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ENVIRONMENT AS A FOREIGN POLICY TOOL: THE CASE OF KAZAKHSTAN

ЭКОЛОГИЧЕСКАЯ ПОЛИТИКА КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТ ВНЕШНЕЙ ПОЛИТИКИ КАЗАХСТАНА

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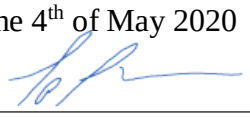

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by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on how Kazakhstan used environment as a foreign policy tool and how the environmental foreign policy is articulated in yearly presidential addresses. I am interested whether environmental issues are in fact on the foreign policy agenda and what are the objectives and means by which environment is put on forward. Why Kazakhstan is a signatory to a list of environmental treaties, but is continuously found not to comply? Addressing this broader question brings to asking more specific theoretical questions. What are the domestic political constraints that preclude Kazakhstan's environmentalism from being instrumental rather than rhetorical? Who is the intended audience of Kazakhstan's well-stated environmental rhetoric?

Kazakhstan's environmental foreign policy is articulated in yearly presidential addresses and implemented in light of the state's multi-vector foreign policy. Building on existing research and analysis of the yearly presidential addresses, this thesis finds that foreign policy and policy preferences in general are delivered in yearly presidential addresses. Channeling foreign policy by means of presidential addresses allows the state to advocate its interests, meet public expectations and strengthen the existing political regime.

To understand why Kazakhstan is a signatory to a number of environmental treaties without compliance, I conducted process-tracing of governmental documents and local news coverage of the state's environmental initiatives. Then I contrasted the local environmental rhetoric to what is being said by international organizations. To conceptualize and then analyze the government's environmental messaging to domestic audience, I studied yearly presidential addresses to the people of Kazakhstan. Therefore, I used R software to uncover the message in the presidents' yearly addresses. On the basis of my findings, I have reached two conclusions. First, I found that domestic political constraints preclude Kazakhstan's

environmentalism from being instrumental rather than rhetorical. Second, having done a thorough analysis of the yearly presidential addresses between 1997 and 2019, I found that Kazakhstan's environmental foreign policy is targeting domestic audience rather than international audience. Overall I find that Kazakhstan's eagerness to join international environmental treaties and conventions is the result of the state's attempts to promote regime-friendly images and solidify the state legitimacy.

In other words, Kazakhstan exploits its foreign policy as a tool to shape the identity of its citizens by means of glorification of the policy and the first president's personality. Likewise the state's consequent reluctance to implement changes to the environmental legislation is the result of domestic political constraints, and it is the state's attempts to reconcile the diverse interests of domestic actors through glorifying the regime in yearly presidential addresses.

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PREFACE

I was always interested in understanding Kazakhstan's policy making. I am truly passionate about considering it in its true light. I am aware that asking bold political questions might be a risky endeavor but this thesis was only an attempt to approximate to the truth without being put on a trial. This is my sacrifice for balancing between my interests and keeping it safe.

The way humanity treats environment, ecosystem and the animal world is what makes my heart ache. That is why I wanted to contrast the state, a widescale and an unnatural force, to what is truly important and real. For me, protection of the environment and not stimulating mercenary treatment of natural resources is what is highly important. The governments will pass but the Planet Erath will persist and it is our responsibility to save it.

CHAPTER 1. Kazakhstan's Environmental Foreign Policy Making

This chapter overviews how Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy is delivered in the president's speechmaking or addresses. Presidential address is therefore regarded as a medium through which the president exercises his power, creates concepts and doctrines. Furthermore, the chapter explores how Kazakhstan's growing number of environmental treaties and conventions is associated with the state's multi-vector foreign policy. It also identifies two primary issues with Kazakhstan's environmental foreign policy. The goal of this chapter is to show how Kazakhstan's environmental initiatives can be rationalized in various ways to different audiences through yearly presidential addresses.

1.1 Introduction

Environmental issues are crucial constituents of states' foreign policy-making. In case of Kazakhstan environmental policy is the part of the multi-vector approach, which has been constant of the state's foreign policy strategy since the demise of the Soviet Union (Hanks 2009, 257). It is therefore crucial to understand how Kazakhstan's environmental initiatives subsist in light of the state's multi-vector foreign policy. This can be done by means of analyzing presidential addresses. Presidential addresses 'provide a powerful opportunity for a leader to define and outline their geopolitical understandings and vision, speaking to both domestic and international audiences in a formal manner' and 'they also are reflective of current thinking and shape the parameters of future discussions' (Ambrosio 2014, 539). The content of a presidential address is context specific as it responds to up-to-date objectives and challenges (Eshbaugh-Soha 2010).

The term 'multi-vector' implies a policy 'that develops foreign relations through a framework based on a pragmatic, non-ideological foundation (Hanks 2009, 259). Cummings (2003, 140) argues that the non-ideological content of Kazakhstan's foreign policy '…is

manifested in various ways, particularly in the president's programmatic statements and in what the president has termed his 'multi-vector' foreign policy'. The literature on what determines president to deliver presidential addresses with a specific content in certain years is underdeveloped (Eshbaugh-Soha 2010). Ragsdale (1984) states that addresses are delivered as a response to decreased approval by domestic audience. Whereas Brace and Hinckley (1993) argue that it is the national economy that can trigger the increase in speeches. Another possible explanation revolves around a presidents' anticipation of 'the future costs and benefits of their current actions' (Barret 2004). Nonetheless, despite the reasons and intentions, the annual presidential address in Kazakhstan can 'trigger the development and revision of state planning. The concepts and the doctrines are all developed 'upon the request of the President' (UNECE 17, 2018). Given that a presidential address has the capacity to create and promote concepts and doctrines; it can be regarded as a practice of exercising power (Zaleska 2012).

In substance, the first president Nursultan Nazarbayev summarizes his foreign policy approach in his 1998 address to the people of Kazakhstan: 'we must be a strong state and maintain friendly relations with our neighbors, which is why we shall develop and consolidate relations of confidence and equality with our closest and historically equal neighbors – Russia. Likewise we shall develop just as confident and good-neighborly relations with the PRC and then with Central Asian states. We are no less active in the Near and Middle East. Also, West'. On the one hand, multi-vector approach may seem as a rush to obtain new partners. On the other hand, foreign policy can be a tool to legitimize the rule of the state authority. These two different features ofthe foreign policy infer different audiences: first is the international audience, second is the domestic audience. Although the target audiences might be different, the presidential speeches are essential in 'altering current political situation' and in reaffirming president's governance (Eshbaugh-Sofa 2010, 3). In Kazakhstan,

the multi-vector foreign policy 'carries in-built contradictions' and 'Nazarbayev is increasingly unable to divorce his domestic and foreign policies' (Cummings 2003, 145). I identified the two issues with Kazakhstan's environmental foreign policy-making which is a limited practical utility of Kazakhstan's environmental initiatives and its eagerness to satisfy and respond to the needs of both elites and citizens.

1.2 Two issues with Kazakhstan's Environmental Foreign Policy

First, the multitasking or the multi-vector nature of Kazakhstan's foreign policy results in a low practical utility of the environmental foreign policy. It means that while Kazakhstan is eager to obtain new partners and solidify cooperation by means of signing environmental treaties and conventions, the practical utility of such cooperations remains low. Thus, according to the UNEP report on the Environmental Program from November 2017, Kazakhstan was found not to comply with the Montreal Protocol in five consecutive years between 2011 and 2016. On the other hand, the OSCE report on "Kazakhstan's Implementation of its OSCE Obligations to Observe the Human Right to a Healthy Environment" indicates how "…the economic policy of the country's leaders, which is focused on: the destructive exploitation of natural resources; the quest by officials and businessmen to possess and redistribute these resources, shifting the environmental costs onto the shoulders of ordinary taxpayers; the inability of governmental bodies to fulfill their responsibilities…" and most notably "…non-compliance with international and national legislation…" (OSCE report 2012, 2-5).

Second, the presidential addresses in Kazakhstan balance between the interests of different domestic groups. The emphasis on extraction of natural resources in presidential addresses somewhat satisfies elite's rent-seeking. Thus president exemplifies that 'Today, I would like to announce the launch of new large-scale projects in the sphere of high processing

of our natural resources which will provide this processing' (presidential address 11, 2012).Whereas the attention to initiating upturn in health care and educational systems is the consideration given to citizens: 'We are creating necessary conditions to ensure high-quality healthcare services in all regions of the country' and 'We cannot be satisfied with today's quality of health care and education, the issues of water provision and the state of environment' (presidential address 12, 2012; presidential address 4, 2001).While being an authoritarian state, Kazakhstani government still needs the support, or at least the absence of direct opposition, of both citizens and the elites (Cummings 2005). That is why, presumably, such a great attention of the presidential addresses was given to shaping the identities of the people by means of upholding regime-friendly images: 'Over the 16 years of our independence, we have implemented our own model for securing public stability and inter-ethnic accord, molding the Kazakhstani identity and shared Kazakhstani patriotism' (presidential address 9, 2008). Nazarbayev is said to use the state's foreign policy as 'an instrument to solidify a Kazakhstani national identity' (Hanks 2009, 261). It may have intended to decrease the costs of creating unfavorable conditions and avoid mass dissatisfaction or public opposition. For a president it is crucial to respond to existing challenges, bring the audience up to date in order 'to demonstrate leadership and resolve' (Eshbaugh-Soha 2010, 7).

Given the propagandistic exploitation of the state's foreign policy and the state's necessity to balance between elite's rent-seeking and citizens' needs, the environmentalism drops in its magnitude. Given the obscure contours and a low practical utility of the state's environmental initiatives, the understanding of Kazakhstan's environmental foreign policy necessitates delving into the domestic or 'institutional, social, economic, and cognitive factors' that shape and determine the dimension of the state's foreign policy (Barkdull 2017). The propagandistic exploitation of the presidential addresses is the interplay between rhetoric

and politics. The theoretical literature sees this relationship as the 'various practices of exercising power subsumed by the laymen under a broad concept of politics' (Zaleska 2012, 2-3). Presidential addresses are the deliberative way of speaking to a specific audience or audiences, but the 'criterion of source may qualify the discourse of political actors – politicians, candidates, parties -as political' (Zaleska 2012, 2). Since Kazakhstan is a presidential republic and it is the presidential addresses and presidential speeches that navigate the course of political action, the study of Kazakhstan's environmental foreign policy is constrained to yearly presidential addresses (Ambrosio 2014).

Considering this puzzle, the thesis attempts to answer the following questions: Why Kazakhstan is a signatory to a list of environmental treaties, but is continuously found not to comply? Addressing this broader question navigates to asking more specific theoretical questions. Why is Kazakhstan vocal about its environmental initiatives? What are the domestic political constraints? Who is the intended audience of Kazakhstan's well-stated environmental rhetoric? To answer these questions, I have process traced government documents and reports and contrasted them with reports of international organizations and external advisers to Kazakhstan's environmental policies. I also conducted a thorough analysis of President's yearly nation addresses to Kazakh citizens from 1997 to 2019 using R software, a quanteda package.

On the basis of my findings, I have reached two conclusions. From the available literature and official documents, protocols, I found that domestic political constraints preclude Kazakhstan's environmentalism from being instrumental rather than rhetorical. Second, having done a thorough analysis of the yearly presidential addresses between 1997 and 2019, I found that Kazakhstan's environmental foreign policy is targeting domestic audience rather than international audience. The study of presidential addresses uncovers that environmental issues are not indeed on the forefront of state's foreign or domestic policy even

though state is being vocal about its practical environmental cooperation with international organizations. Furthermore, presidential address solidify that the focus of the state is on the state's economic prosperity, international cooperation and security and not environmentalism. What is more important throughout the years presidential addresses consistently make explicit attempts to merge 'the progressive subjugation of foreign policy rhetoric to the logic of regime-building' (Anscechi 2014, 733).This is done by means of 'spatialization and historicization of the foreign policy' through glorifying of the policy agenda, personality of the first president and by upholding the 'white tiger' and 'golden eagle' images of the Kazakh people (Anscechi 2014, 733-734).

Overall I find that Kazakhstan's eagerness to join international environmental treaties and conventions is the result of the state's attempts to promote regime-friendly images and solidify the state legitimacy. Whereas the state's consequent reluctance to implement changes to the environmental legislation is the result of domestic political constraints. There is an abundance of scholarly work that delves into states' foreign policy making, but there is a shortage of literature on how Kazakhstan's environmental foreign-policy actually works.

First, thesis delves into Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy to find that it is practical by a narrow margin. The next chapter delves into the ways in which the state reconciles interests of different domestic audiences in order to legitimize the regime. It therefore overviews the interplay between Kazakhstan's foreign policy goals and existing domestic political constraints. The last section of the thesis will delve into the data analysis and the discussion of the results.

CHAPTER 2. The Determinants of the Environmental Policy

Third world countries tend to overlook environmental concerns for the sake of pragmatic interests (Bukkvol 2004; Weiner 1985). Weiner (1985) explains that Third World countries are "desperate for income", stability and preservation of power rather than sustaining natural resources and ecosystem. It is uncommon that any particular state would stand out in achieving an 'outstanding success' or a 'wholly successful' environmental policy (Janicke 1992). It is the makeup of a state, its economic, political and socio-cultural conditions that destine it for a success or a failure in environmental policy making. In other words, it is the structural framework of a government and not '…strategies, or individual measures' that 'determine the probability and promptitude with which a country would develop an environmental strategy' (Janicke 1992, 49).

2.1 Environmental Policy Making

When it comes to environmental foreign policy making, the one would think that a state's concern would revolve around "…ecosystem disruption or destruction, toxic contamination; depletion of fresh water…" (Weiner 1985, 294). Elliot Benedick (1986, 172) argues that Planet Earth is the "interconnectedness of all the components of unique living system" and the "sense of interdependence has fostered a growing realization in foreign ministries around the world that many international activities…have profound implications for the environment". A practical response to the 'salience of energy resources' would be fostering 'new standards for energy efficiency and environmental quality' and investing 'tens of billions of dollars in cutting-edge energy research and development' as was encouraged in the United States (Kraft 2017, 3).

A critical role in addressing environmental issues is given to governments as the right to a healthy environment is a 'public or a collective good' that cannot be maintained by

private actors (Kraft 2017, 15). It is nonetheless clear that states differ in their capacity to address environmental salience. Japan, the United States and Sweden have the best record in environmental protection, whereas Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Albania below the set standard (Janicke 1992, 49-50). The most common explanatory factors for success are the following: existence and popularity of 'Green Parties', environmental institutions, the timing of introduction of environmental policy, institutional constraints and economic situation (Janicke 1992, 50). The ecological record is different for any given states as the actions usually are not coordinated, the capacities are different and the intentions behind environmental policies do not always aim at resolving ecological problems. There is also no significantly powerful international body that navigates and governs the environmental conduct of independent states. Furthermore, '…individual nations have little or no incentive to regulate their polluting activities' to sustain a clean and a healthy environment for the whole world in general (Smith 2017, 9).

