

Securitization of Chinese Migration in Kazakhstan

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Abstract

Kazakhstan experienced large population in- and outmigration during the first decade after independence. In particular, increased Chinese migration and presence in the country proved to be a focal point for debate for the Kazakhstani public, a fact reflected by the obsessive coverage in the local media. The theory of securitization of security threats is employed to examine the effects of Chinese presence in Kazakhstan and to dissect the varying perceptions of this phenomenon on the state and societal levels. Therefore, the media's pioneering of the securitization of Chinese migration and the government's response to it is analyzed in this paper. This paper concludes that though Chinese migration to Kazakhstan constitutes no real security threat to Kazakhstan, however Chinese presence and Chinese migration in Kazakhstan need further research.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Tables	iv
Acknowledgments.....	v
Introduction.....	1
Migration in Kazakhstan in the period between 1990 – 2010	2
Ethnic Kazakhs from abroad – repatriates.....	5
Migrants from Central Asian states in Kazakhstan.....	7
Chinese presence and migration in Kazakhstan.....	11
The Copenhagen school of security theory and the concept of securitization of non-traditional threats.....	21
Position of the government on Chinese presence	25
The mass media’s role in articulating securitization of Chinese migration.....	28
Conclusion	35
Bibliography	37

List of Tables

Table 1. Migration from Kazakhstan to Russia	2
Table 2. International migration of the Republic of Kazakhstan (persons).....	4
Table 3. Distribution of Kazakhs within and outside of the post-Soviet space	5
Table 4. Kazakhstan’s migration balance: 2001 – 2009 (thousands)	8
Table 5. Kazakhstan’s annual GDP growth (2000 - 2009).....	9
Table 6. Number of Chinese citizens temporarily residing on the territory of Kazakhstan.....	16
Table 7. Number of Chinese citizens who acquired permanent residency status or citizenship of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2001 – 2009).....	17

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Introduction

On December 16, 2011 it will have been twenty years since Kazakhstan proclaimed its independence and became the Republic of Kazakhstan. As borders were opened for international movements, the country braced itself for the challenges that accompanied its newfound independence. Reshaping relations with its Eastern neighbor - China - was one of these challenges. Twenty years onwards, citizens of this newly gained neighbor have become regular guests in Kazakhstan. As a result, the issue of a growing Chinese presence and migration - though it pops in and out of national focus - persistently features as an issue in Kazakhstan. One of the factors that brings the issue of Chinese migration back into focus is increased Chinese investment in Central Asia, especially into the Kazakh economy. Though official data on migrants to the country reveals that the actual number of Chinese immigrants is far smaller than claimed or reflected in the media, they are portrayed as a rising menace in local media and perceived as a threat to the future of the state.

Focused media attention on the issue of Chinese expansion and migration into Kazakhstan raises the question of securitization of this issue by media tools. It also reveals deficiencies in state management of migration within the territory of the country.

Even though there are differences among individuals in the Kazakh government, officially the government does not consider Chinese migration to be a threat to state security. Given that the Kazakh government considers this to be a non-issue; the securitization of this issue in Kazakhstan is perpetuated mainly by the mass-media. Strong anti-Chinese rhetoric is easily found in the media, accentuating an already negative social perception of Chinese immigrants.

In the first section, an overall outline of migration patterns in Kazakhstan throughout the 1990s is given to explain background and give the reader some basic information on population movements within the territory of the country. The next section concentrates on the theory of securitization of the Copenhagen school which is used as a framework for further discussion of the Chinese presence in Kazakhstan. The last section studies reactions at the governmental level. In addition, the mass-media's language of securitization of Chinese presence in Kazakhstan is discussed. The last section of the paper focuses on the main ideas and conclusions of the work.

Migration in Kazakhstan in the period between 1990 – 2010

Kazakhstan experienced mass migratory movements of population after the split of the Soviet Union. Entering the long line of emigrant-sending states in the beginning of the 1990s was a logical consequence of the economic downturn and socio-political deterioration that occurred in the country. Between 1990 and 1996, Kazakhstan lost upwards of 2 million people as a result of outmigration. Most of the emigrants were of Slavic ethnicity: Russians (see table 1), Ukrainians, and Belarusians. Furthermore, approximately 64 % of the Germans residing in the country left it for Russia or Germany between 1991 and 2002¹. In total, CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries lost approximately 5 million people - Kazakhstan being one of the most seriously hit countries among them. According to researchers, “these losses have been particularly severe for Kazakhstan and Armenia, which lost much of their population not only to “distant” countries but also to Russia²”. In the destination country list for emigrants from Kazakhstan were also Israel, USA, Canada and other states³. So “Kazakhstan has lost 80% of its Ethnic Germans (about 800 thousand people) and 1.5 million ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians from a total population of 16.3 million in 1989.⁴”

Table 1. Migration from Kazakhstan to Russia

Year/origin country	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Kazakhstan	128,906	183,891	195,672	346,363	241,427	172,861	235,903

Source: Data from the UNESCO Almaty Cluster Office. *International Migration in Central Asia: Challenges and Prospects. Conference Report*. Organized by: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) May 12-13, 2005, Almaty, Kazakhstan. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001579/157974eo.pdf>, 176.

¹ Andrei V. Korobkov, “Migration trends in Central Eurasia: Politics versus economics,” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 40 (2007), 176.

² Valery Tishkov, Zhanna Zayinchkovskaya and Galina Vitkovskaya, “Migration in the countries of the Former Soviet Union,” paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM), September 2005. <http://www.gcim.org/attachements/RS3.pdf>, 16.

³ Meiram Baigazin, “The migration situation in Kazakhstan,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus* 5 (29) (October 2004).

⁴ Valery Tishkov, Zhanna Zayinchkovskaya and Galina Vitkovskaya, “Migration in the countries of the Former Soviet Union,” 16.

Research indicates economic push factors were the priority for most emigrants leaving for ethnical motherlands. Other reasons cited have been the revival of national politics in Central Asian countries, redistribution of state property, strengthening nationalistic moods among the native population and language politics which manifested in reinforcement of the Kazakh language⁵. Indeed these were the major push factors for Russians and Russian-speaking people of other ethnicities to leave for their homelands⁶. As the UNDP 2009 report prepared by Rafis Abazov on the CIS migration trends indicates, the reasons for ethnic migration constitute a wide variety of factors ranging from individual motives to cultural or political influences. All factors that fell within this range, became the driving force for large population movements within the FSU (Former Soviet Union) space. According to Abazov:

Scholars still debate the main reasons behind the rise of ethnic migration (Paul Kolstoe, 1995), including “ethnic turmoil” and deteriorating inter-ethnic relations, “language question,” perception of “social marginalization,” “lack of information,” removal of the elaborate system of ethnic, gender and social quotas, and loss of cultural identity and sense of belonging due to the need to master local languages in order to get jobs and to maintain social status. Many migrants have taken into consideration not only ethnic and cultural factors, but also social, family and economic factors in calculating cost benefits of such migration⁷.

As a result, among the NIS on the Post-Soviet territory, Kazakhstan was in the first place showing negative migration indices, thus becoming a country with one of the highest rates of population migration in the region. The peak of this negative trend was registered in 1994 when approximately around 350,000 people emigrated to different countries, but mainly to Russia (see table 2 on page 4).

Numerically, the years between 1991 and 1999 saw the most intensive migratory movements across the CIS. However, these processes in some way can be considered as a system which should be eventually balanced in terms of ethnically-based movements. As in the UNDP report, it was reasonably pointed out that: “In some degree this was correction of the

⁵ Elena Sadovskaya, “Kazahstan v Central’noaziatskoi migracionnoi subsysteme” (Kazakhstan in Central Asian migratory subsystem),” in *Postsovetskiye transformacii: otrazhenie v migraciyah (Post Soviet transformations: reflection in migrations)*, ed. by Zh.A. Zaionchkovskaya and G.S. Vitkovskaya, Centr migracionnyh issledovanii, Iynstitut narodnohozyaistvennogo prognozovaniya RAN. Moscow: Adamant, 2009, <http://migrocenter.ru/publ/pdf/transform.pdf>, 283, 288.

⁶ Ibid, 283.

⁷ Rafis Abazov, “Current Trends in Migration in the Commonwealth of Independent States,” Human Development Research Paper 2009/36, UNDP, (August 2009), http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2009/papers/HDRP_2009_36.pdf, 22.

Soviet era migration and population distribution that accumulated some demographic and settlement distortions over the period of 50-70 years due to the forced migration and deportation of some groups of people from one area to another...⁸”

Due to comparatively intensive relocations of population, Kazakhstan definitely experienced “brain drain”. Huge losses of professionals in every economic sector led to shortages in most enterprises and social systems⁹. This shortage in skilled specialists and in the workforce in general became an acute problem as the country experienced economic revival and an increase in the FDI. Though the economy of Kazakhstan still hinges largely on the export of raw materials, it is still comparatively better than that of its neighboring states.

Table 2. International migration of the Republic of Kazakhstan (persons)

Years	Immigrants	Emigrants	Migration balance
1992	≈ 150,000	≈ 300,000	≈ - 150,000
1993	≈ 100,000	≈ 320,000	≈ - 220,000
1994	≈ 50,000	≈ 460,000	≈ - 410,000
1995	≈ 60,000	≈ 290,000	≈ - 220,000
1996	≈ 30,000	≈ 230,000	≈ - 200,000

Source: Elena Sadovskaya, “Kazakhstan v Central’noaziatskoi migracionnoi subsisteme” (Kazakhstan in Central Asian migratory subsystem).” In *Postsovetkiye transformacii: otrazheniye v migraciyah (Post Soviet transformations: reflection in migrations)* edited by Zh.A. Zaionchkovkaya and G.S. Vitkovskaya, Centr migracionnyh issledovanii, Iynstitut narodnohozyaistvennogo progonizorvaniya RAN. Moscow: Adamant , 2009, <http://migrocenter.ru/publ/pdf/transform.pdf>, 284.

⁸ Rafis Abazov, “Current Trends in Migration in the Commonwealth of Independent States,” 22.

⁹ Elena Sadovskaya, “Kazakhstan v Central’noaziatskoi migracionnoi subsisteme” (Kazakhstan in Central Asian migratory subsystem), 286-287.

