



University
of Glasgow



Department of International Relations and Regional Studies
College of Social Sciences

**Understanding the Foreign Policy of Kazakhstan
in Response to the Russian Invasion in Ukraine during the First
Year of the War (2022)**

CEERES Master's Thesis

Cynthia Eka Wahyuni
ID 2676361

Supervisors:

Nygmets Ibadildin PhD, KIMEP University
Dr Ammon Cheskin, University of Glasgow

January 2024
Almaty, Kazakshtan

Field of Studies: Social and Political Science

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of:

Master (M) of International Relations (Central and East European Studies):
KIMEP University, Kazakhstan

International Master's (IntM) in Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies:
University of Glasgow, UK

Master of Arts in Social Sciences (MA) in Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian
Studies: University of Tartu, Estonia

Word count of the thesis: 23,182

Authorship Declaration: I have prepared this thesis independently. All the views of other
authors, as well as data from literary sources and elsewhere, have been cited.

Cynthia Eka WAHYUNI, 23/01/2024

Non-exclusive licence to reproduce thesis and make thesis public

I, Cynthia Eka Wahyuni, born 12/06/1998, herewith grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive licence) to the work created by me “Understanding the Foreign Policy of Kazakhstan in Response to the Russian Invasion in Ukraine during the First Year of the War (2022)”, supervised by Nygmet Ibadildin and Ammon Cheskin, to:

- reproduce, for the purpose of preservation, including for adding to the DSpace digital archives until the expiry of the term of copyright;
- to make the work specified in p. 1 available to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the DSpace digital archives until the expiry of the term of copyright;
- I am aware of the fact that the author retains the rights specified in p. 1;

I certify that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe other persons' intellectual property rights or rights arising from the personal data protection legislation.

ABSTRACT

Kazakhstan and Russia are known as traditional allies. Russia proved its position as a reliable ally for Kazakhstan, as it helped to deal with January unrest in 2022 through the involvement of CSTO. However, when Russia invaded Ukraine, Kazakhstan showed a gesture of lack of support for Russia. This thesis aims to unfold the causes of Kazakhstan's lack of support to Russia in the war in Ukraine, as its decision might have a significant cost towards Kazakhstan's energy sector. Moreover, this study also explores the factors that contributed to Kazakhstan's policy and attempts to identify Kazakhstan's effort to lessen its dependency on Russia in the energy sector. This interpretative research employs a qualitative approach with a thematic analysis method. This research incorporates several concepts such as prospect theory (as the leading theory), neoclassical realism, the concept of fear, energy security and diplomacy, and the multi-vector approach. The causes of Kazakhstan's policy will be observed from three reference points: status quo, aspiration, and emotion. The research findings shed light on the logic and perceptions of Kazakhstan's decision-makers behind its decisions when dealing with Russia's aggressive action.

Keywords: Kazakhstan foreign policy, Russia invasion, prospect theory, energy sector.

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND	4
1.1. KAZAKHSTAN RESPONSES OVER THE WAR IN UKRAINE.....	4
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVE	8
2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1.1. REVIEW OF CONCEPT AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	8
2.1.2. KAZAKHSTAN AND RUSSIA RELATIONS	14
2.1.3. KAZAKHSTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY CHARACTERISTICS	17
2.1.4. KAZAKHSTAN'S GESTURE IN THE ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA IN 2014.....	18
2.2. RESEARCH GAP AND OBJECTIVES	21
CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	23
3.1. PROSPECT THEORY	25
3.2. NEOCLASSICAL REALISM	27
3.3. FEAR IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	27
3.4. ENERGY DIPLOMACY AND SECURITY FOR PRODUCING COUNTRY	28
3.5. MULTI-VECTOR FOREIGN POLICY	29
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	31
4.1. RESEARCH DESIGN	31
4.2. RESEARCH METHOD.....	32
4.2.1. THEMATIC ANALYSIS	32
CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS	38
5.1. KAZAKHSTAN UNREST IN JANUARY 2022	38
5.2. NATIONAL POWER OF KAZAKHSTAN WITHIN INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM	39
5.3. THE COMPLEXITY OF KAZAKHSTAN'S SITUATION AND NATIONAL INTEREST	40
5.4. ANALYSIS BASED ON THREE REFERENCE POINTS.....	42
5.4.1. STATUS QUO	42
5.4.2. ASPIRATION	48
5.4.3. EMOTION.....	53
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION	58
REFERENCES	61

INTRODUCTION

The war in Ukraine has sparked various responses among countries in the post-Soviet space. Before the war in Ukraine erupted, Kazakhstan was tested by massive public protest due to the soaring price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) (RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, 2022a). The protest began in the Western part of Kazakhstan in the Mangystau region on early January 2022, and it spread across the country including in Almaty, Astana, Aqtobe, and Shymkent (RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, 2022a). As the condition worsened, President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, declared the emergency of the state on fifth January (Satubaldina & Shayakhmetova, 2022). Moreover, to handle the protest the government of Kazakhstan sought help to the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) for controlling the situation (Rodionov *et al.*, 2022). The security alliance that was chaired by Prime Minister of Armenia at that time, mentioned the peacekeeping force was sent to Kazakhstan, as the country attempted to overcome threat due to external interference (Picheta *et al.*, 2022; RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, 2022b). As we know CSTO is known as a Russia-led security alliance. The presence of CSTO in Kazakhstan during the January events led to speculation to the change of Kazakhstan's foreign policy (Umarov, 2022). Many believe there will be moment where Kazakhstan should pay off the support from Russia (Umarov, 2022).

Kazakhstan is known as one of Russia's allies. They have been maintaining their strategic partnership for thirty years (Satubaldina, 2022b). Both countries involve in many similar multilateral cooperation frameworks other than CSTO such as Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Commonwealth Independent States (CIS), and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) (Merkel, 2023). However, there is salient asymmetrical relationship in energy sector between Kazakhstan and Russia. As a landlocked country, Kazakhstan needs its neighbors to transport the export of energy resources to the global market. It is known, more than fifty percent of Kazakhstan's energy export should pass the Novorossiysk terminal in Russia (Sleta, 2023). From that fact, we can assume Russia has power to disturb the flow of Kazakhstan's energy export.

As the war continues in Ukraine, many believe Kazakhstan distances itself from Russia. The response of Kazakhstan's government was contrasted in accordance with the expectation of how a landlocked country should behave with its transit neighbouring country. In addition, the foreign policy gesture of Kazakhstan may jeopardize Kazakhstan's energy sector. Since its independence day, Kazakhstan has been a traditional ally of Russia. The relationship between the countries has been tested many times, including in the war in Ukraine.

Research Puzzle

The case study on this research is a contra expectation puzzle and I consider as a case that against expectation. In light of the war in Ukraine, given the strong ties between Kazakhstan and Russia after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, taking into account the involvement of CSTO in the January event, and referring to the fact that Kazakhstan need Russia as a transit country to export its energy resources, Kazakhstan was expected to give its support to Russia in the war in Ukraine. In fact, Kazakhstan showed lacked support towards Russia. In June 2022, during the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum, President Tokayev asserted the position of Kazakhstan that did not recognize the independence of Luhansk and Donetsk (Satubaldina, 2022a).

Kazakhstan did not condemn what Russia did in Ukraine, but as a traditional ally of Russia, Kazakhstan's gestures and policy have shown lack of support. The history and the January event have depicted that Kazakhstan is a traditional ally of Russia and Russia is a reliable ally for Kazakhstan. The 'traditional alliance' factor is an important angle in this research. There might be an argument that mentions there is no forever alliance, and a state's behaviour may change from time to time, which is understandable as a state adapts to the change in the international system. Kazakhstan behaved not as a 'traditional ally' of Russia when Russia invaded Ukraine was also a change. Therefore, in this research, I want to explore the conditions and factors that made Kazakhstan lack support for Russia. In short, in this study, I want to rationalize Kazakhstan's behaviour towards Russia in the war in Ukraine, mainly in the first couple of months when the war started.

Research Question

The case study above is raising question why Kazakhstan lacks of support for Russia in the war in Ukraine, mainly in the first year of the war?

With sub-question:

- What factors that contribute to the Kazakhstan's decision?
- What Kazakhstan do to decrease its dependency from Russia, mainly in energy sector?

Limitations

This research has focused on the foreign policy of Kazakhstan between January 2022 until February 2023. The period was chosen because, in January 2022, there was the largest protest in Kazakhstan's modern history, known as Bloody January or *Qandy Qantar*, which

has a significant role to be considered in understanding at what kind of situation Kazakhstan was when the war in Ukraine started. Moreover, February 2023 was marked as a year as the invasion began.

The Structure of the Research

This research consists of six chapters. The *first chapter* provides a background. Here for the background, I put a brief explanation of Kazakhstan's response to the war. It will talk about Kazakhstan's gestures and foreign policy according to the official state apparatus statements and its decision on multilateral cooperation such as in the United Nations. In the *second* chapter, I will provide the literature review which is divided into four parts. The first part will discuss about theoretical framework that has been used in examining Kazakhstan and Russia relations. The second part will discuss the bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and Russia, the third is the characteristics of Kazakhstan's foreign policy, and the fourth is Kazakhstan's gesture on the Ukraine crisis in 2014. The last part of the second chapter covers the research gap and objective to assert the importance of this research.

The *third* chapter will provide the theoretical framework. Five concepts will be utilized in examining this research. The first one is prospect theory, which is the main concept to understand why did Kazakhstan not support Russia in the invasion of Ukraine. The second is neoclassical realism. Neoclassical realism will help us to understand the situation background in the international system, that pushed Kazakhstan to act in a certain way but also at the same time consider the domestic factors. The third is the concept of fear in international relations. Fear is part of emotions, in this research, the concept of fear will help us to explain emotion as one of the reference points. Next is the concept of energy diplomacy and security for the producing country. It is important to discuss energy security, as Kazakhstan heavily relies on the energy sector to sustain its economic development, and this field is strongly connected with Russia. The last concept is multi-vector foreign policy. The concept of multi-vector has been embedded in Kazakhstan's foreign policy approach since its independence. This concept is inherently from Astana's tactics in facing the Ukraine crisis while balancing relations with Moscow.

In chapter *four*, I present the research methodology. In this chapter there will be explanations of the research variables and the methodology. The qualitative method will be employed. In addition, the thematic analysis will be used to examine the case. Moreover, this research adopts a single-country or case-study approach. In chapter *five*, there will be analysis and research findings. Last, the chapter *six* will provide the conclusion.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

1.1. KAZAKHSTAN RESPONSES OVER THE WAR IN UKRAINE

In order to understand Kazakhstan's responses and rationalize why Kazakhstan acted in a certain way, first and foremost, we need to know what Kazakhstan's foreign policies in Ukraine are and what kind of gestures Kazakhstan displayed when the war started. The war in Ukraine has sparked different reactions among the world leaders. Interestingly, as one of the countries that has a close relationship with Moscow, Kazakhstan's gesture has shown lack of support to Russia in the war in Ukraine. In the discussion of Kazakhstan's policy regarding the war in Ukraine, at least five occasions reflected Kazakhstan's gesture of disagreement with Russia's action in Ukraine. The five occasions consist of Kazakhstan's voting at the UN General Assembly that discussed this matter, the statements from the government officers, the perspective on international norms that Russia has violated, cancellation on celebration that related to the Soviet Union legacy, and its action such as refused to send its troops and delivered humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

First, Kazakhstan abstained from the UN General Assembly voting that demanded Russia to withdraw its troops from Ukraine and end its invasion in March 2022 (United Nations, 2022). The resolution also called for Russia to reverse its decision related to the status of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions in Ukraine. The resolution was adopted after 141 states were in favour, 35 states abstained, and 5 states against (United Nations, 2022). Although Kazakhstan was not against the resolution, the decision reflected the lack of Kazakhstan's support for Russia (Dumoulin, 2023), given the fact that Kazakhstan is a traditional ally of Russia. Kazakh Foreign Minister explained an abstention vote was also counted as a position and Kazakhstan's vote was taken by considerations of its national interests (RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, 2023). The abstention was the safe option for Kazakhstan, as it did not want to ruin its relations with Russia but also, at the same time, showed a disagreement with Russia's aggressive action in Ukraine.

Second was the statements from the official representatives of Kazakhstan. In February 2022, the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan, Mukhtar Tleuberdi, asserted that Kazakhstan has no agenda or intention for the recognition of Donetsk and Luhansk independence (Eurasianet, 2022). That was a clear answer, although it did not directly mention the disagreement on the invasion. On another occasion, during an interview with German media, Welt, the Deputy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, stated, "If there is a new iron curtain, we do not want to be behind it" (Rickleton, 2022). The statement emphasising on the term "iron curtain",

which refers to the ideological or political barrier during the Cold War, indicated that Kazakhstan would not take a side with the Moscow's side.

The tip point was happened during the Saint Petersburg Economic Forum in June 2022. On that occasion, President Tokayev touched upon a question about the act of Russia in Ukraine that depicted it as a 'special military operation'. He explained that according to international norms such as the United Nations Charter, two contradictory terms play a role in this case: "national territorial integrity and the right of self-determination" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022). He asserted that Kazakhstan did not acknowledge the existence of a 'quasi-state' such as Taiwan or South Ossetia, and that notion applies to Donetsk and Luhansk (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022). Moreover, Tokayev mentioned that a chaos will happen if hundreds of states emerge by justification of self-determination. However, at the end of his statement, he assured that despite there are some disagreements between Kazakhstan and Russia, such as in viewing the status of the Donetsk and Luhansk, there are not any issues between Moscow and Astana (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022). The assertive statement from Tokayev showed Kazakhstan's consistency in not supporting the independence of Luhansk and Donetsk, as it has been reiterated by some Kazakh state officials several times.

In reflection of Kazakhstan's participation in the UN General Assembly in March 2022, the stance of Kazakhstan was vague as it voted to be abstained. Nevertheless, President Tokayev's statement in the Saint Petersburg Economic Forum has clarified Kazakhstan's stance on the sovereignty of Donetsk and Luhansk. However, it is still a question whether Kazakhstan supports the 'special military operation' or the invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

The respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of other states, mainly the neighbouring states, is critical in maintaining peace and stability between the nations. Russia's foreign policy in invading Ukraine has obviously dismissed the territorial integrity of Ukraine as a sovereign state. Academics such as Michael C. Horowitz believe the invasion intended to increase Russia's influence and status, as Putin views all the post-Soviet states as part of Russia (De Groot, 2022).

Moreover, many believe President Putin's inability to accept the fact that Ukraine is no longer part of Russia also became a reason why the war erupted. A Ukrainian academia, Taras Kuzio, argued that a long-term obsession with Ukraine is rooted deeply in Putin's nostalgia that led to the invasion (Kuzio, 2022). Putin is unable to accept the reality that Ukraine is a sovereign state at this time. For him, there are no Ukrainians. In Putin's mind, Ukrainians are just "the extension of the pan-Russian people" (Kuzio, 2022, p. 42). His reality was constructed

based on past history, where Ukraine was a ‘sovereign’ entity under the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Moreover, in the Kremlin’s perspective, Ukraine is just a puppet state under the control of the West, mainly the United States (Kuzio, 2022). Putin believes Russian troops came as liberators from the West (Kuzio, 2022).

In this case, Kazakhstan's perspective on international norms, such as respect for other states' sovereignty and territorial integrity, is also an essential point to be discussed as it implicitly reflects its stance on this invasion. In September 2022, during the General Debate on the seventy-seventh session of the UNGA, President Tokayev delivered:

“Some 77 years ago, the founding members placed within the UN Charter the principles and norms of international law that have successfully guided us ever since. There is nothing more important now than to return to the foundational principles that lie at the root of this universal organization. In particular, we must rethink the linkages between three primordial principles: the sovereign equality of states, the territorial integrity of states, and peaceful coexistence between states. These three principles are inter-dependent. To respect one is to respect the other two. To undermine one is to undermine the other two” (Tokayev, 2022a).

The statement of President Tokayev during the General Debate on UNGA in 2022 implicitly stated that Kazakhstan did not support the invasion of Ukraine. Russia’s foreign policy in attacking Ukraine has violated the three primordial principles that Tokayev mentioned. He even asserted that the three principles are linked and cannot be separated. This can be marked as the third occasion where Kazakhstan revealed its stance in disagreement with Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Kazakhstan has repeatedly asserted its position that supports international law, the UN Charter, and values such as respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of other nations for many times, including during the meeting with the President of the European Council in October 2022 (European Council, 2022).

Next is Kazakhstan’s refusal to celebrate the Victory Day on May 9. In 2022, Kazakhstan cancelled the Victory Day celebration, an annual event to commemorate the victory of the Soviet Union in defeating Nazi Germany during World War II (Sánchez & Auyezova, 2022). Victory Day is a symbolic event that glorifies the Soviet Union’s golden era, and the cancelation of the event in 2022 might indicate Kazakhstan’s indirect way of distancing itself from Russia (Sánchez & Auyezova, 2022). It is understandable, as many Western and

Ukrainian academics believe the main trigger for the war erupted in Ukraine because Putin always thinks that Russia and the rest of the post-Soviet nations are one entity, and he places Russia as the main successor of the Soviet Union. Celebrating Victory Day several months after the beginning of the invasion could be misunderstood as a support for Russia.

The cancellation of the Victory Day by Kazakhstan has sparked anger among some popular Russian figures. For instance, a prominent Russian anchor, Tigran Keosayan, warned Kazakhstan might face the same fate as Ukraine after cancelling the annual celebration (Kumenov, 2022d). For Keosayan, the cancellation is a betrayal of Russia, as Kazakhstan is a close ally, and Moscow has assisted Astana in stopping the mass protests in January 2022 (Kumenov, 2022d). Other than that, a member of the Russian Duma, Nikolai Novichkov, also expressed his indignation and demanded an explanation from the Kazakh government as he considered the annual celebration very important, especially during that time (Altynbayev, 2022a).

Another gestures that Kazakhstan showed was its refusal to send troops to the war in Ukraine. The information was obtained from the US National Security Council in the beginning of March 2022 (Gotev, 2022). Instead of sending the troops, Kazakhstan sent humanitarian aid to Ukraine. The Kazakh government provided 25 types of medicines that cost around more than 2.2 million USD (Kazakhstan announces the volume of humanitarian aid for Ukraine, 2022). The first batch of the humanitarian aid was delivered through Poland in March 2022, with a total weight of 82 tons (Akhmetkali, 2022).

Although, Kazakhstan did not openly condemn the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. Kazakhstan's gestures in response to the war in Ukraine have shown a lack of support to Russia. The responses did not reflect how 'a traditional ally' should behave, especially after the involvement of CSTO in the January 2022 event. However, Kazakhstan's responses are rational and reasonable, and this research aims to comprehend why Kazakhstan acted in those ways.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

2.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

To give a background and emphasize the importance of this research topic, I will provide a literature review that classifies into four themes. The first theme will cover the type of *concepts and theoretical framework* in examining Kazakhstan's foreign policy, especially with Russia. The second theme will be the general overview of the *relationship* between Kazakhstan and Russia. The discussion of bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and Russia will provide the nature of the relationship between the two countries. The third theme will discuss about Kazakhstan's foreign policy *characteristics* that strongly connect with the multi-vector approach, energy sector, and landlocked country. The fourth theme will focus on Kazakhstan's *gesture and foreign policy in the annexation of Crimea* in 2014. Although there is a limitation in finding the fourth theme, the discussion of this theme is expected to provide knowledge on how Kazakhstan's reaction was to a similar past event.