It is nonetheless expected that a state's environmental initiatives aimed at ameliorating soil, water and air degradation would somehow prioritize stabilization of human-environment relation, renounce exploitation of natural resources, promote the shift to green economy and help to keep up with international environmental obligations (Weiner 1985). In other words, when a state displays its willingness to cope with environmental degradation, it is expected that international environmental treaties and changes to existing environmental code would be instrumental and would yield practical changes.

Nonetheless, 'although governments and private industries are working to deal with these and other environmental problems, the paradox of environmental policy is still as strong as ever' (Smith 2017, 2-10). This is because the ways in which governments decide to tackle environmental issues, the means and the types of environmental policies they introduce are all dependent on divers political processes both local and international (Kraft 2017, 17).

The awareness of the necessity to address environment problems is reflected in Kazakhstan's growing number of international agreements related to environment protection. The rhetoric of Kazakhstan's environmental initiatives usually goes hand in hand with the government's claims to intensify cooperation and to increase practical utility of cooperation with international organizations. Likewise table 1 shows us a list of environmental conventions that were signed by the government of Kazakhstan as a part of its multi-vector foreign policy. Beginning from 1992 Kazakhstan has shown its willingness to become a part of the international consensus on the necessity of preserving biological diversity, manage hazardous wastes and their disposal and protection of the ozone layer. The table 2 indicates Kazakhstan's continued growing dynamic in signing and ratifying environmental conventions and agreements.

Table 1. The list of Kazakhstan's Environmental Conventions and Agreements

№	Name conventions, agreements	Document of accession of the Republic of Kazakhstan/ratification
1	Convention on Biological Diversity	Kazakhstan signed on 09.061992 Ratified on 19/08/1994
2	The UN Convention to Combat Desertification	RK Law on ratification of 07/07/1997
3	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC)	Signed 08.06.1992 Ratified in 1992, 15.05.95
4	Framework Convention for the Protection of Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea	RK Law on the ratification of 13 December 2005
5	Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal	Ratified on 10.02.2003
6	Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants	Ratified by LRK in 2007
7	Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents	Ratified by LRK 23.10.2000
8	Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution	Ratified by LRK 23.10.2000
9	Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context Espoo	Ratified by LRK 21.10.2000
10	Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes	SAM ratified 23.10.2000

Source: sud.gov.kz (Supreme Court of the Republic of Kazakhstan)

Table 2. The list of Kazakhstan's Environmental Conventions and Agreements

№	Name conventions, agreements	Document of accession of the Republic of Kazakhstan/ratification
11	Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer	30.10.1997
12	Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, London Amendment	7.05.2001
13	Convention of the World Meteorological Organization	13.04.1993
14	Convention on public participation in decision-making in the field of environmental medium	23.10.2000
15	The Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Certain ?Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade	20.03.2007
16	Convention for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage	29.07.1994
17	The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands – Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat	13.12.2005
18	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Animals	06.04.1999
19	Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of animals	13.12.2005
20	On ratification of the Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer	6.04.2001

Source: sud.gov.kz (Supreme Court of the Republic of Kazakhstan)

This list of the country's environmental agreements serves as an indicator of the state's willingness to maintain friendly relations with affiliated and signatory parties (Dave 2007). Maintaining friendly relations with virtually any state is the part of Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy (Cummings 2005).

It also indicates Kazakhstan's appreciation of the necessity to respond to environmental degradation, greenhouse effect, global warming, imbalance between human well-being and environmental health (McLeman 2015). On the other hand, this does not demonstrate whether the state is ready to make changes to existing environmental code, create environmental institutions or respond to existing domestic political constraints in a way that would ameliorate the state's environmental record.

2.2 Kazakhstan's Multi-Vector Foreign Policy

Kazakhstani 'multi-vector' foreign policy has seen practically no change since 1990.It has only shifted in its emphasis areas. Multi-vector foreign policy approach '…implies a balanced if not neutral approach using which Kazakhstan can maximize its autonomy of action and bargaining power' (Collins and Bekenova 2016, 9).

Kazakhstan's environmental foreign policy is part of the state's multi-vector foreign policy, which is reemerging in the light of Kazakhstan's objectives to maintain 'good relations with virtually any state' and sustaining 'international position and positive global image of Kazakhstan' (Cummings 2003, mfa.gov.kz). Likewise, one of the main issues with Kazakhstan's multi-vectorism remains that "…no detailed analysis has been published on the evolution of multi-vectorism since the mid 1990s" (Hanks 2009, 257). The absence of the detailed analysis of Kazakhstan's multi-vectorism originates from the inability to identify whether foreign policy choices and interests of a state are endogenous or exogenous to the state system (Wendt 1992, 402).

The president exemplifies that 'No nation on earth – not one! – is our enemy. Our multi–vector diplomacy and foreign policy have successfully defined both our sovereignty and territorial integrity, and developed close relations with the global community' (presidential address, 1998).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, on the other hand, states that Kazakhstan's foreign policy necessitates 'adaptation and promotion of national interests based on the principles of pragmatism'. The Minister continues by elaborating that the state's foreign policy 'will focus on the principles of pragmatism and apply a differentiated and multi-level approach to interaction with foreign countries and international organizations' (mfa.gov.kz, 2018). Most recently, Deputy Foreign Minister Yerzhan Ashkibayev reinforced the goal of increasing practical benefits of cooperation with

international organizations; during the meeting the "proposals of a number of concerned state authorities were considered', '…issues related to Kazakhstan's cooperation under the Montreal Protocol to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer were also raised' (mfa.gov.kz).

These public sentiments define environmental cooperation within a narrow margin that does not account for a specific action plan. The state's environmental 'multi-vectorism' encompasses Kazakhstan's 'recognizing the importance of natural resource conservation and its obligations to the international community' which lead to the ratification of 19 environmental conventions between 1994 and 2001 (UNDPKAZ 2004). The number of environmental treaties almost doubled in number. Thus, by April 2013 Kazakhstan already ratified 30 environmental treaties (sud.gov.kz).

These environmental treaties are in accord with the state's long-term approach to advancing environmental policy development under the Strategic Plan 'Up to 2030: The Environment and Natural Resources' (UNDP 2003). These statements are still in line with Kazakhstan's 'multi-vector' foreign policy strategy or the state strategy, known for its 'pragmatic and non-ideological foundation' (Hanks 2009, 258). However, while the increasing number of environmental treaties indicates the state's interest in cooperation with international organizations, as of now this appears to be a façade of Kazakhstan's environmental foreign policy.

Cummings (2003, 140) finds Kazakhstan's multi-vectorism as the "non-ideological content of the foreign policy" that is traced in the former president's pragmatic public statements. In terms of Kazakhstan it is usually complicated to discern between non-ideological and ideological contents of the foreign policy. According to Ambrosio (2014, 551). Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy is intended to 'keep Kazakhstan culturally and politically connected to areas outside of its immediate region'. This is crucial for

Nazarbayev's perception of the Kazakh national identity as it '…is not just limited to an identity within heart of Eurasia itself, but is dependent upon the maintenance of ties to the wider world' (Ambrosio 2014, 552).Yet since 'foreign policy can be rationalized to various audiences', the degree to which policy objectives and outcomes reflect state priorities, or indeed environmental concerns, is questionable (Cummings 2005, 83). It is therefore unclear whether ideological determinants of the state's foreign policy outweigh non-ideological pragmatic statements. What is clear, however, Kazakhstan has an interest in belonging to international environmental agreements. This is a clear indication of the state's interest, but not of its intention.

Given that foreign policy tends to be less public and involve fewer decision making actors than in domestic policymaking, the possible factors underlying Kazakhstan's foreign policy decisions are unclear (Hanks 2009, 259-260). Foreign policy decisions and interests are not constant; likewise the versatility of the outcomes is high. Cummings (2003) emphasizes a flexibility in foreign policy that aims to manage a good image of the state and maintaining "good relations with virtually any state…", whereas Ambrosio (2014, 543) finds that Kazakhstan's foreign policy concept, which is the multi-vector foreign policy, revolves around balancing between more powerful states, and more importantly, preserving a positive image and relationships with other states.

The flexibility of foreign policy choices and a restricted access to multi-vector decision-making process leave the following questions unanswered. The questions are: whether environmental issues are in fact on the foreign policy agenda and what are the objectives and means by which environment is put on forward. Hug and Zhang (2010, 10) respond that 'during Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the OSCE its focus has clearly been to maximize the status provided by the role to strengthen the prestige of the country and the political elite to its domestic audience with a secondary of positive international publicity".

2.3 Environmental Foreign Policy Remains Impractical

Canzoneri and Gray (1983) argue that 'unfortunately, policy makers generally have incentives to cheat'. Likewise the practical utility of Kazakhstan's environmental agreements raises a number of concerns.

The state that accounts for an immense depository of oil and gas is expected to have an interest in avoiding an excessive exploitation of its natural resources and securing a healthy environment. This is especially true when a state is under a supervision of numerous international environmental organizations to which it is a signatory party. As a right to a healthy environment is a collective good that cannot be maintained by private actors but by the government, the responsibility for addressing environmental issues is on the government itself (Kraft 2017, 15). Furthermore, natural resources are considered to be the property of the state therefore it is the state's responsibility to respond to potential environmental challenges that may originate from the exploitation of natural resources (Heinrich 2012, 7). Environmental protection should have become the matter of the first priority for Kazakhstan because, first, the state exploits and accounts for 34 billion tons of coal, 30 billion barrels of oil, natural gas and 15% of world's uranium resource (Kazenergy report 2015, 2017; OECD report 2012). Second, Kazakhstan is the active member of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and it also signed a number of environmental agreements and the Montreal Protocol. Moreover, the possession of vast natural resources necessitates the adequate response to current and possible environmental degradation. It also requires the state to build and develop policies and rules, both international and domestic, which would satisfy obligations under UN treaties (Sabonis-Helf 2003, 159). While Kazakhstan possesses immense natural resources that are appropriated by the state, the government makes a little effort to give up the exploitation of oil and gas as it brings much economic benefit.

In the context of Kazakhstan, environmental treaties turn out to be a well-stated rhetoric rather than an elaborated action plan. First, the environmental degradation got only worse after the independence (Luong and Weinthal 1999, 1269). According to Environmental Performance Index (yale.edu), Kazakhstan ranks 101 out of other 180 countries falling considerably behind Kyrgyzstan (ranks 99), Russia (ranks 52) and Mongolia (ranks 83). Second, the OSCE report on "Kazakhstan's Implementation of its OSCE Obligations to Observe the Human Right to a Healthy Environment" indicates that "…the economic policy of the country's leaders, which is focused on: the destructive exploitation of natural resources; the quest by officials and businessmen to possess and redistribute these resources, shifting the environmental costs onto the shoulders of ordinary taxpayers; the inability of governmental bodies to fulfill their responsibilities…" and most notably "…non-compliance with international and national legislation…" (OSCE report 2012, 2-5). Third, Kazakhstan is constantly discovered not to comply with the Montreal Protocol. Likewise according to the UNEP report on the Environmental Program from November 2017, Kazakhstan was found not to comply with the Montreal Protocol in five consecutive years 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015 and 2016. The strategies to dealing with environmental issues in Kazakhstan are impractical due to "…the high level of corruption in government…and misconduct by government officials", the database displays the flaws of the existing legislation on environmental issues (article.kz). This is how Kazakhstan promotes its environmentalism while keeping it impractical and indeed failing to correspond to its green initiatives.

2.4 Importance of Understanding the Difference between Domestic and International Rhetoric

The versatile examination of Kazakhstan's environmentalism gives an opportunity to contrast what is said about the state's environmental foreign policy by whom and why. The primary observation suggests that external advisees to the state's environmental foreign

policy are more forthright about Kazakhstan's environmental record, whereas official state reports and ministerial speeches remain formal and secretive.

The official site of the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the press of the ministry of foreign affairs post either short remarks on what has been done without elaborating on the details, or emphasize the inspiring presidential addresses '…we are proud of this, but this is not enough'(akorda.kz). Presidential addresses contain no factual or up-to-date comments on the state's environmental actions. 'The Kazakhstan-2050' Development Strategy and the 'Green Economy' plan goes hand in hand with the president's statement '…the world of the 21st century still needs natural resources…' (akorda.kz). This somewhat suggests that Kazakhstan does not indeed target putting its use of natural resources under a harsher control. Likewise the OSCE 2011 (point 4) report states that 'existing air pollution norms are economically based and do not encourage pollution reduction'.

On 18 March 2019, Kazakh authorities held the 52nd meeting of the Commission on Cooperation of the Republic of Kazakhstan with international organizations. Deputy Foreign Minister Yerzhan Ashkibayev pointed out that the goal is '…to increase practical benefits of cooperation with international organizations; during the meeting the "proposals of a number of concerned state authorities were considered', and the '…issues related to Kazakhstan's cooperation under the Montreal Protocol to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer were also raised' (mfa.gov.kz). The 'Foreign Policy Concept for 2014-2020' states that 'strengthening international reputation of the state, its increased regional weight and importance for the world…' are the result of Kazakhstan's increased participation in 'world affairs' (mfa.gov.kz).

On April 2014 Kazakh government has ratified the amendments to the Montreal Protocol. The content of the meeting does not target the resolution of environmental issues but rather focuses on how the amendment '…will let small and medium business reduce

financial loss on restriction introduction on consumption of ozone destructive substances' (kaztag.kz). The parliamentary meeting was concluded with the following amendment 'will minimize risks of 'gray' schemes and smuggling, harmonize the national legislation in the CU, Eurasian Economic Commission…' and '…it will promote the concept performance on Kazakhstan transfer to the 'green' economy including attraction of new technologies' (mfa.gov.kz).

The local news agency kaztag.kz, states that '…the government of Kazakhstan has shown open disrespect for its international obligations', '…has been subject to harsh criticism from national and international civic organizations and intergovernmental institutions' (osce.org). Likewise, according to the report on 29th meeting of the parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, Kazakhstan was in non-compliance with the consumption control measures in five consecutive years between 2011 and 2016. Kazakhstan's non-compliance thus "allows for the suspension of specific rights and privileges under the Protocol" (UNEO, OzL.Pro.19, 2017).

According to the 2011 OSCE report, 'Unfortunately, despite criticism from well-known human rights organizations and international institutions, Kazakhstan's compliance with the human right to a healthy environment and the right to access natural resources has remained problematic' (OSCE report 2011, 1). Furthermore, 'Kazakhstan's OSCE Chairmanship has not resulted in anything new in regards to the organization's environmental obligations…', 'Kazakhstan's lack of compliance with the requirements of international environmental protection conventions is a significant problem' (OSCE report 2011, 2). Interestingly, the report also overviews Kazakhstan's non-compliance with the Aarhus Convention (Access to Justice in Environmental Matters). What is important about the convention is that it was signed after the public mobilization, it was '…adopted as a result of citizen appeals to the Aarhus Convention's Compliance Committee' (OSCE report 2011, 3).

