakhstan, in Kyrgyzstan, a serious concern over agricultural land rents to China is closely related to how existing debts to China must be paid back. As China's loans come "no-string attached", its interests in Central Asia have always been viewed through the prism of Beijing's worrisome instability in Xinjiang province.⁶² However, lately, according to Li Lifan, associate research professor at Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, one possibility of debt repayment to China might be in form of "barter arrangements in which repayment comes in the form of mineral concessions and long-term leases of agricultural lands."⁶³ Therefore, Central Asians' legitimacy claims of land related China factor have evolved from territorial-border concerns to agricultural land rents to China. This time not entirely for political opposition purposes since it involves society's everyday life concerns. Yet, its development is rather to be seen in the future.

To sum up this chapter, as the case studies drawn on land related China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have demonstrated, foreign policy outcomes can be adopted to serve as an important cause for political oppositions' objectives. And, depending on timing and the very sorts of China factor, the legitimacy within the Central Asian context means benefits-extractions, specifically for political gains in this case. However, the nature of the land related China factor has evolved as well as Central Asian legitimacy claims. Therefore, this proves that Central Asian common legitimacy understandings are yet to be preserved. In the meantime, particular legitimacy claims are raised in accordance with extend the matter is relevant to Central Asians' everyday life concerns. This hypothesis will be further tested and compared within the framework of entrepreneurial trade related China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

⁶² "Inadvertent Empire," *China in Central Asia Blog*, accessed July 12, 2013. <http://chinaincentralasia.com/2013/04/16/inadvertent-empire/>.

⁶³ Chris Rickleton, "Kyrgyzstan: Is Chinese Investment Really Win-Win?" *EURASIANET.org*, July 23, 2013. <http://eurasianet.org/node/67287>.

Chapter 3. Legitimacy of entrepreneurial trade related China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

3.1. Development of Sino-Central Asian entrepreneurial trade relations.

The previous chapter looked at the legitimacy of the land related China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan through the prism of Domestic-Foreign Nexus. Likewise, this chapter will consider entrepreneurial trade relations of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan with China through the same lens.

China's trade offensive towards Central Asian region goes hand in hand with its "China Far West" development strategy, which concentrates on Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Oblast (XUAR).⁶⁴ In 2010, the trade record between China and Central Asian states reached US\$28 billion.⁶⁵ It must be noted that the official statistics take little account of the very realities of trade practices, such as shadow economy or illegal smuggling of goods, which are economically significant. It is nevertheless remarkable that according to the Chinese Customs Statistics the total volume of China-Central Asia trade increased from US\$465 million in 1992 to \$7.7 billion in 2005.⁶⁶ Between 2004 and 2006 itself, it reached more than US\$10 billion according to Central Asian figures or US\$13 billion according to Chinese ones.⁶⁷

Apart from energy and infrastructure sectors, Marlène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse have suggested three categorizations of China-Central Asia trade: border trade, which is dominated by shuttle traders; trade organized by the Xinjiang Production and Constructions Corps; and trade carried out by private entrepreneurs.⁶⁸ Moreover, it can be observed that approximately 80 to 90 percent of Chinese exports to Central Asia consist of goods both raw materials and finished "consumer products, machinery,

⁶⁴ "China's far west. Under the thumb," *The Economist*, December 1, 2005. <http://www.economist.com/node/5252768>.

⁶⁵ Laruelle and Peyrouse, *The Chinese Question in Central Asia*, 47.

⁶⁶ Swanström, Niklas, Niklas Norling and Zhang Li, "China," *Silk Road Studies Program*, p. 384, accessed August 5th, 2013. <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/publications/GCA/GCAPUB-12.pdf>.

⁶⁷ Laruelle and Peyrouse, *The Chinese Question in Central Asia*, 47.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 47-48.

processed foodstuffs, textiles, shoes, electronic goods, pharmaceutical products, automobile parts, and others.”⁶⁹

One of the most important conditions for developing China-Central Asia trade as such is the relatively lower custom duty that Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan impose on goods coming from China.⁷⁰ Nonetheless, it is intriguingly bound with the very conditionality of Russia-dominated Customs Union, of which Kazakhstan is a member-state and which Kyrgyzstan has declared its strong willingness to join in near future.

3.2. The Customs Union versus China trade dilemma.

The Customs Union (CU) as a platform for Eurasian integration was created on October 6th of 2007.⁷¹ Decided at a high level and then implemented with haste, the CU is comprised of Russia, Belorussia, and Kazakhstan. The creation of this single economic space looms ever large on the horizon. In 2010, Alexander Lukashenko, president of Belorussia, signed documents, including a Customs Code, which made the CU “fully operational.”⁷² Accordingly, while it has no effect on the already existent Eurasian Economic Union (EurAsEC), the CU creates “a two-tiered economic system among former Soviet states, separating Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.”⁷³ In the meanwhile, Kiev and Bishkek signed a memorandum on “the deepening of cooperation with the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC),” which is a supranational governing body of the CU that will allow them to take a part in selected meetings of the Supreme Council and the Commission.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Laruelle and Peyrouse, *The Chinese Question in Central Asia*, 52.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁷¹ Tamojennyi Soyuz,” *EurAsEC*, accessed August 12, 2013. <http://www.evrazes.com/customunion>.

⁷² David Trilling, “Moscow Using New Customs Union to Extend Influence in Central Asia,” *EURASIANET.org*, July 7, 2010. <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/61484>.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Alexander Kim, “Opposition to Customs Union Grows Across Eurasia,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 10, no. 117 (June 20, 2013), accessed July 16, 2013. http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=41052&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=27&cHash=20b957ee9d0d4dc022c3369128ad70cd#.UcSTRhYk_w.