2.1.1. REVIEW OF CONCEPT AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This part will cover the literature review focusing on the theoretical perspective in examining Kazakhstan's foreign policy to Russia and bilateral relations between two countries. This review aims to know the range of concepts and theoretical frameworks that have been used by academia. Before explaining into the details, I will provide the highlights of each work.

In the first part, Hanks (2009) unfolds the concept of *multi-vector strategy*. He explains that, initially the concept was emerged to create a 'semi-independent path' or a subtle way to distance when Kazakhstan – Russia relations in a tense situation. The second part will discuss the work from Kassen (2018) explores how to maximize Kazakhstan's position as a *landlocked* and *transcontinental* state by using *exit* and *multi-vector strategy*. Kassen's article also explores the implications of a landlocked nation from economic and political views. As a landlocked nation, Kazakhstan suffers from not having access to the maritime trade route and it is constantly prone to the political pressures from the neighbouring states such as Russia. Next, Laruelle *et al.* (2019) discuss the rationale of Kazakhstan's in-favored attitude towards Russia using *active or passive vectors* and *exogenous or endogenous motives*. Overall, they claim the Russia-favour behaviour by Kazakhstan is the result of international system conditions, geographical proximity, and based on the consideration that having cooperation with Russia is much more bring the benefits than the costs. Then, Stevens (2020) utilizes *image theory* and argues that Kazakh elites had a positive attitude towards Russia, mainly during the

Nazarbaev's era, because they "were the products of the Soviet system" (Stevens, 2020, p. 1182) and had a positive image on Russian history that influenced the intimacy relations with Russia, which resulted in Russia as Kazakhstan's traditional ally. The last one is from Hudson (2022), who explores the influences of Russian *soft power* in supporting its foreign policy in Kazakhstan and how the soft power benefits Russia. It is known that Russian soft power has helped Russia in conducting its foreign policy in Kazakhstan. Although soft power does not always bring a positive image such as during the January event, but there is still a positive image such as a "reliable ally" or "reliable partner" that is embedded in Russia.

Kazakhstan and Russia relations are complex. Kazakhstan is a landlocked country that needs Russia for its energy export transit (Kassen, 2018). It has a good tie in economic and military cooperation with Russia due to its geographical proximity (Laruelle *et al.*, 2019). Kazakhstan is also a traditional ally of Russia, as most of its elites (mainly during the Nazarbaev era) had a strong connection with the Soviet system. Although, on some occasions, Russia is a reliable ally for Kazakhstan (Hudson, 2022), the friction between the two countries tends to emerge under discussion of the territorial integrity and control of energy export (Hanks, 2009). When their relationship is under turbulence, Kazakhstan tends to use its multi-vector strategy. Next, I will unfold each article arguments in details.

The first article is from Hanks (2009). In his article, Hanks explores how Kazakhstan, as an emerging geo-strategic and influential player in Central Asia, has constantly utilized the *multi-vector approach* in international politics. Hanks's article is beneficial as an introduction to the concept of the multi-vector approach. In the introduction part of his writing, he explained why Kazakhstan should be considered as an essential player in the regional and international stages due to two reasons. First, Kazakhstan is a country rich in hydrocarbon resources, mainly in the western part. Second, Kazakhstan is claimed to be the most strategic country among Central Asian states. As it is located in Eurasia, Kazakhstan connects the countries in the north, such as Russia or eastern European countries, with those in south or east Asia. In addition, it is the only Central Asian country with a direct border with Russia. However, Kazakhstan has been disadvantaged as a landlocked nation (Hanks, 2009).

In his article Hanks unfolds the basis of the multi-vector strategy. He explained that Kazakhstan's multi-vector approach is solely motivated by national interests. It is a pragmatic approach, that is guided by two focuses: the opportunity for economic growth and state security. The interesting part is that Hanks explains that the multi-vector approach initially emerged to create a "semi-independent path" when Kazakhstan and Russia were involved in a tense situation, mainly during critical moments related to territorial integrity and control over

Kazakhstan's energy export in 1990s (Hanks, 2009). In addition, the multi-vector approach allows Kazakhstan to explore new markets for its hydrocarbon export and find capital, mainly with western investors (Hanks, 2009).

Hanks's article is a great introduction to the Kazakhstan's multi-vector strategy. The article did not explain the type of method that is used to examine the topic. Nevertheless, he elaborated the concept with empirical facts and a historical approach. Moreover, although I found the research is interesting, Hanks did not explore how the multi-vector approach can be used to lessen Kazakhstan's disadvantage as a landlocked nation.

The second article is from Kassen (2018). In the article, Kassen examined the foreign policy of Kazakhstan by emphasizing the geopolitical aspect of Kazakhstan as the largest landlocked and transcontinental country. He has two research purposes. The first is to examine the implication of the development of Kazakhstan's foreign policy by considering its geographical features. Second, is examining the exit strategy adopted by the government in addressing the potential challenges as the consequences of Kazakhstan's geographical location. Kassen used several concepts in his article, such as the *definition of landlocked and transcontinental country, multi-vector foreign policy, exit strategy and soft power*. He described Kazakhstan as a landlocked country surrounded by a landmass of neighbouring states located in the centre of Eurasian. Besides that, Kazakhstan is also a transcontinental country that lies between two continents: Europe and Asia (Kassen, 2018).

Kassen explains Kazakhstan adopts a multi-vector foreign policy approach that attempts to balance its relationship with its neighbouring partners. On top of that, Kassen also use an exit strategy that he describes as "a set of approaches by the government to address the objective limitations of a country's position in the international arena" (Kassen, 2018, p. 315). Kassen also picked the soft power concept in his article. Kassen uses context analysis, policy and discourse analysis for the methodology part. He uses context analysis to examine the discussion of geography features' implications for Kazakhstan's foreign policy development. While for the exit strategy discussion, he used policy and discourse analysis.

In his article, Kassen explains there is a contradiction of being a landlocked and transcontinental country. Many scholars mentioned that a landlocked situation could hinder the economy growth. At the same time, the position as the transcontinental country is an advantage to promote free trade. As a non-coastal nation, some prices disadvantage Kazakhstan's position in the international arena. Kaasen explained the fundamental challenges from two lenses, economic and political sides. For the economic implications, he mentions that not having access to the world oceans implies "the lack of access to the global maritime trade routes"

(Kassen, 2018, p. 320). This disadvantage can inhibit Kazakhstan's economic development. Some scholars argue the economic development of a landlocked nation depends on preserving a good relationship with its neighbours (Kassen, 2018). In the case of Kazakhstan, preserving relations with China and Russia is very important. As most of the government's income is obtained from the export of hydrocarbon resources, such as oil and gas, Kazakhstan needs a transit country (such as Russia) to reach the global market.

For the political implication, Kassen explains that most of the time, a landlocked nation will be constantly prone to a political pressure and threat of the neighbouring countries (Kassen, 2018). Therefore, a landlocked country tend to adjust its foreign policy and domestic affairs to favour the transit country's situation. A neighbouring coastal nation of a landlocked country may have an "indirect instrument of political influence and economic pressure" on the landlocked nation (Lloyd, 1997; Arvis *et al.*, 2010; Kassen, 2018, p. 322).

Nevertheless, as a transcontinental state, Kazakhstan might have a significant role as a mediator in international politics (Kassen, 2018). Furthermore, Kassen explained Kazakhstan applies its multi-vector foreign policy by actively participating in the initiation of regional integration platform or multilateral cooperation and balancing relationships with its three vectors, namely the post-Soviet vector (in the post-Soviet spaces), Asian vector (with China, India, and Iran), Western vector (with the United States and European Union) (Kassen, 2018). However, considering Kazakhstan's geographical location, Russia and China are critical neighbours.

The majority substances of the article that is written by Kassen highlights the cooperation of Kazakhstan with its partners due to its leverage as a transcontinental nation. Kassen mentioned, in the case of Kazakhstan, the challenges of being a landlocked country are exacerbated by the fact that Kazakhstan mainly depends on the exploration of its energy resources for economic development. However, he did not explain further what kind of challenges that Kazakhstan faces, specifically in the energy sector as it is a crucial sector for Kazakhstan.

Next is from Marlene Laruelle, Dylan Royce, and Serik Bessembayev (2019), they study the range of vectors that make Kazakhstan has more positive attitude towards Russia. They agree a justification of in favour behaviour towards Russia should not be solely based on an argument that Russia has forced Kazakhstan to act in certain manner. They argue the exact drivers of Kazakhstan's behaviour towards Russia is understudied. Many study regarding Kazakhstan – Russia relationship emphasize on Russian minority and media influence. Hence, in their article they examines the bilateral relationship based on *active* or *passive vectors* and

exogenous or *endogenous* motives. Exogenous can be understood as the external factors that influence Kazakhstan also can be defined as Russia's influence to Kazakhstan. While, endogenous is due to Kazakhstan's internal factors. They range of topics in this article are varied, but here I will choose two topics, the economic ties and military strategic cooperation, as those are critical sectors.

According to the Laruelle *et al.* (2019), in the economic sector, Kazakhstan is highly dependent on Russia for its energy exports. Besides energy sector, there are many Russian company in Kazakhstan, such as Russian defence companies (Sukhoy and Irkut) and agribusiness firms. After the establishment of Custom Union and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), there was a growth of Kazakhstan's imports to Russia. The establishment of EAEU indicated there was an attempt of economic integration, nevertheless Kazakhstan has created limits in certain spheres such as joint citizenship and currency (Libman, 2018; Laruelle *et al.*, 2019). The writers argue the economic relations between two countries was naturally happened under consideration of its geographical proximity and economic profiles (Laruelle *et al.*, 2019). Hence, it can be said the economic relations are passively generated, can be said as both exogenous and endogenous (Laruelle *et al.*, 2019).

Under the strategic and military cooperation, Kazakhstan has a strong dependency on Russia. Kazakhstan is a member of Russian led security alliance (CSTO) where the bloc provides security protection and assistance. Moreover, many Kazakhstani armies are trained under Russia military academies and its arsenal supplies are largely come from Russia, including for the repairment (Laruelle *et al.*, 2019). Kazakhstan also reiterated Russia as its main military partner from time to time. Laruelle *et al.*, also claimed the trend is Kazakhstan will intensify its military cooperation with Russia, while lessen the ties with United States and its allies. According to Laruelle *et al.*, given the fact that Russia provides military supports to Kazakhstan and due to the geography proximity, the cooperation in this sector is likely generated by Kazakhstan, Russia, and a result of international system (Laruelle *et al.*, 2019).

In conclusion, they argue that the favourable attitude towards Russia is much more likely because of the result or consequence of the international system (military cooperation), endogenous (such as Russian minority and language), or geographical proximity (economic ties) (Laruelle *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, the sectors that are actively generated by Russia, such as economic and military cooperation, are also supported by Astana. As Astana believes the cooperation brings much more benefits than the costs (Laruelle *et al.*, 2019). The article by Laruelle *et al.* (2019) depicts a very positive image of Russia without really considering the

possibility of Russia's aggressive attitude or a tense situation between Kazakhstan and Russia. Hence, the information in this article is not balanced.

The fourth article is from Stevens (2020). In his article, Stevens studied the influence of Russia's history to Kazakhstan with a focus during Nazarbayev's era. He attempted to unfold the roots of cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia, as Kazakhstan considers to be one of the most highly loyal allies of Russia, beside Belarus. His hypothesis is the number of titular people who fully engaged in Soviet empires before the establishment of a shared sense of titular national identity in the post-Soviet countries will be in line with the more positive image of Russia after the dissolution of Soviet Union (Stevens, 2020).

In his journal, Stevens attempted to examine the closed relations between Kazakhstan and Russia using *image theory* instead of *rational choice*. He utilized content and discourse analysis on Nazarbayev's interview, news, and statements. Based on his analysis, the justifications of the rational theory were insufficient in convincing why Kazakhstan always attempted to please Russia through its policies during 1992-1994. The result of his analysis stated that most Kazakhstan elites at that time, such as President Nazarbayev, "were the products of the Soviet Union system", which put them have a strong connection in terms of preferences and way of thinking (Stevens, 2020, p. 1182). Also, as the result of russification the Kazakh elites tend to have a positive perspective on the history related to Russia. It is reasonable that the majority of Kazakhstan elites depicted the image of Russia as a closed ally in compared with the other post-Soviet countries such as Ukraine or Estonia, as most of the Kazakh elites had positive references (image) on Russian history which is shaping positive perceptions towards Russia (Stevens, 2020).

Next is the article from Hudson (2022). Hudson attempted to examine the role of Russian *soft power* (such as cultural and ideational influence) in supporting Russian foreign policy in Kazakhstan. Hudson explored the benefits of Russian soft power in supporting interaction with Kazakhstan within five cases, two of them are bloody January and invasion in Ukraine. In the case of Bloody January, Russian soft power was useful in facilitating the bond of international political interaction. The narrative of friendly relations between Kazakhstan – Russia enabled Astana for asking help to Moscow easily. But in this case, it is hard to portray the Russian soft power as positive in the public information narrative, as it is dominated by alternative views such as pro-Western or Kazakh nationalist. The involvement of Russia through CSTO has resulted at least three benefits. First, it strengthens the image of Russia as a "reliable partner" for Kazakhstan and a "guarantor of stability in the region" (Hudson, 2022, p. 484). Second, the involvement of CSTO was portrayed as negative due to it put Kazakhstan

indebt for Russian help. Despite this being just prejudice, many believe reciprocal actions are needed to maintain a good relationship. Third, the willingness and rapid action in assisting Kazakhstan implied Russia is a reliable ally, and it can be robust the loyalty of its existing or potential allies (Hudson, 2022).

In the case of the crisis in Ukraine, Hudson explained, “soft power also constrains action, particularly that which could be outside the discursive boundaries of the bilateral relationship as the parties understand it” (Hudson, 2022, p. 485). Astana treats carefully any actions, as it needs to balance the West and Russia under its multi-vector foreign policy approach. Hudson chose several examples, for instance, the decision of Kazakhstan not to recognize the independence of Donetsk and Luhansk (Hudson, 2022). President Tokayev explicitly mentioned that the world would be in chaos if all nations applied self-determination as justification for independence (Hudson, 2022). However, in this part, Hudson did not elaborate on what kind of Russian soft power that constrains the action of Kazakhstan. Moreover, I cannot see a correlation between the Russian soft power and Kazakhstan’s decision, as soft power is much more to be seen as a positive image than a negative one. In his conclusion, Hudson mentioned that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has led to a situation where the Kazakh society questions the political and cultural proximity between the two countries. The invasion may also push Kazakhstan to strengthen ties with other partner countries for a balancing act.

2.1.2. KAZAKHSTAN AND RUSSIA RELATIONS

Kazakhstan is considered a very close ally of Russia compared to other post-Soviet states. The bilateral relationship between Kazakhstan and Russia has been established since Kazakhstan’s independence, and it covers many spheres. History noted that Kazakhstan has always supported any multilateral cooperation initiated by Russia (Stevens, 2020). Several multilateral cooperation involves Kazakhstan and Russia, such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

The Russian influence in Kazakhstan’s politics has been apparent even before Kazakhstan was aware of its national identity. As a result, from 1992 until 1994, Kazakhstan applied a national security strategy that favoured Russia. That period was also crucial in establishing contemporary relations between Kazakhstan and Russia (Stevens, 2020). Stevens argued that Kazakhstan elites in early period of Kazakhstan’s independence “were the products

of the Soviet Union” (Stevens, 2020, p. 1182). Due to the strong connection and familiarity with the Soviet realm, as a consequence most Kazakhstan elites at that time considered Russia as a close ally (Stevens, 2020).

Nevertheless, mentioning Kazakh statehood as a gift from Russia is unacceptable. Kazakhstan officials counter the argument that Kazakh ethnicity was born based on Turkic Khaganate instead of Kievan Rus (Shlapentokh, 2016). However, Kazakhstan’s officials did not dismiss the Russian language, although its position may erode over time by Kazakh and English. The increasing use of English, such as in academic institutions, will expect to bring Kazakhstan into “Euro Islam”. Euro Islam is a term widely spread by Tatar scholars, which means the values of Islam may live together with the values of democracy and capitalism (Shlapentokh, 2016). This can be happened as the use of English increase among the Kazakh elites and well educated people, the chance to the development of new economic firm and institutions that employ English speakers such as in Dubai or Singapore is more likely to happen (Shlapentokh, 2016). Therefore, the Western values such as democracy and capitalist will be able to grow (Shlapentokh, 2016). Based on Shlapentokh (2016), the relations between Kazakhstan and Russia had agreed on some cultural roots; most of the time, it was based on fear of Kazakhstan to Russia’s capability.

In the economic sector, Russia has been counted as an essential actor who contributed to the development of the economy of Kazakhstan. Former president Nazarbayev even mentioned that Russia is one of the critical economic partners (Zabortseva, 2014). In trading activities, Russia is the leading importer for Kazakhstan. However, in terms of investment, Russia is not a prominent investor in Kazakhstan’s economy. Kazakhstan is a rich energy resource country, and oil has been a critical commodity for Kazakhstan’s economic development. Despite this, Russia is not generally the main investor, but it has an important role in Kazakhstan’s oil sector (Zabortseva, 2014). Since its independence, Kazakhstan has been largely dependent on Russia. It is known that Kazakhstan’s oil pipeline should pass Russia’s territory to reach the Western market, such as the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC). The limited oil pipeline route has impacted investment in Kazakhstan’s energy sector, as was proven in 1995 when Chevron lessened its investment in Kazakhstan due to such a problem (Zabortseva, 2014).

Regarding Kazakhstan’s role in the Russian economy, Russia was the second largest destination of Kazakhstan’s foreign direct investment (FDI) during 2004-2008 (Zabortseva, 2014). Zabortseva (2014) explains Kazakhstan’s FDI might have two interpretations. On the one hand, it might indicate an elevated investment partnership status. Also, for Kazakhstan,

this reduced a notion that Russia sometimes perceives as a threat (Zabortseva, 2014). On the other hand, this might reflect a competition between Russia and Kazakhstan to dominate the region (Zabortseva, 2014). The latter argument is inferred from the fact that Kazakhstan became the third party in a disagreement between Russia and Belarus over oil refineries, Kazakhstan revealed its interest in cooperation with Belarus regarding matters that have been discussed with Russia (Zabortseva, 2014). The economic relations trend between the two countries demonstrated that their relationship is complex and should not be seen from one angle (Zabortseva, 2014).

At the beginning of Putin's tenure as the Russian president, he attempted to harmonize relations with the West. Nevertheless, for Russia the West did not treat them as an equal partner, which resulted in the rising competition between Russia and the West decades later (Shlapentokh, 2016). In the second term of Putin's presidency, Moscow increased its influence in the former Soviet space, including Kazakhstan (Shlapentokh, 2016). In 2011, 'Eurasianism' emerged as an ideological tool for Moscow in Central Asia (Shlapentokh, 2016). Eurasianism is a term coined by President Nazarbayev, which at first Russia ignored and has the initial meaning that Kazakhstan will always have the same stance with Russia as if the contradiction would not happen (Shlapentokh, 2016). However, the re-emergence of the term in 2011 had a different interpretation for Kazakhstan. For Kazakhstan, Eurasianism is not just about an equal partnership under the Eurasian Union, but the term also implies that each country has the right to establish a partnership with other superpowers (Shlapentokh, 2016). It is essential to mention that the talk about Eurasianism has a sensitivity to Russian imperialism and its implication on Kazakhstan's independence (Shlapentokh, 2016).