Ethnic Kazakhs from abroad – repatriates

Emigrational losses of the country were partially mitigated by a repatriation program initiated by the Kazakh government. Returning ethnic Kazakhs balanced and enlarged the titular nation which was quantitatively smaller despite the outmigration of other ethnic groups. For example in 1989 Kazakhs only constituted 39.7 % of Kazakhstan’s total population¹⁰. Repatriates were invited to return to their ethnical homeland from the CIS region as well as from China, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey (table 3). As we can observe from table 3, around 3 million ethnic Kazakhs live outside Kazakhstan. However, only fewer than 20 % of them moved to ethnical motherland in the period between 1991 and 2005¹¹.

Table 3. Distribution of Kazakhs within and outside of the post-Soviet space

	Within the post-Soviet space		Outside the post-Soviet space
	Kin-republic (% of the country’s population)	Other republics	
Kazakhs	6,534,616 (39.7 %)	1,601,202 Central Asia: 944,723 Russia: 635,865	1,330,000 China: 1,110,758 Mongolia: 177,000 Turkey: 25,000 Afghanistan: 3-21,000 Iran: 3-5,000

Source: Olivier Ferrando, “Central Asian States and Their Co-Ethnic Minorities Abroad: from Diasporic Policies to Repatriation Programmes,” *International research. Society. Politics. Economics*, no. 1 (2009), http://www.ispr.kz/files/magazine_1.pdf, 26.

From 1991 to early 2000s the migration situation can be generally characterized by the words “outflow”, “immigration”, and “reduction in the number of populace”. In the last decade this trend reversed to the positive to some extent owing to “oralmans” (repatriate Kazakhs mainly from Mongolia, China, Central Asian states, in lesser amount from Iran and Turkey¹²). Repatriation of Kazakhs from abroad was initiated by the government and funds were allocated

¹⁰ Olivier Ferrando, “Central Asian States and Their Co-Ethnic Minorities Abroad: from Diasporic Policies to Repatriation Programmes,” *International research. Society. Politics. Economics*, no. 1 (2009), http://www.ispr.kz/files/magazine_1.pdf, 20.

¹¹ Ibid., 23.

¹² Meiram Baigazin, “The migration situation in Kazakhstan.”

to newcomers in the form of housing, work placement, and social benefits¹³. In the period between 1992 and 2003, 307,400 repatriates were resettled in Almaty, Zhambyl, Mangistau and South Kazakhstan regions¹⁴. Up to 2005, more than 450,000 repatriates settled in the republic according to the official statistics, balancing the slightly negative emigrational outflow during the first decade of independence. According to current data, an estimated 700,000 repatriates immigrated to Kazakhstan¹⁵ since 1991. These repatriates have become a big asset for the country in balancing the population loss over the last 15 years.

¹³ Erica Marat, *Labor Migration in Central Asia: Implications of the Global Economic Crisis*. CACI & SRSP Silk Road Paper (May 2009), 26.

¹⁴ Meiram Baigazin, "The migration situation in Kazakhstan."

¹⁵ Ministry of Labor and Social protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan, "2009 – 2011 zhyldarga arnalgan 'Nurly Kosh' bagdarlamasy" 2008 zhylgy "2" zheltoksan N 1126 kaulysymen bekitilgen ("Nurly Kosh' repatriation program for 2009 – 2011", Decree No 1126 of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan from 2 December 2008), http://www.enbek.gov.kz/kaz/migration/migr_kazdetail.php?recordID=53&mintrud=1; Novosti-Kazakhstan, "V Kazahstan vpervye repatriirovano men'she oralmanov, chem ustanovleno kvotoi" (For the first time less oralmans were repatriated to Kazakhstan than it was set by the repatriation quota limits), *www.zakon.kz*, January 18, 2010. <http://www.zakon.kz/159730-v-kazahstan-vpervye-repatriirovano.html>

Migrants from Central Asian states in Kazakhstan

The main feature of the migration from Central Asia into Kazakhstan today is labor migration, both legal and illegal. After 2000, economical revival, industrial growth, and construction site enlargement in the republic provided the impetus for the main bulk of migrants. This number had continued to swell until the recent economic downturn.

The overall number of migrants to Kazakhstan from Central Asia recorded by official sources differs from the numbers cited in independent sources. While the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) survey gives us an estimate of 200,000 – 300,000 migrants, the survey also suggests the possibility of the number being higher. This indicates that after 2000, the number of labor migrants fluctuated between 300,000 to 500,000 in Kazakhstan¹⁶. Another analysis of the Central Asian migration to Kazakhstan states that “Since the mid-2000s Kazakhstan has become a new popular destination for Central Asian migrants. Over 200,000 Kyrgyz, 50,000 Tajiks, and 250,000 Uzbeks worked in Kazakhstan in 2007”¹⁷.

A survey conducted by the International Labor Organization among migrants in Southern Kazakhstan on the number of illegal migrants in the country indicates that 38 percent of migrant respondents are working without authorization¹⁸. In addition, estimates of labor migrants in the country range from 250,000 to one million¹⁹. In 2007 the government adopted its *Conception of migration policy for years between 2007 and 2015*²⁰. This document is basically an overview of the migratory situation in the country which focuses mainly on planning and implementing policies that should regulate both types of migrations – internal as well as external. The document also states that Kazakhstan has experienced a positive balance of migration (table 4) in recent years which forced the government to adopt a framework program so as to exercise control over increasing changes in the population movements.

¹⁶ International Organization for Migration, *Trudovaya migraciya v stranah Central'noi Azii, Rossiiskoi Federacii, Afganistane i Pakistane* (Labor Migration in the states of Central Asia, Russian Federation, Afghanistan and Pakistan), analytical survey, European Commission (Almaty: IOM, 2005), 14.

¹⁷ Erica Marat, *Labor Migration in Central Asia*, 25.

¹⁸ ILO Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia. *Employment of migrant workers in the informal economy in Kazakhstan: a study of Southern Kazakhstan*, prepared by G. T. Alimbekova and A. A. Shabdenova and supervised by Nilim Baruah (Almaty: ILO, 2009), 13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

²⁰ Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan. *Concept on migration policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2007-2015*. Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N 399 of 28 August 2007, <http://www.enbek.gov.kz/law/lawdetail.php?recordID=364>

Table 4. Kazakhstan's migration balance: 2001 – 2009 (thousands)

Years	Arrived	Left	Migration balance
2001	34,4	104,3	- 69,9
2002	58,2	120,2	- 62,0
2003	65,6	73,9	- 8,3
2004	68,3	65,5	+ 2,8
2005	74,3	52,2	+ 22,1
2006	67,4	33,9	+ 33,5
2007*	53,3	42,4	+ 10,9
2008*	46,3	45,2	+ 1,1
2009*	41,4	33,9	+ 7,5

Source: Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan. *Concept on migration policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2007-2015*. Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N 399 of 28 August 2007, <http://www.enbek.gov.kz/law/lawdetail.php?recordID=364>

* The Agency of Statistic of the Republic of Kazakhstan, *Basic indicators for 2003-2009: migration of population*, <http://www.stat.kz/digital/naselsenie/Pages/default.aspx>

Even though the main points in this government document are rather general, it still accurately highlights problems such as the integration of repatriates, curtailing illegal migration and human trafficking, and proposes solutions which comply with international organizations' recommendations. Having said this, when it comes to assessing the results of the program's implementation on issues of illegal migration, its regulation remains largely ineffective.

As the expert of Central Asia-Caucasus Institute in Central Asian affairs Erica Marat points out, "although a number of international organizations dealing with migrants are active in the region, Central Asian governments still regard migration as an unimportant and temporary issue"²¹. Lack of coordination between Central Asian states in coordinating migration indicates that the problems posed by interstate movements of populations are not prioritized. Just recently Kazakhstan's president, in a speech delivered at the opening of the new session of parliament, indicated that control over migration is an important issue and that a new law on migration should be adopted²². However, this statement could also be influenced by the government's concern over the destabilization in bordering Kyrgyzstan. The main aim of such control will be the entering persons rather than labor migrants already staying in the country.

²¹ Erica Marat, *Labor Migration in Central Asia*, 10.

²² Kazakhstan Today, "President assigned Parliament to consider and pass Law on Migration," September 1, 2010. <http://www.kt.kz/?lang=eng&uin=1133435176&chapter=1153523655>

The main reason that Kazakhstan has become a recipient country for migrants from Central Asia is its economic growth during the last decade. This growth, especially from 2000 to 2007 can be seen in table 5 presented below.

Table 5. Kazakhstan's annual GDP growth (2000 - 2009)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2006	2007	2008	2009
GDP growth (annual %)	10	14	10	9	10	11	9	3	1

Source: The World Bank, *Kazakhstan's GDP annual growth*, Database: World Development Indicators & Global Development Finance. <http://ddp-ext.worldbank.org/ext/DDPQQ/member.do?method=getMembers&userid=1&queryId=135> (accessed July 28, 2010).

In spite of lower salaries in Kazakhstan compared to those earned usually by *gastarbeiters* (the expression usually used in Kazakhstani and Russian media referring to labor migrants, especially to those coming from Central Asia) in Russia, Kazakhstan remains a desirable destination for those seeking employment opportunities. Proximity, i.e. common borders, as well as fewer cultural, linguistic, and social disparities are the main reasons for this²³. Most migrants had to go to work illegally as the government tightened registration procedures for unskilled migrants²⁴ (the larger part of labor migrants from Central Asian fall into this category in recent years). This in turn led to growing speculation in the media about a possible rise in the crime rate related to high unemployment rate among labor migrants²⁵. A typical portrait of a labor migrant from Central Asia tends to be that of a worker with minimal rights earning 2-3 times less than a local worker of the same qualification.

Since early 2000, Kazakhstan has become a part of the “migratory subsystem of Central Asia”²⁶, attracting migrants from Central Asian states and thus turning into the second largest receiving country in the CIS after the Russian Federation. Increase in inter-CIS labor migrations divided CIS members into two categories: ‘sending’ states and ‘receiving’ states²⁷. The economic deficiencies of the sending states are highlighted by their reliance on remittances sent

²³ Erica Marat, *Labor Migration in Central Asia*, 25.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁶ Elena Sadovskaya, “Kazakhstan v Central’noaziatskoi migracionnoi subsysteme” (Kazakhstan in Central Asian migratory subsystem), 290.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 290.

by the migrants. For example, remittances sent by labor migrants to Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan constitute approximately 40 % and about 30 % of their GDPs respectively. According to the World Bank data: “Tajikistan has the world’s highest proportion of remittances to GDP. In 2007 remittances comprised 36% of its GDP, or \$1.8 billion, while Kyrgyzstan ranked fourth in the world, with 27% of GDP or \$322 million. Some reports estimate that Tajikistan’s remittances make up as much as 46% of its GDP.”²⁸ Increasing income disparities between Kazakhstan and neighboring Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and also Tajikistan, coupled with a comparatively smaller population and shortages in the labor force in Kazakhstan, made migrants from these three countries competitive in the Kazakh labor market²⁹. Another factor conducive to hiring workers from Central Asia is lower salaries for work which the local population is reluctant to do. In addition to low wages, migrant workers are willing to work for minimal or no social and health care benefits. These factors increase the demand for illegal or irregular migrant workers³⁰.