There is a wide literature on whether Kazakhstan has gained much since becoming the CU member-state since 2010. The estimated results are debatable. Clearly, with seven direct roads and sixty-four highways connecting with China,⁷⁵ Kazakhstan is still “the major recipient of Chinese imports and the gateway for Chinese goods entering the CU market.”⁷⁶ The CU dictated customs tariff regulations have substantial impact on the imports of goods coming from China. Despite the debate over Kazakhstan’s gains from the CU, Kyrgyzstan has declared its strong eagerness to join the Customs Union. On April 3rd of 2013, Almazbek Atambayev, president of Kyrgyzstan made a speech at the Kyrgyz State Technical University in Bishkek. Addressing number of issues related to both domestic and foreign politics of the republic, Mr. Atambayev stressed the importance of Kyrgyzstan’s expected accession to the CU.⁷⁷ Additionally, Zhantoro Satybaldiyev, prime minister of Kyrgyzstan, confirmed Bishkek’s political decision to join the CU. In doing this at his meeting with members of Russia’s official delegation to the Council of the EEC, he put forth the view that membership in the CU “would not only permit the growth of external trade but also improve the livelihoods of ordinary citizens.”⁷⁸ Moreover, Dجومart Otorbaev, first deputy prime minister of Kyrgyzstan in conversations with the *EURASIANET.org* about the CU, asserted that Kyrgyzstan is now in the process of harmonizing its legislations with the CU member-states.⁷⁹ “In 2013 we will establish a roadmap and next year we

⁷⁵ Yelena Sadovskaya, “Chinese labor migration to Kazakhstan at the beginning of the 21st century,” *Think Tanks*, (2012): 3, accessed August 7, 2013. http://www.nupi.no/content/download/284213/992479/file/Chinese%20labour%20migration%20to%20Kazakhstan%20at%20the%20beginning%20of%20the%2021st%20century_Sadovskaya.pdf. ()

⁷⁶ Alexander Libman and Daria Ushkalova, “Foreign Trade Effects of the Customs Union between Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia,” *Central Asia Economic Paper*, no. 8 (May, 2013): 4, accessed June 7, 2013. http://www.centralasiaprogram.org/images/Economic_Papers_8_May_2013.pdf.

⁷⁷ Georgyi Voloshin, “Accession to the Customs Union with Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus Threatens Kyrgyzstan’s Domestic Stability,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, 10 (April 9, 2013). http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Bsword%5D=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae3e&tx_ttnews%5Bany_of_the_words%5D=wenran%20jiang&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=40709&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=c2b468ad49ed8fc4be96912730cd1a61#.UfGVZhYk_w.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ David Trilling, “Kyrgyzstan: Vice Premier Outlines Economic Roadmap,” *EURASIANET.org*, May 24, 2013. <http://eurasianet.org/node/67014>.

will make very concrete practical steps (towards membership),” said Mr. Otorbayev.⁸⁰ But also, noting one of the concerns particularly among entrepreneurs in the apparel and textile industries, the Kyrgyz official highlighted risks of such a political decision. He estimates the apparel-textile industry to be worth about \$1 billion or a sixth of overall gross domestic product (GDP) of Kyrgyzstan.⁸¹ The finished and diversified garments are assembled in Kyrgyzstan and mainly exported to Kazakhstan and Russia.⁸² That the industry heavily relies on cheap raw materials imported from China is significant.⁸³ As David Trilling, regional expert summarizes, such the dilemma is – “should it join, manufacturers could face new barriers to importing raw materials from China. Should it not join, the Customs Union could squeeze out Kyrgyz exports.”⁸⁴

There is no objection to the multi-billion dollar gains of two of the Central Asian states, in either case of the CU-membership or the China trade with customs tariffs favorable to regional entrepreneurs. However, while Bishkek already faces opposition objections but also is rushed to make final decisions, local mass media in Kazakhstan is now filled with social dissatisfactions and opposition awakenings politicizing the CU versus China trade issue.

3.3. Domestic response: regime and foreign policy legitimacy claims.

This paper argues that the domestic response in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan with regard to the CU membership versus China trade dilemma confirms the domestic-foreign policy linkage even in neopatrimonial-authoritarian states. Foreign policy studies suggest that the notion of legitimacy should not be regarded as a common knowledge that the legitimacy itself is not monolithic. Instead, legitimacy claims carried

⁸⁰ David Trilling, “Kyrgyzstan: Vice Premier Outlines Economic Roadmap,” *EURASIANET.org*, May 24, 2013. <http://eurasianet.org/node/67014>.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ David Trilling, “Kyrgyzstan: Garment Industry Is a Bright Spot in Gray Area,” *EURASIANET.org*, October 29, 2012. <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/66119>.

out by oppositions in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in relation to entrepreneurial trade related China factor are substantially rooted in benefit-extractions aims within Central Asian everyday life realities.

Firstly, as mentioned, the CU versus China trade dilemma in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan proves the domestic-foreign policy interplay even in neopatrimonial-authoritarian states. It specifically demonstrates the impact of foreign policy outputs on domestic order of these two of Central Asian states. To illustrate, on March 16th of 2013, a group of activists convened in Almaty and proposed organizing a national referendum.⁸⁵ As opposition leader Bulat Abilov summarized on his Facebook account, one of the demands included an immediate withdrawal of Kazakhstan from the CU.⁸⁶ The move against the CU is supported by two of the most outspoken proponents of rising Kazakh nationalism, Mukhtar Taizhan and Aidos Sarym.⁸⁷ Moreover, according to regional expert Dr. Nargiz Kassenova, Kazakhstan's CU membership can be disastrous, especially for small and medium enterprises. She states that both the appreciation and the dissatisfaction can be felt within Kazakhstani public with regard to what the CU-membership offers. "But if you talk to them (people) in private then they're much stronger. They give strong opinions. They say that the economy was surrendered," claimed Dr. Kassenova.⁸⁸ Thus, the impact of the foreign policy decision of Kazakhstan to join the CU varies, but nevertheless, it adversely weighs on the private entrepreneurship sector with China.

Similarly to what has occurred in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan's most-likely accession to the CU has raised public concerns among business elites, interest groups and local entrepreneurs. However, Kyrgyzstan is yet to become a member-state of the

⁸⁵ David Trilling, "Kyrgyzstan: Garment Industry Is a Bright Spot in Gray Area," *EURASIANET.org*, October 29, 2012. <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/66119>.

⁸⁶ Kim, "Opposition to Customs Union Grows Across Eurasia."

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Joanna Lillis and Dean C. K. Cox, "Interview 180: Was the Eurasian Economic Union a Good Deal for Kazakhstan?" *EURASIANET.org*, March 14, 2013. <http://eurasianet.org/node/66694>.