Although Russia and Kazakhstan have a strategic partnership, we must recognize an imbalance of power between the two countries. Russia has more power to influence Kazakhstan in various spheres (Hudson, 2022). Hudson (2022) conducted a survey among higher education students in three regions - Astana, Almaty, and Kostanai. He studied the role of Russian cultural and ideational influence in supporting Russian foreign policy in Kazakhstan. According to the survey, students in the three regions were inclined to agree with the statement that Russian soft power has a high influence in Kazakhstan (Hudson, 2022). The soft power of Russia is delivered through several mediums such as public diplomacy, language, and media (Hudson, 2022). In short, we cannot ignore the influence of Russian hard power and soft power in Kazakhstan.

2.1.3. KAZAKHSTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY CHARACTERISTICS

Located in Eurasia, Kazakhstan is a landlocked and transcontinental country that placed between the East and the West. Based on Idan and Shaffer (2011), landlocked countries have limited foreign policy manoeuvres, and landlocked factors tend to constrain foreign policy decisions. A similar stance is conveyed by Kassen (2018), which mentions there is a paradoxical consequence of being a landlocked and transcontinental country. A landlocked situation could inhibit the development of the economy, as the flow of goods might be limited mainly for the export. While at the same time, a position as a transcontinental country can be advantageous to promote free trade with neighbouring states (Kassen, 2018).

As a landlocked country, Kazakhstan often integrates transportation issues, including energy distribution, into its foreign policy (Idan & Shaffer, 2011). Since its independence, the Kazakhstani government openly articulated and addressed its concern as a landlocked nation in international and regional forums, such as in the forum of United Nations (Idan & Shaffer, 2011). Kaasen (2018) explains that the economic implication of a landlocked state is limited access to maritime trade routes (Kassen, 2018). Therefore, maintaining good ties with neighbouring states is crucial for the economic development of a landlocked nation, mainly for export activities where the non-coastal state needs the neighbouring countries to be the transit countries. In the case of Kazakhstan, this is a serious concern due to the fact that the Kazakhstani government's revenue is mainly from exporting energy resources (Kassen, 2018).

Energy security has been a top priority for Kazakh's leaders, and the agenda of having secure export routes and supply for the domestic market is the government's main agenda. The problem is always about the transport of the energy commodity. As Kazakhstan is located in Eurasia, it needs assistance from neighbouring countries to distribute energy exports. Many attempts have been made to diversify Kazakhstan's energy export routes. Unfortunately, most of the pipelines are the legacy of Soviet times therefore, some pipelines still pass through Russian territory (Baizakova, 2010).

As Kazakhstan's neighbour, Russia has successfully preserved its regional influence. Moscow is a "significant other" in shaping Astana's policies (Cummings, 2003). The Kremlin's influence resulted from a high level of russification among elites, a high number of Russian population, and Astana's dependency on Moscow for its security (Cummings, 2003). The apparent influence can be seen (mainly) when Russia acts as a transit country in the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC) project. The CPC pipeline was the first and foremost export pipeline for Kazakhstan. It passes Russian territory and ends in Novorossiysk. Besides

that, Kazakhstan also built an export pipeline to China through the Atasu-Alashankou pipeline and invested in Georgia's Black Sea ports (Idan & Shaffer, 2011).

Talking about the political implications, Kassen (2018) explained that most of the time, a landlocked nation often adjusts its foreign policy and domestic affairs to favour the transit country's situation. In some occasions, the neighbouring states of a landlocked nation tend to use its position as leverage to influence the policies of landlocked nation (Kassen, 2018). Apart from the challenges, some leverages can be obtained from the position as a transcontinental country. Kazakhstan can be a bridge between Europe and Asia to support its economic situation and have a political role as a mediator within global politics (Kassen, 2018).

Since its independence, the elites of the Kazakhstani government have inclined to picture Kazakhstan as a peace and secular country (Cummings, 2003). Kazakhstan adopted a multi-vector approach that can be defined as a pragmatic diplomacy foreign policy strategy where Kazakhstan attempts to balance its relationship with its neighbouring partners. The multi-vector approach can also be seen by actively participating in regional integration platforms or multilateral cooperation (Kassen, 2018). In other words, Kazakhstan attempted to open all possibilities of cooperation with states but simultaneously maintain relations with neighbouring countries (Cummings, 2003). Scholars such as Cummings (2003) argued that the flexibility in conducting relations with other states at the international level resulted from the weak statehood and nation-building process.

The year 2022 was a testament to Kazakhstan's multi-vector policy approach. The uprising protest, which involved the intervention of the CSTO and the invasion of Ukraine, put Kazakhstan's foreign policy in a difficult situation. Many Kazakh people believe Kazakhstan is in debt to Russia as CSTO was involved in handling a demonstration in January 2022. Some believe the debt may result in the loss of Kazakhstani sovereignty and the end of multi-vector foreign policy (Arynov, 2022). It was predicted that Astana would support Moscow in the invasion of Ukraine for many reasons, as explained before. Surprisingly, Kazakhstan's gesture was not as expected, and explanations about it will be further elaborated in the analysis section.

2.1.4. KAZAKHSTAN'S GESTURE IN THE ANNEXATION OF CRIMEA IN 2014

Russia's annexation in Crimea has evoked fear among post-Soviet countries, including Kazakhstan. Russia's action unfolded its readiness to redraw borders and its commitment to respect other former Soviet countries' sovereignty cannot be trusted. Moscow justified its action as an attempt to protect Russian minorities and focused on the "Russian world" in its

foreign policy (Morozov, 2015). Using a postulate to protect ‘compatriot’ abroad, Moscow defended its foreign policy as it regulated under Russian Law on State Policy on Compatriots Abroad (Holmquist, 2015).

The fear that the same event can be repeated in Kazakhstan is reasonable, as many Russian ethnicities live in the northern and eastern parts of Kazakhstan. In 2014, approximately 21% of the Kazakhstani population were Russians (Baizakova & McDermott, 2015). The annexation in February 2014 also came as a warning for Kazakhstan as President Russia, Vladimir Putin, mentioned that “before 1991 there was not statehood in Kazakhs society”, several months after the annexation, which strengthened the phobia among Kazakh people (Putz, 2015; Gussarova, 2017, p. 5).

In response to the annexation, the Kazakhstani government attempted to be neutral (Gussarova, 2017). Kazakhstan was aware of its position in the confrontation between the West and Russia. Thus, Kazakhstan’s stance was always clear and followed the rules under international law, as it never recognized conflicted territory (Baizakova & McDermott, 2015). Kazakhstan's neutrality was proved when the European Union (EU) imposed sanctions on Russia after the annexation of Crimea, Russia asked other Custom Union members, Belarus and Kazakhstan, to retaliate by having counter-sanctions. However, both Kazakhstan and Belarus declined Russia’s request. In 2014, Kazakhstan also asserted that it would leave the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) if the membership in the organization jeopardized Kazakhstan’s interests and independence (Holmquist, 2015).

Kazakhstan’s willingness to be neutral also can be seen in 2015, when it refused to support Russia’s idea to cut the free trade agreement with Ukraine under the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In fact, Kazakhstan tended to act as a mediator between Ukraine and Russia, as it happened during the Minsk negotiation and through OSCE activities (Gussarova, 2017). Some scholars addressed the possibility of the Crimea crisis in Kazakhstan. According to Morozov (2015), to assess the possibility, there must be “pre-existing points of reference” such as instability, strong “friend-enemy images”, banning the use of the Russian language, direct threat to Russian minority in the host states to justify certain measure such as annexation. In addition, Russian public opinion in seeing the image of the host state is also an important factor (Morozov, 2015).

Based on Baizakova & McDermott (2015), the factors that triggered the Ukraine conflict were absent in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan’s government was aware and sensitive to issues that can trigger friction with Russia, such as the Russian language or the treatment of the Russian minority. Therefore, Astana attempted to be careful with the language regulations,

as they did not want to repeat what Kyiv had experienced. Also, the government treated the Russian minority and Kazakh equally (Baizakova & McDermott, 2015).

Another consideration is the political instability and relationship with the West. Domestic instability in Ukraine that was exaggerated by Russian propaganda created a situation where many believed the Russian minority population in Ukraine was facing a threat and certain measure was needed to protect them (Morozov, 2015). Kazakhstan in 2014 was relatively stable, hence, the likelihood of the event in this course would not happen.

The relationship with the West might be a critical consideration. Kazakhstan's gesture was different from Ukraine's. While Ukraine distanced itself and consciously showed a willingness to be part of the West, Kazakhstan kept close ties with Russia by joining the Custom Union and CSTO (Holmquist, 2015). A series of events, such as the "Orange Revolution" in 2004 and "Euromaidan" resulted from the geopolitical struggle between the West and Russia in Ukraine. Unlike Ukraine, Kazakhstan does not have the ambition to be part of the European Union (EU) or NATO. Instead of the West, China was likely a possible threat to Russia in Central Asia, mainly in Kazakhstan (Morozov, 2015). Moreover, Moscow will take into account Beijing's interest in taking any actions in Central Asia (Baizakova & McDermott, 2015).

Russia's foreign policy maneuverer has challenged Kazakhstan's ability to apply a multi-vector strategy, making the approach much more attractive and risky at the same time, as Kazakhstan has to strive to balance its relationship with Russia and the West (Holmquist, 2015). For Kazakhstan, the balancing act is not a choice. It is something that Kazakhstan must do as it cannot choose its neighbours (Holmquist, 2015).

Under Nazarbayev's presidency, Kazakhstan acted relatively neutral in response to the Ukraine crisis in 2014. Kazakhstan refused to acknowledge the change of Ukraine's border while at the same time attempting to understand Russia's actions (Arynov, 2022). Nevertheless, under President Tokayev, many questioned to what extent the Kazakhstani government is able to maintain its neutrality. Given the involvement of CSTO in January 2022, President Tokayev is allegedly indebted to President Putin (Arynov, 2022).

2.2. RESEARCH GAP AND OBJECTIVES

Undoubtedly, Kazakhstan is a close ally of Russia. Moscow's influence towards Astana has been firmly rooted based on their ties in the past. Considering the historical ties, Moscow's influences through hard and soft power, and the asymmetric relations between the two parties, Astana has a lot of reasons to behave in favor of Moscow. Nevertheless, as Kazakhstan is now an independent and sovereign state, its foreign policy should not be dictated by others. The challenge as a landlocked country and Kazakhstan's economic revenue that is heavily dependent on the energy sector has put Kazakhstan in a difficult situation. However, as Nazarbayev said, they cannot choose their neighbors. Therefore, a certain approach such as hedging that is wrapped as a multi-vector foreign policy approach is needed for survival, and it has been a common narrative that justifies Kazakhstan's gesture whenever its action is contrary to Russia.

In this research there are two research gaps from theoretical perspective that I would like to address:

1. Whenever Kazakhstan distances itself from Russia, most academics will use the justification that Kazakhstan is adopting a multi-vector strategy. Indeed, as Hanks (2009) also mentioned, initially, the strategy emerged for the first time to create "a semi-independent path" when the bilateral relations between Astana and Moscow were in a tense situation in 1990s. It is also reasonable that Kazakhstan is not fully supporting Russia in Ukraine after Russia assisted Kazakhstan's government in dealing with mass protests in early 2022, as Kazakhstan attempts to balance its relations with others in the international system. However, the use of the multi-vector approach solely cannot explain the correlation of the impact of the domestic factors (such as public opinion/discontent) with Kazakhstan's foreign policy. For instance, *the multi-vector approach solely cannot explain how the impact of public discontent towards the Kazakhstan government (due to the January event) affects Kazakhstan's foreign policy or its attitude towards Russia in the war in Ukraine*. In this research, I would like to include how public discontent, mainly due to the January event, can influence Kazakhstan's attitude towards Russia in the invasion in Ukraine. Therefore, in this research I will attempt to incorporate the multi-vector strategy with other concepts and theory.
2. In the article that is written by Kassen (2018), he explains two implications for landlocked nations. First, from an economic standpoint, as a landlocked country, Kazakhstan lacks a maritime trade route. Therefore, it needs neighboring states to

export its energy resources as a transit country. Second, from the political implication, Kazakhstan is prone to constant political pressure and threats from its neighbors, as the transit country has an indirect instrument to influence or even force Kazakhstan's government to act in a certain way. Suppose we follow the logic of Kassen's work, in that case, the *lack of support for Russia (as the transit country for Kazakhstan) will increase the political pressure and the chance for Russia's government to use the 'indirect instrument'. Also, at the same time, it lessens the options for Kazakhstan's maritime trade routes, which have been limited before.* From those perspectives and bearing in mind that more than half of Kazakhstan's energy export is passed through Russian territory via the CPC pipeline, does it mean the government of Kazakhstan put itself in a dangerous situation? Why does the Kazakh government take a risky decision? How do we rationalize Kazakhstan's policy in this case?

In addressing the two research gaps above and to rationalize Kazakhstan's policy and attitudes towards Russia, I would like to offer a comprehensive explanation through this research study. This research has two objectives, which are:

- Objective 1: Examine the causes of Kazakhstan decisions that lack of support to Russia in the war in Ukraine (January 2022 – February 2023)
- Objective 2: Explore the factors that contributed to the Kazakhstan's decisions.
- Objective 3: Identify Kazakhstan's effort to decrease its dependency with Russia.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

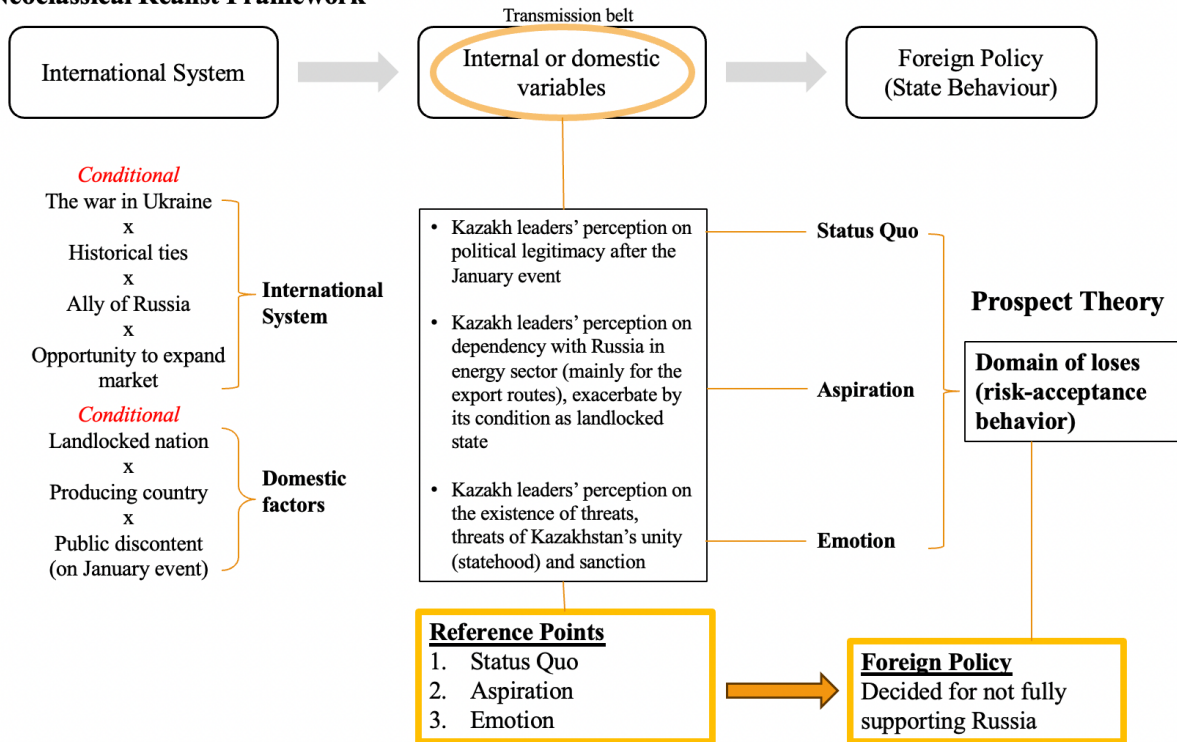
This study is inspired by the work of He and Feng (2013), who explore Asian Security by combining prospect theory and neoclassical realism. In their work, they argued that states are facing an uncertain world as we live in an anarchical international system. Therefore, on several occasions, states sometimes opt for risk-taking or irrational behavior (He & Feng, 2013). The risk-taking or irrational behavior can be said as a deviant case by a rational theory or logic of thinking. According to He and Feng (2013), prospect theory can be used as an alternative to offer a new perspective when states act irrationally, which is insufficiently addressed by common international relations theories. In addition, prospect theory offers a psychological perspective that can be considered complementary to mainstream theories of international relations.

I commenced this research by observing some irrational Kazakhstan behaviors that could not be explained using common international relations theories. First, Russia has proved that Moscow was a reliable ally for Kazakhstan, as it helped Astana during the mass protest in January 2022. However, a month after the January event, Kazakhstan showed a lack of support for Russia. Something that is considered as unexpectedly happens for some observers. Second, as a producing country, Kazakhstan has a national interest in expanding and securing its energy market. By showing a lack of support for Russia, as a landlocked nation, it means Kazakhstan's actions increased the likelihood of getting political pressure from Russia and put its traditional transit route (the CPC pipeline) and energy market at risk. Then, the question is, why did Kazakhstan put itself in a risky situation? Based on those observations, I assessed Kazakhstan was in the domain of risk-acceptance behavior, and I found prospect theory can be a helpful tool in explaining Kazakhstan's behavior.

In using prospect theory, we need to decide the reference point as a starting point to begin our analysis. Determining the reference point is essential, this can be reflected in the work of scholars such as Morozov, who mentioned the importance of examining the "pre-existing points of references" in carrying out an analysis of the possibility of Russia's action in Ukraine being repeated in Kazakhstan. Although this research does not address such a case, I believe the reference point is an essential starting point to understand the analysis comprehensively. In this research, the reference point is the starting point on how a state assesses or perceives its internal and external conditions. The reference point will determine the domain of the state's stance, whether the state is in a domain of gain (risk-averse) or in the domain of losses (risk-acceptant).

Nevertheless, prospect theory does not provide us with how to determine the reference point. Hence, in determining the reference point, we need neoclassical realism. Neoclassical realism was chosen because this theory “provides ‘transmission belts’ from the unit level (state level) as causal mechanisms to connect (international) system effects and policy decision” (He & Feng, 2013, p. 26).

Neoclassical Realist Framework



Source: Elaborated by the author

In other words, the reference point is the result of Kazakhstan’s government assessment of internal (domestic factors) and external conditions (international system situation). In this research, I treat the state leader and the government apparatus as one entity or agent representing the interest of Kazakhstan’s government (at a state level). According to Political psychologists, there are five ways to discover the reference point, namely: status quo, heuristics, emotion, aspiration, and analogies (Mercer, 2005). By using the help of neoclassical realism, I chose three reference points: status quo, aspiration, and emotion.