In order to develop political and economic ties between the recipient and sending countries, building a firm legislative base is important. Having said this, migrants to Kazakhstan from Central Asia do not regularly experience xenophobic attitudes and prejudice. As UNESCO conference reports state, Kazakhstanis’ attitude to the migrants tends to be unbiased which could ensure “...a good opportunity for the Kazakhstani Government to shape public opinion to favor migration as enriching the country's multiethnic population.”³¹

As we can see, migration between Central Asian region and Kazakhstan has been an intensifying dynamic of labor migration in the last decade.

²⁸ Ali M. Mansoor, Bryce Qullin, and World Bank. Europe and Central Asia Region, *Migration and Remittances : Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union* (Washington, DC: World Bank, Europe And Central Asia Region, 2006), 34.

²⁹ Elena Sadovszkaya, “Kazakhstan v Central’noaziatskoi migracionnoi subsysteme” (Kazakhstan in Central Asian migratory subsystem), 290.

³⁰ The irregularity of their status mainly can be explained by illegal presence or violation of stay in country, and illegal entry into the country. IOM depicts the situation of irregular migrants as following: “In Kazakhstan, the term irregular migration refers to cases in which migrants do not comply with the registration rules at the appropriate district (or regional) branch of the Migration Police Department within five days after their entry. Such cases are not considered as smuggling of migrants, if the entry to Kazakhstan was legal as in the case of labour migrants from neighbouring Central Asian countries due to the visa-free regime. These labour migrants violate the rules and regulations only later in case they overstay or work illegally.” - International Labour Organization, *Baseline Research on Smuggling of Migrants in, from and through Central Asia*, ed. by Calus Folden et al. (Vienna, Austria: IOM Technical Cooperation Centre for Europe and Central Asia, September 2006), 27.

³¹ UNESCO Almaty Cluster Office, *International Migration in Central Asia: Challenges and Prospects. Conference Report* (UNESCO: Almaty, Kazakhstan, May 12-13, 2005) <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001579/157974eo.pdf>, 23.

Chinese presence and migration in Kazakhstan

In the years immediately following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan opened its borders and Chinese and Kazakh citizens became actively involved in the cross-border trade relations. In these years, China viewed Kazakhstan mainly as just another market for exporting its production. Establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992 enhanced political and economic interaction between the two states. A direct consequence of this was increased migratory movements across the border. In the early 90s Chinese citizens were travelling under visa-free arrangements as “tourists” and official data confirms that around 130,000 – 150,000 Chinese citizens arrived or used Kazakhstan as a country of destination or as a transit territory over three years between 1993 and 1995³². Visa-free regulations heightened the possibility of inflow of illegal migrants from China and urged the Kazakh government to adopt new agreements “On citizens’ business travel” which limited visa-free travel only to diplomatic and service passport holders³³. In some sense this legislative base restricted possible illegal migration from China. However, the presence of Chinese labor on the local labor market became a reality of Kazakhstan in the late 1990s when more companies from China entered the industrial and oil-gas sectors of economy.

Comparatively large numbers of Chinese citizens and their possible participation in the “shadow economy”³⁴ caused fears of ‘Chinese expansion’ among the local population. Kazakhstan, after establishing relations with PRC, became one of its main trading partners in Central Asia when the main post of Dostyk-Alashankou opened on the Kazakhstan-Chinese border in 1992. This post became a thoroughfare of Chinese goods not only to Kazakhstan, but for Central Asia, Russia, Iran, and even for Afghanistan³⁵.

³² Elena Sadovskaya, “Chinese Migration to Kazakhstan: a Silk Road for Cooperation or a Thorny Road of Prejudice?” *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (2007): 151.

³³ *Ibid.*, 151.

³⁴ According to ILO Resolution of 2002 “shadow economy” or “informal economy” is defined as “...all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements” – citation source: International Labour Organization Subregional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, *Employment of migrant workers in the informal economy in Kazakhstan: a study of Southern Kazakhstan*, 11.

³⁵ Sébastien Peyrouse, *The Economic Aspects of the Chinese-Central Asia Rapprochement*, CACI & SRSP Silk Road Paper, September 2007, 20.

There were several waves of migration from China in the last 20 years after the borders were opened³⁶. In the 1990s there were mainly two phases: from 1991-1993 and then between 1994 and 1999³⁷. By and large, the migration between these periods can be defined as “commercial trade” and citizens of the PRC stayed in Kazakhstan temporarily³⁸. Kazakhstanis on their part were engaged in “shuttle trade”³⁹ by going to China for several days to purchase goods with the intention of reselling them back home in Kazakhstan. The first period coincided with continued rapid economic development in China, resulting in a number of border territories having various privileges in foreign economic relations⁴⁰. The second stage was more varied with different forms and directions of Chinese trade and labor migration. The geography of Chinese migration mainly covered borders with XUAR regions - Almaty and the East Kazakhstan region. Generally, the migration flow of these periods can be defined as “informal” as a result of unregulated registration of traders with the administrative bodies of Kazakhstan⁴¹. Through the 90s, commercial trade increased interaction between China’s XUAR region and bordering regions of Kazakhstan and became one of the most important destinations for Kazakhstan’s shop-tourists. Shop-tourism or shuttle-trade became the main source of income for thousands of Kazakhstanis. The year after China and Kazakhstan signed their first agreement in 1991, around 700,000 Kazakh citizens were reported to have crossed the border for the purpose of purchasing goods for further retail in Kazakhstan⁴². According to Sebastien Peyrouse, a senior research fellow with the Central Asia and Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program” in 2002, shop tourism reportedly still provided employment for nearly half a million

³⁶ See Elena Sadovskaya, “Chinese Migration to Kazakhstan,” 153; Svetlana Kozhirova, “Kitaiskaya migraciya kak element regional’noi bezopasnosti” (Chinese migration as a part of regional security), PhD dissertation abstract (Astana: L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, 2009),

http://www.enu.kz/nauka/otdel_otes/avto_refer.php?sphrase_id=269172, 14.

³⁷ Svetlana Kozhirova, “Kitaiskaya migraciya kak element regional’noi bezopasnosti”(Chinese migration as a part of regional security), 14.

³⁸ Elena Sadovskaya, “Chinese migration to Kazakhstan: causes, key trends, and prospects,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, no. 1(49) (2008), 167.

³⁹ “Shuttle trade” was primary source of income for thousands of people who lost their jobs in the transitory period after 1991 and were forced to become self-employed by reselling goods brought from China, Turkey, Eastern Europe – see Regina A. Spector, “Bazaar Politics: The Fate of Marketplaces in Kazakhstan,” *Problems of Post-Communism* 55, no. 6 (November-December 2008): 45.

⁴⁰ Svetlana Kozhirova, “Kitaiskaya migraciya kak element regional’noi bezopasnosti”(Chinese migration as a part of regional security), 14-15.

⁴¹ Elena Sadovskaya, “Chinese Migration to Kazakhstan,” 154.

⁴² Sébastien Peyrouse, “Chinese Economic Presence in Kazakhstan,” *China Perspectives*, no. 3 (September 2008): 37.

Kazakhs, who are estimated to have spent more than \$1 billion in Xinjiang between 1989 and 2003⁴³.”

The third phase of migration from China to Kazakhstan can be counted from 2000 onwards. By the 2000s, characteristics of migrants from China had been changing with institutionalization of relations between Kazakhstan and China in different spheres. The expert on population migration issue in the post-Soviet states, Elena Sadovskaya, notes that: “In 2000s, the proportion of people involved in commercial migration started to decrease due to the gradual institutionalization of business transactions. Shuttle traders gave way to intermediary firms specializing on transport and trade⁴⁴.”

The number of Chinese companies and enterprises established in Kazakhstan grew remarkably fast. In 1998 there were about 300 Kazakh-Chinese joint ventures and 18 registered Chinese companies - some of them representative offices of state-run companies like Xinjiang International Cooperation Company, Xinjiang Airway Company, etc.⁴⁵. The number had remarkably increased by 2005. “A census taken revealed that 744 Chinese enterprises” had been established in Kazakhstan - “40 large companies and close to 700 small ones⁴⁶”. In 2010, according to the Ministry of Justice, 78 representative offices of Chinese companies, 3964 enterprises with Chinese capital, and 65 branches functioning in oil-gas, textile, plastic and metal production were registered in Kazakhstan.⁴⁷”

Therefore, institutionalization of relations and the increasing legislation base that regulated different aspects of politico-economical ties between Kazakhstan and China paved the way for more active involvement of Chinese citizens in Kazakhstan’s labor migration. In 2001, Kazakhstan enacted quota setting procedures for annual workforce demand to control the number of professional workers coming from foreign countries⁴⁸. Regarding the classification of foreigners who enter Kazakhstan with visa grants from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there are

⁴³ Sébastien Peyrous, “Chinese Economic Presence in Kazakhstan,” 37.

⁴⁴ Elena Sadovskaya, “Chinese Migration to Kazakhstan,” 155.

⁴⁵ Klara Khafizova, “Transgranichniye otnosheniya Sin’tzyan’ – Kazahstan” (Crossborder relations Xinjiang – Kazakhstan.) *Central’naya Aziya i Kavkaz (Central Asia and the Caucasus)*, no. 3 (9), (2000), <http://www.cac.org/journal/cac-09-2000/12.Khafizov.shtml>

⁴⁶ Sébastien Peyrouse, *The Economic Aspects of the Chinese-Central Asia Rapprochement*, 18.

⁴⁷ Ludmila Piskorskaya, “Bol’shiye ‘glaza’ kitaiskoi ekspansii” (Big “eyes” of Chinese expansion), www.zakon.kz, April 19, 2010. <http://www.zakon.kz/169690-legendy-i-mify-kitajskoj-jekspansii-v.html> (accessed August 28, 2010).