CU. Thus, there are rather overwhelming speculations about economic consequences of such a scenario. According to Roman Mogilevskii, senior research fellow at University of Central Asia in Bishkek, who has been following the case of Kyrgyzstan joining the CU, in accordance with the CU protocol, “the government applies a 15% VAT rate and import duties in compliance with the CU to all imports of goods by individuals in the main re-export categories.”⁸⁹ This would result in about US\$500 million (10.8% of GDP) loss in private sector, and 9% of GDP loss in overall economy of Kyrgyzstan.⁹⁰ Moreover, the Central Asian Free Market Institute, regional think-tank and active interest group, discussing Kyrgyzstan’s gains from World Trade Organization (WTO) membership, has calculated Kyrgyzstan’s re-export trade activities from China to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Russia and other states. In 2008, goods from China going through two of the nation’s biggest markets Dordoi and Karasuu resulted in \$US 3.5 billion or 68% of GDP. In addition, 500, 000 people or 20% of work-capable population is involved in these trade activities as such.⁹¹ In addition, based on World Bank calculations, “ the value of these re-exports today constitutes the Kyrgyz state’s main source of foreign currency, ahead of the gold mine of Kumtor.”⁹² Therefore, Kyrgyzstan’s CU accession has serious implications on its overall economy and citizens who are especially involved in trade with China.

Secondly, a question on the Customs Union versus China trade sheds light on Central Asian peculiar understanding of legitimacy. The very legitimacy claims carried out by opposition in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in relation to entrepreneurial trade

⁸⁹ Roman Mogilevskii, “Re-export Activities in Kyrgyzstan: Issues and Prospects,” *Institute of Public Policy and Administration*, no. 9 (2012): 29. <http://www.ucentralasia.org/downloads/UCA-IPPA-WP-9-Reexport-Eng.pdf>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ “Trinads’atiletnii yubilei: Rezul’taty vstupleniya Kyrgyzstana v WTO,” *Central Asian Free Market Institute*, December 20, 2011. <http://www.freemarket.kg/publications/trinadsatiletnii-yubilei-rezultaty-vstupleniya-kyrgyzstana-v-vto>.

⁹² Gaël Raballand and Bartłomiej Kaminski, “Entrepôt for Chinese Consumer Goods in Central Asia: The Puzzle of Re-Exports through Kyrgyz Bazaars,” *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 50, no. 5 (2009): 581-90. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/5260>.

related China factor are substantially rooted in benefit-extractions aims within everyday life realities.

In Kazakhstan, the business grievances and rising Kazakh nationalism are central components of the ‘CU versus China trade’ matter. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the opposition in Kazakhstan is yet capable of utilizing institutional tools to its advantage. In addition, the literature suggests that the objections raised by the opposition are not necessarily in favor of China, but rather possibly against the Russia-led CU. According to one expert, “...it is becoming evident that some Kazakhstani politicians...are increasingly challenging the current regime with a new anti-Eurasianist message,” which the CU carries.⁹³ Aidos Sarym, a political scientist and opposition activist noted in an interview entitled ‘Kazakh Question and Kazakh Answer’ that Russia has lost its exclusive cultural attractiveness and has no other strong lure for Kazakhs.⁹⁴ “There is a demand and a search for a nation-based ideology for Kazakhstan, and many in society are trying to capture what ‘the Kazakh idea’ might be like,” insisted Mr. Sarym.⁹⁵

On the other hand, Kyrgyzstan’s role as a platform for re-export activities is key. Being the second-largest country of Central Asia in terms of trade exchanges with China, Kyrgyzstan’s re-export activity provides a source of income and employment for a broad spectrum of the country’s citizens and is a major sector of the national economy, one that cannot be overlooked in the current debate. It was entrepreneurs not the state who identified and exploited existing opportunities, which in turn led to the development of this sector and boosted the national economy. Nevertheless, it is a matter of future political trajectories, how will these trade entrepreneurs will react to the

⁹³ Kim, “Opposition to Customs Union Grows Across Eurasia.”

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

political decision of Kyrgyzstan to enter the CU, taking into account that “it (the CU membership) was not a subject for social and Parliamentary discussions.”⁹⁶

It must be noted that there are no permanent lobbies financed by China that have developed independently of the ruling elites, and none that could duplicate high-level decisions.⁹⁷ According to Laruelle and Peyrouse, lobbying groups in Central Asia in relation to China can be defined as non-ideologically driven; rather, “China is viewed in an exclusively pragmatic fashion.”⁹⁸ In Central Asia, “one is pro-Chinese out of economic interest, or because one thinks that there is no other rational choice for the future of the country.”⁹⁹ Officials do not either see the Chinese regime as a role model or embrace Chinese civilization.¹⁰⁰ However what is appealing, official trade with China involves high-ranking political figures whereas ‘black’ market trade activities highly rely on influential senior officials and business elite.¹⁰¹ Granted that, since confiscated products and smuggling of goods activities bring benefits to them it is no good for high-ranking custom officers to legalize Sino-Central Asian trading scheme¹⁰² or to systematize within the CU regulations. Although the impact of the CU regulations on Sino-Central Asian trade is yet to be seen, this overall suggests how the legitimacy understandings as regards to the entrepreneurial trade related China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are rather complicated involving informalities as such.

In summary, one may draw the following important conclusions from the Chinese economic presence in Central Asia. First, this presence certainly benefits the Central Asian economies, albeit in an ambiguous way, giving it a source of income, especially in re-exports. Above all else, most privileges accrue to the heavy industry

⁹⁶ “CAFMI: The consequences of Kyrgyzstan entering the Customs Union,” *Central Asian Free Market Institute*, December 26, 2011. <http://www.freemarket.kg/en/news/cafmi-consequences-kyrgyzstan-entering-customs-union>. (Accessed July 5, 2013).

⁹⁷ Laruelle and Peyrouse, *The Chinese Question in Central Asia*, 99.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 102.