This indicates how Kazakhstan hears and validates citizens' voices but still does not do the work. There is a noticeable lack of state environmental policy but what is more obscure is Kazakhstan's open disrespect towards its own international environmental and human rights obligations. This unsurprisingly leads to 'lack of compliance with international and national legislation by authorities at all levels in Kazakhstan' (OSCE report 2011, point 4). Next the report emphasized that even though Kazakhstan is a signatory to numerous environmental agreements and conventions, the state's violations 'have not been adequately reflected in international reports' (OSCE report 2011, point 6)

Likewise, Kazakh officials do not respond to OSCE report on Kazakhstan's non-compliance. The response to OSCE's criticism was given by Zhumageldy Sakenovich Yeluybayev who is the Professor and the President of Kazakhstan Petroleum Lawyers Association. Zhumageldy Yeluybayev is not the representative of the state but makes a critical judgment of what the state has said and done. According to his report, 'in spite of all progressive ideas contained in the current environmental legislation, the law enforcement practice reveals certain gaps and contradictions. The existing system of regulation of environmental issues is justly criticized by the experts and international observers, who note that law and law enforcement practices in Kazakhstan are aimed at punishing a user of natural resources, rather than at restoring and preserving the environment' (zakon.kz).

Kazakhstan's promising policy efforts do not conform to the existing political domestic constraints such as resource nationalism and natural resource trap (Domjan and Stone 2009; Strauss 2000). Nonetheless, the state is still being vocal about its cooperation with international organizations and the importance of complying with the Montreal Protocol. The alternative to the state rhetoric on its environmental initiatives is the perspective of external advisees to the state's environmental foreign policy.

2.5 The Remarks of External Advisers

The ambassador of the European Union Traian Hristea during the roundtable on 'Improvement of the Environment in Astana' in 2018 stated that 'EU has supported and helped promote the Green Economy concept since the 2015 Paris climate summit and we will continue to do this through policy dialogue, expert advice and financial support for targeted investments' (eeas.europa.eu,). This corresponds with Kazakhstan facing '…complex environmental challenges in the areas of water resources, energy, agriculture and industry – sectors which are particularly vulnerable to climate change' (eeas.europa.eu). Yet Traian Hristea later followed up by stating that 'EU decided not to allocate funds directly to Kazakhstan as of 2014' (eeas.europa.eu). It is interesting how the ambassador speaks openly about the numbers: 'EIB signed the loan agreement with DAMU to finance climate change adaptation and mitigation…', '…the EUR 200 million credit line with DAMU will be disbursed in local currency…'; '…another loan agreement signed by EIB in Kazakhstan provides for the EUR 100 million credit to the Agrarian Sector' (eeas.europa.eu). Importantly, the report on the apportionment of the money given to support Kazakhstan's environmental initiatives is nowhere to find.

Baskut Tuncak a special rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes submitted a report after the mission to Kazakhstan between 26 March to 8 April 2015 (United Nations General Assembly). Having interacted with government officials and civilians, Baskut Tuncak came up with the list of comments and recommendations. The report states that Kazakhstan's effort in acknowledging its environmental issues is the first step in improving the situation. Nonetheless, Baskut Tuncak emphasizes that the 'exposure to toxic and heavy metals is an ongoing and serious concern', the rapporteur continues that he '…observed large piles of uncovered waste from a metal processing facility that would likely

contain heavy metals and be easily dispersed by wind…" (Report of the Special Rapporteur, p5). Tuncak noticed a striking level of air pollution, 'he heard testimonies from individuals and community members whose health conditions had been significantly compromised and who, in some case, expressed belief that their lives were endangered owing to the effects of pollution' (Report of the Special Rapporteur, p5).

Rapporteur follows by noting that 'the country does not have a robust system for the sound management of industrial chemicals and pesticides' (Report of the Special Rapporteur, p 6). The point 24 of the report states that 'country has relatively good record of ratification', Kazakhstan made 'strong political commitments' yet it signed only a limited number of treaties and conventions that do not respond to the state issues. Thus, Kazakhstan is a signatory to Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions yet they 'offer protection from a narrow subset of hazardous substances and wastes' (Report of the Special Rapporteur, p8). The Rapporteur is also questioning the Environmental Code of Kazakhstan that was adopted in 2007. According to Baskut Tuncak 'there is a need for careful screening of its various provisions to eliminate gaps and possible discrepancies between its various constituent parts' (Report of the Special Rapporteur, p 9).

Importantly, the Baskut Tuncak's report is followed by the Kazakhstan's government official response. What is more interesting, the Tuncak's report can only be accessed in English, whereas the Kazakhstan government's response to the report can only be accessed in Russian. This raises the question of who the intended audience of the message indeed is. The Kazakhstan government's response was that the special rapporteur's anxiety over the misuse of toxic materials is exaggerated (Comments of Kazakhstan on the report of the Special Rapporteur, p4). The Kazakhstani government's response only emphasized how the state indeed follows the norms of IAEA and does not violate or overlook any of the existing environmental obligations (mfa.gov.kz). The absence of the detailed response to the special

rapporteur's findings is still a response. This supposedly shows how the government neglects the objective criticism and attempts to avoid the dialogue and the resolution of the current environmental issues. Nonetheless, the state responds to Baskut Tuncak in a thorough report that can only be accessed in Russian, which means that the issues are on the table and settling it down is still in priority. Nonetheless, the government's response does not target environmental issues; it is rather a messaging that aims to show how the government is indeed in control of air pollution and human rights to access clean environment.

The issue with Kazakhstan's environmental multi-vectorism, as I understand it, can be summarized as follows. Kazakh authorities only formally emphasize the importance of cooperating with international organizations and the necessity of complying with obligations before international organizations. In practice, Kazakhstan does not comply with its obligations. According to the report on 29th meeting of the parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, Kazakhstan was in non-compliance with the consumption control measures for five consecutive years (between 2011 and 2016). Although, Kazakhstan's non-compliance is permissible, as the Protocol "allows for the suspension of specific rights and privileges" (UNEO, OzL.Pro.19, 2017).

Despite non-compliance government officials and the president remain vocal about Kazakhstan's cooperation with international organizations and the importance of complying with the environmental regime. There is a mismatch between what Kazakhstan say and can indeed do. Kazakhstan's political domestic constraints, such as resource nationalism and the natural resource trap preclude the state from introducing effective environmental management (Domjan and Stone 2009; Strauss 2000).

CHAPTER 3. Domestic Political Constraints are Strong in Kazakhstan

The goal of this chapter is to show how authoritarian regime legitimation allows for reconciliation of the state's obligations before environmental agreements and existing domestic political constraints. Authoritarian legitimation fulfils both elite's rent-seeking and responds to citizens needs. This chapter therefore delves into existing domestic political constraints that make Kazakhstan's environmental foreign policy rhetorical rather than instrumental. The understanding of domestic constraints sheds light on why Kazakhstan is continuously found not to comply with its environmental obligations.

This chapter also contrasts the state's rhetoric on its environmental performance with the reports of external advisers to Kazakhstan's environmental policy. The state's failure to comply with international environmental agreements and initiatives is not mirrored in yearly presidential addresses as they serve a different purpose. Presidential addresses are meant to uphold positive and regime-friendly images without referring to negative international sentiments.

3.1 The Authoritarian Legitimation

The definition of legitimacy emphasizes how 'it takes all citizens in a state as being the relevant subjects of legitimacy'. It means that state legitimacy is the derivative of what citizens think about the efficacy of their government (Gilley 2006, 3-5).Weber (1969, 130-131), on the other hand emphasizes how legitimacy originates in '…virtue of affectual attitudes, especially emotional, legitimizing the validity of what is newly revealed…'. An authoritarian state like Kazakhstan can then plead for emotions and patriotism of its citizens to create a consensus and support for the policies and the regime in general (Kudaibergenova 2018).Civic freedoms are crucial determinants of state legitimacy (Gilley 2006, 12). Likewise in the absence of efficacy in environmental foreign policy, 'affectual attitudes' or civic

freedoms, the Kazakhstani government is compelled to create certain ‘systems of discourse’ and the ‘ways of thinking’ through the medium of presidential speeches to generate public support and eliminate opposition.

International environmental agreements and conventions, international organizations are ‘among the influences on regime transformation’. These organizations exercise their power in different ways (Schatz 2006, 264). Given that Kazakhstan was in non compliance with, for instance, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer in five consecutive years, the Protocol could impose a requisition that ‘allows for suspension of specific rights and privileges’ of a signatory state (UNEO, OzL, Pro. 19, 2017). Prevehouse (2002) argues that, if necessary and prioritized, a state can enhance a reform and keep up with obligations thus surrendering to the powers of international organizations. Nonetheless, Kazakhstan did not sign up for international environmental treaties to ‘accede to western demands about human rights norms and participation in key international institutions’ or to let international organizations constraint its authoritarianism (Schatz 2006, 266). Thus the degree to which environmental treaties and conventions naturalize within the state and become indeed practical is very low. In other words, Kazakhstan’s priority in signing environmental treaties is to keep an eye to both international recognition and, most importantly, regime legitimacy (Collins and Bekenova 2016). It is nonetheless crucial to emphasize that this ‘game’ and its rules ‘are not dictated solely by the big players’ (Collins and Bekenova 2019, 6; Cooley 2012, 9). One of the key players of this ‘game’ is the spectators. According to Collins and Bekenova (2016, 5) spectators ‘observe the state’s role and actions in the game’ and these are ‘the public or society’. Spectator’s appreciation of the state behavior, the success of state policies is critical for a regime to be justified and maintained. In other words, ‘in order to play successfully, state should be confident that the role it chooses to play is at least able to secure its crucial domestic legitimacy’ (Collins and

Bekenova 2016, 5-6). Though, as it was emphasized above, Kazakhstan has been numerously found not to play the 'game' successfully or it has failed to comply with international environmental conventions and treaties. In the given context, the state had to secure its domestic legitimacy by means of reconciling its interests, performance and existing domestic political constraints.

3.2 Rent-Seeking or the Natural Resource Trap

Kazakhstan is the largest Central Asian state, it is rich in both oil and gas and 'one of the key reasons behind the Kazakhstani elite's promotion of its explicitly multivector foreign policy has been its goal of multiplying its pipeline routes and of attracting a diversity of economic investors (Cummings 2005, 3, 75). The ruler, in turn, has to make difficult choices between 'on the one hand, trying to seem fairly democratic and, on the other, effectively quashing political challenges' (Overland 2012, 35). The overall constraints that are created by resource rents repose in 'removing the incentives for elites to develop their country' (Robinson 2006, 447-448). Furthermore, given that elite in Kazakhstan hold essential positions of power the 'occupational boundaries became further blurred' (Cummings 2005, 51).

It then comes as no surprise that there is a gap between what Kazakhstani officials say and do in regards to environmental issue area. There is a disagreement between national law and the international environmental agreements. There is also the absence of feedback mechanisms and regulatory institutions (Sabins-Helf 2003).Furthermore, there is a gap between what the state guarantees to do at first and the state's actual capacity to comply with obligations (Weinthal and Watters 2010, 784). What is more important, there is a critical relationship between elite and a general institutional environment within the state. The absence of feedback mechanisms and regulatory institutions is associated with elite groups or

'various opposites' who 'pulled the state in various directions' (Cummings 2005, 5). The state's capacity to keep up with environmental obligations before both domestic and international audiences therefore is decreased (Umbetaliyeva and Satpayev 2012).

According to Hale (2006), the president unintentionally managed to build a system where elite group's interests override state interests thus creating additional constraints for promoting an effective environmental policy. In other words, the state cannot promote green economy and environment friendly technology without the support of the elites as it is the elite groups who occupy the oil and gas industries. This system creates obstacles for upholding environmental initiatives as elite groups grow powerful enough to limit and endanger both domestic politics and foreign policy making (Berg 2004). The existence of the president's very limited "…inner circle of advisers…" makes it significantly harder to grasp the overall character of the state's environmental foreign policy and it's both focus and intentions (Cummings 2005, 39). Nonetheless, it indicates how elite groups, while occupying critical positions in oil and gas sectors, constraint the state's compliance with environmental treaties and preclude environment from becoming practical.

This exemplifies how third world countries tend to overlook their obligations before international environmental treaties and conventions in the presence of existing domestic political constraints, various opposites and excessive dependence on the extraction of natural resources. The following figure shows how elite system is structured in Kazakhstan and how the president's inner circle of trustees is affiliated with oil and gas industries. This figure indicates three circles of the president's trustees: the national business elite, the regional elite and the technocrats or the professionals (Umbetaliyeva and Satpayev 2012, 83).What is interesting, Kazakhstan is a great example of how oil and gas industries are de-professionalized as it is the businessmen, speakers of the Senate, advisers to the president and the son in law of Nazarbayev. These president's trustees are responsible for managing oil and

gas sectors and are those who bear a substantial degree of responsibility before securing or failing the state's environmental initiatives.

Table 3. Elite Networks in Kazakhstan

Name	Political Position	Business Interests
Kulibayev, Timur and Nazarbayeva, Dariga	Kulibayev was adviser to the president in 2005	Oil, banking and communications sectors
Ryskaliyev, Bergei	Head of the regional administration, Atyrau	Oil and gas production
Kusherbayev, Krymbek	Head of the regional administration, Mangistau	Oil and gas production
Abykayev, Nurtai	Speaker of the Senate (2004-7), deputy foreign minister (2008-10)	Metals and energy sectors
Kalmursayev, Sarbai	Chief of staff of the president	Oil and gas production
Balgimbayev, Nurlan	Adviser of the president	Kazakhstan Oil Investment Company
Utemuratov, Bulat	Adviser of the president	Banks and mineral sector

Source: (Cummings, 2005)

Bueno De Mesquita and J. Ray (2001, 10-13) state that a leader in non-democratic or authoritarian regime tends to allow his foreign policy decision making process be interfered by domestic actors who can uphold his political power. The Institute of Research on Contemporary Political Issues in Moscow has published the study that shows how Kazakhstan's business groups extract benefits from the natural resources and influence the overall policy making. Thereby according to the study, the "oil group" is headed by the former president's son-in-law who controls the Northern Kazakhstan's largest oil refinery

(Dave 2007, 148-149). In this context, the "hidden agenda lurking" becomes less hidden as it is somewhat evident how clientilistic networks empower and support elite groups in their quest for the profit.