⁴⁸ International Labour Organization, *Rights of migrant workers in Kazakhstan. National legislation, international standards and practices* (Almaty: ILO, May 2008), http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ilo/2008/108B09_387_engl.pdf, 13.

different categories depending on the main purpose of entrance of the foreign citizen. There are a number of visa types. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs there are 11 types of visas depending on the purpose of arrival to the country: tourist, business, private, investor's visa, work visa, study visa, transiting visa, visa for medical treatment purposes, diplomatic visa, service visa and visa for permanent residency⁴⁹.

As we consider mainly labor migration it is important to paint a general picture of the average foreigner coming to Kazakhstan for work. Foreign citizens entering the state under work visa regulations are obliged to obtain work permits to be eligible for legal labor activity within the territory of Kazakhstan barring certain exemptions. Regulations are implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of Kazakhstan which annually sets certain quotas for an incoming work force to satisfy the domestic labor market's demand for highly skilled and qualified specialists. There are 4 categories into which the invited foreign work force is categorized. According to the Ministry of Labor these categories as following "...the first category – on attracting organization supervisory personnel; the second category – on attracting the higher and secondary professional educated specialists with the approved documents; the third category – on attracting the qualified employees; the fourth category – on attracting the employees engaging in seasonal farm jobs under the conventions on relationship in the field of labor migration and social protection of employees- migrates⁵⁰”.

The ratio of the invited work force is not to exceed 2 % of the overall economically active population in the Republic (in 2008 it was 1,6 %, in 2009 and 2010 – 0,75 % and according to the plan developed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection for 2010 – 2014 quota should be around 1 – 1,5 %⁵¹). Setting certain quotas allows the government to control the number of legally employed foreigners in the country and meet the demands of the domestic labor market. A license issued to a foreign citizen to be employed within the territory of

⁴⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, *Instructions for foreign citizens coming to the Republic of Kazakhstan*, Astana, 2008, http://portal.mfa.kz/portal/page/portal/mfa/ru/content/consular_info/pamyatka_incomming (accessed September 28, 2010)

⁵⁰ Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan, *Calculation of quota on attracting foreign labor force*, <http://www.enbek.gov.kz/eng/tips/tipsdetail.php?recordID=60#content> (accessed September 28, 2010)

⁵¹ “*Ob utverzhdenii Strategicheskogo plana Ministerstva truda i social'noi zashity naseleniya Respubliki Kazahstan na 2010 – 2014 gody*” Postanovleniye Pravitelstva Respubliki Kazahstan ot 21 dekabrya 2009 goda N 2342 (“Strategic plan of the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2010-2014” Decree N 2342 of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan from December 31, 2009”), <http://www.enbek.gov.kz/law/lawdetail.php?recordID=574#content> (accessed September 28, 2010).

Kazakhstan is categorized depending on the skills and qualifications of the worker. The government had to cut down the quota for foreign labor workers from 120,000 in 2008 to about 60,000 in 2009⁵² due to the deterioration of the country's economy.

More qualified specialists arrived along with the increase of Chinese capital in oil-gas, transport, logistic, and construction spheres. Chinese licensed workers had already been present in Kazakhstan's labor market. For example, according to Sadovskaya, in 1993, there were only about 600 legal workers hired on the territory of Kazakhstan and this number was insignificant in comparison to the number of employees coming from other countries. However, "the number of Chinese workers had grown by 9 times in 2006 since 1993, when their number was 559; the number increased by 3,4 times, from 1,457 to 5,008 persons between 2004 and 2006⁵³". However, only 5008 Chinese labor migrants which fell under the quota that was set by government annually. Most of them are highly qualified contingent, employed predominantly by Chinese companies. In terms of increasing numbers of incoming Chinese citizens to Kazakhstan, licensed labor migrants that fall under the quota are no more than 10 % (see table 6 – column 'for work'). As for the other columns in table 6, those pertaining to 'business purpose', Chinese enterprises preferred using this form of invitation (under which working and receiving salary during staying in Kazakhstan is prohibited) for workers who upon arrival actually work and then are replaced by the next group of workers from China⁵⁴. This can be considered as a form of illegal migration to the country.

So the number suggested by experts that fluctuates around 30,000-50,000 is more realistic as opposed to 300,000 (supposedly the number of Chinese in the country according to some media publications) which experts consider to be an overestimation. As research suggests, "the number of irregular migrants from countries other than former USSR residing on the territory of the CIS is often grossly overestimated. Realistic estimates of their numbers are quite modest. For instance, Russia, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are seriously concerned with the demographic pressure of Chinese living near their border regions⁵⁵". Syroezhkin argues that if

⁵² Kazakh Telegraph Agency (KazTAG), "V 2010 godu kvota na privilecheniye inostrannoi rabochei sily sostavit okolo 60 tys. chelovek" (In 2010 quota for inviting foreign work force will be around 60 thousand person), December 8, 2009. <http://www.zakon.kz/156356-v-2010-godu-kvota-na-privlechenie.html> (accessed August 10, 2010).

⁵³ Elena Sadovskaya, "Chinese Migration to Kazakhstan," 156.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 158.

⁵⁵ Valery Tishkov, Zhanna Zayinchkovskaya and Galina Vitkovskaya, "Migration in the countries of the Former Soviet Union," 38.

300,000 Chinese resided in Kazakhstan they should be more visible, like for example the Korean diaspora which is a little less than 100 thousand in Kazakhstan⁵⁶.

Table 6. Number of Chinese citizens temporarily residing on the territory of Kazakhstan

Year	Registered	For business purposes	For work	For private purposes	Tourism	Penalized under administrative law	Expelled
2000	13328	11233	131	1305	659	5221	430
2001	13415	9064	1224	2476	651	1198	203
2002	20243	13945	984	4344	970	661	159
2003	16974	9772	916	6016	270	363	151
2004	28558	16179	890	10860	629	1429	191
2005	34108	12755	2604	17108	1641	3881	531
2006	29183	7056	2513	19168	446	3587	866
2007	45570	11249	4720	29246	355	4715	553
2008	46370	14005	5593	26235	474	5998	666
2009*	23725	6442	3357	13673	253	3286	151

Source: Konstantin Syroezhkin, “Kitaiskaya migraciya v Kazahstan: voobrazhayemiye i real’nyie ugrozy” (Chinese migration to Kazakhstan: imaginative and real threats and challenges). *International Research. Society. Politics. Economics*, no. 1 (2009): 117 -128, http://www.ispr.kz/files/magazine_1.pdf, 121.

*January –June 2009, data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kazakhstan.

Some experts pointed out that the:

...increase in Chinese migration to Kazakhstan is due to a rapid increase in the spontaneous unregulated flow of labour migrants rather than to an increase in legally employed Chinese labor. Migrants often enter Kazakhstan legally, but then they start working without a formal employment contract (often just by oral agreement), which makes them illegally employed. Such irregular labor immigration remains largely

⁵⁶ Konstantin Syroezhkin, “Kitaiskaya migraciya v Kazahstan: voobrazhayemyie i real’nyie ugrozy” (Chinese migration to Kazakhstan: imaginative and real threats and challenges). *International Research. Society. Politics. Economics*, no. 1(2009), http://www.ispr.kz/files/magazine_1.pdf, 121.

undocumented, but as a rule it tends to increase in proportion to increases in the number of licensed laborers employed in any given destination country.⁵⁷

Though the number of Chinese citizens coming for work has been increasing with time, migrants who have firmly settled in Kazakhstan are small in number as indicated in table 7. Those who acquire citizenship are largely ethnic Kazakhs who are repatriated⁵⁸.

Table 7. Number of Chinese citizens who acquired permanent residency status or citizenship of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2001 - 2009)

Years	Permitted for permanent residency		Admitted to the citizenship of the Republic of Kazakhstan						
	Total	Including repatriates	Total	Including repatriates	Other nationalities				
					Total	Hans	Uyghurs	Russians	Mongolians
2001	227	216	1189	1182	7	1	6	1	
2002	174	171	1353	1348	5		4		
2003	272	267	1328	1323	5	4	5		
2004	597	579	4178	4169	9	1	4		1
2005	1116	1109	3916	3907	9		5	3	3
2006	7707	7130	7177	7166	11		10	1	
2007	11533	10952	3228	3226	2		2		
2008	13325	12745	15116	15112	4	1	3		1
2009	13305	12475	3040	3040					

Source: Konstantin Syroezhkin, "Kitaiskaya migraciya v Kazahstan: voobrazhayemyie i real'nyie ugrozy"(Chinese migration to Kazakhstan: imaginative and real threats and challenges), 122.

⁵⁷ Elena Sadovskaya, "Contemporary Migration from China to Kazakhstan in the Context of Global Chinese Migration," in *Rethinking Global Migration: Practices, Policies and Discourses in the European Neighborhood* (GIOMIG Conference) (Ankara: Center for Black Sea and Central Asia (KORA), Middle East Technical University (METU), 2008), 80.

⁵⁸ Konstantin Syroezhkin, "Social Perceptions of China and the Chinese: A View from Kazakhstan," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (2009): 41.

The geographical distribution of legal workers from China is diverse and not confined only to Almaty which is one of the main economic centers. In the early 2000s in Western Kazakhstan (Aktobe, Mangistau regions) more foreign licensed workers worked legally than in Almaty. In general, they mainly were employed in three regions. In 2005 "...32.6 percent are hired to work in Atyrau region, 15.4 percent in Astana, and 14.7 percent in Almaty (8.4 percent in Almaty city). The top three industries employing foreign workers include construction (58.4 percent), mining (15 percent), and agriculture (7.8 percent)⁵⁹". There are about 1000 Chinese companies registered in Almaty which work in banking (e.g. Bank of China, Industrial and Commercial Bank of China) , oil (e.g. CNPC, Sinopec), construction, construction machines, textile, metal, plastic, travel (such as China Business Travel Agency), food and other industries⁶⁰.

Sadovskaya considers Chinese legal migration to be temporary and that it should not be accepted as permanent relocation of Chinese (Han) that in the future could grow into a diaspora⁶¹ . She suggests that the main purpose of entrepreneurs from China is to accumulate capital and use it back home to develop business or to move on to more developed countries⁶².