¹⁰² Sadykzhan Ibraimov, “China-Central Asia Trade Relations: Economic and Social Patterns,” *The China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (2009): 56. <http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/index.htm>.

sectors, which are in hands of the business elite and clans in power. Small and medium-sized Chinese enterprises are rare because of the very limited Central Asian market and the negative investment environment. But trade triggered the emergence of private enterprises, owned by the middle classes, whether Chinese or Central Asian. Unfortunately, here too, corrupted milieus provide benefits and advantages first to customs officers, the police, and others within the system. But also, this question is now inextricably bound with the very conditionality of the Russia-led CU, resulting in visible internal discontent within Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Because of legitimacy claims and the way the system operates *vis-à-vis* foreign actors, foreign policy actions as such have had more impact on domestic settings and contentions of the two of Central Asian states.

Chapter 4. Legitimacy of socio-culture related China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

4.1. The presence of Confucius Institutes and the Chinese.

So far, related to land and to entrepreneurial trade, the two kinds of China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were considered. This chapter will provide closer analysis of the socio-culture related China factor in the two of Central Asian states.

After the dissolution of the USSR in early 1990s, China has appeared as the most “consequential outside actor”¹⁰³ in Central Asia. Although it is “an inadvertent” power with no grand strategy towards the region,¹⁰⁴ China’s penetration inwards Central Asia was not inevitable due to its geographic proximity and growing dependence on foreign energy supplies. However, China’s increasing engagement with the region makes its economy exposed to the Central Asians’ perceptions of China. Because China and Central Asian societies have been historically disengaged, today Central Asians’ awareness of China, its culture and society is not pervasive.

At the state level, the inter-state professional exchanges, trainings or the activities promoting the Sino-Central Asian relations are not frequent. Granted that, the socio-culture related China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan became evident predominantly due to the presence of Confucius Institutes and Chinese migration flows into the region.¹⁰⁵

Although Central Asians’ perceptions of China and the Chinese vary from benign to indifferent but alarmist Sinophobe sentiments are not uncommon. Thus, Beijing looks at its soft power as a supplementing tool to influence the region. Inserted into an academic framework by American political scientist Joseph S. Nye Jr., the

¹⁰³ Raffaello Pantucci and Alexandros Petersen, “China and Central Asia in 2013,” *China Brief* 13, no. 2. (January 18th, 2013): 9, accessed July 6, 2013. http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/cb_01_05.pdf.

¹⁰⁴ “‘Inadvertent Empire’ – Interview with Alexandros Petersen,” *The Gadfly*, April 16, 2013. <http://the-gadfly.org/?p=413>.

¹⁰⁵ See: Elena Y. Sadovskaya, “Chinese Migration to Kazakhstan: a Silk Road for Cooperation or a Thorny Road of Prejudice?” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (2007): 147-170; Konstantin Syroezhkin, “Social Perceptions of China and the Chinese: A View from Kazakhstan,” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (2009): 29-46.

essence of soft power is ‘winning hearts and minds’ by means of attraction aimed at convergence of values and cultures.¹⁰⁶ And, China is no exception in relation to Central Asian republics. To illustrate, the opening ceremonies of China-established Confucius Institutes were celebrated across the region since 2006. The third Institute was recently opened in Kazakhstan.¹⁰⁷ In Kyrgyzstan there are two of them in Bishkek with sub-branches in Osh and Jalalabat.¹⁰⁸ As the part of worldwide international network of Confucius Institutes, they focus on teaching Chinese language to university students.¹⁰⁹ According to the observations of regional experts, Raffaello Pantucci and Alexandros Petersen, the Confucius Institutes in Central Asia focus on language learning in a business setting, nevertheless, the teachers appear to stimulate the students' interests in China's culture and history.¹¹⁰ They give informal classes in tai chi trainings, paper cutting and Chinese dressmaking.¹¹¹ The educational centers are additional components of China's soft power towards Central Asia. The aim is to raise awareness of Chinese culture in the region as a part of its overall ‘harmonious development’ oriented diplomacy.¹¹² It is also an approach to prepare Central Asians for China's long-term economic presence in the region.

Another apparent way the socio-culture related China factor became evident in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan is due to the Chinese migration flows into Central Asia. With a focus on Kazakhstan, Elena Y. Sadovskaya is a leading expert on the dynamics,

¹⁰⁶ Joseph J. Nye, Jr., "Wielding Soft Power," In *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, April 5, 2004. http://belfercenter.hks.harvard.edu/files/joe_nye_wielding_soft_power.pdf.

¹⁰⁷ Chris Rickleton, "Kyrgyzstan: China Expanding Influence, One Student at a Time," *EURASIANET.org*, January 4th, 2012. <http://eurasianet.org/node/64788>.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Raffaello Pantucci and Alexandros Petersen, "China's Slow Surge in Kyrgyzstan: A View from the Ground," *China Brief Volume 11*, no. 21 (November, 2011). http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Bsword%5D=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae3e&tx_ttnews%5Bany_of_the_words%5D=India%20Kyrgyzstan&tx_ttnews%5Bpointer%5D=3&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=38658&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=770f1e1f9a42d294ebb44f577c8cb60f#.UgaNIRYk_wv.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Xiaohui (Anne) Wu, "The Rise of China's Harmony-Oriented Diplomacy," *POLITIKA Annual Journal* (2007): 22-26. http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publication/18179/rise_of_chinas_harmonyoriented_diplomacy.html.

causes, and major characteristics of the Chinese migrants' regional distribution as well as the patterns of the migrant flows in Central Asia.¹¹³ According to her, depending on Central Asian post-independence time period, three types of Chinese migration flows can be identified: commercial or shuttle trade; labor, both legal and irregular; and repatriation of ethnic Kazakhs from China.¹¹⁴ This can be applied to the case of Kyrgyzstan as well.

It can be agreed that a gradual disclosure of the socio-culture related China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan was not unexpected as it involves both China's interests towards the region and the Chinese flows in and out of Central Asian republics. But what impact on the internal settings of Central Asian states it has is central to this research.

