Abstract

The following master thesis deals with Chinese and Russian influence in Central Asia through a case study of Kazakhstan. Existing literature on the topic mostly addresses Chinese and Russian points of view and their approach towards whole Central Asia. This thesis builds on it by focusing on the most prominent country in the region, Kazakhstan, and the perceptions of China and Russia by the political elites—the president and government—as shown in their official narrative. The attention towards Central Asia has grown in the past few years, especially since the Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The start of the invasion is a core point of the thesis, as it compares Kazakh perceptions during a period of one and a half years before and one and a half years after the invasion in order to find out whether the perception in the official narrative has changed or not. The data consists of reports collected from the websites of the Kazakh government and president during the given period. The analysis applies qualitative content analysis, through which it identifies the most significant topics that are perceived with regard to China and Russia. The thesis explores development within these categories. It describes the commonly occurring themes, but at the same time pays high attention to specific non-typical reports, especially those referring to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This case study is analysed in the context of Chinese and Russian influence in Central Asia and Kazakh-Chinese and Kazakh-Russian relations.

Keywords