In contrast to the numbers of Central Asian migration, estimates indicate Chinese migration in Kazakhstan is more modest. However, movements of labor migrants or merely citizens to Kazakhstan from China provoke extensive coverage in media and garner more attention in society.

Overall, illegal migration is not confined to Chinese citizens. Since the outbreak of the financial crisis, the Kazakh government is more focused on the flows from bordering Central Asian states, as International Crisis Group's report shows: "...The proportion (of illegal migrants) in Kazakhstan appears even higher. Experts claim that the number of migrants reaches up to three million annually, and only about 200,000 to 300,000 of them are in the country legally.⁶³" One element which distinguishes most Chinese migrants differ from Central Asian

⁵⁹ Murat Buldekbayev, "Every migrant has the right to (il)legal employment?" in *Migration Perspectives: Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, ed. by Roger Rodriguez Rios (International Organization for Migration: Vienna, 2006), 39.

⁶⁰ Li Tao, "Hasakesitan Zhongguo xin yimin de fazhan gaikuang he qushi" (Overview and trend of development of Kazakhstan's new Chinese migrants), *Shijie Minzu (World ethno-national studies)*, no. 6 (2009): 65-66.

⁶¹ Elena Sadovskaya, "Chinese Migration to Kazakhstan," 156.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 156.

⁶³ International Crisis Group, *Central Asia: Migrants and the economic crisis*, Asia report N 183 (International Crisis group January 2010, 5).

workers is that they are mostly employed in high-paying industries and work primarily in the Chinese companies or affiliated firms. Unlike Central Asian migrants, they work for Chinese employers and are less economically and socially vulnerable in the new environment despite being fewer in number. In comparison, migrants from Central Asia are at the mercy of their employers in terms of their legal status as a worker, salary, duration of staying in the country, and future opportunity to return for work⁶⁴.

However, Central Asian migrants are more socially acceptable because there is no significant communication or cultural barrier.⁶⁵ Conversely, Chinese migrants are culturally disconnected from the locals. This cultural disconnect, coupled with the involvement of Chinese businesses in the acquisition of important economic and infrastructural niches in the Kazakhstani economy, earns the Chinese migrants a negative image. Furthermore, limited participation in the management of resource based industries leaves the local population feeling like bystanders or outsiders. Ignorance of the real economic benefits and the actual extent of foreign involvement (corporations and companies) in strategically important spheres breed resentment among the local population and this fuels anti-Chinese sentiment.

According to recent data, the average portrait of Chinese legal migrant (who works legally under work license) in Almaty would be as following: “migrants with good education and high material conditions, often have their own home (26 %) or rent it (39 %), 33 % live in a hostel or a representative of Chinese firm.⁶⁶”. This is in stark contrast compared to figures for the conditions of illegal migrants from Central Asian states who in some cases work only for 100 US dollars per month. Consequently, Chinese migrants who are legal and economically secure generate more concern for the Kazakh public than migrants from other countries. These concerns arise despite a relatively solid legislative base between the two countries that was developed over the last two decades⁶⁷.

⁶⁴ Erica Marat, *Labor Migration in Central Asia*, 25.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶⁶ Svetlana Kozhirova, “Kitaiskaya migraciya kak element regional’noi bezopasnosti” (Chinese migration as a part of regional security), 16.

⁶⁷ For example, Kazakhstan and China signed several important documents since 2000s which have to provide long-term partnership relations between the two states: "Treaty of Good-neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation" on 23 December 2002, "The cooperation program for 2003-2008" dated June 3, 2003, "Joint Declaration of China and Kazakhstan on the establishment and development of strategic partnership" (July 4, 2005), "Agreement on the development of trade activities between China and Kazakhstan" (January 2006), "Strategy of cooperation between Kazakhstan and People's Republic of China in the XXI Century "(December 2006) . Citation

Illegal or legal Chinese migration by itself can contribute to the securitization of the Chinese presence in Kazakhstan. It is also reinforced by the historical and cultural perception of the Chinese in society. While in other parts of the world Chinese diasporas or ‘Chinatowns’ became an inseparable part of societies (in Southeast Asia, North America), post-Soviet states did not encounter foreign migrations before 1990s, except for internal inter-Soviet mass movements of people. Yet another reason of phobias toward the Chinese presence is the history of confrontation between the PRC and Soviet Union during the second half of the 20th century. However, in today’s realities economic competition on the labor market is more relevant. There are several levels of society’s reaction to the possible threats that could be produced by migrants: society’s concern about migrants’ overtaking economical niche and by that reducing chances for local community member to enjoy economical gains or it could be cultural concerns of society when it sees migrants as a security threat. As Terry Terriff puts it: “...security of a society is jeopardized when that society perceives that its identity is endangered and reacts to protect it.”⁶⁸

After becoming an independent state this imagined possibility of a Chinese ‘migrant invasion’ turned into a reality and the increased physical presence of Chinese migrants supported by economical leverage in the form of investments in Kazakhstan’s economy, fueled phobias about “Chinese expansion” in society.

source: Svetlana Kozhirova, “Kitaiskaya migraciya kak element regional’noi bezopasnosti” (Chinese migration as a part of regional security), 22.

⁶⁸ Terriff, Terry, Stuart Croft, Lucy James, and Patrick M. Morgan, “Non-traditional security threats: economics, crime and migration,” in *Security Studies Today* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 1999), 164.

The Copenhagen school of security theory and the concept of securitization of non-traditional threats

Migration is an issue most countries have to deal with and in this regard Kazakhstan is not an exception. Strict and efficient regulation measures are required. Security discourses were reconsidered and expanded as new problems emerged in the post-Cold War era. Scholars redefined security to cover challenges pertaining to the environment, mass movements of people, drug trafficking, etc. One possible solution was suggested by Ole Weaver and Barry Buzan who were the founders of the Copenhagen School of security studies. They proposed a novel approach for dealing with newly emerging non-traditional threats. They expanded the realm of security analysis and widened the scope of security studies, shifting the focus from the state to society (collectivity of individuals). However, for Buzan the state still factors as the central part of this analysis. As Terry Terriff points out,

Buzan suggests that the differing levels and sectors are most useful not as self-contained realms for policy or analysis but as ‘viewing platforms’ that allow analysts and policy-makers to approach security from different angles. Security is integrative and a comprehensive understanding must include all levels and sectors. However, Buzan always comes back to the state because he accepts the anarchic nature of the international system and the primacy of the state within that system.⁶⁹

The Copenhagen school widened the scope of security discourse by introducing the notion of securitization theory of threats. The process of securitization has to be articulated by the ‘speech act’ - particularly by declaring that a definite threat exists and so the security issue too exists. A ‘speech act’ itself is a tool of utilization for the purposes of justification of policies that could be taken in order to deal with the security threat. If we cite Weaver, he defines ‘speech act’ as follows: “...security is not of interest as a sign that refers to something more real; the utterance itself is the act...By uttering “security”, a state-representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it⁷⁰.”

Securitization of the threat has to undergo the process of articulation in the form of ‘speech act’. ‘Speech act’ itself has an audience and a source from which it has to be articulated,

⁶⁹ Terriff, Terry, Stuart Croft, Lucy James, and Patrick M. Morgan, “Non-traditional security threats: economics, crime and migration,” 167.

⁷⁰ Ole Weaver, “Securitization and Desecuritization,” in *On security*, ed. by Ronnie D. Lipschutz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 55.

an ‘actor’. The actor securitizes the issue by means of ‘speech act’ relating it to the referent object. The referent object in this concept is the object whose survival is perceived to be threatened. In theory, the state and the society could be those referent objects to which the ‘speech act’ is directed. Weaver argues that state and society prioritize threats differently: “State security has *sovereignty* as its ultimate criterion, and societal security has *identity*. Both usages imply survival. A state that loses its sovereignty does not survive as a state; a society that loses its identity fears that it will no longer be able to live *as itself* ⁷¹.” However, these two entities are intertwined so it is hard to differentiate the referent object from the actor of the securitization process. As Weaver points out, society has no distinct representative to address its concerns ⁷². He proceeds to note that: “...We cannot predict who will voice “societal security” concerns; we can only see, with hindsight, how much legitimacy an actor *did* possess when s/he tried to speak on behalf of society.... ⁷³”. It is usually the state that uses ‘the speech act’ to securitize and that has institutions to represent society ⁷⁴. Thus, from a broad perspective, we can see two main actors or referent objects in the securitization process - the state and society.

Although the development of civil society continues to produce other types of members in the securitization of non-traditional threats e.g. NGOs, grass root movements, mass-media, international organizations etc, these actors also become involved in the internal affairs of the state. These actors that hypothetically can contribute to the securitization of non-traditional security threats in general can become a platform for locals to voice their concerns. However, the line between state-centric and societal representatives is not so clearly defined. In this case, migratory movements between the states can be perceived to a threat on both the state level as well as the societal level. At first glance, migration need not necessarily generate security problems. However, under different circumstances it can pose possible threats for the state and society. As Terriff summarizes categories of threats related to refugee flows and migration:

Myron Weiner has identified five broad categories of threat: first, refugees and migrants who work against the regime of their home state; second, migrants who pose a threat to the host state; third, immigrants as a cultural threat; fourth, refugees and migrants as social or economic threats; and fifth, the use by host countries of migrants and refugees as instruments to threaten the country of origin. In these categories it is not always clear what the referent object is. It may be the state and seeing the state as

⁷¹ Ole Weaver, “Securitization and Desecuritization,” 67.

⁷² *Ibid.*,69.

⁷³ *Ibid.*,70.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*,70.

threatened, and, by extension, international peace and stability (the first, second and fifth categories), or on the societal level, with the threat being to social cohesion and societal identity (the third and fourth categories).⁷⁵

Thus it is not easy to identify the precise impact of migration on the state and societal level and study each in isolation. From the 1990s, Kazakhstan can be seen as one of the countries in which migration processes overwhelmed the existing population structure in terms of numbers and changed its ethnic composition (large outflow to Russia and other states) to some degree. The issue of decreasing population owing to outflow as well as inflow into the country gradually came to the attention of the state, forcing it to examine the issue. If we take into consideration all legislative acts concerning migration, Kazakhstan has not ratified some major international laws and acts related to labor and migration⁷⁶. Some main documents were signed however, between Kazakhstan and other members of the CIS, as the 1994 Agreement on Cooperation in the Sphere of Labor Migration and Social Protection of Migrant Workers, as well as bilateral and trilateral agreements on labor migration with Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan⁷⁷. In 1997, the law “On Population Migration” was adopted which set general regulatory directions dealing with immigration, labor migration, repatriates, and refugees⁷⁸.