4.2. Domestic-foreign nexus: social perceptions and legitimacy claims.

The presence of the socio-culture related China factor is closely intertwined with how legitimately China is perceived in Kazakhstani and Kyrgyzstani societies. In general, there is no extensive social awareness of China in two of Central Asian republics. Yet the manifestations through mass media and popular national narratives result in pro-, indifferent and anti- public opinions. In any respect, this implies the impact of the socio-culture related China factor on the internal settings of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Central Asians' legitimacy claims of the socio-culture related China factor is ambivalent, what matters utmost are China's preponderance in the region and financial extractions from its presence.

Firstly, the social perceptions of the socio-culture related China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are not uniform as both Sinophile and Sinophobe

¹¹³ Elena Y. Sadovskaya, "Chinese Migration to Kazakhstan: a Silk Road for Cooperation or a Thorny Road of Prejudice?" *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (2007): 147-170. http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/46179/ichaptersection_singledocument/d6aec3e0-849b-4a9c-b056-9883d5fbab66/en/8+es07silkroad.pdf.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

apprehensions are omnipresent. To illustrate, according to academic fieldwork carried out in 2005, 26% of people surveyed found China anxiety provoking in Kyrgyzstan, while this figure rises to 32% in Kazakhstan.¹¹⁵ A research in 2007 on the attitudes towards Chinese migrants in Kazakhstan finds 55% indifferent, 24% concerned about potential labor competition with Chinese, and 18% negative and alarmist public concerns.¹¹⁶ According to 2010 International Republican Institute polling, 92% of surveyed answered ‘no’ to the question whether Kyrgyzstan should consider joining China in the future.¹¹⁷ According to 2012 social survey by regional M-vector research and consulting company, China is viewed as the largest threat by 31% of surveyed Kazakhstani population *vis-à-vis* 65% of Kazakhstani and 95% of Kyrgyzstani see Russia as the top priority country for international cooperation.¹¹⁸ Even though it is almost impossible to draw a precise map on Central Asian public opinion, these are few surveys available on the social perceptions of China. There is indeed a need for survey updates, especially on the presence of Confucius Institutes and the Chinese migrants in Central Asia. Yet the recent available information reveals some worrying public opinion tendencies in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in relation to the socio-culture related China factor. Furthermore, Konstantin Syroezhkin, a Central Asia scholar has asserted variations in Kazakhstani social perceptions of China as well as the Chinese presence, the problems of China, its traditions and the way of life.¹¹⁹ Thus, it is important to analyze the social perceptions of the socio-culture related China factor in two of Central

¹¹⁵ Laruelle and Peyrouse, *The Chinese Question in Central Asia*, 195.

¹¹⁶ Yelena Sadovskaya, “Chinese labor migration to Kazakhstan at the beginning of the 21st century,” *Think Tanks*, (2012): 12. http://www.nupi.no/content/download/284213/992479/file/Chinese%20labour%20migration%20to%20Kazakhstan%20at%20the%20beginning%20of%20the%2021st%20century_Sadovskaya.pdf.

¹¹⁷ “Kyrgyzstan National Opinion Poll,” *IRI*, (February 2012): 45. <http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2012%20April%2011%20Survey%20of%20Kyrgyzstan%20Public%20Opinion,%20February%204-27,%202012.pdf>.

¹¹⁸ “Central Asian Barometer,” *M-vector Research and Consulting*, (October 12th, 2012). <http://www.m-vector.com/en/news/?id=290>.

¹¹⁹ Konstantin Syroezhkin, “Social Perceptions of China and the Chinese: A View from Kazakhstan,” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (2009): 31. http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/105544/ichaptersection_singledocument/5317fe38-a884-4e5d-af5b-2392c2e22afd/en/02_spcvck20090229-46.pdf.

Asian states by looking at several social strata: political groups, local experts, and general public.¹²⁰

A scholar looking at a general public perceptions points at how “national stereotypes, based on superficial knowledge about another ethnic groups, absence of information and interpersonal contacts, turn into national prejudice and bias,”¹²¹ which is a case of broader public perceptions of Chinese in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. In addition, this reckons Central Asian elites to be greater informed on foreign affairs but unwilling to share that information with the general public.¹²² Consequently, thus leads to overstated Central Asian perceptions of China.

The Sinophobe attitudes appear to be because of limited awareness and shaped by certain national narratives utilized by opposition groups. Labor competition with Chinese workers and a fear of Chinese expansionism are two main vanguard concerns of Kazakhstani and Kyrgyzstani public. In both states, Chinese workers are seen as environment unfriendly and stealing jobs from locals especially in rural areas near mining projects.¹²³ To illustrate, in early months of this year, “the movement for the salvation of Kyrgyzstan,” a small group of nationalists generally opposing so-called ‘Chinese expansionism,’ protested against a new Chinese-run oil refinery in Kara-Balta, situated just outside of Bishkek.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Konstantin Syroezhkin, “Social Perceptions of China and the Chinese: A View from Kazakhstan,” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (2009): 31. http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/105544/ichaptersection_singledocument/5317fe38-a884-4e5d-af5b-2392c2e22afd/en/02_spcvck20090229-46.pdf.

¹²¹ Elena Y. Sadovskaya, “Chinese Migration to Kazakhstan: a Silk Road for Cooperation or a Thorny Road of Prejudice?” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (2007): 168. http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/46179/ichaptersection_singledocument/d6aec3e0-849b-4a9c-b056-9883d5fbab66/en/8+es07silkroad.pdf.

¹²² Rouben Azizian and Elnara Bainazarova, “Eurasian Response to China’s Rise: Russia and Kazakhstan in Search of Optimal China Policy,” *Asian Politics and Policy* 4, no. 3, (2012): 392. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/store/10.1111/j.1943-0787.2012.01348.x/asset/j.1943-0787.2012.01348.x.pdf?v=1&t=hk5qj704&s=5753e5e467b023d37ffe081e28d64edd66b465c2>.

¹²³ “Central Asia: Report Looks at China’s Role in Central Asia,” *EURASINET.org*, February 26, 2013. <http://eurasianet.org/node/66607>.

¹²⁴ Chris Rickleton, “Kyrgyzstan: China Muscles into Energy Market, Fueling Suspicion,” *EURASIANET.org*, March 20, 2013. <http://eurasianet.org/node/66716>.