The elite's rent seeking and profit from the exploitation of natural resources is referred as the resource nationalism. Domjan and Stone (2010, 2, 15) point out that Kazakhstan "…focuses on economic growth and development as a basis for strengthening the political legitimacy of the ruling elite" and it all by means of extracting and exploiting natural resources. This is the resource nationalism or the "wide range of strategies that domestic elites employ in order to increase their control of natural resources" (Domjan and Stone 2010, 4). It is worth emphasizing that in the context of Kazakhstan, resource nationalism is driven by elites' desire to legitimize their rule and it is also meant to improve their economic standing (Bremmer and Johnston 2009). While Kazakhstan sticks to its multi-vector foreign policy, signs environmental agreements and "balances oil and gas concessions among foreign powers", it still fails to build a capacity to uphold obligations, reverse the de-professionalization of oil and gas sectors, take elite's rent-seeking under a stricter control to eventually respond to the state's obligations before international environmental treaties and conventions (Domjan and Stone 2010).

Sabonis-Helf first, elaborates how the absence of effective domestic institutions constraints the fulfillment of environmental obligations. Sabonis-Helf (2003,167) states how in the absence of effective and credible domestic institutions and a valid competition for power, but in the presence of numerous risks and uncertainties, the promotion of environmental values becomes complicated. Umbetaliyeva and Satpayev (2012, 73, 78) state that in Kazakhstan, "…politics became a profitable business…" and the power lies in the hands of the, now former, president's inner circle where family members manifestly claim for power. Kuzsnir (2012, 102) agrees with abovementioned authors in stating that Kazakhstan

has a "…personalized system of rule…" that rests on the "…informal structure of power that is not founded on an institutional distribution of authority…".

The loophole in Kazakhstan's policy making or the missing link between policy making and effective resolution of the environmental issue is the absence of transparent institutions that could ensure the control over elite's access to power (Bhattacharyya and Hodler 2010). Sabonis-Helf (2003) puts a great emphasis on the importance of effective and credible domestic institutions that would encourage environmental policy making and control the implementation of policies in practice. The absence of such institutions and elite's rent seeking are the domestic constraint that disturb the policy content and precludes environmental issues from moving to a forefront of the state's policy making.

3.3 Legitimation through the Discursive Efforts

Kazakhstan has experienced no significant public contentions before the deadly clashes in Zhanaozen in 2011. Five years later, public unrest instigated the protests against the land reform. High rates of unemployment, economic inequality, enchained freedom of speech and poverty have been the catalysts for the dissatisfaction with the government. During the period of clashes between the government and citizens, and protests the 'regime legitimacy might falter if the country continued to experience and economic downturn' (Omelicheva 2016, 9-11). Therefore the state is now being careful in choosing language while speaking to its citizens. Likewise, 'Nazarbayev has been careful to avoid the language of socio-economic equality reminiscent of Soviet times. Instead, his rhetoric has invoked equality of economic opportunity and opportunities of employment' (Omelicheva 2016, 11).

Schatz and Maltseva (2012, 45-46) argue that if Kazakhstani government 'cannot shape the political field through their discursive efforts, soft authoritarian regime will fall'. Likewise, presidential addresses devote significant attention to upholding positive images

about the state's cooperation with international organizations; promote patriotic sentiments and skips the negative international record of the government's performance. A dominant presidential discourse legitimizes the state regime as the rhetoric '…enables a social actor to influence asymmetrically the decisions of other social actors in ways that favor the empowered actor's will, interests, and values' (Castells 2013, 9-10). Following that, legitimacy in the context of Kazakhstan is the 'discursive presentation of a given political system and its ruling administration as the most appropriate or proper ones for the society' (Omelicheva 2016, 4). On contrary, the Western political thought puts an emphasis on citizens' actual participation in politics. According to Dawisha (1985, 4) '…by facilitating the participation of the citizen in the body politics, the institutions become in a sense the symbols of system legitimacy' and 'the means by which citizens show their acceptance of the political system'.

Given that Kazakhstani government prevents citizens from being integrated in the state's political life, the government has intentionally 'eschewed coercion in favour of persuasion in part ironically because of the perception of weakness that the use of violence may engender among important observers' (Collins and Bekenova 2016, 7). The state also tends to eliminate the voices that are "…inimical to the authority of Nazarbayev personally and the interests of his inner circle of family…" (Dave 2007, 148). In this context, elites remain unpunished for their rent-seeking and keep on 'crafting new foreign policies and anchoring their borders' (Cummings 2012, 62). Whereas, citizens become the target of the state's rhetorical machine.

Possession of immense natural resources and commitment to environmental treaties impose burdens. This is one of the possible explanations for why Kazakhstan initiates the "Up to 2030" Plan and "Green Economy Plan until 2050" that are meant to build an effective regulatory framework to address environmental concerns (policy.asiapacificenergy.org).

There is no single justification for a state legitimacy; therefore Kazakhstan resorted to multiple tactics. The state signed environmental treaties, introduced the 'Green' plans in order to create 'discursive representation of its rule as legitimate'. Kazakhstan uses its multi-vector foreign policy and successful ratification of treaties as testimony of its international recognition (Omelicheva 2016, 5).Following that, According to Omelicheva (2013; 2016, 9), 'external' legitimation of the state regime before the domestic audience has been the president's '…main discursive currency from the 2000s on'.

Yet the state's attempts to address environmental issue still remain inconclusive. Luong and Weinthal (1999) call Kazakhstan's environmental initiatives the "democratic goals and non-democratic outcomes". Furthermore, the state limits local non-governmental organizations in their participation in the environmental policy making this is why "…many NGOs are actually shrinking rather than growing…" (Luong and Weinthal 1999, 1267, 1275). Kazakhstan seems to limit citizenry's participation in the environmental sector and thus spurs additional questions on whether it really does care about addressing environmental concerns or not.

Furthermore, according to Luong and Weinthal (1999, 1275), Kazakhstan's domestic audience relationship with the state and elites reposes on distrust, thus "…many Kazakhstanis are skeptical that the current leadership will address these problems…". Likewise, according to the World Values Survey, domestic audience in Kazakhstan or almost 44,7% of the population are either very interested or somewhat interested in politics (2010-2014). This means that citizens are eager to participate or at least have a general understanding of what the government is saying and indeed doing. This implies that citizens do indeed have the incentives to coordinate or punish the government (Weeks 2008, 37). Luong and Weinthal's (1999) overviewed the situation twenty years ago, yet the distrust between citizenry and the government still persists. Thus, 745 out of 1500 respondents have a low or a very low level of

trust in Kazakh police (WVS, 2010-2014). Importantly, even if citizens do have the incentives to punish the leaders it does not guarantee them the means to do it.

Despite Kazakhstan being an authoritarian state, it cannot rely at coercive measures of inducing and controlling its domestic audience (Kotkin 1995). Kotkin (1995) elaborates that authoritarianism can be sustained by means of coercion, yet coercion is not the only tool by which authoritarian rulers remain in power. Therefore, Kazakh government is found to engage in a discursive preemption with its citizens. Discursive preemption is a non coercive measure of legitimizing the state rule by means of fostering regime-friendly images. In other words, it advances state legitimacy before the domestic audience without resorting to power (Schatz 2009, 50-52). This is done by means of rhetorical manipulation of the foreign policy that can be observed in yearly presidential addresses (Anceschi 2014, 745).A rhetorical manipulation of the foreign policy by the Kazakhstani government is meant to achieve 'a degree of popular legitimacy' that allows rulers to avoid a constant concern with potential resistance and rebellion' (Schatz 2017, 51). The government uses discursive preemption as it has a deep knowledge of 'the field of actors' (Schatz 2008, 61). The discursive preemption between the government and the governed is well articulated in the president's yearly addresses to the people of Kazakhstan. Schatz (2008) calls Kazakhstan the soft authoritarian states that relies more on persuasion of its domestic audience rather than on coercion. Kazakhstan '…packages information, fosters regime-friendly images and propagates narratives about public life to advance its legitimacy claims'(Schatz 2008, 52). This information is 'packaged' for the domestic audience, likewise it is the domestic audience that gets 'persuaded' by the message, and eventually upholds the elite legitimacy. This is not surprising as 'the presidential discourse resonates with people's beliefs…' (Omelicheva 2016, 12).

What is more interesting, Schatz (2008) finds intrinsic links between how transnational image making spills over into the domestic audience. Thus, '…international

perceptions and image making may spill over into domestic discursive space in unpredictable and unmanageable ways' (Schutz 2008, 52). Schutz's (2008, 53) furthermore notes that 'image makers seek to undercut the plausibility of alternative narratives'. Thus, the local news coverage of Kazakhstan's environmentalism or the presidential addresses are usually positive with an emphasis on international cooperation, with yet no straightforward actions plan. Since the regime has the 'discursive upper hand', there is a necessity at looking how environment is being delivered to different audiences with an emphasis on the domestic audience (Schatz 2008, 57-58).

Cummings (2006, 178), on the other hand, looks at how legitimation, self-legitimation and identification all played a crucial role in 'cultivating elite identities'. This sheds a light at the relationships between ruler and the led and how a ruler manages to rule for the sake of preserving his powers. Cummings (2006, 180-181) emphasizes how the government uses 'ceremonies, pictures, and words…; elaborate rituals, icons, and symbols…' in order to formally identify themselves in the process of identification. Following that, the speeches given by Kazakh officials may be the attempts of the government to identification and legitimation. Furthermore, Kazakh government engages in all three methods of legitimation: ceremonial, pictorial and verbal (Cummings 2006, 182). Marat (2009) agrees that Kazakh government made an effort to identify themselves, or build a definite image, before both international and domestic audiences. This was meant to build elite prestige, seek support and claim the regard and respect. Likewise Kazakhstan has a limited control over what information or an image about the state will spread around the international audience. Yet it has a control over what is being told and how it is been presented to the domestic audience (Marat 2009).

The abovementioned section emphasizes how Kazakh government and elite engage in different ways of legitimation of their power before the domestic audience. Kazakhstani

government perceives its domestic audience as an important target of both domestic and foreign policy messaging. In such a context, the importance of preserving a positive image before international community becomes less significant than preserving a positive image coupled with a popular legitimacy before the domestic audience – elite and citizens. Weeks (2008) fills in the gap by arguing that authoritarian or nondemocratic leaders can be held domestically accountable or can incur a penalty from domestic audience for, for instance, escalating a foreign policy crisis and then backing down. Likewise the president notes that 'Unless the people have confidence and trust in their Government, they will not support their Government. We have seen that most clearly recently in certain Asian countries, where remote autocratic Governments lost public confidence' (presidential address 1998).

Following that, domestic audience can sanction their leader for something they view inappropriate. Another issue is whether domestic audience has the means to sanction an authoritarian leader. On the one hand, individuals may hide away their preferences. On the other hand, individuals may fear retribution from a leader for evincing counteraction. This fear increases with the increase in leader's ability to monitor and punish (Weeks 2008, 39).

Even if in fact voicing opposition in authoritarian regime does not happen often, the understanding of such consequences by the leader might put domestic audience in a position more valuable for the state than international audience. One of the ways in which Kazakhstani government prevented potential non-compliance with its policy agenda was putting a great emphasis on glorification of the state's foreign-policy. This is the state's strategy 'instrumental in the advancement of an identity centered on sovereignty'. Following that, the foreign policy rhetoric was used to promote the cult of the President through a propagandistic framework of speeches, addresses to the people of Kazakhstan (Ansechi 2014, 746). According to Anceschi (2014, 747), the state established a rhetorical construct that allowed for altering individuals' identities and advance a 'leadership-centric identity'. The Kazakh

government resorted to utilization of symbols to create a particular type of collective consciousness. According to Aydingun (2008, 143), ‘The Kazakh state symbols can be said to have an ethno-national character at first sight because some Kazakh folkloric materials are used’. These folkloric materials are seen in the presidential addresses as they consistently uphold the images of snow leopard and golden eagle. The golden eagle, for instance, is represented on the Kazakhstani flag and is meant to ‘concretize the abstract notion of the nation’ (Motyl 2001, 164). The golden eagle is the ‘universal symbol of all gods’ and is ‘referring to nomadic culture and to the Kazakh tradition of hunting’ (Aydingun 2008, 145). As Laruelle (2014, 2) exemplifies, it is the state attempts to promote ‘Kazakhness’ as this narrative is consistently cultivated in presidential speeches. Kazakhness is delivered in various ways including the referral to the images drawn from nomadic heritage (Laruelle 2014, 3-4).

CHAPTER 4. Research Design

This chapter includes theory and hypothesis. Likewise it discusses how Kazakhstan utilized its environmental foreign policy to resolve issues other than environmental degradation. Kazakhstan utilized its environmental rhetoric and foreign policy in general to create targeted narratives that promote regime-friendly images. Then the chapter delves into the research methodology and data. There it overviews how I applied both qualitative and quantitative research methods to answer proposed research questions.

Theory

Kazakhstan's failure to uphold its environmental 'multi-vectorism' through building an explicit action plan is the derivative of domestic political constraints, and a failure to build a capacity and institutions to adhere to environmental obligations. Whereas, Kazakhstan's eagerness to join international environmental treaties and conventions is the state's attempts to promote regime-friendly images, put an emphasis on productive cooperation with international organizations, to eventually solidify the state legitimacy.

The presidential addresses, in turn, are the medium through which the government creates and promotes concepts and doctrines, therefore delivering messages by means of presidential addresses can be regarded as a practice of exercising power (Zaleska 2012).

Presidential addresses display that environmental issues are not indeed on the forefront of the state policy agenda, it is rather economic prosperity based on the extraction of natural resources and social well being. The sentiments on environmental cooperation 'internalized the criteria of a globalized nation'; the presidential addresses likewise are 'playing up its transnational potential and unabashedly embracing architectural modernity' (Laruelle 2014, 1-2). Therefore, by voicing environmental initiatives, on the one hand, and by upholding the positive images and sentiments, on the other hand, the Kazakh government manages to create

a hybrid state identity. First, is the modern state with a multi-vector foreign policy that is based on pragmatic principles of cooperation. Second, is the identity of Kazakh people who do not voice opposition as the regime rhetoric resonates with their beliefs (Anscechi 2014). To be more precise, the state's environmental rhetoric attempts to balance between the interests of different domestic actors including elite and citizens. This is meant to reconcile domestic tensions through creating targeted narratives that would promote and highlight the 'progressive personalization of the agency of Kazakhstani foreign policy' (Anscheci 2014, 745).

'Neither purely domestic nor a purely international analysis' could account for the state's decision-making (Putnam 1988, 430). It is crucial to explore Kazakhstan's foreign policy decision-making in light of the existing domestic political constraints as the states usually aim to 'reconcile domestic and international imperatives simultaneously' (Putnam 1988, 460).The main concepts I am looking at are the message to domestic audience, ideological and instrumental contents of the state's foreign policy. The concepts that are of no less importance are the following: elite legitimacy, mass legitimacy and mass dissatisfaction. Studying Kazakhstan's foreign policy outside of the context of domestic political constraints is not fruitful. Thus, additional concepts are: Kazakhstan's multi-vectorism, domestic political constraints, resource nationalism or the natural resource trap.

