

invited to learn more. Hao Chen, with this text, has hopefully opened up another avenue of research that will allow himself and many others to continue exploring Central Asia's history.

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Luca Anceschi. *Analysing Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy: Regime Neo-Eurasianism in the Nazarbaev Era*. London & New York, NY: Routledge, 2020. xi + 196 pp. (ISBN 9780415711432). doi:10.22679/avs.2023.8.1.012

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Luca Anceschi's book, *Analysing Kazakhstan's Foreign Policy: Regime Neo-Eurasianism in the Nazarbaev Era*, offers a detailed analysis of Kazakhstan's foreign policy under Nazarbaev, with a particular focus on the influence of regime *neo-Eurasianism*. The theoretical framework of the book draws on the concept of regime *neo-Eurasianism*, which has received limited attention in previous academic literature. The author highlights the significant role played by ideology, identity, power, and the domestic political context in shaping Kazakhstan's foreign policy decisions. This approach offers a valuable and insightful understanding of the complex dynamics of Kazakhstan's foreign policy, especially the influence of domestic factors on its approach. The central argument of the book is that the concept of *Eurasianism*, as applied to Kazakhstan's foreign policy under Nazarbaev's presidency, served to enhance Nazarbaev's legitimacy, leadership, and legacy rather than being driven by a genuine emphasis on Eurasian integration.

The book is divided into five chapters, with an introduction and a conclusion, each examining different aspects of Kazakhstan's foreign policy. In the introduction, Anceschi provides a brief historical overview of Kazakhstan and its foreign policy as well as an explanation of the book's central theme. Chapter one examines Kazakhstan's foreign policy in the pre-Eurasianist era, between December 1991 and November 1993, when the country gained independence. Anceschi argues that during this period, Kazakhstan pursued a multi-vector foreign policy, seeking to establish relations with all major powers and regional organizations.

Chapter two focuses on the emergence of neo-Eurasianist rhetoric in Kazakhstan in the mid-1990s and its evolution into a dominant ideology in the Nazarbaev era, with a focus on Nazarbaev's 1994 speech at Moscow State University as a significant turning point. Anceschi examines the key tenets of *neo-Eurasianism* and its impact on Kazakhstan's foreign policy, including the promotion of regional integration, the establishment of a multi-polar world order, and the cultivation of a Eurasian identity. The chapter also examines various Russian and Kazakh interpretations of this concept and draws comparisons between them.

Chapter three examines the relationship between regime *neo-Eurasianism* and intra-Central

Asian integration and explores the failure of Central Asian regionalism and the impact of *neo-Eurasianism* on Kazakhstan's relations with its neighbors. Anceschi argues that Kazakhstan's pursuit of regional integration under neo-Eurasianist ideology has been hindered by its rivalry with Uzbekistan and the failure of the Central Asian Union. Consequently, the ambitions of Central Asian regionalism were not aligned with Nazarbaev's desire to be recognized as a champion of Eurasian integration, which was further highlighted by his leadership role in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe in 2010.

Chapter four revisits the concept of *re-integratsiya*, which was a key policy of Kazakhstan in the post-Soviet era, and its evolution in the Nazarbaev era. This chapter delves into the functioning of two institutional components of *Eurasianism* - the Eurasian Union and the Eurasian Economic Community - in the broader context of the post-Soviet space during the period between 1994 and 2013. The author examines how these entities represented different visions of integration, including the number of member states involved and the scope of integration. Additionally, the chapter explores the impact of *re-integratsiya* on Kazakhstan's relations with Russia and the other Central Asian states. Anceschi argues that *re-integratsiya* was initially pursued as a strategy to maintain Kazakhstan's independence but, in the Nazarbaev era, it became a means to achieve economic and political gains through cooperation with Russia and other post-Soviet states.

Chapter five of this book focuses on the latest iteration of *Eurasianism*, namely, the Eurasian Economic Union (EaEU). Notably, this development coincides with a decline in Kazakhstan's interest and influence in integration from 2014 onwards. This chapter examines Kazakhstan's decision to join the EaEU and its impact on the country's foreign policy. The author explores the domestic and international factors that influenced Kazakhstan's decision to join the EaEU and its implications for its foreign policy. In the concluding chapter, Anceschi summarizes his findings and their implications for understanding Kazakhstan's foreign policy under Nazarbaev. He argues that regime *neo-Eurasianism* has been a dominant ideological framework guiding Kazakhstan's foreign policy, but its impact has been limited by Kazakhstan's geopolitical and economic constraints.

The book is well-written and engaging, making it accessible to both scholars and general readers. The author provides clear and concise explanations of complex concepts and issues, making it an excellent resource for anyone seeking to understand the dynamics of foreign policy in Central Asia. The book is also well-organized, with each chapter building upon the previous one, providing a comprehensive and coherent analysis of Kazakhstan's foreign policy.

One of the major strengths of the book is the author's use of primary sources, including interviews with key policymakers and officials in Kazakhstan. This approach offers a valuable and insightful understanding of the complex dynamics of Kazakhstan's foreign policy. Another strength of the book is its focus on the domestic factors that have shaped Kazakhstan's foreign policy, including its economic and political developments, and efforts to promote national identity. This focus provides a valuable contribution to the study of Central Asian politics and international relations, as it highlights the importance of understanding

domestic politics in shaping foreign policy.

While Luca Anceschi's book is a well-researched and insightful analysis of Kazakhstan's foreign policy during the Nazarbaev era, there are a few minor weaknesses that should be noted. For instance, it would have been beneficial if the book briefly touched upon Nazarbaev's role in the pre-independence period to provide a better understanding of his policy-making. Furthermore, the book predominantly focuses on Kazakhstan's relations with Russia and China, with limited discussion on its relations with other countries in the region and the West. Nevertheless, these minor weaknesses do not significantly affect the book's content and it remains a valuable contribution to the literature on Central Asian politics and international relations.

Overall, Anceschi's book is a valuable resource for scholars and policymakers interested in Central Asian politics and foreign policy. The author's use of a wide range of sources, including interviews with policymakers and scholars, adds depth and credibility to his analysis. The book's comprehensive analysis, engaging writing style, and insightful conclusions make it a must-read for anyone seeking to understand the complex dynamics of foreign policy in Central Asia.

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