As for some Central Asians, China is primarily an economic niche to fulfill their everyday life realities. Mr. Pantucci confirms the increasing attractiveness of China to Central Asian locals, above all out of economic interest.¹²⁵ Accordingly, in Bishkek there are native Chinese-Mandarin speakers who teach approximately 3,000 local students.¹²⁶ The growing figure as such reflects the fact that students are seeking job opportunities in China or Chinese firms in Kyrgyzstan. In addition, Vladimir Lu, dean of the Kyrgyz-Chinese faculty at Bishkek Humanities University said, “working in Beijing, Shanghai or Guangzhou they can earn 10 times as much as dean earns here”, referring to the growing number of the graduates who head to China every year.¹²⁷ Sharing the same view, “many local students study Chinese to attain a better life here so they can work in big companies later,” said Liza (an interviewee) explaining that many of her Kyrgyz students leave to work in China, where “there are better employment opportunities and better money.”¹²⁸ Moreover, according to Jyldyz Satieva, international affairs consultant in the president’s office of Kyrgyzstan who earned her masters degree from Jilin University in Changchun, the anti-Chinese feelings “will change with time as more people start learning Chinese, and information about Chinese culture becomes more widespread.”¹²⁹ “Chinese firms are opening up here, and there are jobs for people who understand the country and speak the language,” she said.¹³⁰ Therefore, as it was illustrated, Kazakhstani and Kyrgyzstani social perceptions of China are divergent depending on timing, social group they belong to, and the degree of their awareness of China. If Sinophobe social apprehensions are rooted in limited awareness of China and national narratives, the socio-culture related China factor is legitimately viewed when it is financially fulfilling.

¹²⁵ Rickleton, "Kyrgyzstan: China Expanding Influence, One Student at a Time."

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Alina Dalbaeva, “Kyrgyzstan: Chinese Student Population Growing, Despite Local Fears,” *EURASIANET.org*, March 24th, 2010. <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav032510.shtml>.

¹²⁹ Rickleton, “Kyrgyzstan: China Expanding Influence, One Student at a Time.”

¹³⁰ Ibid.

Secondly, interestingly, on the account of research findings as such, a comparative analysis of the social perceptions of the socio-culture related China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan *de facto* uncovers the nature of state itself in the region. Diverging responses of Kazakhstani and Kyrgyzstani governments to the Chinese migration show contrasting political and economic environments in two of Central Asian republics. To illustrate, the presence of the Chinese in Kazakhstan is highly regulated. A 'one-day' visa based on inter-governmental agreement prevents Chinese migrants from arriving on pre-arranged work visas.¹³¹ There is limited visibility of Han Chinese workers since they are situated in low-key work conclaves.¹³² Contrary, the Chinese migrants and businesses are highly visible in Kyrgyzstan. One case in January reached even international media after Han Chinese contractors in Osh took local villagers hostage and fought with police over an alleged cell phone theft.¹³³ On the contrary, as Mr. Syroezhkin notes, how Kazakh government paints China in the eyes of local populations actually is used to cover their own nature of corruptibility,¹³⁴ as both Kazakhstan (134) and Kyrgyzstan (154) ranked low respectively out of 176 countries in Transparency International's 2012 Corruption Perceptions Index.¹³⁵

In summary, it was demonstrated how to deal with China and the Chinese became the very domestic issues of Central Asian governments. And, Central Asians' perceptions of China matter as well as the public is concerned about how their governments' attitudes towards the phenomena as such. On the other hand, China is in no hurry in its approach towards the region. As Raffaello Pantucci asserted, "Beijing is

¹³¹ Alexander Cooley, *Great Games, Local Rules* (Oxford University Press, 2012), 157.

¹³² Raffaello Pantucci and Alexandros Petersen, 2012.

¹³³ David Trilling, "Chinese Workers Fingering in Southern Kyrgyzstan Fracas," *Eurasianet.org*, January 9, 2013. <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/66372>.

¹³⁴ Konstantin Syroezhkin, "Social Perceptions of China and the Chinese: A View from Kazakhstan," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (2009): 39-41. http://mercury.ethz.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/105544/ichaptersection_singledocument/5317fe38-a884-4e5d-af5b-2392c2e22afd/en/02_spccvk20090229-46.pdf.

¹³⁵ "Corruption Perceptions Index 2012," *Transparency International*, accessed August 9th, 2013. <http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2012/results/>.

playing a ‘slow game’ as it increases its appeal to Central Asians.”¹³⁶ There are no pro- or anti- China sponsored lobby groups. The role of China in Central Asia is in fact rather new in the political and intellectual sphere, relatively to Russia for instance. However, based on limited information about China and the Chinese, feelings of mistrust about Beijing's so called ‘hidden’ objectives prevail throughout the societies. Majority of regional experts try to provide both pro- and con- arguments on the presence of China in Central Asian states, nevertheless, decisions are rather complex just as Central Asian peculiar understandings of legitimacy notions are.

¹³⁶ Raffaello Pantucci and Alexandros Petersen, 2012

Chapter 5. Comparative analysis of the three China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

5.1. Understanding legitimacy through prism of domestic-foreign nexus.

The analysis put forth in the previous chapters, examining, three specific aspects of China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, lays the foundation for this final chapter. This chapter focuses on the core question of this research, which is: *How does the way domestic-foreign nexus is played out as for different aspects of China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan explain the notions of legitimacy within Central Asian context?*

Based on the sub-hypothesis stated in each previous chapter, it will be argued: firstly, in accordance with the timing and particular dimension of China factor, the internal-external policy interplay takes place. Nevertheless, it is primarily limited to the foreign policy impact on the domestic circumstances of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. And, only very infrequently, the reverse is evident where domestic action changes foreign policy. Secondly, the way that legitimacy is understood and appears in practice throughout Central Asian entities is not monolithic but has its peculiar features elaborated below. A closer look at phenomena as such is key to understanding the political and socio-economic transformations that occur across the region.

In viewing the understanding of Central Asians' legitimacy through prism of foreign policy studies, it becomes apparent that it is neither uniform nor static; but rather, varied and fluid. Legitimacy in Central Asia is mostly exploited as another means to reach specific ends. At times, these ends can be economic, political, or social, but in a majority instances they are for benefits that can be gained, derived, or extracted. Nevertheless, the overall consistent and commonly agreed upon social consent on the understanding of legitimacy is yet to be preserved. It is not to say that there is no

consent of view as such, nevertheless, the notion of legitimacy in Central Asia exists with its specific features adapted to the very peculiarities of the region itself.