The main concept which is the message to the domestic audience is going to be measured in president's annual addresses to the people of Kazakhstan. My research questions are: Why Kazakhstan is a signatory to a list of environmental treaties, but is continuously found not to comply? Why is Kazakhstan vocal about its environmental initiatives? What are the domestic political constraints? Who is the intended audience of Kazakhstan's well-stated environmental rhetoric?

Hypothesis 1: Domestic political constraints preclude Kazakhstan's environmentalism from being instrumental rather than rhetorical.

*Hypothesis 2:*Kazakhstan's environmental foreign policy is targeting domestic audience rather than international audience.

*Hypothesis 3:*Kazakhstan's environmental multi-vectorism is a tool to legitimize state authority by means of upholding regime-friendly images.

The emphasis is on the message to domestic audience as the international audience is sometimes too broad to define precisely (Marat 2009, 4). Domestic audience in Kazakhstan is both elites and citizens and the necessity to balance between both groups is what makes environmentalism not instrumental. A number of authors, including Cummings (2003, 2005) analyze Kazakhstan's 'content of foreign policy' in regards to environment, through delving into the speeches and public statements of the former president or governmental officials. Cummings (2005, 83, 94) states that it is usually unclear whether Kazakhstan's 'ideological' constituents of the state foreign policy indeed outweigh 'non-ideological pragmatic statements'. The analysis by means of studying speeches has its own limitations, but it is most appropriate in evaluating the message.

Kazakhstan is now a signatory for more than 30 environmental treaties (sud.gov.kz). This is the indication of Kazakhstan's interest in cooperating with international organizations and upholding environmental activism. Yet a more elaborate study of the state's 'environmental multi-vectorism' demonstrates how Kazakhstan's environmental 'multi-vectorism' or environmental rhetoric is instrumental by a narrow margin. According to Weinthal (1999), Kazakhstan's environmental initiatives are 'democratic goals and non-democratic outcomes'. Thereby, 29th meeting of the parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer found Kazakhstan's non-compliance with the

treaties to which it is a signatory. Kazakhstan was in non-compliance if five consecutive years between 2011 and 2016 (UNEO).

Kazakhstan's foreign policy is grounded on 'pragmatic and non-ideological foundation'. The 'pragmatic' and 'non-ideological' constituents of the state's foreign policy, while being abstract and non-transparent, are still one of the main pillars of Kazakhstan's 'multi-vectorism' (Hanks 2009, 257-258). According to the minister of foreign affairs 'Kazakhstan's foreign policy will focus on the principles of pragmatism and apply a differentiated and multi-level approach to interaction with foreign countries and international organizations' (mfa.gov.kz, 2018). The rhetoric of Kazakhstan being 'multi-vector' and Kazakhstan being 'green' go hand in hand. This is how, I suppose, Kazakhstan's environmental multi-vectorism comes into play. I also argue that Kazakhstan's environmental multi-vectorism is a message to both domestic and international audiences.

Thuswise the state's environmental multi-vectorism encompasses Kazakhstan's 'recognizing the importance of natural resources conservation and its obligations to the international community', but does not yield instrumental results (UNDPKAZ 2014, UNEO). One of the limitations of the research on Kazakhstan's multi-vectorism and foreign policy is the absence of detailed analysis since the mid 1990' (Hanks 2009, 257). According to Weiner (1985) Kazakhstan's failure to comply with obligations before international environmental treaties and the Protocol is common for third world states 'loud rhetoric and inefficient action plan' dynamic. This dynamic finds its justification in Kazakhstan's domestic political constraints. Domjan and Stone (2009) and Strauss (2000) argue that Kazakhstan's environmental initiatives are not instrumental due to 'resource nationalism' and a 'natural resource trap'. 'Resource nationalism' prevents environmental initiatives from being instrumental due to elites' control and abuse of natural resources, or as for Domjan and Stone (2009, 38) it is the 'wide range of strategies that domestic elites employ in order to increase

their control of natural resources'. 'Natural resource trap', on the other hand, is the overall dependency of the state on the benefits that come from the extraction and exploitation of natural resources. These domestic constraints may, to some degree, justify Kazakhstan's well-stated environmental rhetoric that is not followed by an elaborate action plan.

Research Methodology

Let me now discuss the research design and the tools I used for data collection such as both qualitative and quantitative research methods which are described below. This thesis focuses on how Kazakhstani government utilized environmental policy as a foreign policy tool. Thuswise I first produced process tracing, on the basis of available literature and documents, as it is helpful in uncovering the dynamics and correlation between domestic political constraints and Kazakhstan's non-compliance with its environmental obligations. In process tracing, I first found the list of Kazakhstan's environmental conventions and agreements. Then I checked whether Kazakhstan keeps up with its environmental obligations by delving into the reports of international organizations. Besides discovering the reports of international organizations, I also delved in the reports of external advisers to Kazakhstan environmental legislation. This all was contrasted to the local news coverage of the same events. The discrepancies between how international organizations and Kazakh government evaluate the state's environmental performance, suggest that environmental foreign policy indeed targets the domestic audience.

To analyze and conceptualize the government's environmental messaging to domestic audience, I studied yearly presidential addresses to the people of Kazakhstan. Therefore, I used R software, a quanteda package, to analyze the message covered in the presidents' yearly addresses to the people of Kazakhstan. The analysis of the presidential addresses is essentially a text analysis similar to what Peacock et al (2019) have done with boilerplates in

international trade agreements. In Peacock et al (2019), boilerplate is referred as a standard form of words or 'a nearly identical language across clauses or agreements'. In case of Kazakhstan, the standard form of referring to environmental issues in presidential addresses is different from the ways they are referred at the international level. Since presidential addresses target the domestic audience, I take environmental messaging in presidential addresses as if it entails a 'hard law' which means that the messaging can be legally enforced (Peacock et al 2019, 3-5).

The other issue is whether messaging indeed yields legal enforcement of what has been said. Importantly, 'boilerplating' or using standard forms of words or nearly identical language, 'lowers costs of implementation and compliance insofar as it creates uniformity among clauses…' (Peacock et al 2019, 3). This uniformity and standardized ways of referring to environmental issues may be the reason why Kazakhstan's environmentalism remains practical by a narrow margin. Furthermore, boilerplating in Kazakhstani context is the state's consistent attempts to identity redefinition channeled through the yearly presidential addresses. This message has a propagandistic character and aims at 'advancing civic identity hinged around the notion of sovereign, if multi-ethnic, statehood – centered attention on the substantive policies implemented externally by Kazakhstan' (Anscechi 2014, 734-735).

In order to study environmental messaging, I analyzed 18 presidential addresses between 1997 and 2019 that are available on the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Importantly, the official website of Akorda presents different information on the yearly presidential addresses. Akorda.kz which is the official site of the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan displays 22 presidential addresses instead of 18 that are available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Thuswise, I produce two different analyses of presidential addresses from both of the websites to identify whether the environmental rhetoric changes or not. The analysis of the

presidential addresses is done to uncover the ways in which the messaging and the focus on environmentalism has shifted and changed throughout the years in comparison to other issue areas. Furthermore, it helps to trace how the Kazakh government used the presidential addresses to exploit propagandistic exploitation of the state's foreign policy. Furthermore, the analysis of the presidential addresses sheds light on how the environmental rhetoric and the emphasis on cooperation with international organizations were used to promote regime-friendly images.

Following that, to obtain 18 tables of most frequently used words in presidential addresses, I used R software, a quanteda package. First, I converted the addresses into txt format. Thus, I had 18 separate txt files for each presidential address. Second step was to get rid of punctuation marks, capital letters and words such as 'в', 'Kazakhstan' and 'country' in the txt files. After this, I removed all the stop words or sets of commonly used words in English because they bear no empirical importance for this study. These stop words are: where, when, open, above. In addition to stop words, I removed words that are common in presidential addresses such as Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan's, Nurly and Zhol. Having done the data processing described above, I found frequencies of words for each text and then found 25 most frequently used words in each presidential address.

Finally, I plotted words' frequency in each presidential address using a plot function. The same procedure was conducted on 22 presidential addresses from the official website of the president of the Republic of Kazakhstan. There I choose 40 most frequently used words in each presidential address, and then checked the second 40 most frequently used words in the same addresses. Likewise, I build a second line graph that shows what words and how frequently they were used throughout the years the presidential addresses were published.

Data

This research builds on publicly available data such online interviews (audio and visual materials and podcasts), officials' public speeches, the World Values Survey Database, the World Factbook (CIA) library, the reports and sources from UNDP, UNEP, OSCE, WHO, domestic documents and a number of reports such as Environment Action Plan, Strategic Plan 'Up to 2030', UNEP report on Environmental Programme – Twenty-Ninth Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, OECD Project on Reforming Kazakhstan. To evaluate citizens' eagerness to participate or at least have a general understanding of what the government is saying and doing, I referred to World Value Survey. To evaluate the messaging to domestic audience, I turn to presidential yearly address to the people of Kazakhstan. I delve into the yearly presidential addresses to the people of Kazakhstan to investigate the dynamics of government's focus, grasp the general tone of the address and evaluate whether the issues of environmental degradation, citizens' well-being and foreign policy contradict or supplement each other. This data comes from the official state websites such as mfa.gov.kz and akorda.press.

CHAPTER 5. Discussion of the Findings

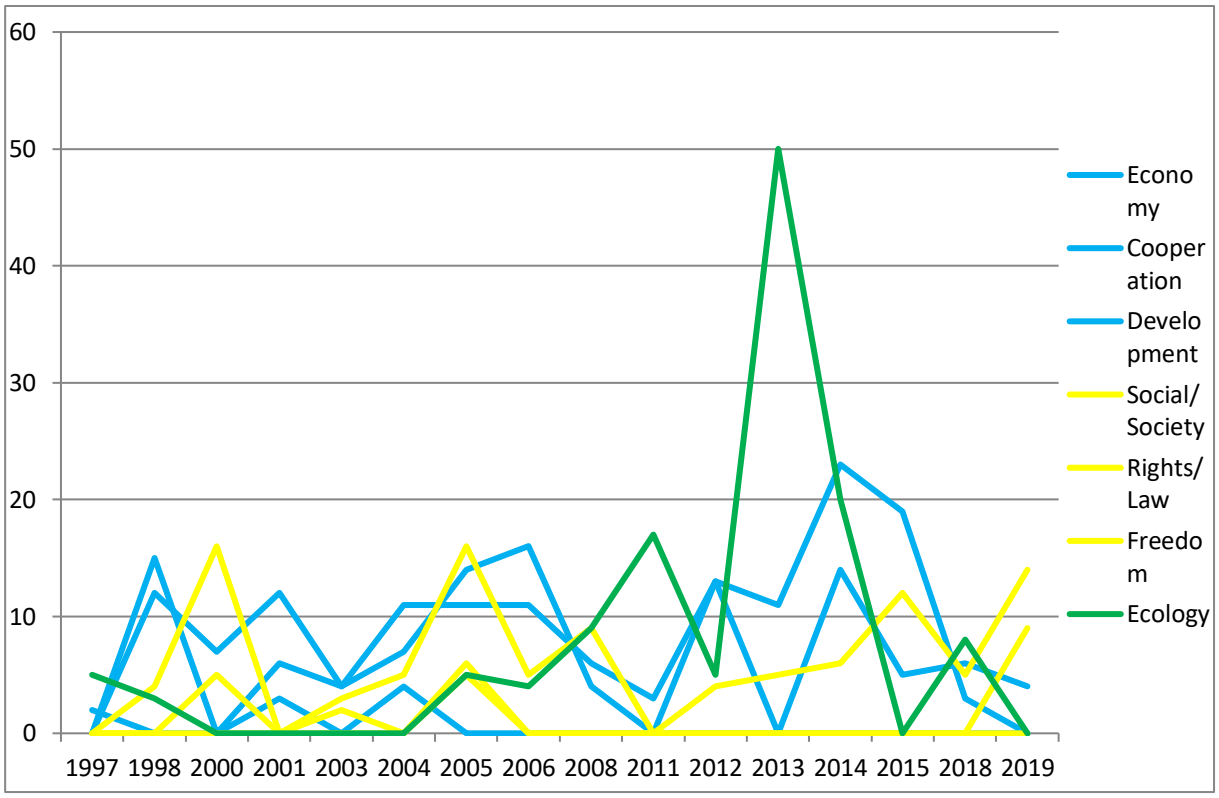
The below line graph illustrates how the number of times a word, or a group of words, was mentioned in a given presidential address and how it changed over time. Likewise the line graph gives an overview of the dynamics and the trends in the presidential addresses between 1997 and 2019. I divided the words, therethrough the messaging, into 3 categories in different colors. Likewise economy, cooperation and development are in the first group and are in blue color. The words social, society, rights and law are in the second group and are represented by a yellow line. The last group is comprised of every word that is somehow related to environment and ecology, this group is in green. The most frequently used words that are regarded as 'environment' and 'ecology' are: energy, gas, water, drinking, resources, nuclear, natural, oil and waste. The x-axis of the line graph is the timeline, whereas the y-axis shows how frequently these words were mentioned.

Overall, while words in blue and yellow categories do not show an impetuous increase in the times they are mentioned throughout the years, the words in 'ecology' group show a considerable spike between 2012 and 2015. What is more interesting, the topics correlated with economy, cooperation, development from the first group, and the topics correlated with the words social, society, law and freedom from the second group were mentioned consistently throughout the years. Whereas, the words such as environment and ecology were not mentioned consistently. The only spike in mentioning environmental issues was between 2012 and 2015. The particular presidential address that resulted in a spike shown on the line graph is the 'Strategy 2050' that was proposed in December of 2012.

The spike is followed by an abrupt decrease in environmental messaging as seen on the line graph. It means that the Kazakh government puts a greater emphasis on environmentalism only in delivering the upcoming state strategy. Given the sharp decrease after the spike, it becomes evident that the interest in delivering environmentalism outside of

the 2050 strategy is not in the state priority. In other words, environmentalism is strong and loud in planning, but not in practice.