The status quo is chosen to connect Kazakhstan’s foreign policy with the January event in 2022. Here, the status quo (in the domain of loss) is assessed by the discontent of Kazakh public and low confidence to the government that resulted a riot in January 2022. Moreover, the aspiration is chosen because it connects with Kazakhstan’s national interest in the energy sector. Kazakhstan is highly dependent with Russia on energy sector (domain of loss), at the

same time it is a landlocked nation and a producing country that seeks to expand its energy market. From the assessment of the international system, we may examine that Kazakhstan might see an opportunity to expand its energy market as the war in Ukraine erupted. In discussing this second reference point, I will attempt to elaborate the case by using the concept of energy diplomacy and security for producing country, and the multi-vector approach. Last is emotion, where the domain of losses is determined by analyzing the fear. This emotional point is taken as one of the reference points based on Kazakhstan's government assessment of the existence of threats in the international system (such as the threat of sanctions). Moreover, the in-depth discussion will be integrated with the concept of fear in the international system.

3.1. PROSPECT THEORY

Initially coined by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky in 1979, prospect theory can be defined as “a descriptive theory of decision-making under risk” (Mercer, 2005, p. 1). Prospect theory emerged for the first time in psychology study. Many scholars criticized that prospect theory is more likely emphasized as “individual-level theory” (He & Feng, 2013). However, the development of studies on prospect theory in fields outside psychology allowed the theory to be used for organizational and collective decision-making, such as a state, as reflected in a study conducted by Taliaferro in 2004 (He & Feng, 2013). In the International Relations study, Jervis (1988) was one of the scholars who introduced prospect theory (Mercer, 2005). Prospect theory involves how the interpretation or framing of information (gains or losses) as their reference point influences decision-makers' choices. As Levy (2003) mentioned, “the way people identify the reference point and hence how they frame a problem, can have a critical effect on their choices” (Levy, 2003, p. 217).

Prior in deciding a decision, entity such as states will assess their situations for making a choice. Their assessments will decide do they in a domain of gains or losses. Then, their assessment towards their circumstances will influence their behaviour in terms of risk orientation. According to prospect theory, decision-makers will behave as risk-averse if they are in the domain of gains. In the domain of losses, the decision-makers will behave as risk-acceptant. In other words, when decision-makers are in advantageous circumstances (domain of gain), they tend to secure their gains. However, when the decision-makers are in a disadvantageous situation (domain of losses), they tend to opt for risky decisions (He & Feng, 2013), to avoid further losses (loss aversion) (Mercer, 2005). This is based on assumption that most entities much more value things that they already had than things that they want to obtain (Taliaferro, 2010), as the pain of losing is much more intense than the pleasure of gaining things.

Entities who choose risky options (risk-acceptant behaviour) tend to assess that the risky option that they choose has much more high utilities or payoff, although the option is less probable (He & Feng, 2013).

Mercer (2005) mentioned that according to political psychologists, there are five ways to determine the reference point that dictate the decision makers' domain: "status quo, aspiration, heuristics, analogies, and emotion". In this research, I will use status quo, aspiration, and emotion as the references point to examine the topic. The status quo is chosen to connect the January event in 2022 with the Kazakhstan's foreign policy, the aspiration connects with the national interest of Kazakhstan in energy sector, and the emotion is chosen based on assessment of the existence of threat and the feeling of fear among both the public and the government.

The use of the status quo as the reference point is common in political sciences. When decision-makers are satisfied with the status quo condition (domestic and/or international level), they are in the domain of gain (Mercer, 2005). Vice versa, while the decision-makers are unsatisfied with the status quo, it indicates they are in the loss domain (Mercer, 2005). When the political actors or people who control the government assume their positions are threatened, they will likely act in a domain of loss (Mercer, 2005). Some previous studies suggest that the status quo as the reference point might be related to economic conditions such as an economic collapse or changing market opportunities (Mercer, 2005). When the decision-makers experience losses, they will strive to return to the original position, try to reduce their losses instead of seeking a gain and use the status quo (after the losses) as the reference point (Levy, 2003).

Next is aspiration as the reference point, which means the aspiration of actors (Mercer, 2005). In this research, I translate actors as decision makers or government, which is the extension of the state. Thus it can be said that the aspirations of states as national interests. The last reference point that I will use is emotion. According to Kahneman and Tversky, emotion is important in the framework of prospect theory because decision-makers experience it and will influence their judgment (Mercer, 2005). A wide range of emotions can be taken into account, such as greed, fear, anger, desperation, panic, regret, injustice, and many more (Mercer, 2005).

3.2. NEOCLASSICAL REALISM

In foreign policy analysis, neoclassical realism offers a framework analysis that incorporates the considerations of internal and external conditions of the state (Rose, 1998). As in classical realism, neoclassical realism considers decision-makers' perceptions and domestic factors as the internal features that influence foreign policy (Pashakhanlou, 2017). The theory also takes into account the structure of the international system and the capabilities of states, which roots in neorealism (Pashakhanlou, 2017).

Neoclassical realism emphasizes the role of state leaders (decision-makers) as the main actor (Česnakas, 2010). In this research, I treat the state's apparatus, including the state leader, as an agent that represent the state's interest. According to this theory, there are two types of power: "national power and state power" (Česnakas, 2010, p. 46). The interpretation of national power varies, ranging from military strength to tangible material power such as GDP and population (Česnakas, 2010). The national power can then shape the state power, as state power can be translated as the ability of the government to maximize the use of national power to obtain national interests (Česnakas, 2010). According to the neoclassical realists, states face uncertainties in the anarchy system by attempting to control and shape the external environment using state power (Rose, 1998). In examining analysis related to energy resources in foreign policy, knowledge of the national power is needed. Thus, it will be useful to determine the group of the states in the global energy market, such as producing country, transit country, or consumers (Česnakas, 2010). In addition, neoclassical realism puts the international system as the independent variable, with the internal or domestic factors as the intervening variable resulting in foreign policy as the dependent variable (Rose, 1998).

3.3. FEAR IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Generally, emotions are constructed. People within and between the group may share the same emotions, validate, or judge the emotions that emerge in society (Crawford, 2014). Emotions such as fear result from biological processes in the human body, which link with the individual's perception and understanding in accordance with the surroundings and social context (Crawford, 2014). If an emotion such as fear among the collective people becomes a dominant feeling, there will be an urgency to address the issue and repress the fear (Crawford, 2014). Crawford (2014) argued that emotions such as fear can be institutionalized and may influence the state's policy and behaviour in world politics. In world politics, fear may appear

as a reaction to other states' behaviour that threatens and put a certain state in danger. Hence it will be institutionalized and addressed by certain actions or policies (Crawford, 2014).

Similar to Crawford, a scholar such as Pashakhanlou mentioned that fear is an emotion that arises due to threat or danger that can be used as a political instrument to justify a certain policy of a country (Pashakhanlou, 2017). Fear has a strong connection in international relations with the concept of threat and national security. According to Buzan (1983), the security of individuals or society is inseparable from the security of the state, due to state is a "political unit" and a "metaphysical entity" that consists of individuals (Buzan, 1983, p. 38). If the core idea of the state itself is located in the human mind, then that idea tends to be the main concern or object of national security (Buzan, 1983, p. 39). Thus it can be said the perception of threats among a group of people in a certain country might be translated as a threat to national security. That can be explained due to human mind, beliefs, and emotions are connected, those tend to push people to act in certain ways.

3.4. ENERGY DIPLOMACY AND SECURITY FOR PRODUCING COUNTRY

There is not any exact definition of energy diplomacy (Goldthau, 2010; Griffiths, 2019), the term is complex. The interpretation of energy diplomacy depends on the position of the country in the supply chain and it emphasizes on the role of state as the primary actor (Goldthau, 2010). According to Dent, he conveyed energy diplomacy as "derivative of a state's energy policy as operationalized through foreign policy actions" (Dent, 2013, p. 953). In addition, Griffiths argued energy diplomacy as "government-related foreign activities that aim to ensure a country's energy security while also promoting business opportunities related to the energy sector" (Griffiths, 2019, p. 2). Dent's argument implies state is using foreign policy as a mean to get national interest in energy sector, while Griffiths indicates energy security as the main national interest that state must protect in delivering energy diplomacy. From both definition we can argue that the term energy diplomacy and energy security cannot be separated.

Talking about the concept of energy security, there are various interpretations of energy security from international organizations and international relations scholars. Two prominent definitions come from International Energy Agency (IEA) and the Asia-Pacific Energy Research Centre (APEREC). According to IEA, energy security can be described as "the availability of an uninterrupted or reliable supply of energy at an affordable price" (IEA, 2001; Pasqualetti, 2011, p. 278). While APEREC identified energy security as "Four As: availability, accessibility, affordability, and acceptability" (APEREC, 2007; Pasqualetti, 2011, p. 278).

Actors provide various interpretations of energy security to justify their policies and actions in addressing energy security issues (Sovacool & Mukherjee, 2011; Van de Graaf & Zelli, 2016).

The definition of energy security is subjective, it depends on the role of the state in the energy supply chain (producer, transit, consumer) and its perception of its vulnerabilities (Luft *et al.*, 2011). It is important to note that one state may have several positions and national interests. All countries can be said act as consumer countries, as they need energy sources. However, only several countries with abundant energy resources and strategic geographical locations can serve as producers and transit countries. In the case of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan is a producer (exporter) and consumer country. In this research, I will emphasize the role of Kazakhstan as the producer country.

A country that has a role as an energy producer or exporter seeks the security of the demand, which means it needs assurance that there will be buyer and market for the sale of its production with a fair and profitable price in the long term (Luft *et al.*, 2011). The previous argument echoes, with the argument from Goldthau (2010), that defined energy security for producing country as “a reliable demand at sustainable price” (Goldthau, 2010, p. 26). Most of the time, exporter country have a significant amount of revenue from the sale of energy production, such as Kazakhstan.

3.5. MULTI-VECTOR FOREIGN POLICY

Multi-vector foreign policy has always been the main approach of Kazakhstan’s foreign policy (Arynov, 2022). The approach focuses on obtaining national interest, it is pragmatic and not associated with certain ideologies (Hanks, 2009). The objectives of the foreign policy of Kazakhstan are centralized into two goals, namely, security and economic development of the state (Hanks, 2009). At first, the multi-vector approach was formulated to distance Kazakhstan from Russia’s hegemon and influence in the region, mainly when the relationship between the two countries was tense (Hanks, 2009). Energy is the salient sector where Kazakhstan applies this foreign policy approach. Kazakhstan invites any energy companies and institutions from various nations to invest in and develop Kazakhstan’s energy industry (Vanderhill *et al.*, 2020; Ussenova, 2022).

Since the mid-1990s, Kazakhstan has applied the multi-vector approach in the energy sector to create routes and sell energy commodities to the global market (Hanks, 2009). Kazakhstan could not create the energy routes project by itself since Kazakhstan is a landlocked country which has limitations on access to the sea. As a young nation, Kazakhstan also needed

many investors to develop its economy, mainly in energy. Nowadays, the approach is still relevant to alleviate the impact of geopolitical competition between great actors in the region. Instead of taking a side with one great power such as Russia, the multi-foreign policy approach allows Kazakhstan to benefit as much as it can from other great powers who have interests in the region. Scholars such as Ussenova argued that this approach is a means to exploit the great powers (Ussenova, 2022). By maintaining good relations with other great powers, such as China and the West, therefore this approach diminishes Kazakhstan's dependency on one superpower (Nurshanbayev, 2020; Ussenova, 2022).

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research applies an *outcome-centric* research design that attempts to explain the outcomes - foreign policy or Kazakhstan's behaviour towards the war in Ukraine. The goal of this type of research design is to find explanations by considering multiple independent variables or explanatory factors (Gschwend & Schimmelfennig, 2007). As this research explores the cause of why Kazakhstan behaved in a certain way, the analysis of the reference points will be the highlight of this research.

In this research the foreign policy of Kazakhstan will be the dependent variable (DV) or the factor being explained. As this research attempts to explore the independent variable (IV) or explanatory factor, the reference points are the IVs. There will be three IVs, namely status quo (IV1), aspiration (IV2), and emotion (IV3). Each IV will be operationalized through indicator of Kazakh leaders' perception. The indicator for the status quo is perception on political legitimacy of the government, which here emphasize on Tokayev's governance. Moreover, the indicators for aspiration will be assessed through perception on effort to lessen the dependency with Russia and expand energy market. Last is emotion, which will be measured through perception on the existence of 'fear' due to threats.

Independent Variable	Indicator	Level of Precision
Status Quo	Kazakh leaders' perception on its political legitimacy after the January event.	Nominal / Categorical
Aspiration	Kazakh leaders' perception on effort to lessen the dependency with Russia.	Nominal / Categorical
	Kazakh leaders' perception to expand its energy market.	Nominal / Categorical
Emotion	Kazakh leaders' perception on the existence of fear due to territorial integrity threat.	Nominal / Categorical
	Kazakh leaders' perception on the existence of fear due to the secondary sanction threat.	Nominal / Categorical

Source: Elaborated by the author

In this research, the international system situation (such as the war, Kazakhstan – Russia historical ties, Kazakhstan as a landlocked and producing country, position as the ally of

Russia) acts as the conditional variable. The conditional variable is interpreted as a variable that has existed before, and its value impact the independent variables have on dependent variables (Van Evera, 1997). In this research, the analysis of the international system and domestic factors that influences the independent variables will be examined through neoclassical realist lenses. I believe the international system and domestic factors as conditional variables are essential considerations that Kazakhstan takes into account. It affects or shapes Kazakhstan's national interest, foreign policy approach and decisions.

4.2. RESEARCH METHOD

This is an interpretative research, and I will use a qualitative analysis approach with thematic analysis method to examine the research questions. Qualitative analysis can be interpreted as an analysing approach by “gaining empirical data with the analytical tool that does not involve statistical or numerical analysis” (Benoit, 2020, p. 469). Moreover, this research can be classified as a *case-study* analysis (small-n) or a single-country approach. As it explained by Van Evera, the case study analysis “*explores a small number of cases (as few as one) in detail, to see whether events unfold in the manner predicted and whether actors speak and act as the theory predicts*” (Van Evera, 1997, p. 29).

4.2.1. THEMATIC ANALYSIS

According to Terry *et al.* (2017), thematic analysis can be defined as a qualitative approach that emphasizes coding reliability and the development of themes. This approach can be conducted as deductive, starting from a theory as the foundation, moving to identify the themes guided by the hypothesis or prediction of the theory, and gathering the facts as part of the coding process (Terry *et al.*, 2017). Based on this method the themes and codes are part of the analytic process where the researcher points out its subjectivity and interpretative analysis (Terry *et al.*, 2017). The coding process involves listing codes, each indicating a label or definition. In terms of data collection and sample size, the data collection within the thematic analysis framework is flexible, allowing it to examine various data sets (Terry *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, the important thing is the sample size of the data can produce patterns that are able to answer the research questions (Terry *et al.*, 2017).

In this research, I will use a deductive (top-down) coding process where the codes derive from an established theory or a concept. The theory or the concept becomes a foundation to see what kind of data the researcher should find. The theory also helps to determine how

codes can be classified into themes. In conducting this research, I used the version of the thematic analysis provided by Terry *et al.* (2017), which mentioned there are six phases of thematic analysis; begin with familiarising with the data, creating the codes, then developing the themes, evaluating potential themes, defining the themes, and the last part is generating the report (Terry *et al.*, 2017). However, as I use the deductive approach, I will start from developing and defining the themes, familiarising with the data sets, creating the codes, and generating the report.

The references point (status quo, aspiration, and emotion) will become the main themes in this research. Each theme should link with the other but has its interpretation (Terry *et al.*, 2017). There are phases of evaluating and defining the themes. In the evaluating phase, the researcher should ensure the themes are well connected with the codes, whole data set, and research question (Terry *et al.*, 2017). While in the defining phase, the researcher starts to interpret the themes, define the core idea of each theme, and tell the substances (story) of the data (Terry *et al.*, 2017). In this research, the phases of defining and evaluating the themes will be done in accordance with the prospect theory.

Next is familiarising with the data. During the familiarising with the data set, the researcher should deeply engage with the wide range of data (Terry *et al.*, 2017). In this research, the main sources of the data will be government official statements such as President speech, government officials interview, official document records, article journals, and trusted news online media.

The next phase is deciding the code. Coding will help to select information that contribute to the Kazakhstan's decisions. Creating the codes phase can be interpreted as "tagging" or putting labels on the particular data set (Terry *et al.*, 2017). Each label captures meaning that is written in a few words (Terry *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, the coding process has roles both in data reduction and organizing data to seek patterns. During the research process, the researcher should observe, analyse the pattern in the data, make notes, and write insights. Last is generating a report, where the researcher writes all the findings analytically (Terry *et al.*, 2017).

In this research, the main analysis part will be divided into three themes: status quo, aspiration, and emotion. I will start the analysis part by examining Kazakhstan's situation and capabilities using the framework of neoclassical realism. The assessment or analysis about Kazakhstan's situation and capabilities will become the start point to understand why I chose the three references point (status quo, aspiration, and emotion). Under each theme, first of all, I will explain why Kazakhstan is in the domain of loss. In the discussion about the status quo

theme I will explore the public discontent towards Kazakh government that led to the riot in January 2022. In the second theme, I will explain Kazakhstan's dependency on Russia related to energy export routes that exacerbate by landlocked condition and its intention to seek alternative routes. Last in the third theme, I will explain about the threats such as sanction and threats to the Kazakhstan's statehood.

I argue the position of Kazakhstan in the domain of loss based on my assessment towards Kazakh elites' (government) perception. I analyse Kazakh elites' perception through *reflection* on their policies (both domestic and foreign policies). My reflection will be validated by the content of the official government statements (such as speech) or official information that were published in the official government website or (credible) media. I collect thirty government statements and official information to validate and strengthen my arguments.