Firstly, as shown previously, all three China factor related cases demonstrated that the domestic-foreign nexus takes place even in neopatrimonial-authoritarian states. That can be clearly illustrated by examining the similarities in how Kazakhstani and Kyrgyzstani governments dealt with numerous aspects of China factor. In both countries, the China factor spurred social dissatisfactions, in turn triggering social instabilities throughout the whole area. The opposition, represented by mainly political groups, but also experts and individuals, were able to internalize the China factor related issues, in turn challenging the ruling regimes. This consequently led, directly or indirectly, to changes in domestic order and deviations in internal settings of both states. Depending on the extent the state is capable to preserve a domestic order; the specifics of the two cases look different as detailed above. But, what is clear is that the domestic-foreign nexus is vital to understanding what happens on the internal political stage and is intricately tied to the notion of legitimacy.

Secondly, how the domestic-foreign nexus is played out within Central Asian context suggests that the very essence of a 'Central Asian' consistent understanding of legitimacy is yet to be established. It is dynamic and fluid and still very much in formation as these nations continue to define themselves in the contemporary era. While the specifics of this 'legitimacy' are not fully defined, its significance cannot be denied. That said, as noted above, it can be generally agreed that legitimacy in Central Asia is primarily based on benefit-extractions in one way or another. To further illustrate, in the case of land related China factor in both Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the illegitimacy claims of territorial-border agreements with China and the governments' leasing agricultural lands to Chinese served as an ultimate political cause to the opposition. Yet, this did not provide a strong basis for common social consent on the meaning of

legitimacy for policy or for the ruling regime. Despite some consensus, there is still a debate in what legitimacy means depending on circumstances and timing. It must be also noted that land related China factor interested only specific segments of the society, particularly the opposition, predominantly represented by political parties. Therefore, it served the political goals of only certain social groups.

In contrast to land related China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the case of trade entrepreneurial related China factor held direct relevance for the vast majority of the population. Therefore, the dilemma that occurs between the Russia-dominated Customs Union membership and increasing trade entrepreneurial related China factor and about that understanding of legitimacy within Central Asian context is closely correlated with everyday life realities that people in these societies must face. Kyrgyzstan, especially because of being substantially dependent both on Russia and its role as a re-exporter of Chinese goods to other countries, faces an extremely difficult situation.

This in turn sheds light on the understanding of legitimacy notions and what it means for the policy or the government to be legitimate in the eyes of ordinary people, a central concept to this research study. As mentioned earlier, Central Asian Free Market Institute, a local think tank group, pointed out Kyrgyzstan's political decision to join the economic block was not subject to the Parliament or social discussions, citing a situation similar to how the Kyrgyzstani government dealt with the territorial land negotiations with China that eventually led to the regime's downfall. However, the specific development of the Customs Union membership versus increasing trade with China, a dilemma as such, will continue to be subject to future debates.

Interestingly, the case of the socio-culture related China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan has brought to the surface an important point about legitimacy that has not been seen in the same way with the land related or entrepreneurial related China

factor. That is, that the understanding of legitimacy in these Central Asian entities is closely related to the state capacity or its willingness to reconnect the Central Asian societies with Chinese people. For instance, the strong state capacity of Kazakhstani government directly affected the state's ability to keep the Chinese migration flows less visible than in Kyrgyzstan. According to social surveys, this led to a lesser degree of Sinophobe sentiments in Kazakhstan than in its smaller neighbor country. However, the unwillingness of both states to learn more about China, its culture, and the civilization brings further challenges, because this ignorance generates inadequate or misunderstood national stories and perpetuates Sinophobe feelings across the region. On the other hand, this unwillingness and its resultant issues provide the opposition with material for its criticism of the current governments. Yet, it also confirms inconsistency and complexity in the understanding of legitimacy within Central Asian context.

5.3. Implications on foreign policy outcomes.

There is general agreement among scholars that in authoritarian types of regimes the general public, if does not represent opposition, does not have influence in foreign policy decision-making. With varying degrees of authoritarian rule, Central Asian states have also been looked at using individual, namely presidential level of foreign policy analysis. Although this is not misleading, nevertheless it is important to consider other internal sources of foreign policy making in these states.

Social discontent over the land related China factor in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan did not result in change of the foreign policy outcomes. This does not, however, imply that there were no internal factors at work. Whilst in Kazakhstan lack of change in foreign policy around this issue was predominantly due to the regime's greater control and maneuvering with the opposition, in Kyrgyzstan, the domestic disputes over the territorial-border negotiations with China were overruled by the

justifications provided by government policy makers who defended the treaty agreements. Accordingly, the agreements were in line with the nation-state interests. Resolving all border issues meant improvements especially in trade relations with China, an important component of further commercial success in Kyrgyzstan. Then minister of foreign affairs of Kyrgyzstan, Muratbek Imanaliev claimed that, “the emotional debates on border issues, which lack a sober attitude and understanding of the national interests of Kyrgyzstan, may have very grave political and economic consequences for the republic,”¹³⁷ given that soon after signing of the 1999 agreement, China gave Kyrgyzstan “an air corridor for flights to Beijing and provided \$600,000 of military assistance.”¹³⁸ He strongly insisted that Kyrgyzstan had in fact gained 70 per cent of the overall disputed territory.¹³⁹ In support of Imanaliev, then serving Ombudsman Turdakun Usubaliev asserted that the position taken by the political opposition “sufficiently moves Kyrgyzstan towards a policy of confrontation with China,”¹⁴⁰ which Kyrgyzstan most needed not to have. This diffusion of popular discontent through state justified rationalization seems to affirm Joe D. Hagan’s assertion that “...the internal fragmentation of a regime has substantially less effect on foreign policy behavior...”¹⁴¹ Hence, territorial-border land related China factor has not been a problem between the Central Asian republics and China. Rather, it remains a problem between Central Asian rulers’ and their country’s domestic political actors. It has been further confirmed that the Central Asian domestic responses to the entrepreneurial trade related China factor versus the CU membership dilemma of

¹³⁷ “Central Asia: Border Disputes and Conflict Potential,” *ICG Asia Report*, no. 33 (April 4th, 2002): 17, accessed June 12, 2013. [http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/central-asia/Central%20Asia%20Border%20Disputes%20and%20Conflict%20Potential.pdf](http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/asia/central-asia/Central%20Asia%20Border%20Disputes%20and%20Conflict%20Potential.pdf).