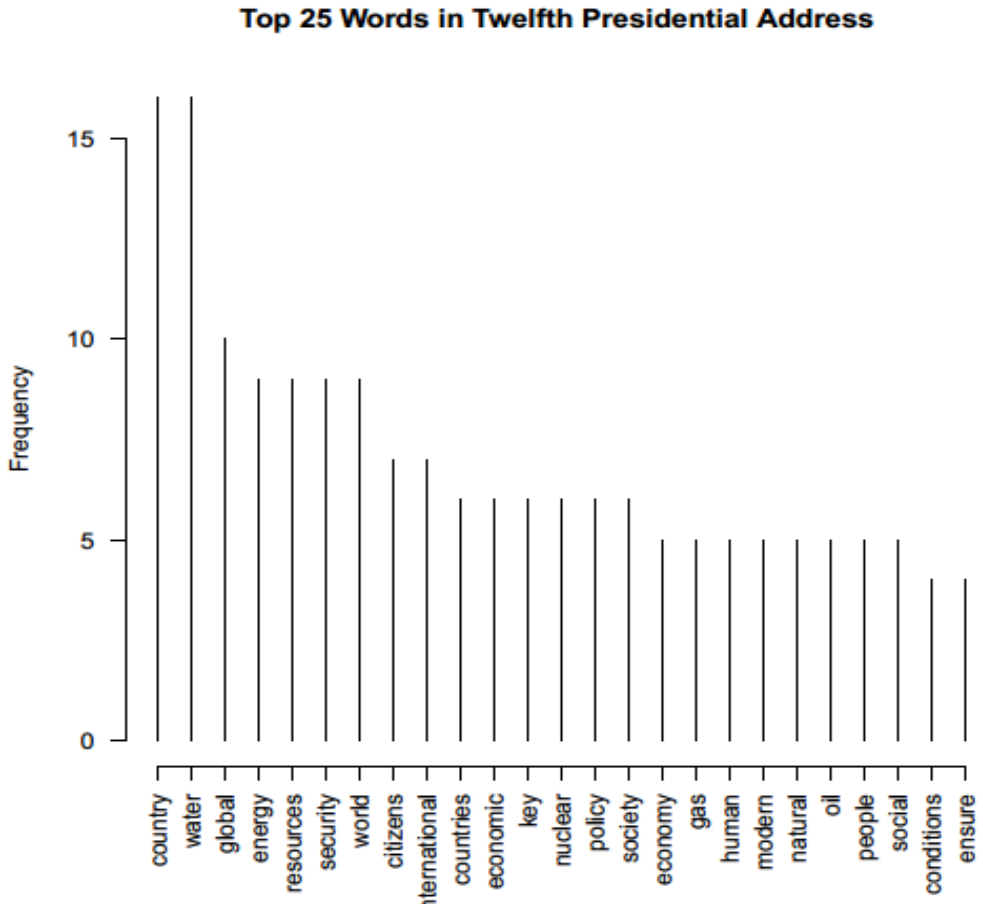
Figure 1. The frequency of words used in the presidential addresses published in mfa.kz



The 12th presidential address in December 2012 that introduces the strategy 2050 lays out ten global challenges of the 21st century: ‘Ten global challenges of the 21 century: accelerating course of history, global demographic imbalance, global food security threat, the water shortage, energy security, the exhaustion of natural resources, industrial revolution, growing social instability, crisis of our civilization's values and a new global destabilization’.

The figure 6 shows that the word ‘water’ in 12th presidential address in December 2012 was mentioned more than 15 times, and the words ‘energy’ and ‘resources’ were mentioned 9 times, and the words ‘gas’ and ‘oil’ were mentioned each 5 times . In contrast to previous presidential addresses, the attention given to environment related issue areas is high. Thus, the spike which is shown on the previous figure. The next figure shows how this change after the ‘Strategy 2050’ has been delivered.

Figure 2. The frequency of words in the 12th presidential address



The president sees the exhaustion of natural resources as a challenging issue of the 21st century; therefore the president exemplifies that 'Kazakhstan also faces an acute water supply issue. We lack high-quality drinking water'; A number of regions face drinking water scarcity'. The access to quality water and drinking is the right of the domestic audience to a healthy environment; given its importance, this message has been numerously delivered and put on forward. Nonetheless, the consequent presidential addresses do not account for the progress that has been done to improve the access to clean water. Therethrough, the abrupt drop in how often the state discusses water related issues. Next, the president adds: 'The era of hydrocarbon economy is coming to its end. We face the beginning of a new era where human activities will be based not so much on oil and gas, but on renewable energy sources'. This does not target the general domestic audience or the citizens, but those who are

accountable for extraction of resources or who occupy the oil and gas sector – elites (Cummings 2005). What is more interesting, he follows up by stating that: 'Kazakhstan's oil and gas complex remains the powerhouse of our economy, which facilitates growth of other sectors'. There the president acknowledges the state's dependency on natural resources, when coupled with the consistent and frequent mentioning of economic matters, it validates that state's economy does not prosper without extraction and abuse of oil and gas. In light of this dependency and elite's rent-seeking, environmental matters become less significant. This confirms the first hypothesis where Kazakhstan's domestic political constraints preclude environmentalism from being instrumental rather than rhetorical. In other words, the state has to balance between the needs of its citizens or their rights to access clean drinking water, and elite's rent-seeking and their abuse of natural resources.

Figure 3. The frequency of words in the 13th presidential address

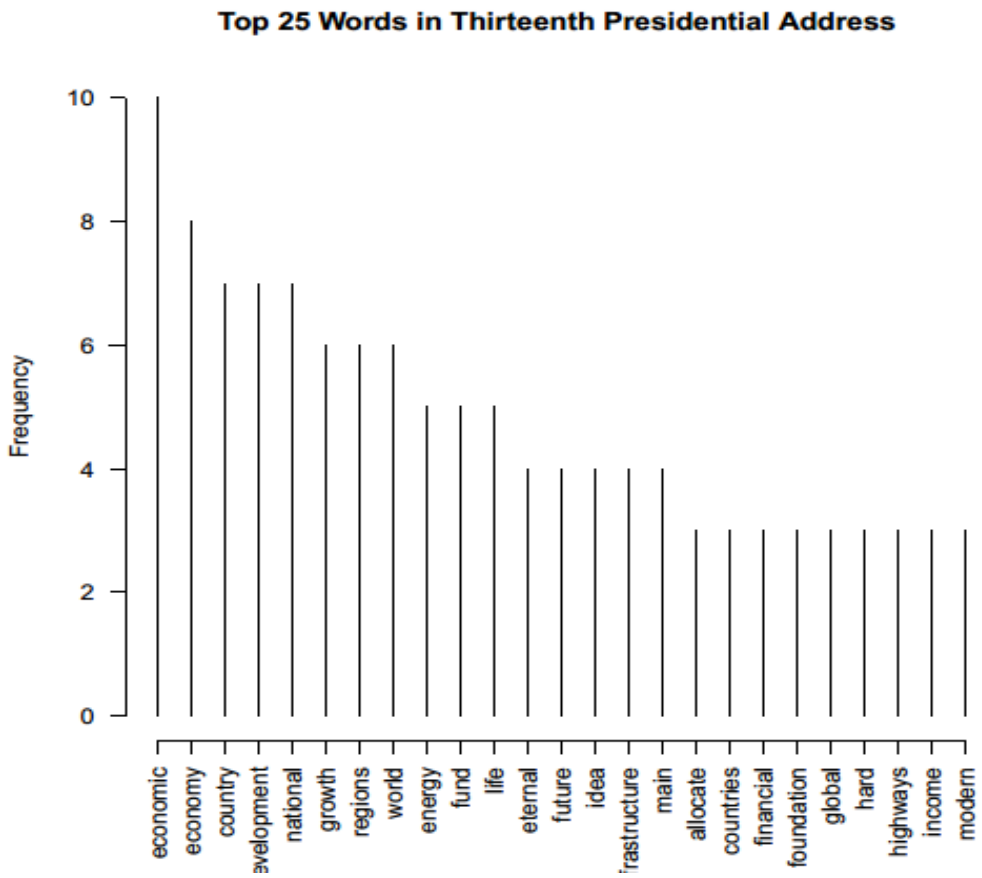
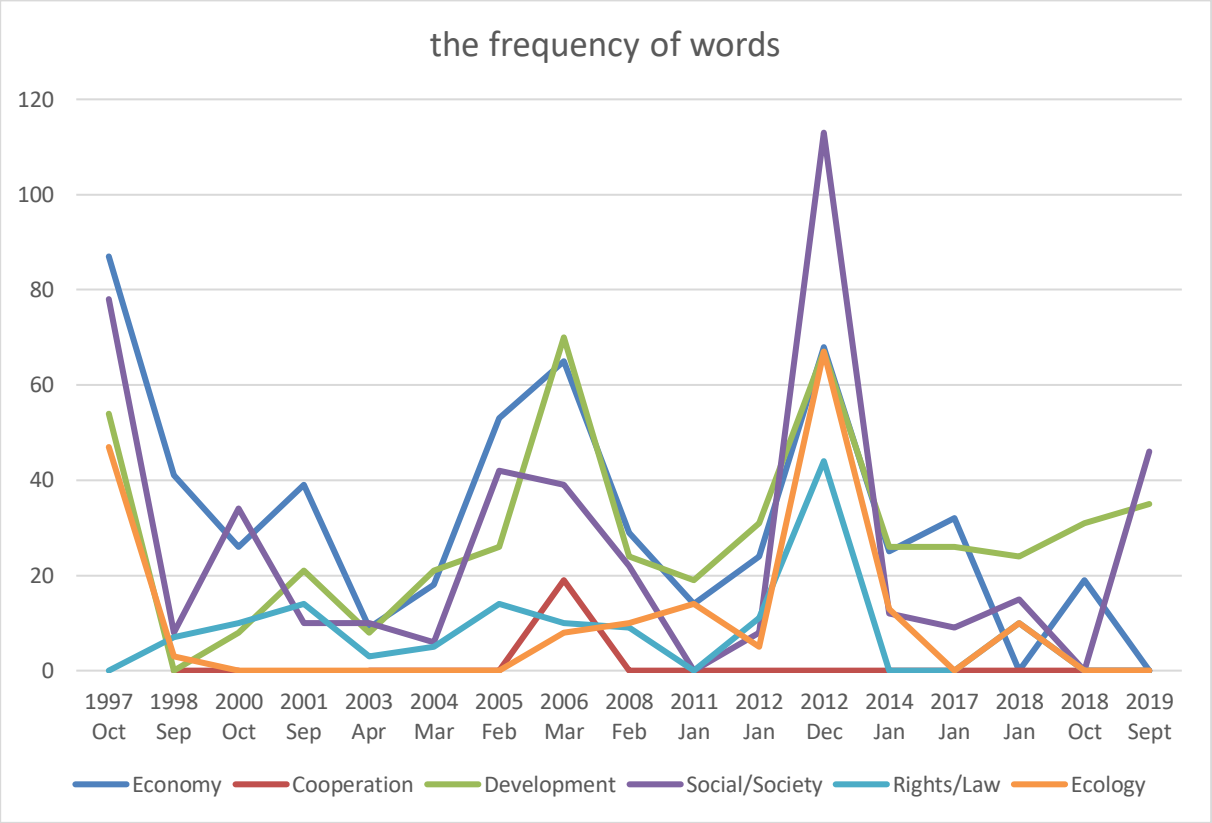


Figure 4. The frequency of words in the presidential addresses published in akorda.kz



This line graph displays the similar trends shown in the figure 5. This time, the line graph illustrates the frequency of additional words such as 'cooperation' and 'development'. The words grouped under the 'ecology' are marked in orange, and as seen from the line graph, follow the similar pattern as the words grouped under 'cooperation' marked in red. Interestingly, the words from both groups either completely neglected, or not mentioned, like between 1998-2005 and between 2008-onwards, or show up in a speedy increase like between 2005-2008 or between 2012-2014.

Environmentalism in Kazakhstan is usually brought up along with cooperation with international organization, which is the foundational to the state's multi-vector foreign policy. The trends on the line graph show otherwise. The spikes in orange do not correspond with the spikes in red. It implies that the rhetoric on environmentalism does not always go with the sentiments on cooperation with international organizations. This somewhat disproves the fact

that Kazakhstan's environmentalism is the part of the state's multi-vector foreign policy. In contrast to 'cooperation' and 'ecology', other words are mentioned consistently. \

The only difference between the figure 5 and the figure 8 is the group of words that account for the most abrupt spike. On figure 5 the words under the group 'ecology' account for the spike between 2012-2015 with the frequency around 50 mentions. Whereas on the figure 8 the words under the group 'social/society', including 'people' and 'public', account for the spike between 2012-2014 with the frequency more than 100 mentions.

The presidential addresses are meant to deliver the same message, though these line graphs show otherwise. The first line graph summarizes the presidential addresses from the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Whereas, the second line graph summarizes the presidential addresses from the official website of the president – akorda.kz. It is evident that two sources deliver different messages. The first one indicates that ecology was mentioned more times than 'economy' and 'social', the second one illustrates that it is 'social' and 'society' that surpass 'ecology', 'economy, 'cooperation and others.

The question is why the official website of the president displays a different message with an emphasis on social and societal needs. President grants much attention to social well being and thus he exemplifies that 'For what are stability and harmony? It is family welfare, safety, a roof over our head.

Peace is the joy of paternity and maternity, health of parents and happiness of our children. Peace is stable work, wages and feeling confident about the future. Peace and stability are the achievement of our entire population, which must be protected and reinforced by everyday hard work' (presidential address, 2014). This supports the second hypothesis as the attention given to society overrides the attention given to other issue areas.