Taking into account the number of official bodies (the Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy and several of inter-parliamentarian committees⁷⁹) involved in the direct or indirect control of migration in the republic, one can conclude that state is highly concerned by this phenomena. However, lack of

⁷⁵ Terry Terriff, Stuart Croft, Lucy James, and Patrick M. Morgan, “Non-traditional security threats: economics, crime and migration,” 158.

⁷⁶ International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-13&chapter=4&lang=en (accessed July 20, 2010); ILO Migration for Employment Convention No. 97 (revised), 1949 <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde.pl?C097> (accessed July 20, 2010); ILO Migrant Workers Convention No. 143 (supplementary provisions) <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/ratifce.pl?C143> (accessed July 20, 2010) According to ILO Kazakhstan is a member of ILO since 1993, has ratified 16 conventions of the International Labour Organization and 8 of them are principal conventions - see International Labour Organization. *Rights of migrant workers in Kazakhstan. National legislation, international standards and practices* (Almaty: ILO, May 2008), 11.

⁷⁷ International Labour Organization. *Rights of migrant workers in Kazakhstan. National legislation, international standards and practices*, 11.

⁷⁸ Ministry of Labor and Social protection of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Law “On population migration” N 204 from 13 December 1997, http://www.enbek.gov.kz/migration/migr_rusdetail.php?recordID=71&mintrud=1 (accessed July 15, 2010)

⁷⁹ Erica Marat, *Labor Migration in Central Asia*, 26.

coordination impedes obtaining the exact number of migrants in the country. So it was decided that 'Immigration Police' be created to supervise control of migrants⁸⁰.

In addition to different types of migratory movements such as immigration of repatriates, legal labor migrants, and illegal labor migrants from Central Asian states, there is rapidly growing rural movement toward main cities. Still, Chinese migration raises unique questions and concerns within Kazakhstani society. The problem of migration of Chinese citizens in Kazakhstan has several dimensions due to rising political and economic influence that China gradually exerts on the country.

⁸⁰ Erica Marat, *Labor Migration in Central Asia*, 26.

Position of the government on Chinese presence

In the last 5 years, bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and China have been progressing due to increased Chinese investment. The involvement of Chinese companies and corporations in the Kazakh economy presently is not confined to the oil-gas sector. Chinese companies are also investing in financial, mining industry, uranium mines development projects⁸¹. In 2009 overall investment in Kazakh economy from China amounted to more than 8.5 billion dollars and with the credit loan this year it could rise to 10 more billion US dollars⁸².

There were some objections among Kazakhstani society in regards to detentions in Almaty of Uyghurs from China allegedly involved in separatist movements of XUAR⁸³. In late 80s and the beginning of 90s nuclear testing in Lop Nor also evoked discontent of the nuclear testing ban movements in Kazakhstan and the government was also active on this issue for some period. Gauging Chinese-Central Asian relations Mark Burles points out that: "...Kazakhstan has lodged official protests with China in the past, expressing Kazakhstan's concerns over the potential harmful impact of the tests on ecology and overall health of the region."⁸⁴ However, as time passed good bilateral relations set in, economical benefits prevailed which resulted in the government of Kazakhstan's policy of lessening the influence of the opposition and of the active part of society on the international affairs of the republic.

The most significant deals signed between two countries were related to oil-gas production and pipeline transportation. According to the declaration signed in 2005, the 1000-km *Atasu-Alashankou* pipeline was planned to transport 10 million tons of oil per year and provide 15 percent of total China's demand for oil⁸⁵. However, other estimates of Kazakh oil in the Chinese economy are smaller. Peyrouse gives the following estimates: "...the pipeline will

⁸¹ Sébastien Peyrouse, "China's recent advances in Central Asia," *CACI Analyst* (December 12, 2008), <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5001>

⁸² Sergei Smirnov and Vasili Kalabin, "Kreditnyi syr Kitaya" ('Cheese' credit loan from China), *Expert-Kazakhstan*, no. 44 (235) November 16, 2009, http://www.expert.ru/printissues/kazakhstan/2009/44/kazahstansko_kitajskie_otnosheniya/ (accessed June 27, 2010).

⁸³ EurasiaNet, "Uighur issues may become factor in China-Kazakhstan relations," January 2, 2003, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/46c58ed51a.html> (accessed June 27, 2010).

⁸⁴ Mark Burles, "Prospects for China's influence in Central Asia", in *Chinese policy toward Russia and the Central Asian Republic* (RAND's Project Air Force, 1999), 58-59.

⁸⁵ Richard Weitz, "Central Asia", in *China-Russia security relations: strategic parallelism without partnership or passion?* (Strategic Studies Institute United States Army War College Monograph, 2008), 57. <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?PubID=868>

provide 5 % of total Chinese oil import and in 10 years could reach about 40 million tones, so increase twofold⁸⁶.” As one of Kazakhstan’s leading sinologists, Konstantin Syroezhkin, states Chinese companies currently control over 25 % of the oil production in Kazakhstan⁸⁷. More so than ever before, the Kazakh government is bound to China by the new contracts and commitments.

Because of increasing Chinese influence, the Kazakh government overlooks violations of foreign labor force attraction laws by Chinese companies. Syroezhkin supports the assumption that any possible efforts of government officials to denunciate China “...are used only to divert the attention of public opinion from the real perpetrators.”⁸⁸ Furthermore, he cites a Kazakh scholar who says that “ultimately, the threat is not in China’s economic expansion, but in corruptibility of our officials⁸⁹.” As a fellow researcher of the Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies Serik Shakirbayev, points out:

Other reason, promoting strengthening of inflow of migrants, is the inefficient migratory policy of the state, particularly, the work of migratory service bodies. Corruption in Migratory Police and Border Police is one of the reasons, generating scale illegal migration, including the Chinese. Its result is absence of the statistics, reflecting a real state of affairs. There is a paradoxical situation, when repatriates cannot receive citizenship, works, apartments, etc. for a long time, whereas the Chinese migrants are easily engaged in business, conclude fictitious marriages and get the real estate. Regular migration of the Chinese people, particularly, if it will accept mass character, can entail a lot of problems for our state...⁹⁰.

Ignoring problematic issues with China can also be explained by other reasons. Laruelle and Peyrouse suggest:

In fact, having a positive attitude toward China is not necessarily founded on an ideological conviction (i.e. sympathy for the country, considering its political regime a good role model, or an embrace of Chinese civilization, etc.). It seems instead to be driven by a logic that also has a Sinophobe dimension: a desire to build closer ties with China because it is better to maintain healthy relations with a large and feared neighbor.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Sebastien Peyrouse, “Central’ naya Aziya i Kitai: rastushee partnerstvo”(Central Asia and China: growing partnership) EUCAM (EU-Central Asia monitoring) working paper N 4, October 2009, http://www.eucentralasia.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF_RU/Working_Papers_RU/WP4-RU.pdf, 10.

⁸⁷ Konstantin Syroezhkin, “Social Perceptions of China and the Chinese,” 45.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 45.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 45.

⁹⁰ Serik Shakirbayev, “Aspects of migration situation in the Republic of Kazakhstan”, March 17, 2006, The Kazakhstan Institute for Strategic Studies, <http://www.kisi.kz/> (stylistic and spelling of the original text retained)

⁹¹ Marlène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse, *China as a Neighbor: Central Asian Perspectives and Strategies*, (Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program, 2009), 67.

It is possible that Kazakhstan's government does not articulate concerns over Chinese migration openly. The media provides the main platform for the discussion of the Chinese presence. However, it also depends on the ownership of the media outlet. In recent years for example, there were several cases related to CNPC (China National Petroleum Corporation) division located in Aktyubinsk region (Western Kazakhstan). Articles stated that the company violated rights of the workers, alleging unreasonable dismissal or lower salaries compared to those of Chinese workers'. It also stated that locals had worse working and living conditions, etc⁹². These publications are specific to areas where many Chinese and Kazakhstani workers are employed, however Laruelle and Peyrouse purport that "...it is possible to observe the emergence of anti-Chinese lobbies supported by some middle working classes concerned about the deterioration of the labor market and Chinese competition. Beijing's offensive in the national energy sector is also eliciting a growing number of reactions, even among officials."⁹³ As one of the Kazakhstani political scientist assessing the question of Chinese presence in Kazakhstan and Central Asia suggests, the acceptance level of China's involvement varies between official and civilian circles. Whereas officials consider that China strengthens the local economy, most experts as well as people see it as PRC's economic expansion in Kazakhstan⁹⁴.

Authorities do not intend to bring this problem into the realm of security. Instead, the government manipulates it in certain ways for leverage in internal politics and to undermine competing lobbies. They have different media groups at their disposal through which they wage information warfare. These outlets use stereotypes to heighten fears of the 'Chinese threat' or 'expansion', which perpetuates the negative image of Chinese coming to Kazakhstan.

⁹² Rika-TV, "V inostrannyh kompaniyah prodolzhayut ushemlyat' prava kazahstancev" (Kazakhstanis' rights are continuously violated in foreign companies), May 19, 2008.

<http://rikatv.kz/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=3908> (accessed September 5, 2010); Megapolis, "Vplot' do deportacii..." (*Right up to deportation...*), December 4, 2006, http://www.megapolis.kz/art/Vplot_do_deportatsii (accessed September 5, 2010).

⁹³ Marlène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse, *China as a Neighbor*, 78.

⁹⁴ Berik Zhalgas, Interview with Muhit Asanbayev – vice-president of Kazakhstan Center of Humanitarian and Political trends, *Central Asia Monitor* 51 (263), December 25-30, 2009, <http://www.sarap.kz/rus/view.php?id=366> (accessed September 10, 2010).

The mass media's role in articulating securitization of Chinese migration

The role of mass media in Kazakhstan differs greatly from those that exist in states with more liberal social structures. The main television channels and newspapers are either state-run or controlled by business groups⁹⁵. Consequently, the main opposition sources are compelled to publish materials online. There were efforts even to quash dissent in the virtual realm as laws placing restrictions on internet content were introduced to limit the freedom of speech⁹⁶.