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁴⁰ Elena Buldakova, “Conflicting Views on Land Issue Between Kyrgyzstan and China,” *Media Insight Central Asia* 24 (May, 2002): 1-2, accessed June 5, 2013. <http://www.cimera.org/files/camel/en/24e/MICA24E-Buldakova2.pdf>.

¹⁴¹ J. D. Hagan, *Political Opposition and Foreign Policy in Comparative Perspective* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1993), <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1743-8594.2005.00001.x/full>.

Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan had no significant impact on their foreign policies towards China.

Much literature suggests that Sino-Kazakhstan and Sino-Kyrgyzstan relations are primarily determined by external factors, such as the nature of the international system and external actors. This is not incorrect. Of primary importance is Russia's continued role upon the internal dimensions of Central Asian foreign policies. Even while realizing the active role which local actors have played in determination of Central Asian states' foreign policies, scholars such as Sally N. Cummings, Eugene Huskey have argued that Russia will continue to be "*primus inter pares* among foreign policy state relations."¹⁴² Therefore, in reality, it can be said that the Russia-dominated CU does not leave many choices for Central Asian states to choose from even in their increasing trade relations with China.

Similarly, the socio-culture related China factor has no direct impact on Sino-Central Asian state-to state level relations. At the state-level, local think tanks support Kazakhstan's further strong relationship with China. To have "adequate and profitable relations with China for Kazakhstani society" is important.¹⁴³ Elite support for the Sino-Kazakhstan relations serve to keep legitimacy of high-level inter-governmental initiatives. On the other hand, although the official discourse of Kyrgyzstan emphasizes further close cooperation with China,¹⁴⁴ due to its decentralized power structure and weak economy, the Sino-Kyrgyzstan partnership is exposed to more instability. Violent social disruptions occasionally arise between Chinese migrants and Kyrgyzstanis.¹⁴⁵ Elite social entrepreneurs have political incentives independent of the state to mobilize

¹⁴² Cummings, *Understanding Central Asia*, 60.

¹⁴³ Laruelle and Peyrouse, *The Chinese Question in Central Asia*, 152.

¹⁴⁴ Agreement on peaceful neighborhood co-existence, Kyrgyzstan-People's Republic of China, June 24, 2002, *Toktom*, accessed June 6, 2013.

¹⁴⁵ Trilling, "Chinese Workers Fingering in Southern Kyrgyzstan Fracas."

popular opposition against Chinese entities, which encourages destabilization.¹⁴⁶ These are dilemmas that impact the wider well being of both Kyrgyzstan's and China's interests. Yet, its effect on foreign policy outcomes is yet to be observed.

¹⁴⁶ Sultan Kanazarov, "Opposition leader Azimbek Beknazarov threatens the Kyrgyz authorities," *Fergana News*, March 7, 2013. <http://enews.fergananews.com/article.php?id=2337>.

Conclusions.

There were two primary objectives of this dissertation work: 1) to bring to light and discuss the interactions between foreign policy and domestic policy, and *vice-versa*; and 2) following this, to further illustrate the broad concept of legitimacy within Central Asian context in relation to the multi-dimensional nature of China factor or the presence of China in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Findings, concluding remarks, and further research questions follow below.

Firstly, the theoretical framework and the literature were all well incorporated. In order to better understand legitimacy within Central Asian milieu, Domestic-Foreign Nexus, an approach to foreign policy analysis was employed. A closer examination of domestic policies, legitimacy notions, and internal conditions interacting with the external settings was fundamental in understanding the essence of legitimacy notions within Central Asian context. That being stated, this research project confirms the occurrence of domestic-external interplay even within non-democracy realms.

Secondly, all three China factor cases provided a legitimate basis for the penultimate chapter of this research study. Because they were all relevant and cross-sectional with each other, these cases offered a good comparative framework. Each showed a similar pattern of events of how the opposition could employ legitimacy claims in their own behalf.

Thirdly, this work proved that the understanding of legitimacy is a key component of regime survival, policy-making, governmental workings, and how the public reacts to these. That being said, the concept of legitimacy is still nebulous with respect to the Central Asian states. Therefore, it is necessary to further discuss the Central Asian peculiar understandings of legitimacy in relation to internal sources of their foreign policies towards China.

Fourthly, popular disagreement with foreign policy had little or no impact on foreign policy-decisions. But conversely, such social discontent has shown significant impact on the domestic order of Central Asian republics and some marginal effect on Sino-Central Asian relations.

Finally, most scholars and experts on the presence of China in the region agree on its importance and encourage neither overestimating nor underestimating China's power nor its ability to further conquer Central Asian markets and territorial lands. They realize and emphasize the rising soft power of China towards the region, especially economically. It must be also noted, because of its geographical proximity and economic interdependence with Central Asian states, China is and will always be present in the region. In other words, it is and will remain such a significant actor in the region of Central Asia that all regional security arrangements must involve at least some consideration of China.

Therefore, Sino-Central Asian relations will remain a progressive area of research, attracting China scholars from around the world for further academic investigations. It is key to understand each republic in its own right, while at the same time furthering a deeper understanding of the complexity of Central Asia as a whole through more comparative and regional analysis.

The findings of this study suggest that such research should include further anthropological investigations and field studies, as well as consideration of the following, as well as other, questions: How varyingly the Central Asian social perceptions on the presence of China in the region have been changing? What theoretical frameworks or other social science based empirical studies best explain various measures of these changes? How do these perspectives help to account for the regime behavior and policy outcomes in comparative perspectives? What are the benefits of studying domestic politics through prism of international relations and vice-

versa? As this research study of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan demonstrates, there are many questions to be answered and comparative analysis provides an excellent prism for doing this.

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