Figure 5. Top first 40 words in the presidential address published in akorda.kz

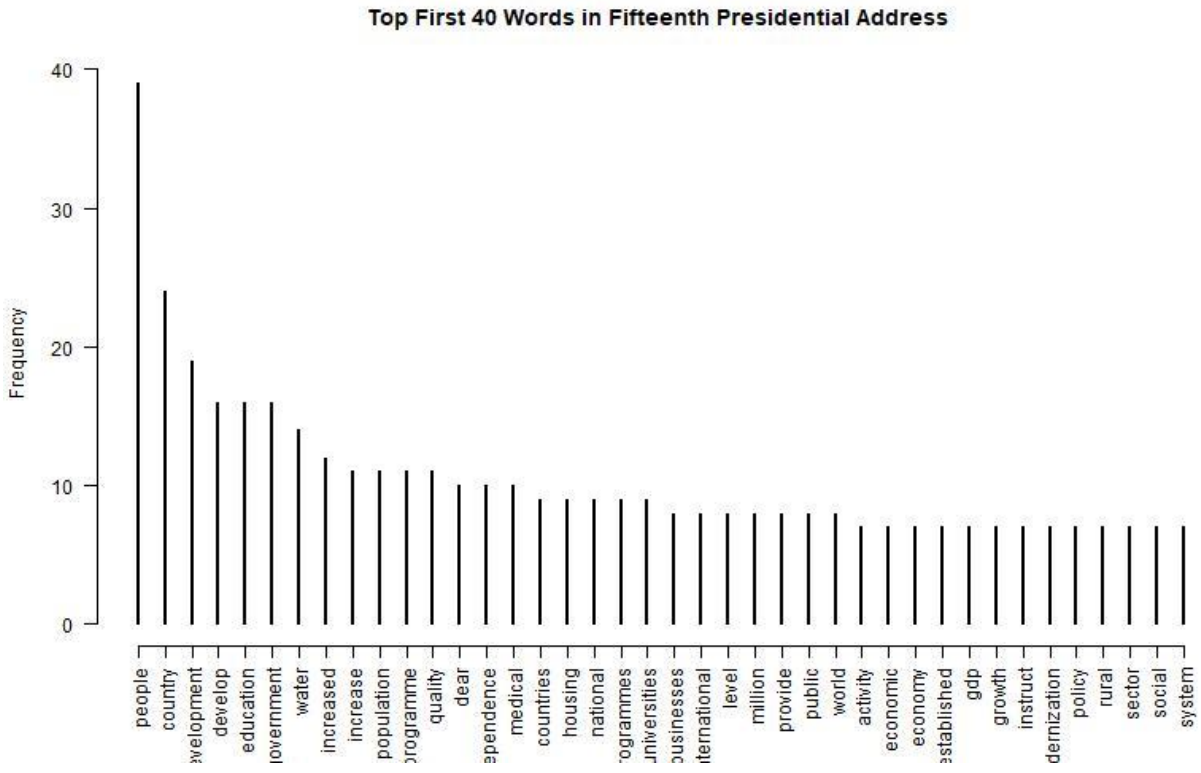
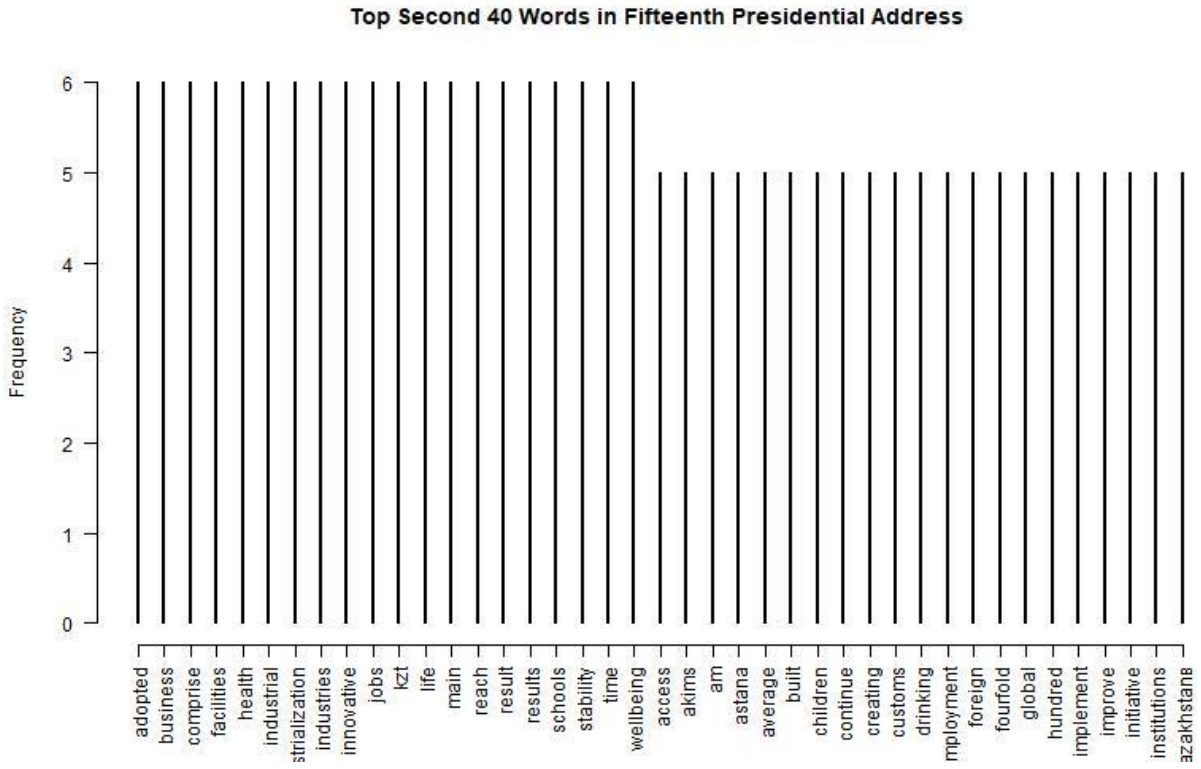


Figure 6. Top 40 words in the presidential address published in akorda.kz



The top first 40 most frequently used words in the fifteenth presidential address from the president's website is 'people' which exceeds the words 'water', mentioned less than 20 times, and 'economy, mentioned less than 10 times. The top second 40 most frequently used words in the fifteenth presidential address from akorda.kz are 'health', 'jobs', 'life', 'schools', 'stability' that were mentioned six times each, and 'wellbeing' that was mentioned five times. These two figures create an apprehensive understanding of what the rhetoric is in the presidential addresses from the akorda.kz. The focus is evidently on people, as it is the most frequently used word in the top first 40, and their health, employment, education of their children, general wellbeing and stability of everything mentioned above. Likewise, the intended audience is the people of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the president continuously emphasizes that 'Unless the people have confidence and trust in their Government, they will not support their Government' (presidential address 2, 1998).

Another question is how Kazakh government utilized yearly presidential addresses to channel regime-friendly images, and used the addresses as a tool to define and shape the identities of the citizens. The state promoted regime-friendly images by magnifying sentiments and symbols that overlook the reality and 'externalise' domestic issues including unemployment, corruption and economic hardships (Edelman 1985, 8-10). Presidential addresses therefore appear as the channel through which the government has indirectly and leniently shaped the identities of its citizens. In this context, the environmental rhetoric was only an attempt of the state to redefine itself before the eyes of its citizens through promoting an image of a '…rapidly emerging economic and political power with a peaceful and harmonious society' (Marat 2009, 1129).

First, almost every presidential address starts with the proverb that creates a particular narrative and a tone for the whole address. These are the following proverbs: "The people seldom speak but when they speak they never make mistakes" (September 20, 1998), 'He who

is incapable of great achievements despises great plans' (French philosopher Luc de Vovenarg, March 19, 2004), 'A law is just a sound' (Soviet maxima, march 1, 2006), 'If the country has a blessing there will be wellbeing and its direction will be right' (folk saying, January 28, 2011), 'Our wise people have a saying that the well-being begins with unity' (January 27, 2012), 'The eyes may be frightened, but the hands are working' (December 2012), 'If you want to know a nation's prosperity look at its paths' (November 11, 2014), 'A rich country is the country where people live in harmony' (October 5, 2018) and 'In the words of the great Abai: Unity must be in minds' (September 2, 2019). These proverbs serve a strategic function of identity-making. It permits the Kazakhstani government to exploit yearly presidential addresses for the sake of increasing the targeted audience's compliance with the government's authoritarian policy making. This is one of the ways in which Kazakhstan 'have monopolized the process of creating and spreading images of the nation and the state…' (Marat 2009, 1126). These proverbs are meant for the domestic consumption as they specifically promote the national heritage such as the land, unity and harmony that were glorified in folk sayings.

Likewise, the yearly presidential addresses highlight only specific parts of the story, while downplaying apparent failure to respond to both social and environmental crises.The more direct way in which the state exploited the yearly presidential addresses is the celebration of the images of white tiger or the snow leopard or 'barys' and the golden eagle. These messages stand out particularly loud as they are mentioned consistently throughout the years. The first presidential address from 10 October, 1997 exemplifies 'Kazakhstani Snow Leopard would also possess western elegance multiplied by the advanced level of development, oriental wisdom and endurance' this goes short before another statement 'Kazakhstan of 2030 must be a clean and green country with clear air and pure waters. Industrial waste and radiation would no longer enter its homes and gardens'. Interestingly, the

yearly presidential addresses touch upon the 2030 and 2050 programs, but do not delineate their progress. Kazakhstani snow leopard was not elaborated as a distinct concept but it carries its own significance; 'snow leopard' is used consistently as if it is synonymous to being 'Kazakh' or 'Kazakhstani'. It resonates with the state's attempts to create the images of 'Serdtse Evrazii' [In the Heart of Eurasia] or the 'Heart of Eurasia', and the campaign entitled 'Road to Europe' (Marat 2009, 1130). The snow leopard is meant to inspire confidence and power. The 'snow leopard' illustrates how Kazakh government utilized domestic boilerplaiting or the 'standard words'. By making 'snow leopard' symbolic and by using it as a standard way of referring to Kazakh people, the state created ideological pressures. The 15th presidential address from November 30, 2015 emphasizes a different but similar animate symbol – the golden eagle. The presidential address states: 'I believe in our people. Let us see our country high in the sky, spreading its wings like the golden eagle on our celestial flag. Let us always fly the banner of our creative people who can appreciate what they have and build something new. Go, Kazakhstan!'. This is the demonstrative way in which the state has put its foreign policy 'at the epicenter of propagandistic discourse seeking identity redefinition through the manipulation of time and space' (Anscechi 2014, 733). This time, golden eagle is compared to the country, but not people. The sentiments 'fly the banner' like the golden eagle and 'Go, Kazakhstan!' are juxtaposed to each other; it shows the trajectory of how the state resorted to identity-making by exploiting the images of both snow leopard and the golden eagle. This is how the Kazakh government managed to utilize the past for the sake of construction of the present (Aydingun 2008, 139). This rhetoric boils down to a specific narrative where the foreign policy, the personality of the president, Kazakhness are all integral parts to individuals identities that represent these connections.

CHAPTER 6. Conclusions

Having investigated Kazakhstan's environmental foreign policy, through analyzing the correlation between the state's multi-vector foreign policy and a growing number of environmental treaties, existing domestic political constraints and the ways in which Kazakh government rationalized its environmental initiatives and foreign policy to different audiences, a number of conclusions were drawn.

First, having done an analysis of available literature, protocols, official documents, I found that the domestic environmental rhetoric differs from the international record of Kazakhstan's environmental performance. Furthermore domestic political constraints turn out to be strong in Kazakhstan; domestic constraints prevent environmental rhetoric from yielding practical utility. Second, a thorough evaluation of the yearly presidential addresses displays that environmental issues are not indeed on the forefront of the state's foreign policy. Nonetheless, presidential addresses illustrate how the state utilized its foreign policy rhetoric for the sake of regime legitimation by means of promoting regime friendly images and sentiments.

Therefore, presidential addresses act as a medium to deliver foreign policy and policy in general to domestic audience and are the medium to create regime friendly sentiments. I also find that yearly presidential addresses and the state's environmental initiatives attempt to reconcile the interests of different domestic groups: both elites and citizens. Therefore the emphasis on the extraction of natural resources somewhat responds to elite's rent-seeking needs. Whereas the attention given to the individuals' rights to a healthy environment, quality health care and education, is the tribute payed to citizens. While Kazakhstan is considered to be an authoritarian state, it still needs the support or at least the absence of direct opposition by its domestic audience.

Limitations

This study has limitations. First, there is a lack of data and a prior research on Kazakhstan's environmental foreign-policy making. Second, given the absence of even some degree of transparency of the state's decision-making process, there is a lack of documents, reports and responses to the external advisers to the state's environmental policy making. For instance, Kazakhstan does not respond to OSCE's accusations on the state's non-compliance with the Montreal protocol in five consecutive years. This response could have been critical to this research, and its absence considerably reduces the transparency of Kazakhstan's environmental decision-making process. Third, Kazakhstan does not create a safe space to ask bold political questions. Initially, I saw this paper growing in a different direction. However, given the existing constraints on the freedom of speech, I was not able to conduct interviews and ask provocative but intriguing questions.

Contribution to the Existing Research

This work aimed to answer a number of questions, including 'Why Kazakhstan is a signatory to a list of environmental treaties, but is continuously found not to comply?', 'Why is Kazakhstan vocal about its environmental initiatives?', 'What are the domestic political constraints that preclude Kazakhstan's environmentalism from being instrumental rather than rhetorical?' and 'Who is the intended audience of Kazakhstan's well-stated environmental rhetoric?'. My contribution to existing research is to present a broadened understanding of how Kazakhstan utilized its environmental foreign policy to solidify its legitimacy before the domestic audience by means of promoting regime-friendly images and sentiments. Having done process tracing of existing literature and documents, and analysis of the yearly presidential addresses, it became evident that the state's environmental rhetoric is instrumental only by a narrow margin due to domestic political constraints. Even though there

is an existing research on Kazakhstan's foreign policy decision-making, there is no existing research connecting environmental foreign-policy and its target audience. Likewise this paper expands the understanding of Kazakhstan's environmental rhetoric and foreign policy decision-making process through identifying the target audience, and the ways in which state channels it's messages. In my work, I attempted to put a greater emphasis on how domestic political constraints disturb the state's compliance with environmental treaties and conventions, as it is also correlated with the state's policy agenda that does not prioritize environmental issues.

Future Research Needs in This Field

This research follows a state-centric approach. Thus it delves into the state's decision-making process, evaluates its environmental foreign policy making and explores the ways in which Kazakhstan utilized its foreign policy to promote regime-friendly images and sentiments. Future research needs in this topic include understanding of how citizens view the state's actions, how the domestic audience relates to environmental issues and does domestic audience indeed care about the state's non-compliance with international environmental obligations. Another path to studying the same questions under different perspectives would be to explore the ways in which state utilized national symbols to redirect citizens' attention from the reality of the present.

Appendix A. Top 25 words in the presidential addresses (mfa.gov.kz)

The below figures illustrate the frequency of words mentioned in the presidential addresses from the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. These frequencies give an overview of the content of each presidential address.