First, we should outline the role of mass-media in Kazakhstan. At present, according to the Ministry of Communication and Information of Kazakhstan, there are about 2695 mass media sources including paper and electronic (TV channels, radio stations, cable TV) media sources registered in the country. The main bulk of them are in print (2427) and only about 10 % are in electronic form (257)⁹⁷. Ownership of the media tends to mainly be non-governmental. Statistic shows that 436 of 2695 are state-owned and similar percentages apply to all other types of media. Hence, the state-owned media share is considerable less in number compared to the private shares. According to the results of research conducted by the NGO MediaNet on Kazakhstan's mass media, though percentage of non-state media sources prevails over government funded sources, proprietors of most mass media are large companies, financial organizations, or local business groups⁹⁸. The degree of independence of media organizations in research is also relative. The main reason is that because of informal interactions of owners with authorities, "the bulk of mass media are loyal to the state authorities due to the familiarity of mass media owners with state authorities, receipt of public funds by mass media and other reasons⁹⁹".

The state monopoly over media resources strengthened during recent years as the main political party in the country - which is also happens to be pro-presidential – consolidated

⁹⁵ Freedom House, "Freedom of the Press 2009 – Kazakhstan," May 1, 2009,

<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,COI,,,KAZ,,4b27420bc,0.html> (accessed June 18, 2010).

⁹⁶ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, "Kazakh websites protesting new Internet law with strike," May 13, 2009, <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4a1d3e0323.html> (accessed June 18, 2010).

⁹⁷ Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan, *Information on functioning mass-media of the Republic of Kazakhstan as of June 25, 2010*,

http://mci.gov.kz/main/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=528&Itemid=218 (accessed September 1, 2010).

⁹⁸ MediaNet, Results of research "Kazakhstan mass media: key participants, possibilities, needs and risks", edited by Vyacheslav Abramov (Almaty, 2009), http://www.medianet.kz/files/issledovanie_mass_media_kazahstana.pdf, 62.

⁹⁹ MediaNet, Results of research "Kazakhstan mass media: key participants, possibilities, needs and risks," 62.

different state and private media outlets into one holding - *Nur-Media*¹⁰⁰. It is widely assumed that a large number of private/independent media outlets ensures freedom of press. However, the role of the main media players in Kazakhstan is complicated due to overwhelming resources that are at state's disposal. Government holds a monopoly in distribution of frequencies and funds for state orders on the publications' content. Main media channels and newspapers have been incorporated into state-run, governmental media groups. There are 11 state TV companies according to the Ministry of Communication of Kazakhstan and 52 private ones. Out of 11 news agencies only one is in state property. State-owned print mass media is also smaller in number (328 – state, 1291- private¹⁰¹). State monopoly over the mass media seem to be weak if we look at the parity of state-run and independent or private media. The latter undoubtedly prevail over the state-run ones. However, the coverage of the potential audience and financing is at the disposal of the state-run media sources. Also as MediaNet research reveals most of the media workers try to self-censor as not to be confrontational to the government's policies or official structures¹⁰². A majority of state-run TV channels are not independent and affiliation with the government is more obvious whereas, print media ownership is not officially declared though informed readers may know from the publications' tone or themes¹⁰³. At the moment, there are a limited number of TV channels which have access to bigger audiences. Only several state channels such as *Khabar*, *Kazakhstan TV channel*, *private KTK (Commercial Television Channel)*, *El-Arna*, *Astana*, *31 channel*, and other several large TV channels are able to broadcast to more than half of the republic's population.¹⁰⁴ Hence, access to information in rural areas is limited to these mainly state-run or affiliated media structures.

Another indicator of state control over media recourses is placement of orders to various mass-media on specific themes (payments for order for publications assigned from the government structures) that tend to be positive or supportive of state policy and image.

¹⁰⁰ Dana Rysmuamedova, "Cennost' bol'shiih proektov" (Value of big projects), interview with Armanzhan Baitasov, general director of *Nur-Media* holding, *Biznes&Vlast'*, February, 2, 2009 <http://www.zakon.kz/132336-razgovorov-vokrug-mediakholdinga-nur.html> (accessed September 5, 2010); MediaNet, Results of research "Kazakhstan mass media: key participants, possibilities, needs and risks" http://www.medianet.kz/files/issledovanie_mass_media_kazahstana.pdf, 62.

¹⁰¹ Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of Kazakhstan, *Information on functioning mass-media of the Republic of Kazakhstan as of June 25, 2010*, http://mci.gov.kz/main/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=528&Itemid=218 (accessed September 1, 2010)

¹⁰² MediaNet, Results of research "Kazakhstan mass media: key participants, possibilities, needs and risks", 69-70.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 63.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 63.

MediaNet's new research reviews the implementation as well as effects of this new state-run policy of influencing mass media. Their research draws the following conclusion: "Non-transparency of public (state) order placement for publications elicits a number of questions, including questions about its real aims and purposes. In recent years these aims are state's desire to control private mass-media which cannot or does not want at the moment refuse accepting public (state) order placement for publications.¹⁰⁵".

However, here we have to mention that the securitization of Chinese presence is discussed mainly on the pages of the printed media which also circulate mostly in more densely populated urban areas. Articles which were taken as examples in the next part of the section were mainly from the print media. So while referring to governmental TV media, they do not tend to pay attention to the migratory situation except for cases that were reported by the Migration services officially. Therefore, the emphasis here is mainly on print media as state channels' reports do not usually reflect the real state of affairs in the country.

Rhetoric securitizing Chinese migration in Kazakhstan can be clearly traced to the mass media outlets. In different newspapers, articles which have a negative or an alarmist tone appear on a regular basis. Some of the experts who do research on migration from China such as Svetlana Kozhirova assume that publication of these articles related to Chinese migration or that Chinese presence in Kazakhstan tends to be mobilized before large China-Kazakhstan projects are launched¹⁰⁶.

When it comes to publications related to Chinese migrants coming to Kazakhstan and the Chinese presence, coverage generally has several aspects. The general features of articles or publications in informational sources can be described as following: 1) Migration is connected with the strengthened economical presence of China in Kazakhstan; 2) Demographical differences and geographical proximity are mentioned to be a priority as the number of Chinese citizens in country is perceived to be increasing; 3) Corruption in law-enforcement departments' management of migration is highlighted by authors as a factor leading to Chinese migrants freely entering Kazakhstan's territory or working without licenses and acquiring the citizenship

¹⁰⁵ MediaNet, "Goszakaz v mass-media Kazahstana", Informacionno-analiticheskii obzor. Itogi Goszakaz – 2009, novosti i anonsy ("Public order placement in the mass media of Kazakhstan". Informational-analytical survey. Resume of Goszakaz – 2009, news and announcements), The International Centre of Journalism MediaNet, <http://www.medianet.kz/index.php?uin=1104119280&chapter=1283841651>, (translated from Russian).

¹⁰⁶ Ludmila Piskorskaya, "Bol'shiye 'glaza' kitaiskoi ekspansii" (Big "eyes" of Chinese expansion), www.zakon.kz, April 19, 2010. <http://www.zakon.kz/169690-legendy-i-mify-kitajskoj-jekspansii-v.html> (accessed August 28, 2010)

illegally; 4) General politics in the government's dealing with Chinese investors (mostly represented by state-owned corporations of China) are criticized as overtly undermining state control over strategic sectors of economy (selling oil-gas companies, concessions by Kazakh side in negotiations over infrastructural projects or in terms of loans provided by PRC to Kazakhstan). The main aspects of securitization, however, develop around territorial integrity, threat to national security, and demographical overtaking.

The language used in media publications also has to be taken into consideration as usually Kazakh and Russian-language media-sources' preferences on themes and coverage differ¹⁰⁷. However, information or opinions on Chinese migrants or expansion appears in both Kazakh and Russian language media in Kazakhstan. In Kazakh language media, the language of the publications tends to be more emotionally charged than in their Russian counterparts. Emotive language is employed rousing patriotic feelings and urging readers to guard national interests, territorial interests, and the nation's very survival which is threatened by an invasion of Chinese migrants.

The most disturbing aspect is the large discrepancies between official government figures and media estimates of the number of Chinese migrants. One trick the media employs is to frame the news or information in sensational language to attract the reader. Though experts note that there is a wide variety of motivations for publications related to Chinese migrants, they often criticize media for inflating the real facts. At the same time, some of them call upon journalists to be more objective and to avoid stirring public opinion and to publish overtly pro-Chinese articles.

The main aspects that are usually discussed in media with respect to the Chinese question were summarized above. The most recent and prominent example of 'Chinese expansion' rhetoric to appear in the mass media were the protests that were triggered by the remark of Nursultan Nazarbayev about leasing 1 million hectares of agricultural lands to Chinese agricultural firms. In his speech delivered at the meeting with investors, he stated that Chinese counterparts had already agreed to lease some part of bordering territory from Kazakhstan to fulfill agricultural needs¹⁰⁸. This remark caused heated debate on the Chinese

¹⁰⁷ MediaNet, Results of research "Kazakhstan mass media: key participants, possibilities, needs and risks", 63.

¹⁰⁸ Dilbegim Mavlonii, "Mimohodnoye zayavleniye Nazarbayeva privelo aktivistov k kitaiskomu konsul'stvu" (Nazarbayev's incidental remark brought activists to Chinese consulate), *Azattyq.org*, December 11, 2009, http://rus.azattyq.org/content/Kazakh_lands_rent_to_China_/1901588.html (accessed September 6, 2010)

threat to territorial integrity and national security, even leading to small scale demonstrations led by nationalistic-patriotic groups outside the consulate of PRC in Almaty¹⁰⁹ They filed a petition demanding the government of PRC abstain from raising the question of renting out the land. The media was flooded with articles from opposition groups and intellectual circles criticizing the government's intention of leasing out the land thus fanning suspicions among the local population that the deal had been pre-negotiated between Kazakhstan and China. One of the arguments that featured in the discussions was that the consequences of leasing the land would be a possible increase in the number of Chinese immigrants to Kazakhstan and further settlement¹¹⁰. Laruelle and Peyrouse in their monograph suggest that this kind of rhetoric in the media tends to follow a trend. They cite the 2004 transaction of abandoned land of 7000 hectares to Chinese farmers referring to the Russian regional news portal¹¹¹, and note that “the so-called Chinese threat is therefore bound to re-appear in Kazakh media and political spheres at regular intervals...” and within different political circles such as opposition and nationalist¹¹². The theme of threat from China was mentioned in most of Kazakh language publications related to this particular case of possible land leasing. Also debates were organized by pro-oppositional media sources where speakers' critiques were directed more to Kazakh officials' policy in negotiations with China. China's utilization of *soft loan* politics also earned criticism¹¹³.