Text No.	Publish Date	Type	Title	Code	Link
1.	16/03/2022	State of the Nation Address	New Kazakhstan: The Path of Renewal and Modernisation	January event, overthrowing the top leadership, (political) reform, sanction, citizens' (public) confidence	https://www.akorda.kz/en/state-of-the-nation-address-by-president-of-the-republic-of-kazakhstan-kassym-jomart-tokayev-17293
2.	20/04/2022	Events	The President receives Chairman of Management Board of "KazMunayGas" Magzum Mirzagaliyev	CPC (Caspian Pipeline Consortium)	https://www.akorda.kz/en/the-president-receives-chairman-of-management-board-of-kazmunaygas-magzum-mirzagaliyev-2035221
3.	29/04/2022	Press News (MFA)	President Tokayev proposes a referendum on Constitutional reforms, discusses issues of national unity and building a New Kazakhstan	Reform (political), referendum, national unity	https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mfa/press/news/details/365322?lang=en
4.	29/04/2022	Events	The President outlines priorities of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan	January tragedy, reform	https://www.akorda.kz/en/the-president-outlines-priorities-of-the-assembly-of-people-of-kazakhstan-2933439
5.	29/04/2022	Factsheet (MFA)	Factsheet on President Tokayev's participation in the session of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan	Referendum, statehood	https://www.gov.kz/uploads/2022/4/29/30cbfa41898f2693bc79b0cd48e6a5ff_original.24948.docx
6.	06/05/2022	Events	Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's congratulations on the Victory Day	Victory Day	https://www.akorda.kz/en/kazakhstan-president-kassym-jomart-tokayevs-congratulations-on-the-victory-day-94325
7.	24/05/2022	Events	President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev made a video address to the participations of the World Economic Forum	Reform	https://www.akorda.kz/en/president-of-kazakhstan-kassym-jomart-tokayev-made-a-video-address-to-the-participants-of-the-world-economic-forum-2441751
8.	03/06/2022	Speech	President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's Address to the people of Kazakhstan	Reform (constitutional), referendum	https://www.akorda.kz/en/president-kassym-jomart-tokayevs-address-to-the-people-of-kazakhstan-35830
9.	05/06/2022	Events	President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev Cast Hist Ballot in Nationwide Referendum	Referendum	https://www.akorda.kz/en/president-kassym-jomart-tokayev-cast-his-ballot-in-nationwide-referendum-554243
10.	06/06/2022	Speech	President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's Address to the people of Kazakhstan	Reform (constitutional), referendum, corruption	https://www.akorda.kz/en/president-kassym-jomart-tokayevs-address-to-the-people-of-kazakhstan-65338

Text No.	Publish Date	Type	Title	Code	Link
11.	08/06/2022	Events	Kassym-Jomart Tokayev held a number of meetings with the leadership of multinational companies	Kazakh oil, alternative routes	https://www.akorda.kz/en/kassym-jomart-tokayev-held-a-number-of-meetings-with-the-heads-of-multinational-companies-853658
12.	04/07/2022	Events	Phone conversation with President of the European Council Charles Michel	Global tension, Trans-Caspian, EU	https://www.akorda.kz/en/phone-conversation-with-president-of-the-european-council-charles-michel-464718
13.	21/07/2022	Speech	Speech by President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the Fourth Consultative Meeting of the Heads of States of Central Asia	Bridges between competing poles, geopolitical confrontation, respect for the fundamental principles of international law, transcontinental, Trans-Caspian, interstate border	https://www.akorda.kz/en/speech-by-president-kassym-jomart-tokayev-at-the-fourth-consultative-meeting-of-the-heads-of-states-of-central-asia-216535
14.	01/09/2022	Speech	President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's State of the Nation Address	Reform (constitutional), economic transformation, equality, Trans-Caspian, statehood	https://www.akorda.kz/en/president-kassym-jomart-tokayevs-state-of-the-nation-address-181857
15.	15/09/2022	Speech	President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's speech at the opening ceremony of the VII Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions	Geopolitical confrontation, political transformation, sanction	https://www.akorda.kz/en/president-kassym-jomart-tokayevs-speech-at-the-opening-ceremony-of-the-vii-congress-of-the-leaders-of-world-and-traditional-religions-1481411
16.	16/09/2022	Speech	Speech by the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, at a meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO Member States in an expanded format	Sanction, Trans-Caspian	https://www.akorda.kz/en/speech-by-the-president-of-kazakhstan-kassym-jomart-tokayev-at-a-meeting-of-the-council-of-heads-of-state-of-the-sco-member-states-in-an-expanded-format-2683815
17.	20/09/2022	Events	President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev delivered a speech at the General Debate of the 77 th session of the UN General Assembly	Artificial barriers, economic isolation, sanction, Trans-Caspian	https://www.akorda.kz/en/president-of-kazakhstan-kassym-jomart-tokayev-delivered-a-speech-at-the-general-debate-of-the-77th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly-2181351
18.	20/09/2022	Speech	Speech by the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the General Debate of the 77 th session of the UN General Assembly	Geopolitical confrontation, artificial barrier, sanction, landlocked, Trans-Caspian	https://www.akorda.kz/en/speech-by-the-president-of-kazakhstan-kassym-jomart-tokayev-at-the-general-debate-of-the-77th-session-of-the-un-general-assembly-2082327
19.	20/09/2022	Events	Kassym-Jomart Tokayev held talks with the President of the European Commission	Joint projects in the energy	https://www.akorda.kz/en/kassym-jomart-tokayev-held-talks-with-the-president-of-the-european-commission-2082224
20.	21/09/2022	Events	President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's Address to the people of Kazakhstan	Reform (constitutional)	https://www.akorda.kz/en/president-kassym-jomart-tokayevs-address-to-the-people-of-kazakhstan-2184639
21.	12/10/2022	Events	Presidents of Kazakhstan and Turkiye held the 4 th meeting of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council	Trans Caspian	https://www.akorda.kz/en/presidents-of-kazakhstan-and-trkiye-held-the-4th-meeting-of-the-high-level-strategic-cooperation-council-1395119
22.	27/10/2022	Events	Kazakh and European Council Presidents spoke at media briefing	Trans Caspian	https://www.akorda.kz/en/kazakh-and-european-council-presidents-spoke-at-media-briefing-289114
23.	27/10/2022	Events	Joint press statement of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and the President of the European Council, Charles Michel	Trans Caspian	https://www.akorda.kz/en/joint-press-statement-of-the-president-of-the-republic-of-kazakhstan-kassym-jomart-tokayev-and-the-president-of-the-european-council-charles-michel-2791647

Text No.	Publish Date	Type	Title	Code	Link
24.	27/10/2022	Events	Kassym-Jomart Tokayev took part in the Meeting of Heads of State of Central Asia and the President of the European Council	Geopolitical tension, bridge	https://www.akorda.kz/en/kassym-jomart-tokayev-took-part-in-the-meeting-of-heads-of-state-of-central-asia-and-the-president-of-the-european-council-289842
25.	04/11/2022	Speech	Speech by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at a meeting with the heads of foreign diplomatic missions accredited in Kazakhstan	Political reform	https://www.akorda.kz/en/speech-by-the-president-of-the-republic-of-kazakhstan-kassym-jomart-tokayev-at-a-meeting-with-the-heads-of-foreign-diplomatic-missions-accredited-in-kazakhstan-4101217
26.	05/11/2022	Events	The President has publicly signed a number of laws	Referendum, reform (constitutional), political transformation, corruption	https://www.akorda.kz/en/the-president-has-publicly-signed-a-number-of-laws-5105850
27.	17/11/2022	Events	The President held a meeting with Josep Borrel, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy-Vice-President of the European Commission	Reform	https://www.akorda.kz/en/the-president-held-a-meeting-with-josep-borrel-eu-high-representative-for-foreign-affairs-and-security-policy-vice-president-of-the-european-commission-1710113
28.	20/11/2022	Events	Kassym-Jomart Tokayev Cast His Ballot in the Early Presidential Election	Reform (political), referendum	https://www.akorda.kz/en/kassym-jomart-tokayev-cast-his-ballot-in-the-early-presidential-election-20103547
29.	26/11/2022	Speech	Speech by President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the Inauguration ceremony	Reform, election, corruption	https://www.akorda.kz/en/speech-by-the-president-of-kazakhstan-kassym-jomart-tokayev-at-the-inauguration-ceremony-26102635
30.	04/01/2023	Events	President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev meets with Constitutional Court Judges	Reform (political)	https://www.akorda.kz/en/president-meets-with-constitutional-court-judges-704016

Source: Elaborated by the author

I obtain the official statement and information from the official website of the President of Kazakhstan and Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I select the documents within the time frame from January 2022 until February 2023. I choose the documents based on the topics that related to this research and the codes that included in the documents. In addition, I choose the codes by using inductive and deductive approach. For example the code such as ‘political reform’ is a code that has correlation with status quo which is deductive as I choose it because status quo is part of the theoretical framework here (as the reference point). I see the political reform that was conducted in Kazakhstan, as an attempt to preserve status quo of Tokayev (as a president) or in other words to re-gain trust and control over Kazakh public opinions’. While, the code such as ‘victory day’ is inductive, it does not have direct connection with the theoretical framework. However, the event has link to the topic discussion of how the cancellation of victory day military parade in Kazakhstan in 2022 triggered threats from popular Russian figures.

In the table, there are two types of documents. First is speech of the President of Kazakhstan in the national and international forum, and second is official information to

address certain events. These information and documents will be utilized to validate and strengthen my argument and reflection. Each document, in the table, can be useful for all three themes or just one theme, depends on the code that I have determined. I also label each document with a number. In the analysis part, I will indicate the text number in the citation, referring to the document in the table.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS

As the neoclassical realist argue the state will assess its capability and situation (in international system) when it attempts to obtain its national interest while facing challenges in an uncertain world. The response of a state is likely the reflection of unit-level response such as leader perceptions (Ripsman, 2017). Before we dive in to the leader perception analysis, I begin this analysis part by explaining the internal and external conditions that shaped Kazakhstan's foreign policy in response to the aggressive action by Russia in Ukraine. The year 2022 was not an easy for Kazakhstan. In early January 2022, Kazakhstan was challenged by mass protest, and the test continued as in February Russia invaded Ukraine. It was a tough year for Kazakhstan, as the riot in January threatened Kazakhstan's stability from the internal, and in the next month, Kazakhstan was challenged by a global issue that directly impacted Kazakhstan's geopolitical position and might jeopardize its economic situation. The analysis part of this research will begin by explaining the situation in Kazakhstan prior to the Russian invasion, Kazakhstan's national power and its national interest in the global energy market. Such an explanation is needed to give us a big picture of the challenges that Kazakhstan needs to address, but at the same time, we will be able to understand Kazakhstan's national interest in the international system.

5.1. KAZAKHSTAN UNREST IN JANUARY 2022

Before the war erupted in Ukraine in January 2022, the Kazakhstan government faced a mass public protest due to the soaring price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) (Wilczewska *et al.*, 2022). The event was also known as Bloody January or *Qandy Qantar*. Initially, the protest began in the oil-rich region Mangistau and spread to other cities such as Aktau, Almaty and the capital Astana (Capalla, 2022). The price was raised as a consequence of government policy that attempted to remove subsidies for fuel and enabled the market to dictate the price (Wilczewska *et al.*, 2022). However, the mass protests were not solely about the rising prices of the LPG, but it was more about the dissatisfaction of Kazakh society with the condition of the economy (such as poverty and inequality) and the authoritarian rule (Walker, 2022; Storel, 2022). The protestors demanded reform and an improvement in the standard of living quality and the reform of the government (Walker, 2022).

As the condition worsened, President Tokayev announced a state of emergency for two weeks, which resulted in restrictions on gathering and mass movement (Mikheyev *et al.*, 2022). President Tokayev even labelled the demonstrators as terrorists and allowed the security forces

to shoot (Storel, 2022). The peak point was that Kazakhstan called CSTO for help. During the session of the security council, President Tokayev mentioned that Kazakhstan was under attack by terrorists and counter operation was needed. Therefore, Kazakhstan asked CSTO to overcome the threat (Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022c). For the first time since its establishment, CSTO deployed around 2,500 troops to help Kazakhstan handle the riot (Pannier, 2022a). On 11 January, during the meeting with the parliament, President Tokayev asserted that the mission of CSTO forces had been completed and that the forces would leave within less than ten days (Dixon, 2022). Scholars such as Libman and Davidzon argue that instead of seeing the deployment of CSTO to suppress the riot, the involvement of CSTO should be seen as a sign of solidarity with the political regime of Kazakhstan (Libman *et al.*, 2023). The same narrative is also delivered by Bruce Pannier, who mentions that the deployment of CSTO did not intend to defend Kazakhstan's sovereignty, yet it intended to support and preserve Tokayev as he acted friendly with Russia (Pannier, 2022). However the Kazakhstanis might have different interpretation towards the involvement of the CSTO in the January event.

5.2. NATIONAL POWER OF KAZAKHSTAN WITHIN INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

Assessing national power is important to dictate state capability and how state can maximize its capability to get its national interest. As Rose (1998) explains about neoclassical realism, he mentioned "*power analysis must therefore also examine the strength and structure of states relative to their societies, because these affect the proportion of national resources that can be allocated to foreign policy*" (Rose, 1998, p. 147). In assessing capability, according to the neoclassical realist theory, there are two types of power, namely, the national power and the state power. In Kazakhstan's case, there are two significant national powers. First is Kazakhstan's strategic location. Kazakhstan is a transcontinental country, it is situated between two continents, Europe and Asia (Kassen, 2018). Having a strategic location in Eurasia allows Kazakhstan to act as a 'bridge' between Europe and Asia, for instance, as a logistical bridge or a transit country (Otsuka, 2001; Anceschi, 2014; Kassen, 2018). This strategic location also benefits Kazakhstan, as it has a direct border with two global powers, China and Russia. China and Russia are significant players in the global energy market, and both are Kazakhstan's strategic partners in energy cooperation.

Second, Kazakhstan is rich in oil and gas resources. For the past two decades, Kazakhstan's energy supply has been surplus to the point that it can cover an average of 230%

of Kazakhstan's domestic needs (IEA, 2022). This situation led Kazakhstan to be one of the largest fossil fuels exporters, mainly of oil resources (IEA, 2022). The International Energy Agency (IEA) mentioned a report from the BP Statistical Review of World Energy (2019) showing that at the end of 2018, Kazakhstan had 1.7% of the world's (proved) oil reserves that placed Kazakhstan as the 12th largest oil reserve worldwide (IEA, n.d.). The report from BP also mentioned that at the end of 2018 Kazakhstan had 0.5% of world proved gas reserves or around 1,000 bcm (IEA, n.d.). As Kazakhstan endows abundant fossil fuel resources, under the global energy market Kazakhstan acts as the producing country. Kazakhstan's government has been highly dependent on revenue from the energy sector, mainly oil, since its independence (Azretbergenova & Syzdykova, 2020). Therefore, as one of the big players in the energy market, securing export routes and markets is part of Kazakhstan's main national interests.

5.3. THE COMPLEXITY OF KAZAKHSTAN'S SITUATION AND NATIONAL INTEREST

When the war in Ukraine erupted, on the one hand, Kazakhstan was relatively able to overcome the domestic turbulence that needed serious attention to prevent such events would be repeated in the future. President Tokayev is expected to control the public and regain the trust of Kazakh society, ensuring the public trust that his government works for a better Kazakhstan. On the other hand, the war in Ukraine put Kazakhstan in a difficult situation. Kazakhstan attempted to balance its relations both with the West and Russia.

Kazakhstan asserted its stance that it respects territorial integrity and international norms, while at the same time, it did not condemn Russia. Kazakhstan is a traditional ally of Russia, this alliance could not be deteriorated. Long historical ties between the two countries have been profoundly embedded. However, the relationship between the two countries is not always stable. Kazakhstan wants to loosen its dependency on Russia, mainly in the energy sector. It is important to mention, Kazakhstan's main export route through CPC is ended in Russian territory and 80% of Kazakh oil export pass through CPC (Sleta, 2023). As a producing country, ensuring the security of the energy export routes and market is part of the main national interests. Unfortunately, in the case of Kazakhstan, the diversification of the energy export routes and market was limited by its shortcomings as a landlocked nation. Yet, the war in Ukraine has given rise to the opportunity for new export routes and markets to Europe. Other than that, Kazakhstan was aware and careful of the possibility of getting sanctions from the West and the possibility that Russia would invade the northern part of Kazakhstan.

These complexities have resulted in Kazakhstan's behaviour that lacked support towards Russia in the war in Ukraine. I argue low public confidence to the government, Kazakhstan's dependency on Russia mainly in energy sector that exacerbated by landlocked situation, also the existence of threats towards northern part of Kazakhstan and shadow of the Western sanction, all of these things, put Kazakhstan in the domain of loss.

Kazakhstan's domestic instability in early 2022 reflected that there was dissatisfaction among the public with the Kazakh government, which threatened the status quo. Under prospect theory, dissatisfaction with the political and economic situation means the subject's status quo (here, the Kazakh leader) is in the domain of loss. That is the reason why I chose status quo as one of the references point. Moreover, the war in Ukraine has disrupted the flow of Kazakhstan's main pipeline export, the CPC pipeline. The severe disruption will influence Kazakhstan's revenue as a producing country. As Kazakhstan is a landlocked country that has limited export route options, the disruption of the CPC pipeline would exacerbate the energy export flows. At that point, Kazakhstan's ability to access export energy routes was declining, but at the same time, Kazakhstan aspired to diversify the energy export routes, which put Kazakhstan in the domain of loss. The second reference point, aspiration, is chosen as Kazakhstan always wants to diversify its energy export route and decrease its dependency on Russia, but Kazakhstan has very limited options. At the same time, the disruption of the CPC pipeline due to the war in Ukraine has made Kazakhstan much more vulnerable, and it pushes Kazakhstan to be more eager to find an alternative to the CPC pipeline.

Last, Kazakhstan was in a disadvantageous situation when Russia attacked Ukraine. The attack on Ukraine influenced Kazakhstan's perception towards Russia, as many believe Russia's aggressive action might threaten the northern part of Kazakhstan. The threat that results a fear puts Kazakhstan in a domain of loss. Therefore, to avoid the loss of territorial integrity in a real event, Kazakhstan had to defend values such as respecting international norms and territorial integrity. Despite this, opposing Russia might have a cost. In addition, as the war erupted, the West imposed sanctions on Russia. The sanction towards Russia might have a domino effect on Kazakhstan's economy, while the country is also struggling to reach a better economic situation. This condition put Kazakhstan in the domain of loss, which led Kazakhstan to opt risk option by not fully supporting Russia.

Not fully supporting Russia means increasing the likelihood of disruption of the CPC pipeline. The disruption of the CPC pipeline was a better option than getting further losses, such as getting the Western sanction (if Kazakhstan supports Russia). The threats, such as sanctions from the West or Russia's aggressive policy that might jeopardize the northern part

of Kazakhstan involve emotional fear. Therefore, the third reference point in this research will be emotion, as it helps us to understand why Kazakhstan lacks support for Russia.

5.4. ANALYSIS BASED ON THREE REFERENCE POINTS

In explaining neoclassical realist, Rose (1998) mentioned, “*to understand the way states interpret and respond to their external environment, they say, one must analyse how systemic pressures are translated through unit-level intervening variables such as decision-makers’ perceptions and domestic state structure*” (Rose, 1998, p. 152). In this section, I attempt to analyse the intervening variables (internal factors) of Kazakhstan’s decision maker perceptions from three different reference points: status quo, aspiration, and emotion. I will try to unfold how Kazakhstan’s leader perceptions from these different angles that led to a decision for not taking a side with Russia in the war in Ukraine.

5.4.1. STATUS QUO

He and Feng (2013) explain that the ruling government does not just possess external security threats that might threaten the state’s security. The elites in the government are also concerned with their political authority, which is part of the domestic domain that connects to their political legitimacy (He & Feng, 2013). All elites will attempt to secure their position and power to control their authority while ensuring their position will not be replaced in the office (He & Feng, 2013). Under authoritarian rule, such as in Kazakhstan, the political legitimacy will be measured by how strong the leader (or the elite) is able to control the regime while attempting to address political challenges from its opponent or challenges from the social forces (He & Feng, 2013).

When the war in Ukraine erupted in February 2022, Kazakhstan just overcame the biggest riot since its independence. The root cause of the riot was the dissatisfaction of Kazakh society with the government, showing that there was low confidence to the Kazakh government. The domestic turbulence of Kazakhstan in early 2022 was a serious challenge to the political authority of the Kazakh’s leader that threatened the status quo of its legitimacy (dissatisfaction with the status quo). *In this research, Kazakh’s elite perception of its political legitimacy will become the intervening variable in a neoclassical realist framework.* As Tokayev’s grip of control was loosened, marked by the riot, I assess the status quo of Tokayev’s authority in the domain of loss. That condition is in line with the explanation by Mercer that mentions, “When actors find their political position deteriorating, they are likely to view themselves in a domain of loss” (Mercer, 2005, p. 4).