Figure 1. Top 25 words in first presidential address

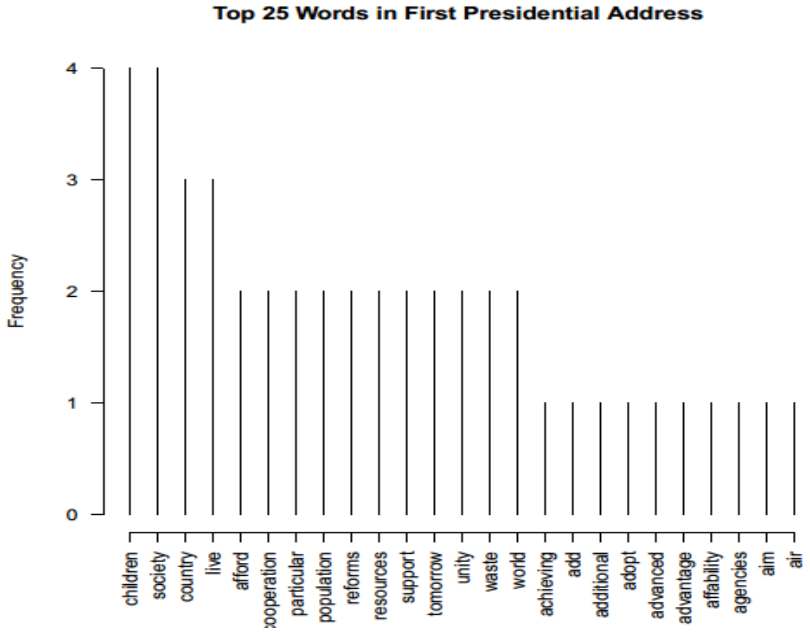


Figure 2. Top 25 words in second presidential address

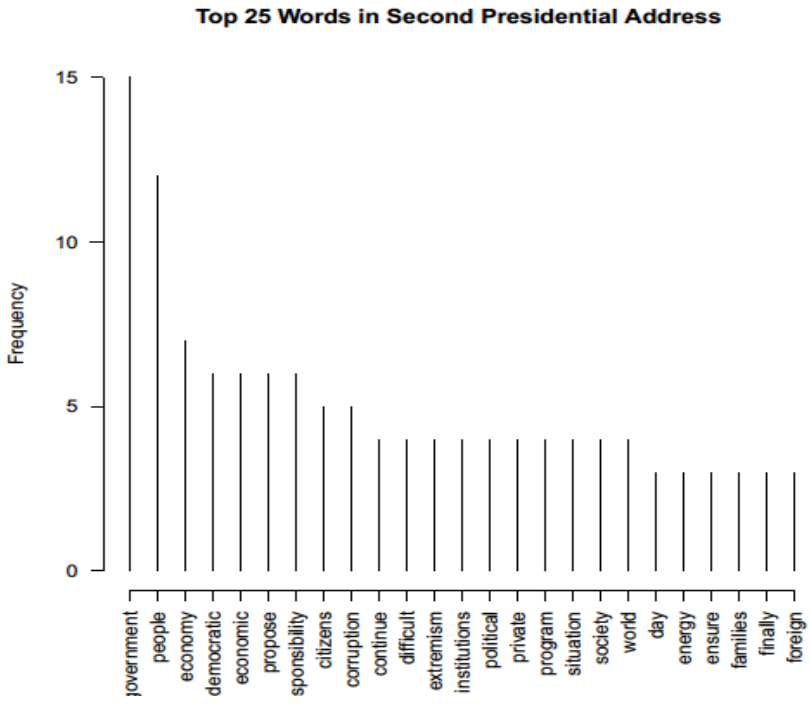


Figure 3. Top 25 words in third presidential address

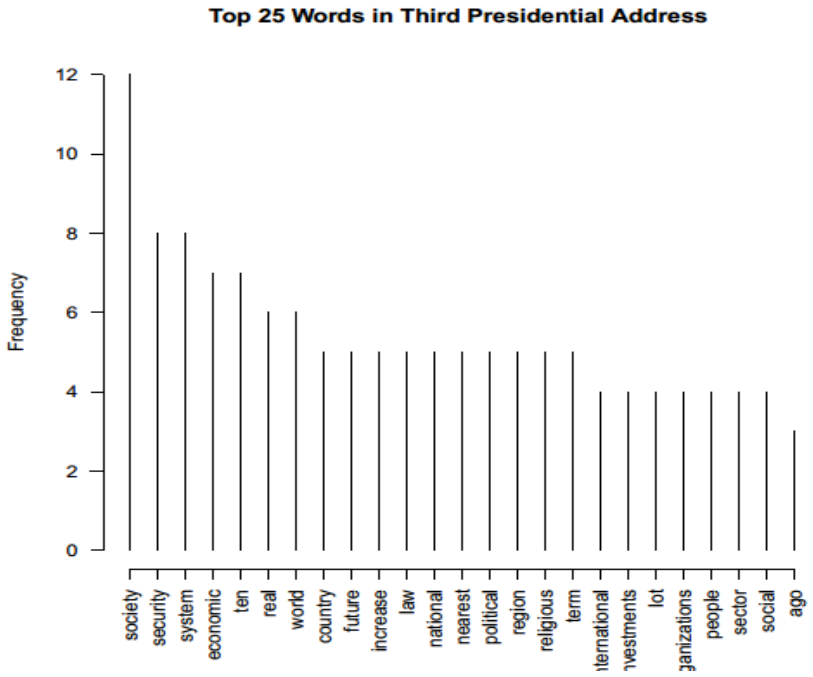


Figure 4. Top 25 words in fourth presidential address

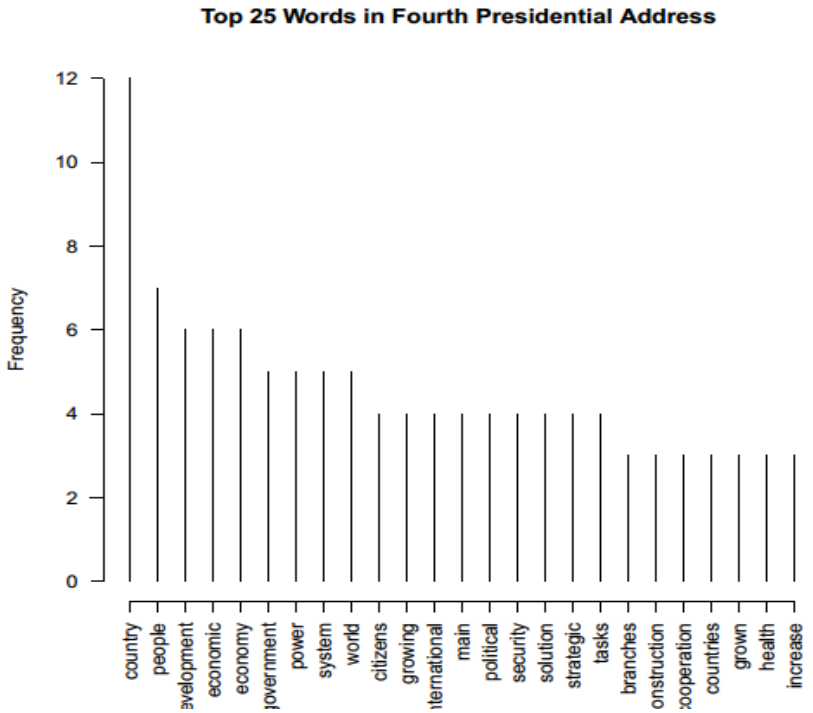
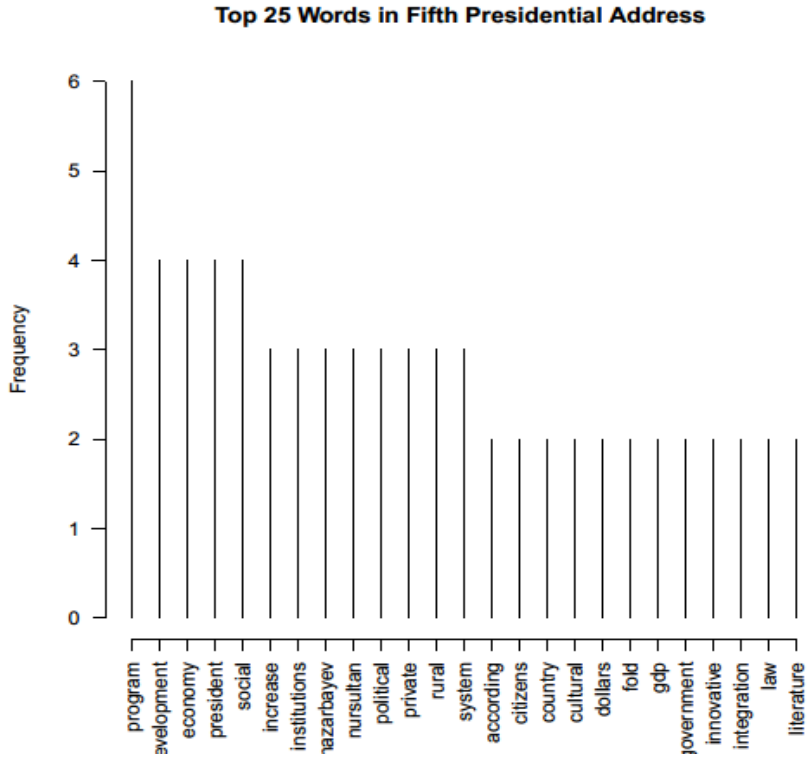


Figure 5. Top 25 words in fifth presidential address



Appendix B. Top first 40 words in the presidential addresses (akorda.kz)

The below figures illustrate the frequency of words mentioned in the presidential addresses that are published on the Official site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. These frequencies give an overview of the content of each presidential address.

Figure 1. Top first 40 words in first presidential address

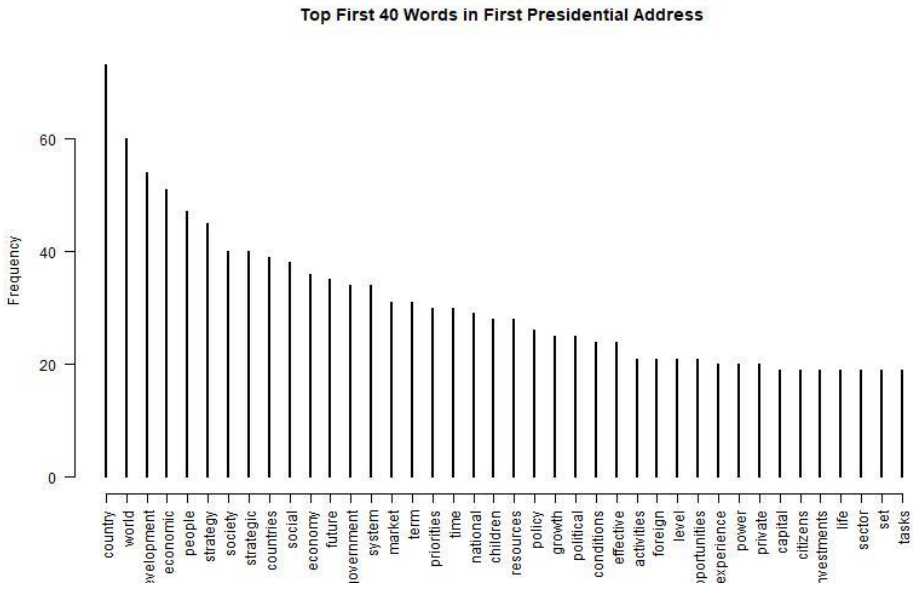


Figure 2. Top first 40 words in second presidential address

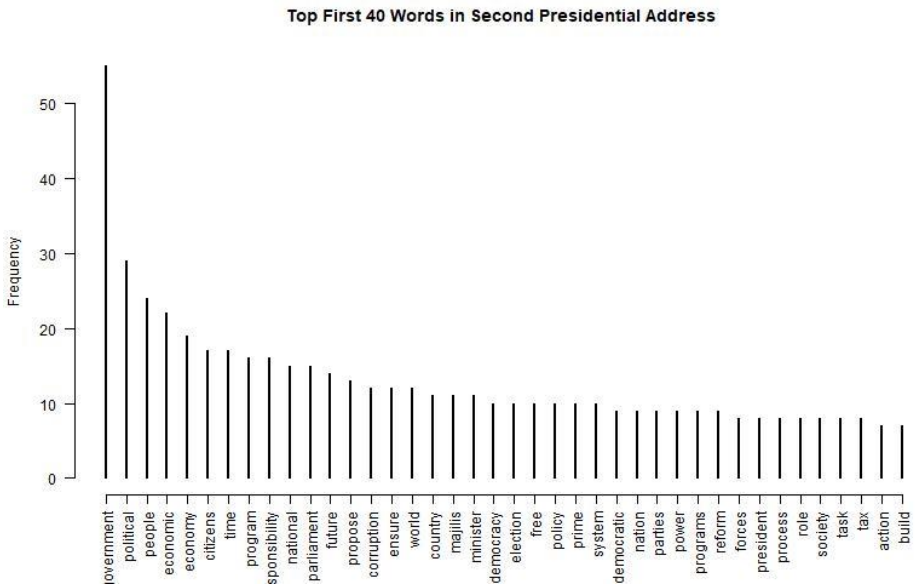


Figure 3. Top first 40 words in fourth presidential address

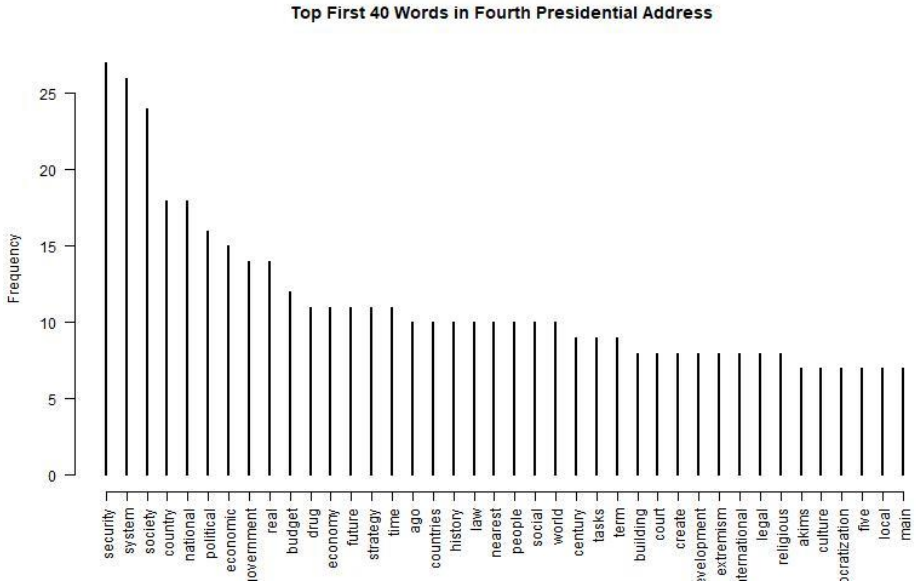
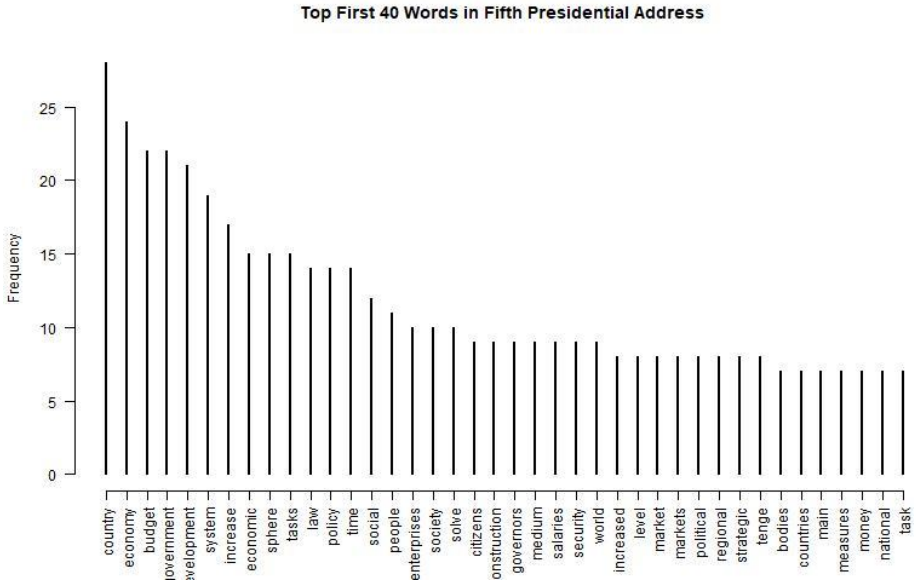


Figure 4. Top first 40 words in fifth presidential address



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