Another popular topic, one which is usually supported by official statistics, is the detention of illegal Chinese workers from Chinese companies' or their violation of

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Zhanbolat Mamai, “Zherdi bergender bilikten ketedi” (Those who will give away the land would lose power), *Zhas Alash* – Kazakh language weekly newspaper, December 22, 2009. <http://www.zhasalash.kz/saraptama/653.html?lang=kz> (accessed September 4, 2010).

¹¹¹ However, according to the Kazakhstan's state news agency *KazInform*, statement about 3000 thousand Chinese farmers coming to Kazakhstan and leasing 7000 hectares is groundless as Kazakhstan's government had not confirmed such transaction. See *KazInform*, “Informacionnaya “utka” po-pekinski ili kitaiskie plany po osvoeniyu zemel' Kazahstana” (Informational “utka” po-pekinski (Peking ‘duck’ – ‘duck’ stands for false report in Russian language media) or Chinese plans on developing Kazakhstan's lands), December 19, 2003, <http://www.inform.kz/rus/article/60947#>

¹¹² Marlène Laruelle and Sébastien Peyrouse, *China as a Neighbor: Central Asian Perspectives and Strategies*, 80-81.

¹¹³ Nazira Darimbet and Serikzhan Kovlanbayev, “Tak li strashen Kitai kak ego malyuut?” (Is China as scaring as it is painted?), *Respublika* – Russian language oppositional newspaper. February, 2, 2010, <http://www.respublika-kz.info/news/politics/7548/> (accessed September 4, 2010); Zhanbolat Mamai and Inga Imanbai, “Zherdi zhalga bergennin basy butin bergeni” (Those who leases the land is giving away his head). *Zhas Alash*, December 29, 2009, <http://www.sarap.kz/kaz/view.php?id=361> (accessed September 4, 2010); Kenzhaly Esbergen, “Kytaidyn mol nesiyessin algannyn, Beizhinge syn aityga kelgende uni shykpaidy” (One after taking big loan from Beijing do not dare to criticize it), *Azattyq.org*, March 30, 2010. http://www.azattyq.org/content/Kazakhstan_press_digest_china_credit/1997537.html (accessed September 4, 2010)

Kazakhstan's labor law in the form of using workers from PRC without an official license. Cases related to CNPC-Aktobemunaigas (for repeated violation of Kazakhstan's foreign labor force regulation company lost its quota for inviting work force from PRC¹¹⁴) were covered in media. Violation of employment procedures or discrimination in salary levels between local and Chinese employees were the main focus of publications¹¹⁵. Though at the surface of the publications social disparities are highlighted, in Kazakh language media discontent with the growing workforce from China is considered to be threatening to the country's future, though it do not fit into the definition of security threat. Peyrous points out that: "Kazakh courts have issued penalties to Chinese companies for more than 300 contraventions of the labour code or environmental standards. In light of the proliferation of Chinese companies throughout the country, and not only in the border regions, some experts see a deliberate strategy of developing a network throughout the country so that in the event of serious political tensions, Beijing could interfere in Kazakhstan's internal development on the pretext of safeguarding its enterprises¹¹⁶."

Media claims of exact numbers are certainly not supported by the facts or research data. So the numbers of 300,000 or 500,000 ("there are at least 500,000 Chinese walking about in our country¹¹⁷", and "according to different sources today in Kazakhstan there are 300,000 Chinese¹¹⁸") Chinese who purportedly reside in Kazakhstan obviously cannot be confirmed by scientific arguments or by experts' works. The figure of 300,000 Chinese in Kazakhstan is mentioned by Syroezhkin as very dubious and he also questions the intentions of Xinhua news agency in providing these numbers¹¹⁹.

If we consider the media as an actor in securitization of Chinese migration, then referent object to whom the 'speech act' expressed as "expansion to Kazakhstan of Chinese" directed is

¹¹⁴ KazInform, "V Atyrau kitaiskaya kompaniya poteryala pravo privilekat' k rabote insotrancev" (In Atyrau Chinese company forfeited the right to invite foreign workers", March 17, 2008, <http://www.zakon.kz/106988-v-atyrau-kitajskaja-kompanija.html> (accessed September 4, 2010).

¹¹⁵ Bayan Sarsembina, "Sheginerge zher zhok" (No way back), *Zhas Alash*, March 30, 2010. <http://www.zhasalash.kz/ekonomika/1395.html?lang=kz> (accessed September, 5, 2010).

¹¹⁶ Sebastien Peyrous, "Chinese Economic Presence in Kazakhstan," 38.

¹¹⁷ Orken Kenzhebek, "Kara kytai kaptasa" (If thousands of Chinese would come), *Zhas Qazaq*, July 31, 2009. <http://abai.kz/content/rken-kenzhebek-ara-ytai-aptasa> (accessed September 7, 2010).

¹¹⁸ Esengul Kapkyzy, "Kytai kulashyn alemge zhayudy kozdeidi. Ol ushin aueli Orta Aziiyany, Kazakstandy 'bauyrna baspak'" (China is aiming to dominate the world. But first want to 'take over' Central Asia and Kazakhstan,) *Turkistan*, http://www.turkystan.kz/page.php?page_id=27&id=3468

¹¹⁹ Konstantin Syroezhkin, "Kitaiskaya migraciya v Kazahstan: vobrazhayemyie i real'nyie ugrozy" (Chinese migration to Kazakhstan: imaginative and real threats and challenges), 122.

society. However, the media appeals to established perceptions/prejudices that Syroezhkin suggests to be myths or phobias that rooted in it¹²⁰.

The reason for (persistent attention of public) using this range of phobias, experts assume, is related to unfamiliarity of society on the most part with Chinese internal realities, its culture, and history. "...On the one hand, myths and phobias regarding China and the Chinese stem from national memory and historical bilateral relations. On the other hand, as the results of a study - which is, unfortunately, the only existing one - show, the Kazakh public is little informed about China and indifferent to Chinese migrants.¹²¹". Experts do not exclude migratory influence from neighboring China, hypothetical refugee flows in case of anti-governmental riots, or clashes in XUAR and consider migration flows from China as a consistent part of an economic globalization process that would have to be regulated in order to avoid challenge of demographic pressure¹²². Unclear, non-transparent information on the exact figures of migration from China coupled with a visibly enhanced physical presence of Chinese in almost all major cities of Kazakhstan, create fears which are intensified by sensational articles that periodically appear in the press. This affects the credibility of the information for the public. The mass-media to some degree persistently puts the spotlight on migration-related issues since it touches upon important economic interests of locals. The main issue is not the migration itself, it is more about how the government has to manage the influence of the demographic pressure that may be spread over Kazakhstan in the future¹²³.

Despite a weak civil society structure in Kazakhstan, we can assume that the media's obsession with the Chinese question is a reflection of a lack of transparency in the state's interaction with Chinese counterparts and the government's accountability to the constituents. As a result, discontent with the official position and the level of access to the information related to the strategic contracts in industrial or oil-gas sector persists. The Chinese question is partly caused by the internal imbalance of people-power relations.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 117.

¹²¹ Konstantin Syroezhkin, "Social Perceptions of China and the Chinese," 33.

¹²² Konstantin Syroezhkin, "Social Perceptions of China and the Chinese," 42; Elena Sadovskaya, "Chinese Migration to Kazakhstan," 169.

¹²³ Kazakhstan-Today, "V Kazahstan v 2006 godu v'ehalo okolo 100 tys. kitaicev – ekspert Centra migracionnyh issledovaniy" (Nearly 100,000 Chinese entered into Kazakhstan in 2006 – expert of the Center for the research of migration), October 9, 2007, <http://kt.kz/?lang=rus&uin=1133168996&chapter=1153427470> (accessed June 15, 2010).

Conclusion

The securitization of Chinese migratory flows to Kazakhstan by the government is not necessary and the development of such scenario is unrealistic. Obviously for Kazakhstani and Chinese governments, expansion of the migration issue into the security realm is basically unacceptable. The real number of Chinese labor migrants in Kazakhstan is not confirmed by official statistics which provide only the number of those who are licensed. The issue of general labor migration is acute, however a lot of problems can be resolved by government. Attitudes towards Chinese and Central Asian migrants are different because, visibility of migrants on the territory of Kazakhstan as well as interaction with local population is limited and depends on the contrast in numbers between Chinese migrants and migrants from neighboring states.

From the point of view of protecting social identity in Kazakhstani society, the enduring Chinese presence in the Central Asian region was accepted cautiously on the part of the larger population, even after trade relations with China improved. The main explanation of perseverance of fears is in understanding of the differences in all aspects (economy, military might, geopolitical weight, demographical disparity, political influence) between Kazakhstan and China as well as government's slow response to intensifying migration flows in the country.

As frequent publications on violations of the rights of Kazakhstani workers in Chinese companies appear, as well as news that Chinese workers often violate the rules of labor regulations in Kazakhstan, media attention naturally refocuses on the Chinese question attention and as a result creates an impression that Chinese citizens are increasing and settling in Kazakhstan. In fact, experts estimate their share in total migratory flow to be relatively low and consider it too early to announce that the country is Sinicized. However, most of the experts, both foreign and Kazakhstani, point out that the Chinese issue will not fade away as penetration of PRC business structures in Central Asia under the favorable conditions will continue. Therefore, I believe that current policy of the authorities on migration issue should become more effective and realistic to avoid further escalation of the problems associated with increase in the number of migrants (both legal and illegal); problems that can potentially destabilize Kazakhstani society. Therefore, these problems will need to be resolved at some point. And in this case as in most others, the sooner the problems are resolved the better.

The interaction between the society and state is in the locus of the securitization theory. Issues arising from Chinese expansion that concern media sources or forces behind certain mass-media tools in Kazakhstan pose questions that go beyond the scope of just national security. Media attention also provokes social reactions to state policy as well as to the real actions of the power-holding structures.

Further research on the patterns of securitization language or its effect on the reality of Kazakhstani society can be developed. In relation to migration deeper analysis is required, analysis based on comprehensive and factual databases so as to accurately ascertain the number of labor migrants in Kazakhstan. This information will be crucial in forming a state policy which allows for more effective management of the migrational situation in Kazakhstan.

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