The January event was unprecedented crisis and a deadly riot that ever happened in Kazakhstan since its independence (Kozłowska, 2023). According to Human Rights Watch, to suppress the mass protest and the chaos of the riot, Kazakhstan's authorities used a lethal forces that led to death of at least 232 people, including 19 of security personnel (Human Rights Watch, 2023). In August 2022, Kazakh authorities confirmed the raise of the casualties to 238 people (RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, 2022c). The raised fuel prices was just a trigger of the 2022 Kazakhstan unrest. The real drivers of the mass protest are a long-going mass discontent towards socio-economic and political problems, namely: inability of government to deliver good governance, corruption, and declining economic condition (such as economic inequality and inflation) (Kudaibergenova & Laruelle, 2022; Mukhamediyev *et al.*, 2023).

During the time of the protest in January 2022, the chant, “shall ket” (which means “leave old man”), was massively heard (Wilczewska, 2022; Pannier, 2022b). The “old man” here referred to Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan's first president. From the perspective of the demonstrators, they believed Nazarbayev had full control over the Kazakh government as he and his family had critical positions in the government and state-owned companies. For instance, Timur Kulibayev, the son-in-law of Nazarbayev, was believed to have a monopoly on many sectors, including energy (Wilczewska, 2022). Moreover, since the beginning of Tokayev's tenure, some of his policies have been controversial. Tokayev changed the name of the capital from ‘Astana’ to ‘Nur-Sultan’ in honour of Nazarbayev (later changed again to ‘Astana’), appointed Nazarbayev's daughter to be the speaker of the Senate and Nazarbayev himself as the secretary of the Security Council (Pannier, 2022b). The anger and discontentment of the Kazakh people also emerged as a result of the government's restriction on the freedom of expression and assembly (Human Rights Watch, 2023), as many journalists and people who criticized the government have been jailed or silenced (Wilczewska, 2022).

In addition, the ramped-up corruption resulted in Kazakh society's low confidence in the government. According to Transparency International, the Kazakhstan Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)¹ ranked 101st among 180 countries with a score of 36/100, marking corruption has been embedded among the Kazakh elites (Transparency International, 2023). In 2022, after the tragedy of January, two relatives of Nazarbayev, Kayrat Satybaldy and Kayrat Boranbayev, were arrested on corruption charges (Lillis, 2022). Within twenty years of Nazarbayev's tenure, many relatives of him bought luxurious properties in Europe and the

¹The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is the index that shows the failure of countries to stop corruption. The index assesses from 0-100, with a scale of 0 as highly corrupt and 100 as very clean (Transparency International, n.d.).

United States that had a total of at least USD 785 million (Eckel & Alikhan, 2020). Allegedly, the wealth of Nazarbayev's relatives was the result of corruption and Nazarbayev's patronage, for example in December 2020, Financial Times uncovered that Timur Kulibaev (the son-in-law of Nazarbayev) benefited millions of dollars from a gas pipeline project with China (Eckel & Alikhan, 2020).

Other than that, one of the causes of the January protest was the declining economic condition and inequality in Kazakhstan. People in the rich oil reserves region in the western part of Kazakhstan saw that the oil wealth from their region was used to develop big cities such as Almaty and Astana (Krol & Ramesh, 2022). Many ordinary people across Kazakhstan struggled to obtain a proper life while they saw the elites had luxurious lives (Wilczewska, 2022). President Tokayev acknowledged that the wealth share of Kazakhstani people is only concentrated in 160 people or even less than that (Krol & Ramesh, 2022). At the national level, due to the pandemic Covid in 2020, Kazakhstan experienced economic upheaval. It struggled to stabilize its condition, as the growth rate was low at number 2.5% in 2021, while inflation was predicted to be above 7% in 2022 (Shaikh, 2022). Kazakhstan is also known to be highly dependent on its oil revenue, the slow oil market might lead to a deficit in the budget projection (Shaikh, 2022). Moreover, Kazakhstan currency, Tenge, had been volatile and remained vulnerable to the shock after the covid-pandemic in 2020 (Shaikh, 2022). Those aspects might contribute to the slowdown of Kazakhstan's economic growth. Also, according to the research by Mukhamediyev *et al.* (2023), the subsistence level was increased in Kazakhstan. However, the growth of the subsistence level was not in line with the real income of Kazakh people, leading to the condition where many people had income below the subsistence level (Mukhamediyev *et al.*, 2023). That condition was one reason that forced people to protest in January 2022.

These socio-economic and political problems above resulted in the discontent and distrust of the Kazakh society to the government and elites, mainly to the presidency of Tokayev. Despite the government's claim that under the constitution, Kazakhstan is a democratic state (Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, n.d.), the immediate responses of the Kazakh government, such as "shoot-to-kill order" and repressive actions towards journalists and activists, proved that Kazakhstan is not a democratic country. Kazakh society has been sick and tired of a corrupt authoritarian government. They wanted government transformation and improvement in economic conditions, and President Tokayev has been unable to deliver those goals. Moreover, the involvement of CSTO in the January event might impact Kazakhstan's government image. Many Kazakh people reacted negatively

towards Tokayev's decision to ask CSTO for assistance (Kassenova, 2022). They perceived the assistance of CSTO as the inability of the Kazakh government to ensure its own security and questioned Kazakhstan's sovereignty (Kassenova, 2022; Kaisar, 2022).

President Tokayev perceived the riot and the discontent of the Kazakh people as a threat - to some extent, he also perceived it as a threat to his political legitimacy. His views can be reflected in the speech on March 16, 2022. He mentioned:

“The events of January shook the society. Our people faced an unprecedented challenge, with the country's integrity under threat.” (Text 1: Tokayev, 2022b)

Instead of acknowledging the riot as an expression of discontentment of Kazakh people towards his government's performance, he outlined the event as a terrorist attack. He claimed the event was an attempt to destabilize Kazakhstan, and he explicitly expressed that the event aimed to overthrow him from the presidential position. As he mentioned:

“Terrorists attacked government buildings, strategic infrastructure and businesses. They shot at peaceful citizens in order to blame the authorities. Foreign radical forces tried to exploit this situation. They wanted to turn Kazakhstan into a conflict zone, to tear apart our country, to destroy peaceful life and overthrow the President. It was an unprecedented challenge to our statehood.” (Text 1: Tokayev, 2022b).

However, Tokayev's claim over a terrorist attack appeared as an excuse to justify his repressive policies in facing the demonstrators. Such measures were taken to control the situation. Moreover, he was aware about the threat towards his political legitimacy, as he said:

“One thing I can say is that there was a large-scale, detailed operation aimed at overthrowing the top leadership and discrediting it in the eyes of the people and the foreign public.” (Text 1: Tokayev, 2022b).

There was not any clear evidence of a terrorist attack as Tokayev claimed. The overclaim was just to provide legal basis in calling assistance from CSTO (Kim, 2023). The experts of UN human rights also argued the use of the 'terrorist' term was inaccurate, inconsistent with

international law, and the term could not be used to silence public critics over government (UN Human Rights, 2022).

To regain public trust and restore the status quo of its political legitimacy, Tokayev promised to conduct a comprehensive modernization of the political system. In his speech on March 16, he conveyed the proposed reform aimed to promote democratization and ensure the stability of the country. In addition, he introduced the shifting from a “super-presidential government” to “a presidential republic with a strong parliament”, indicating his effort to ensure a balance of power between institutions (Text 1: Tokayev, 2022b). He also mentioned ten initiations that were necessary to be reformed. In the next month, on April 29, Tokayev announced there would be a referendum on constitutional amendments based on initiations that he introduced a month before (Text 3: Official website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022). Next, on June 3, in his speech, Tokayev announced that on June 5, the people of Kazakhstan would have referendum and vote on the amendments of the Constitution (Text 8: Tokayev, 2022c). He emphasized the urgency of the amendment as an effort to build democratic Kazakhstan, as he mentioned:

“For the first time in the history of our country, amendments to the Constitution will be made through a nationwide referendum. The referendum is an important step towards building a developed democratic society in Kazakhstan.” (Text 8: Tokayev, 2022c).

On June 6, Tokayev claimed the referendum was “held in full accordance with the democratic requirements” (Text 10: Tokayev, 2022d). The narrative of Kazakhstan's successfully conducted political reform and transformation was massively delivered by Tokayev on many occasions, both in the domestic and international stages. The reiteration of the successful reform was Tokayev’s effort to convince domestic and foreign audiences that Kazakhstan is a democratic country with a legitimate government that always puts its people's interest as the top priority. For instance, during the parliament session, he delivered:

“This year our country has entered a new stage of development. In a nationwide referendum, the majority of citizens supported the course of political modernisation. The constitutional reform was a fundamental step in the creation of the New Fair Kazakhstan. The continuation of political modernisation should be structural economic transformation. We are facing a profound restructuring

of relations in the triad 'citizen – business – state'. First and foremost, the state will ensure equality of opportunities and justice for all" (Text 14: Tokayev, 2022e).

As part of the reform, Tokayev also decided to have “a comprehensive reset of key state institutions in accordance with the new strategy” (Text 14: Tokayev, 2022e) by announcing “a snap presidential election” in the parliament session in September 2022. He proposed a new presidential tenure of seven years, a one-term mandate, without the right to be re-elected (Text 14: Tokayev, 2022e).

From the stance point of prospect theory, I would argue Tokayev was in the domain of loss, knowing that his political legitimacy was threatened after the January event. He attempted to regain trust and influence public opinion by conducting political and economic reform. Nevertheless, I argue that the real aim of the reform was not purely to make a significant change in political transformation in Kazakhstan. Tokayev has indeed been able to weaken Nazarbayev’s influence and control over valuable sectors. However, the reform also can be seen as Tokayev’s attempt to dismantle his opposition in the government. Thus, it put him in a secure position without prominent opponents. This was obvious mainly during the snap election, as there was no genuine opponent of him (Putz, 2022). All three political parties (Ak Zhol, People’s Party of Kazakhstan, and Amanat (previously was Nur-Otan)) had the full support of Tokayev (Putz, 2022). Despite the reform opening a chance for opposition in Kazakh leadership, there were no new registered political parties (Putz, 2022). A notable candidate opposition, such as Zhanbolat Mamai, who strove to register the “Democratic Party for Kazakhstan,” was jailed as he gathered illegal rallies to commemorate the casualties of the January event (Putz, 2022). Moreover, I argued that the reform was intended to improve the image of Tokayev as a trusted leader who listened to its citizen's aspirations, despite the fact that Tokayev is still an authoritarian ruler.

Tokayev was in big trouble during the January event; his grip on control was loosened, and his political legitimacy was threatened due to discontentment over socio-economic and political problems. Gaining trust and convincing the domestic and foreign audiences about his credibility as a leader was an absolute objective to achieve. In managing the crisis, he invited CSTO as an external entity to handle it. It led to the question of Kazakhstan’s sovereignty and ability to ensure its own security, mainly by Kazakhstani. From this point of view, fully supporting Russia in the war in Ukraine was not a choice at that time, as it would worsen

Kazakhstani's perspective towards its own government. Instead of helping him to achieve his goal, fully supporting Russia would deteriorate his aim to restore the status quo.

In addition, the political and economic reform that Tokayev's government framed aimed to prove that Kazakhstan was a democratic country, as he repetitively mentioned and expressed that notion. Although, the fact, it is a public secret that Kazakhstan is under authoritarian rule. Fully supporting Russia in the war in Ukraine would undermine the primary goal of political reform. The political reform aimed to advance the idea that Kazakhstan is a democratic country. Supporting authoritarian ruler decisions such as Putin's decision to invade Ukraine would be counterintuitive to the image idea that Tokayev wanted to establish (as a leader of a democratic nation), both to the domestic and foreign audiences. From neoclassical realist perspective, here, we can see how Kazakhstan's leader perception on its domestic state structure may influence its foreign policy.

Not fully supporting Russia, also asserted that Kazakhstan's leader is not a 'puppet' of the Kremlin. The government is sovereign to dictate its decisions independently. Despite it being well known that Kazakhstan is strongly dependent on Russia in many sectors, including in the military, Kazakhstan's assertiveness has proved that the Kazakh government under Tokayev's presidency had the ability to adjust its position by making a wise and careful decision in facing Russia's neo-imperialist ambition.

5.4.2. ASPIRATION

Energy has been a prominent sector that contributed to Kazakhstan's economy. Hydrocarbon energy sources contributed to about 17% of Kazakhstan's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), whereas the oil sector contributed to around 60% of its export goods (IMF, 2022). Considering the significance of energy export to Kazakhstan's economy, the topic of energy has been one of Kazakhstan's main national interests. As a producing country, Kazakhstan's interest is to secure its energy export distribution line and market demand. Nevertheless, as a landlocked state, Kazakhstan has limited access to the maritime trade routes. Therefore, Kazakhstan needs its neighbouring countries to distribute its energy exports. Kazakhstan has several export routes. The main route is the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), which transports around 80% of Kazakhstan's total exports (Sleta, 2023). Another energy export route is the Atyrau-Samara pipeline, and some quantities of export transport via the Kazakhstan-China pipeline, the railway route to Uzbekistan, and the Caspian Sea (Sleta, 2023).

The CPC transports Kazakhstan's oil exports from an oil field in western Kazakhstan to the Novorossiysk terminal in Russia (Kumenov, 2022a). Considering that 80% of Kazakhstan's oil exports should pass Russian territory to reach the global market, Kazakhstan would like to diversify its energy export route and loosen dependency with Russia. This is reasonable as if there is a disruption in the CPC, it will affect Kazakhstan's revenue and may directly impact Kazakhstan's economy. In this discussion, I argue that *Kazakhstan leader's perception of dependency on Russia for energy export routes, exacerbated by its landlocked condition*, put Kazakhstan in the domain of loss.

Kazakhstan's leader, Tokayev is aware of the urgency to diversify the export routes. Being dependent on CPC give Russia bargaining power to influence Kazakhstan whenever Kazakhstan's stance against Russia. In other words, Russia may use its position (as a transit country) as a political tool to coerce Kazakhstan to change its position or policy anytime. As it was predicted, Kazakhstan lacked of support towards Russia, resulted the interruption of CPC. The CPC route was repeatedly interrupted and resulted global repercussions, as the pipeline transport around 1% of global oil, also declining oil production (World Bank, 2023). The disruption of the CPC was a biggest risk for Kazakhstan, and it was a consequence for not having the same stance with Russia.

Since the war in Ukraine began in February until August 2022, the CPC was interrupted at least four times (Kumenov, 2022a). The first disruption happened in March 2022, at that time the consortium mentioned the route might not work for about two months because of infrastructure damage due to a storm (Kumenov, 2022b). Nevertheless, many experts were doubtful about it because none of the western consortium partners, such as Exxon, was able to do the inspection (Kumenov, 2022b). The second time was in June 2022, the disruption was caused by the discovery of anti-ship artillery during the World War II (Kumenov, 2022a).

In the next month, on July 4th 2022, President Tokayev communicated with the President of the European Council, Charles Michel. During the talk, Tokayev mentioned that Kazakhstan would be acting as the "buffer state" between the West and East and expressed Kazakhstan's readiness to help EU in dealing with energy security (Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022a). A day after the talk, the Russian district court decided to suspend the operation of the CPC with excuse due to environmental violations (Kumenov, 2022a). But several days later the court announced the pipeline could continue to work if the consortium pay certain amount of fine (Kumenov, 2022a). The fourth time disruption happened in August 2022 with a reason of cracked equipment and the repairment at minimum will be around a month (Kumenov, 2022a).

As a sovereign entity, Kazakhstan would like to exercise its right to make decisions independently. Supporting Russia in the war in Ukraine would not guarantee the stability of Kazakhstan's energy export lines. Considering the trait of Russian aggressive action, staying under the shadow of Russian coercion is not a choice as it will always put Kazakhstan under constant threat and in a tough position. Allowing Russia to dictate Kazakhstan's decisions while at the same time knowing its main energy export under constant threat should be viewed as a further loss for Kazakhstan. To avoid further losses, Kazakhstan chose to take a different path from Russia while exploring possible solutions.

The disruption of the CPC was indeed a displeasing moment for Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, instead of seeing the event as a loss, Tokayev used the momentum by maximizing Kazakhstan's position as a transcontinental nation to become the nexus between Asia and Europe. As he mentioned in his speech in the parliament:

“Given the current geopolitical situation, Kazakhstan is becoming the most important land corridor between Asia and Europe. We need to make full use of the emerging opportunities and become a transport and transit hub of truly global significance. Kazakhstan has already begun implementing such major projects as the creation of a container hub in Aktau and the development of the Trans-Caspian corridor. Advanced logistics companies of the world will be involved in this work” (Text 14: Tokayev, 2022e).

Here, we can see from neoclassical realist perspective, how the perception of a leader on its national power influence its decision in facing the external environment. Kazakhstan's leader opt the choice to maximize its position as transcontinental state (as national power) during the crisis time to be hub of the global trade route, by developing the Trans-Caspian corridor. Moreover, in addressing the situation, Kazakhstan utilized its multi vector approach by distancing itself from Russia, strengthening cooperation and diplomacy with other counterparts such as the European Union (EU), China, and Turkey. In November 2022, after series of disruptions of the CPC, the Kazakh government announced it will diversify energy export route through the Middle Corridor bypassing Russia, connecting Kazakhstan to the world market through Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan and Georgia through Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline (Kumenov, 2022c; Sleta, 2023). The Middle Corridor is also known as the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR). TITR is a transport route project to increase the flow of goods that was established in 2014 by Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and

Georgia; running from China, Kazakhstan, the Caspian sea, Azerbaijan, and Georgia (Middle Corridor Website, n.d.).

As the war in Ukraine erupted, Kazakhstan used the momentum to promote the development of Trans-Caspian route or TITR. President Tokayev invited partner countries to invest in this transportation project. For instance during the meeting between the Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Samarkand in September 2022, Tokayev stated:

“I would like to dwell specifically on the priority vectors of economic cooperation - the transit and transport sector, food and energy security. The adoption of the Concept of Cooperation between the SCO countries on the development of efficient economic and transport corridors gave us a major success in improving logistical interconnectedness. We are talking about "China-Europe" rail transportation and the Trans-Caspian international transport route, as well as plans to build a third railway crossing point on the border of Kazakhstan and China. I invite the SCO partners to use the opportunities that are opening in this area” (Text 16: Tokayev, 2022f).

In light of the war in Ukraine, Kazakhstan, together with Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey, signed a quadrilateral declaration which strengthened cooperation on the Trans-Caspian, Middle Corridor (Guliyev, 2022). For Kazakhstan, the war in Ukraine has revived the idea of transporting energy exports using the Trans-Caspian line. Since the 1990s, there has been a plan to have a Trans-Caspian pipeline (Margheritini, 2022). However, the pipeline has never been built as an issue such as the legal status dispute of the Caspian Sea hindered the project development (Margheritini, 2022).

The Trans-Caspian line as energy export route should be seen as a short-term solution to diversify Kazakhstan’s energy export route, as it is using tankers and railway (Kumenov, 2022c), it is a not effective for a long run. However, it does not rule out the possibility to make the Middle Corridor as one of main channel to transport Kazakhstan’s energy export in the future. As long as Kazakhstan is able to gain investors and develop the project, there is a possibility the Middle corridor could be one of its main energy export routes in the future, and I see Kazakhstan is considering that option. In addition, the government of Kazakhstan used the momentum of the war in Ukraine not just to diversify its energy export route, but also expand its energy market by intensifying energy diplomacy with potential market that is

directly impacted by the war which is the EU. The desire of Kazakhstan to expand the market was conveyed by President Tokayev during the phone conversation with President of the European Council on July 4th. In the press release of the event it is stated:

“The President also called on the European Union to cooperate in developing alternative transcontinental corridors, including the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has also expressed concern about the risks to global energy security and emphasized Kazakhstan’s readiness to use its hydrocarbon potential to stabilize the situation in the world and European markets” (Text 12: Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022a).

Kazakhstan also invited and conducted diplomacy with the EU to develop the TITR. A month before the phone call with President of the European Council, the Kazakh embassy in Brussels conducted conference with topic “Transport Cooperation between Kazakhstan and the European Union” (Szumski, 2022). The conference was a hub for discussing the Middle corridor as an alternative to the Northern one (Szumski, 2022). The discussion about energy project between Kazakhstan and the EU continued during the side event of the 77th session of the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2022. At that moment, President Tokayev met Ursula von der Leyen (President of the European Commission) discussed several topics including “the implementation of joint projects in the energy and transport industries” (Text 19: Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022b). In the next month, in October 2022, the President of the EU visited Kazakhstan and the talk about energy cooperation and Trans-Caspian was on agenda. During the meeting, President Tokayev expressed his expectation to invite EU join the development of the TITR, as he delivered:

“In addition, the importance of developing international transport routes to ensure a global supply chain for goods was highlighted. It is particularly important in today's geopolitical context. We also looked into the possibilities of exploiting the Trans-Caspian international transport route by the European Union” (Text 22: Tokayev, 2022g).

After series of talks, in November 2022, Kazakh Minister of Industry and Infrastructure Development announced that the EU would invest for the development of TITR during the Ministerial Meeting on Trans-Caspian Connectivity with the representatives from Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Turkey in Aktau (Astana Times, 2022). The involvement of EU in the development of TITR should be seen as a positive outcome, as it is a good start for Kazakhstan to loosen the dependency with Russia.

5.4.3. EMOTION

Emotion is something that actors experience (Kahneman & Tversky, 1984; Kahneman, 1994; Mercer, 2005). Emotion can be a reference point that frame our choices and influence our preferences (Farnham, 1997; Mercer, 2005). In this part, I would argue emotion which is ‘fear’ as a reference point that influence Kazakh’s leader in deciding its policy. The fear emerged as a result of *Kazakh leaders’ perception on the existence of two type of threats, namely threat of Kazakhstan’s unity (statehood) and sanction from the West.*

President Tokayev has repeatedly mentioned that Kazakhstan will respect international norms and value other states’ sovereignty and integrity. The issue of territorial integrity and sovereignty is a sensitive topic for Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan's statehood is rather fragile as it is a young state that obtained its independence in 1991. Backed in 2014 President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, mentioned a very controversial statement. Putin said, “The Kazakhs never had any statehood”, which infuriated Kazakhstanis at that time (Najibullah, 2014). The region in northern Kazakhstan (such as Petropavlovsk, Pavlodar, Kostanay, and Kokshetau) is largely dominated by Russian ethnicity (Zhanmukanova, 2021). In the past, the division of ethnicities tended to trigger friction. However, the first President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, was able to maintain the nation under ‘unity’ (Zhanmukanova, 2021). Nonetheless, the “Russian Question” keeps alarming Astana from time to time (Zhanmukanova, 2021). Russian aggressive action and neo-imperialist trait in Ukraine is a red flag for Kazakhstan. Knowing its northern part is threatened and vulnerable to separatist movement, the Kazakh government never tolerates any narrative undermining its territorial integrity.

As the war in Ukraine erupted, Kazakhstan attempted to be cautious with its policy. In April 2022, Kazakhstan decided to cancel the Victory Day military parade (RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, 2022d). The cancellation of the annual commemoration of Victory Day sparked offensive comments from popular figures in Russia, one of them Tigran

Keosayan, a Russian filmmaker (Putz, 2022). Keosayan commented on the Victory Day cancellation with an offensive tone, saying that Kazakhstan should be careful and learn what is happening in Ukraine as an example (Putz, 2022). Former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev also criticized Kazakhstan for not fully supporting Russia. Medvedev named Kazakhstan as “an artificial state” in a social media post that was later deleted (Sanchez, 2022). The confrontation over Kazakhstan's refusal to fully support Russia was also discussed in a political talk show aired through Russia-1, a state-owned TV channel. Vladimir Solovyov, the presenter of the talk show, mentioned that Russia has been a reliable partner for Kazakhstan however Kazakhstan’s action is not reciprocal amid the “special military operation” in Ukraine (Altynbayev, 2022b). Solovyov also stated that the next problem after Ukraine can be Kazakhstan, implying that Kazakhstan can be a potential target after Ukraine (Altynbayev, 2022b).

Offensive comments from many famous Russian figures were perceived as a threat to Kazakhstanis. The communal threats resulted in a shared emotion, which was fear. When fear became a collective emotion among Kazakhstanis, the threats from popular Russian figures became a security issue that the Kazakh government needed to address. The emotions among Kazakhstanis were valid, mainly if they considered the past event where Putin did not acknowledge the statehood of Kazakhstan and Moscow’s aggressive action in Ukraine. Kazakhstan leaders perceived the offensive comments might have impact to the northern part of the country, divided the society and destabilized the domestic situation. The government concern was understandable, as the situation was exacerbated by the massive propaganda exposure by the Russian state media (Kumenov, 2022e). During the 31st session of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, President Tokayev emphasized:

“It is unacceptable that external conflicts, which have existed and will exist, will be used to incite inter-ethnic discord and form fault lines among our citizens”
(Text 4: Tokayev, 2022h).

He also stressed that:

“provocateurs will not be able to undermine our unity, the right of our state to pursue an independent policy” (Text 5: Tokayev, 2022i).

In this part, from neoclassical realist perspective, we can see how leader's respond was shaped by its perception based on reaction of the external environment. According to the speech, President Tokayev mentioned "external conflict" which refer to the war in Ukraine. He further elaborated "...used to incite interethnic discord and form fault lines" (Text 4: Tokayev, 2022h) meaning the offensive comments intended to trigger the division among Kazakh and Russian ethnicities, especially those who live in the northern part of Kazakhstan. The speech indicated that the Kazakhstan government was aware that offensive comments might jeopardize Kazakhstan's unity. Moreover, the government also realized that the Russian ethnicity in the north somehow become a political tool to suppress Kazakhstan's independent policy. President Tokayev also has repeatedly expressed his concern on how the geopolitical confrontation in the Ukraine might impact the unity of Kazakhstanis, as he mentioned on his speech before the referendum on June 3rd:

"In the face of unprecedented geostrategic uncertainty and the need to address the complex challenges facing our country, we must be strong in our unity and solidarity" (Text 8: Tokayev, 2022c).

Kazakhstan's concern regarding the threats that might lead to the division of its state was manifested through its policy by defending international norms, such as respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of other states. Thus, from this point of view, fully supporting Russia in the war in Ukraine was a big no for Kazakhstan.

Next is a fear of sanction. In response to the invasion, several countries imposed many sanctions on Russia and its affiliated allies that were complicit in the invasion of Ukraine. For instance, the US banned the export of technology that supported Russia's military and aerospace industry (Toh *et al.*, 2022). The US, together with the EU, Canada, and the UK, agreed to exclude Russian banks from SWIFT global payment (Toh *et al.*, 2022). In addition, as Belarus was considered complicit in this invasion, some countries, such as Japan, Australia, the US, and the UK, imposed sanctions on the Belarusian elites, individuals, and companies (Toh *et al.*, 2022). As an attempt to cut Russia's income from energy sector, the leaders of G7 together with the EU and Australia also agreed to adopt a price cap policy² on Russian oil (Rosenberg & Nostrand, 2023).

² The use of economic policy to obtain foreign policy goals, which in this case is to restrict the Russian income from the oil industry while "maintaining the supply of Russian oil" (Rosenberg & Nostrand, 2023). The policy allows maritime transport companies located in the coalition to provide services "only if the price of the oil is

Russia is indeed Kazakhstan's strategic partner in many sectors, including economy. Kazakhstan is also a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), a Russian-led free trade bloc. A trade between Russia and Kazakhstan is exempt from custom checks (Zholobova *et al.*, 2023). As Western countries imposed sanctions on Russia and allies that were complicit in supporting the invasion, Kazakhstan is prone to secondary sanction if it is proven aiding Russia to circumvent the sanction by the West (World Bank, 2023). In an interview, the Minister of National Economy, Alibek Kuantyrov, stated that "Kazakhstan does not support anti-Russian sanctions but will comply" (Mikovic, 2023). However, an article published by Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) showed that advanced microchips that were used for Russian missiles and robots allegedly came from Kazakhstan (Zholobova *et al.*, 2023). The US government has warned Kazakhstan about the secondary sanction. It is known that the secondary sanctions target products that can be used for military activities (World Bank, 2023). In convincing its western counterpart, Minister of National Economy of Kazakhstan asserted that Kazakhstan will prioritize its economic interests and the cooperation with the EAEU would not "go beyond economy" (Mikovic, 2023).

It is important to mention that the sanction to Russia might have impacted Kazakhstan's non-oil exports. Kazakhstan's exports to Russia were much more varied compared to its exports to the global market, which was dominated by mineral fuels, and around 10% of Kazakhstan's exports went to the Russian market (World Bank, 2023). Therefore, it is reasonable that Kazakhstan does not support the anti-Russia sanction. Kazakhstan has been in a difficult economic situation. The inflation was relatively high, and the sanction to Russia and the threat of secondary sanction might jeopardize Kazakhstan's economy in the long run. President Tokayev explicitly conveyed the displeasure expression over the situation, as he mentioned:

"Kazakhstan has faced unprecedented financial and economic difficulties in our modern history associated with a sharp aggravation of the geopolitical situation. Tough sanctions confrontation is already leading to serious costs not only for individual countries, but also for the entire global economy" (Text 1: Tokayev, 2022b).

sold at or below the price cap level" (Rosenberg & Nostrand, 2023). The price cap was decided at USD 60 per barrel (Rosenberg & Nostrand, 2023).

Referring to the statement from Tokayev, we can see that sanction due to the geopolitical confrontation is framed as a threat and costly. Indeed, fully supporting Russia was not a choice for Kazakhstan. The upheaval economic situation before the war in Ukraine has been a big challenge for the government. Kazakhstan should not be under additional burden by having sanctions from the West; therefore, from the perspective of prospect theory to avoid further losses, complying with the West is a favour preference for Kazakhstan.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Kazakhstan’s attitude, which showed a lack of support to Russia in the war in Ukraine, put Kazakhstan’s main oil export route (CPC) and its northern region in a risky situation. It has been obvious that the CPC disruptions that happened at least four times in 2022 resulted from geopolitical tension. Risking the CPC was indeed a great loss for Kazakhstan, as 80% of its oil exports pass through the CPC line. Nevertheless, when the war erupted, Kazakhstan was much more likely under a disadvantageous situation (in the domain of loss). In such critical situation, Kazakhstan leaders (government) has been cautious, using ‘watch and see’ approach, ensuring its policy would not put Kazakhstan in a worse situation and get further losses (loss aversion behaviour).

Factors that Contribute to the Kazakhstan’s Decision	
Internal	External
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political and socio-economic problems, namely corruption, inequality, and declining economic condition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat of unity and territorial integrity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discontentment of Kazakhstanis towards government performances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat of secondary sanction.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspiration to diversify energy export routes and expand market as a landlocked nation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPC as Kazakhstan main oil export route is under constant threat.

Source: Elaborated by the author

I classify factors that contribute to Kazakhstan’s decision into two types, namely internal and external. Internal factors are the endogenous factors that emerged due to the domestic situation or desire of Kazakhstan leaders. External factors are the exogenous factors caused by external entities that influence Kazakhstan leaders’ perception in framing their situation and choices.

The internal factors consist of political and socio-economic problems, discontentment towards government performances, and the aspiration of the Kazakh government to diversify its energy export route and expand the energy market. As it explains, the January event triggered by the soaring price of LPG was actually a manifestation of Kazakhstanis’ discontentment towards Tokayev’s governance in handling corruption, inequality, and declining economic conditions. The January riot has threatened Tokayev’s political legitimacy and the status quo of its government. Next is the factor of aspiration. Kazakhstan largely depends on Russia for its energy export, as a producing country securing the export route and

its energy market are part of Kazakhstan's main national interests. Not taking the same stance with Russia offered Kazakhstan a chance to diversify its energy export line and market.

For the external factors, there are three drivers. Factors of threats to CPC and Kazakhstan's territorial integrity came from Russia. Russia is known often to use its position as a political tool in influencing Kazakhstan's decision, and its aggressive attitude in Ukraine is concerning. The last external factor is the threat of secondary sanction to Kazakhstan from the Western counterparts such as the US and the EU.

In addressing why Kazakhstan showed a lack of support towards Russia in the war in Ukraine, I argue that *Kazakhstan decision-makers perceived that the price for fully supporting Russia was too costly*, despite Russia has been a traditional ally of Kazakhstan. As we know one of the main assumption of prospect theory is an entity tend to experience an intense pain of losing rather than a pleasure of gaining. Fully supporting Russia will ruin President Tokayev's efforts to regain the trust of the public and restore his status quo as a legitimate leader after the January event. Also, it might interrupt the political reform that Kazakhstan conducted. Moreover, showing total support to Russia will ruin Tokayev's credibility as a leader, both from domestic and foreign audiences' perspectives and intensify questions about Kazakhstan's sovereignty. In other words, Tokayev saw its government status quo is much more valuable than the value of supporting its traditional ally. In addition, it is essential to mention that Kazakhstan was already in a difficult economic situation when the war erupted. At that time, Kazakhstan was not able to restore its economic situation after the COVID-19 pandemic. The oil and gas market was unpredictable and slow, and the situation might get worse as Kazakhstan would experience a domino effect due to Russian sanctions. Getting additional sanctions from its Western counterpart was too costly, and indeed, avoiding the secondary sanction was a rational choice for Kazakhstan.

On top of that, even if Kazakhstan decided to support Russia fully, it would neither ensure that the flow of CPC would not be interrupted in the future nor that Russia would not act aggressively towards the northern part of Kazakhstan. Risking the CPC was indeed a direct loss for Kazakhstan. However, in this case, another consideration was that Kazakhstan might think it had opportunities to expand its energy market, diversify its energy export route by inviting investors, and maximize its potential as a transcontinental state. Those considerations are the result of geopolitical confrontation in Ukraine. From the stance point of neoclassical realism, here, we can also see how Kazakhstan's leader is able to maximize its national power, such as its position as a transcontinental state, in response to the change in international system.

It might be an irony, nevertheless the war in Ukraine has offered Kazakhstan a chance to lessen its dependency on Russia in the energy sector. The invasion of Ukraine forced the EU to find a replacement for the energy supply that was used to provide by Russia. As Kazakhstan is a producing country, increasing the energy export volume to the EU might be a great option. The war in Ukraine allows Kazakhstan to maximize the Trans-Caspian route, or the Middle Corridor, by transporting its oil via the BTC pipeline. The idea of distributing energy exports using the Trans-Caspian line has been introduced previously. The idea of the Trans-Caspian pipeline has emerged since the 1990s, but the project has never been conducted due to the legal dispute of the Caspian Sea. However, the war in Ukraine has revived the idea of transporting energy exports via the Trans-Caspian line. In 2022, Kazakhstan persisted in persuading partner countries to invest in the development of the TITR by conducting a series of diplomacy activities. TITR is not an exclusive transport route for energy export, and the route has much more to offer than as a distribution line for energy export. Indeed, if the development of TITR goes as planned, it will give Kazakhstan many economic benefits. Successfully inviting the EU or a new potential energy market country to invest in the development of TITR should be seen as a good start for Kazakhstan to lessen its dependency on Russia.

REFERENCES

- Akhmetkali, A. (2022, March 14). Kazakhstan Sends First Humanitarian Aid Plane to Ukraine Through Poland. *The Astana Time*.
<https://astanatimes.com/2022/03/kazakhstan-sends-first-humanitarian-aid-plane-to-ukraine-through-poland/>
- Altynbayev, K. (2022a, April 28). Kazakhstan's scrapping of Victory Day parade highlights strained Russian ties. *Central Asia News*. https://central.asia-news.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_ca/features/2022/04/28/feature-01
- Altynbayev, K. (2022b, November 30). Russian propagandists threaten to make Kazakhstan the next Ukraine. *Caravanserai*. https://central.asia-news.com/en_GB/articles/cnmi_ca/features/2022/11/30/feature-02
- Arynov, Z. (2022). Is Kazakhstan's Multi-Vector Foreign Policy Threatened? *Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, 21, 192–197.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/48686708>
- Astana Times. (2022, November 28). EU to Invest in Trans-Caspian International Transport Route. <https://astanatimes.com/2022/11/eu-to-invest-in-trans-caspian-international-transport-route/>
- Azretbergenova, G. & Syzdykova, A. (2020). The Dependence of the Kazakhstan Economy on the Oil Sector and the Importance of Export Diversification. *International Journal of Energy Economics and Policy*, 10(6), 157-163.
- Baizakova, K.I. (2010), Energy security issues in the foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. *American Foreign Political Interests*, 32(2), 103-109.
- Baizakova, Z. & McDermott, R. (2015). Threat Perception in Central Asia in Response to Russia-Ukraine: Kazakhstan Will Not Be Next [Research Paper]. *North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)*. https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/194293/rp_119.pdf
- Beach, D. (2016). It's all about mechanisms – what process- tracing case studies should be tracing, *New Political Economy*, 21(5), 463-472. doi: 10.1080/13563467.2015.1134466
- Benoit, K. (2020). Text as Data: An Overview. In L. Curini & R. Franzese (Ed.), *The Sage Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations* (pp. 461-497). SAGE
- Buzan, B. (1983). *People, States, and Fear*. Wheatsheaf Books
- Capalla, E. L. (2022, January 7). 2022 Crisis in Kazakhstan. *Center of Eurasian, Russian, and East European Studies (Georgetown University)*.
<https://ceres.georgetown.edu/research/student-projects/2022-crisis-in-kazakhstan/>
- Česnakas, G. (2010). Energy Resources in Foreign Policy: A Theoretical Approach. *Baltic Journal of Law & Politics*, 3(1), 30-52.
- Crawford, N. (2014). Institutionalizing passion in world politics: Fear and empathy. *International Theory*, 6(3), 535-557. doi:10.1017/S1752971914000256
- Cummings, S. N. (2003). Eurasian bridge or murky waters between east and west? Ideas, identity and output in Kazakhstan's foreign policy, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 19:3, 139-155, DOI: 10.1080/13523270300660021
- De Groot, K. (2022, February 2022). Putin's motivation behind the attack on Ukraine. *Penn Today*. <https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/putins-motivation-behind-attack-ukraine>
- Dent, C. M. (2013). Understanding the Energy Diplomacies of East Asian States. *Modern Asian Studies*, 47 (3), pp. 935-967. doi:10.1017/S0026749X11000667
- Dixon, R. (2022, January 11). Kazakhstan's Tokayev announces wift end to Russian-led intervention, reorganizes security forces. *The Washington Post*.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/01/11/kazakhstan-tokayev-csto-russia->

- IMF (Middle East and Central Asia Dept). (2022, April 11). Republic of Kazakhstan: Selected Issues. <https://www.elibrary.imf.org/view/journals/002/2022/114/article-A003-en.xml>
- International Energy Agency (IEA). (2022). Executive Summary (Kazakhstan 2022). <https://www.iea.org/reports/kazakhstan-2022/executive-summary>
- International Energy Agency (IEA). (n.d). Kazakhstan Energy Profile (Energy Security). <https://www.iea.org/reports/kazakhstan-energy-profile/energy-security>
- Kaisar, A. (2022, January 11). Досым Сатпаев, политолог: «Я надеюсь, что после этих событий хоть какие-то выводы будут сделаны». *ВЛАСТЬ*. <https://vlast.kz/politika/48132-dosym-satpaev-politolog-a-nadeus-cto-posle-etih-sobytij-hot-kakie-to-vyvody-budut-sdelany.html>
- Kassen, M. (2018). Understanding foreign policy strategies of Kazakhstan: a case study of the landlocked and transcontinental country, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 31:3-4, 314-343, doi: 10.1080/09557571.2018.1520809
- Kassenova, N. (2022, January 13). Why Kazakhstan Will Not Be Returning to Russia's Fold. Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies (Harvard University). <https://daviscenter.fas.harvard.edu/insights/why-kazakhstan-will-not-be-returning-russias-fold>
- Kazakhstan announces the volume of humanitarian aid for Ukraine. (2022, March 10). Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Kingdom of Belgium [Press Release]. <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mfa-brussels/press/news/details/338306?lang=en>
- Kim, L. (2023, January 5). The Other Jan. 6. *Foreign Policy*. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/01/05/kazakhstan-bloody-january-violence-tokayev-nazarbayev-conspiracy-protest/>
- Kozłowska, J. (2023, January 21). A year after Kazakhstan's deadly riot, questions persist. *AP*. <https://apnews.com/article/politics-kassym-jomart-tokayev-kazakhstan-almaty-27777324a342490b737866449ca00f93>
- Krol, A.G., & Ramesh, A. (2022). Russia, China, and Protests: Caught Between Two Powers, Kazakhstan Navigates Internal Dissent. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 23(1), 65-71. <https://doi.org/10.1353/gia.2022.0011>.
- Kudaibergenova, D. T. & Laruelle, M. (2022). Making sense of the January 2022 protests in Kazakhstan: failing legitimacy, culture of protests, and elite readjustments, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 38:(6), pp. 441-459. doi: 10.1080/1060586X.2022.2077060
- Kumenov, A. (2022a, August 23). Kazakh oil exports across Russia interrupted for fourth time this year. *Eurasianet*. <https://eurasianet.org/kazakh-oil-exports-across-russia-interrupted-for-fourth-time-this-year>
- Kumenov, A. (2022b, March 23). Kazakhstan: CPC pipeline shutdown poses serious economic threat. *Eurasianet*. <https://eurasianet.org/kazakhstan-cpc-pipeline-shutdown-poses-serious-economic-threat>
- Kumenov, A. (2022c, November 11). Kazakhstan starts exporting oil through Middle Corridor from New Year. *Eurasianet*. <https://eurasianet.org/kazakhstan-starts-exporting-oil-through-middle-corridor-from-new-year#:~:text=As%20things%20stand%2C%20more%20than,comprising%20Azerbaijan%2C%20Georgia%20and%20Turkey.>
- Kumenov, A. (2022d, April 28). Kazakhstan pushes back at threats of prominent Russian propagandist. *Eurasianet*. <https://eurasianet.org/kazakhstan-pushes-back-at-threats-of-prominent-russian-propagandist>
- Kumenov, A. (2022e, April 8). Kazakhstan: Survey finds solid support for Russia, but mostly among Russian speakers. *Eurasianet*. <https://eurasianet.org/kazakhstan-survey-finds-solid-support-for-russia-but-mostly-among-russian-speakers>

- Kuzio, T. (2022). Why Russia Invaded Ukraine. *Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, 21, 40–51. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48686695>
- Laruelle, M., Royce, D., Beysembaye, S. (2019). Untangling the puzzle of “Russia’s influence” in Kazakhstan, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, (60)2, pp. 211-243. doi: 10.1080/15387216.2019.1645033
- Levy, J. S. (2003). Applications of Prospect Theory to Political Science. *Synthese*, 135(2), 215-241.
- Libman, A., Davidzon, I., Saggar, R. (2023, June 27). How to intervene symbolically: The CSTO in Kazakhstan. *Chatham House*. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2023/06/how-intervene-symbolically-csto-kazakhstan>
- Lillis, J. (2022, July 18). Kazakhstan claws millions back from Nazarbayev associates. *Eurasianet*. <https://eurasianet.org/kazakhstan-claws-millions-back-from-nazarbayev-associates>
- Luft, G., Korin, A., Gupta, E. (2011). The Competing Dimensions of Energy Security. In B. K. Sovacool (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Energy Security* (pp. 275-312). Routledge
- Margheritini, F. M. (2022, July 15). The Future of the Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline. *Global Risk Insights*. <https://globalriskinsights.com/2022/07/the-future-of-the-trans-caspian-gas-pipeline/>
- Mercer, J. (2005). Prospect theory and political science. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 8, 1–21.
- Merkel, D. A. (2023, February 3). Putin and Tokayev: Russia-Kazakhstan Relations in 11 Meetings. *Geopolitical Monitor*. <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/putin-and-tokayev-russia-kazakhstan-relations-in-11-meetings/>
- Middle Corridor Website. (n.d.). History. <https://middlecorridor.com/en/about-the-association/history-en>
- Mikheyev, P., Gordeyeva, M., Auyezov, O., Vaal, T. (2022, January 5). Kazakhstan declares state of emergency in protest-hit city, province. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/protests-erupt-kazakhstan-after-fuel-price-rise-2022-01-04/>
- Mikovic, N. (2023, June 14). Russia’s ally Kazakhstan turns eyes to the West. *The Interpreter*. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/russia-s-ally-kazakhstan-turns-eyes-west>
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (2022, June 18). *Kazakhstan’s President Addresses Challenging Issues on International Agenda and Relations with Russia at Saint Petersburg Economic Forum* [Press Release]. <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mfa/press/news/details/390248?lang=en>
- Morozov, V. (June 2015). Kazakhstan and the “Russian World” is a new intervention on the horizon? PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 364
- Mukhamediyev, B., Bimendiyeva, L., Dauliyeva, G., & Temerbulatova, Z. (2023). Unrest in Kazakhstan: Economic background and causes, *Cogent Economics & Finance*, 11:(2), 2263305. doi: 10.1080/23322039.2023.2263305
- Najibullah, F. (2014, September 3). Putin Downplays Kazakh Independence, Sparks Angry Reaction. *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*. <https://www.rferl.org/a/kazakhstan-putin-history-reaction-nation/26565141.html>
- Official website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (2022, April 29). President Tokayev proposes a referendum on Constitutional reforms, discusses issues of national unity and building a New Kazakhstan. <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mfa/press/news/details/365322?lang=en>

- Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (2022c, January 6). President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev held a session of the Security Council. <https://akorda.kz/en/president-kassym-jomart-tokayev-held-a-session-of-the-security-council-705318>
- Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (n.d.). The Republic of Kazakhstan. https://www.akorda.kz/en/republic_of_kazakhstan/kazakhstan
- Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (2022a, July 4). Phone conversation with President of the European Charles Michel. <https://www.akorda.kz/en/phone-conversation-with-president-of-the-european-council-charles-michel-464718>
- Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. (2022b, September 20). Kassym-Jomart Tokayev held talks with the President of the European Commission. <https://www.akorda.kz/en/kassym-jomart-tokayev-held-talks-with-the-president-of-the-european-commission-2082224>
- Pannier, B. (2022a). How the Intervention in Kazakhstan Revitalized the Russian-led CSTO. *Foreign Policy Research Institute*. <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/03/how-the-intervention-in-kazakhstan-revitalized-the-russian-led-csto/>
- Pannier, B. (2022b, January 5). Kazakhs Were Fed Up With Minor Concessions And Officials Paying Lip Service to Reforms. *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*. <https://www.rferl.org/a/kazakhstan-protests-analysis-poverty-corruption/31641045.html>
- Pashakhanlou, A. H. (2017). *Realism and Fear in International Relations*. Palgrave Macmillan
- Pasqualetti, M. J. (2011). The Competing Dimensions of Energy Security. In B. K. Sovacool (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Energy Security* (pp. 275-312). Routledge
- Picheta, R., Chernova, A., Gigova, R., Watson, I. (2022, January 6). Russian-led Military Alliance will Send ‘Peacekeepers’ to Protest-hit Kazakhstan, Armenian PM says. *CNN*. <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/01/05/asia/kazakhstan-fuel-protests-emergency-wednesday-intl/index.html>
- Putz, C. (2015, October 10). Kazakhstan Deftly Balances Relations with Ukraine and Russia. *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2015/10/kazakhstan-deftly-balances-relations-with-ukraine-and-russia/>
- Putz, C. (2022, October 06). Kazakhstan Headed for Election Lacking Competition. *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2022/10/kazakhstan-headed-for-election-lacking-competition/>
- RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty. (2022a, January 4). Kazakh Police Fire Stun Grenades on Protesters in Almaty as Presiden Issues Warning. <https://www.rferl.org/a/kazakh-journalist-detained-almaty-rferl/31638938.html>
- RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty. (2022b, January 5). Russian-Led Security Bloc to Send Peacekeeping Forces to Kazakhstan, Armenian PM Says. <https://www.rferl.org/a/kazakhstan-toqayev-unrest-protests-government-resignation/31639961.html>
- RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty. (2022c, August 16). Kazakh Authorities Raise Death Toll From January Unrest to 238. <https://www.rferl.org/a/kazakhstan-unrest-death-toll-238/31991206.html>
- RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty. (2022d, April 13). Kazakhstan Cancels Victory Day Military Parade Again. <https://www.rferl.org/a/kazakhstan-cancels-victory-day-parade/31801848.html>
- RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty. (2023, February 26). Kazakhstan Says China’s Peace Plan for Ukraine ‘Worthy of Support’. <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-chinese-peace-plan-kazakhstan-support/32288725.html>

- Rickleton, C. (2022, April 4). Kazakhstan seeks to thread diplomatic needle over Russia's Ukraine war. *Eurasianet*. <https://eurasianet.org/kazakhstan-seeks-to-thread-diplomatic-needle-over-russias-ukraine-war>
- Ridley, D. (2012). *The Literature Review: A Step-by-Step Guide for Students* (2nd Ed). SAGE
- Ripsman, N. (2017, December 22). Neoclassical Realism. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*. <https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-36>.
- Rodionov, M., Trevelyan, M., Vaal, T., Auyezov, O., O'Brien, R. (2022, January 6). Kazakh President Seeks Help from Russia-led Security Bloc. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/kazakh-president-seeks-help-russia-led-security-bloc-2022-01-05/>
- Rose, G. (1998). Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy. *World Politics*, 51(1), 144-172.
- Rosenberg, E. & Nostrand, E. V. (2023, May 18). The Price Cap on Russian Oil: A Progress Report. *U.S. Department of the Treasury*. <https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/the-price-cap-on-russian-oil-a-progress-report>
- Sanchez, W. A. (2022, October 9). The War in Ukraine Has Revealed an Independent Kazakhstan. *The National Interest*. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/war-ukraine-has-revealed-independent-kazakhstan-205253>
- Sánchez, W. A. & Auyezova, K. (2022, May 11). Kazakhstan cancels Victory Day in protest over Putin's Ukraine War. *Atlantic Council*. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/kazakhstan-cancels-victory-day-in-protest-over-putins-ukraine-war/>
- Satubaldina, A. (2022a, June 18). President Tokayev Answers Tough Questions at Economic Forum in Russia. *The Astana Times*. Retrieved from <https://astanatimes.com/2022/06/president-tokayev-answers-tough-questions-at-economic-forum-in-russia/>
- Satubaldina, A. (2022b, August 20). President Tokayev Meets Vladimir Putin in Sochi to Intensify Bilateral Ties. *The Astana Time*. <https://astanatimes.com/2022/08/president-tokayev-meets-vladimir-putin-in-sochi-to-intensify-bilateral-ties/>
- Satubaldina, A. & Shayakhmetova, Z. (2022, January 5). Kazakhstan Declares State of Emergency After Fuel Prices Protests. *The Astana Times*. <https://astanatimes.com/2022/01/kazakhstan-declares-state-of-emergency-after-fuel-price-protests/>
- Shaikh, Z. (2022, January 06). ANALYSIS – Economic fallout of pandemic stirs unrest in Kazakhstan. *Anadolu Agency*. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/analysis/analysis-economic-fallout-of-pandemic-stirs-unrest-in-kazakhstan/2467119>
- Shlapentokh, D. (2016). Kazakh and Russian History and Its Geopolitical Implications. *Insight Turkey*, 18(4), pp. 143-164. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26300457>
- Sleta, N. (2023, October 9). Kazakhstan's Oil Supply Reshaping: Is There a Viable Alternative to the CPC Pipeline? *S&P Global*. <https://www.spglobal.com/commodityinsights/en/ci/research-analysis/kazakhstans-oil-supply-reshaping-is-there-a-viable-alternative.html>
- Stevens, C. A. (2020). Russia–Kazakhstan Relations in the Early Post-Soviet Era: Explaining the Roots of Cooperation. *Europe-Asia Studies* (72), 7, pp. 1153-1185. doi: 10.1080/09668136.2020.1719979
- Storel, M. (2022, January 7). Photos : Dramatic scenes from Kazakhstan's massive protests and crackdown. *NPR*.

- <https://www.npr.org/sections/pictureshow/2022/01/07/1071101792/photos-scenes-kazakhstan-protests-crackdown>
- Szumski, C. (2022, June 17). Kazakhstan key ‘Middle Corridor’ linking China to EU. *Euractiv*. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/central-asia/news/kazakhstan-key-middle-corridor-linking-china-to-eu/>
- Taliaferro, J. W. (2010). Prospect theory and foreign policy analysis. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*. <https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-281>
- Terry, G., Hayfield, N., Clarke, V., Braun, V. (2017). Thematic Analysis. In C. Willig & W. Stainton-Rogers (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research in Psychology* (pp. 17-37). SAGE
- Toh, M., Ogura, J., Humayun, H., Yee, I., Cheung, E., Fossum, S., Maruf, R. (2022, February 28). The list of global sanctions on Russia for the war in Ukraine. *CNN*. <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/02/25/business/list-global-sanctions-russia-ukraine-war-intl-hnk/index.html>
- Tokayev, K. J. (2022a, September 20). *Statement by H.E. Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, at the General Debate on the 77th Session on the UNGA* [Speech transcript]. United Nations (UN) website. https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/77/kz_en.pdf
- Tokayev, K. J. (2022b, March 16). *New Kazakhstan: The Path of Renewal and Modernisation* [Speech transcript]. Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. <https://www.akorda.kz/en/state-of-the-nation-address-by-president-of-the-republic-of-kazakhstan-kassym-jomart-tokayev-17293>
- Tokayev, K. J. (2022c, June 3). *President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev’s Address to the people of Kazakhstan* [Speech transcript]. Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. <https://www.akorda.kz/en/president-kassym-jomart-tokayevs-address-to-the-people-of-kazakhstan-35830>
- Tokayev, K. J. (2022d, June 6). *President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev’s Address to the people of Kazakhstan* [Speech transcript]. Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. <https://www.akorda.kz/en/president-kassym-jomart-tokayevs-address-to-the-people-of-kazakhstan-65338>
- Tokayev, K. J. (2022e, September 1). *President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev’s State of the Nation Address: A Fair State. One Nation. Prosperous Society* [Speech transcript]. Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. <https://www.akorda.kz/en/president-kassym-jomart-tokayevs-state-of-the-nation-address-181857>
- Tokayev, K. J. (2022f, September 16). *Speech by the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, at a meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO Member States in an expanded format* [Speech transcript]. Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. <https://www.akorda.kz/en/speech-by-the-president-of-kazakhstan-kassym-jomart-tokayev-at-a-meeting-of-the-council-of-heads-of-state-of-the-sco-member-states-in-an-expanded-format-2683815>
- Tokayev, K. J. (2022g, October 27). *Kazakh and European Council Presidents spoke at media briefing* [Meetings Coverage and Press Releases]. Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. <https://www.akorda.kz/en/kazakh-and-european-council-presidents-spoke-at-media-briefing-289114>
- Tokayev, K. J. (2022h, April 29). *The President outlines priorities of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan* [Meetings Coverage and Press Releases]. Official website of the

- President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. <https://www.akorda.kz/en/the-president-outlines-priorities-of-the-assembly-of-people-of-kazakhstan-2933439>
- Tokayev, K. J. (2022i, April 29). *President Tokayev's participation in the session of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan* [Factsheet]. Official website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. https://www.gov.kz/uploads/2022/4/29/30cbfa41898f2693bc79b0cd48e6a5ff_original.24948.docx
- Transparency International. (2023, October). Transparency Kazakhstan, Civic Foundation. <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/kazakhstan>
- Transparency International. (n.d.). Corruption Perceptions Index. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022>
- Umarov, T. (2022, January 28). Will Russia's Intervention in Kazakhstan Come at a Price?. *Carnegie*. <https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/86298>
- UN Human Rights. (2022, January 11). Kazakhstan: UN experts condemn lethal force against protesters, misuse of term 'terrorists'. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/01/kazakhstan-un-experts-condemn-lethal-force-against-protesters-misuse-term>
- United Nations. (2022, March 02). *General Assembly Overwhelmingly Adopts Resolution Demanding Russian Federation Immediately End Illegal Use of Force in Ukraine, Withdraw All Troops* [Meetings Coverage and Press Releases]. <https://press.un.org/en/2022/ga12407.doc.htm>
- Ussenova, T. (2022). Kazakhstan's Multi Vector Foreign Policy and Its Implications for the Energy Sector. *Journal of Global Social Sciences*, 3(10), 1-22.
- Van de Graaf, T. & Zelli, F. (2016). Actors, Institutions and Frames in Global Energy Politics. In T. Van de Graaf, B. K. Sovacool, A. Ghosh, F. Kern, & M. T. Klare (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of the International Political Economy of Energy* (pp. 47-72). Palgrave Macmillan
- Van Evera, S. (1997). *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Cornell University Press.
- Walker, S. (2022, January 6). Kazakhstan unrest: what are the protests about? *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/06/kazakhstan-unrest-what-are-the-protests-about>
- Wang, H., Xu, Q. (2022). The Practice and Theory of Energy Diplomacy. In: *An Introduction to Energy Diplomacy. Research Series on the Chinese Dream and China's Development Path* (pp. 43-70). Springer, Singapore.
- Wilczewska, A. P. (2022, January 5). What is behind the protests rocking Kazakhstan? *Al Jazeera*. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/5/explainer-what-is-behind-the-protests-rocking-kazakhstan>
- World Bank. (2023). Kazakhstan Economic Update (Spring 2023): Economic Recovery During Challenging Times. <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099319004172398510/pdf/IDU0336efa090a5ea047bc09e560dd1e8a21f03f.pdf>
- Zabortseva, Y. N. (2014). Rethinking the Economic Relationship between Kazakhstan and Russia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 66(2), pp. 311-327. Doi: 10.1080/09668136.2013.872333
- Zhanmukanova, A. (2021, April 23). Is Northern Kazakhstan at Risk to Russia? *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/04/is-northern-kazakhstan-at-risk-to-russia/>
- Zholobova, M., Bidder, B., Abramov, V., Lozovsky, I. (2023, May 19). Kazakhstan Has Become a Pathway for the Supply of Russia's War Machine. Here's How It Works. *OCCRP*. <https://www.occrp.org/en/investigations/kazakhstan-has-become-a-pathway-for-the-supply-of-russias-war-machine-heres-how-it-works>