

Kazakhstan's new capital and legitimacy:

**An analysis of how the former president Nursultan
Nazarbayev has used the country's capital relocation
of 1997 as legitimation instrument**



Anna van der Galiën

s2033232 - MA Russian and Eurasian Studies

Table of contents

	<i>Page number:</i>
Chapter 1: Introduction	4
Chapter 2: Planned capitals	6
2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Planned capital cities	7
2.3 The planned capital: Brasilia, Brazil	10
2.4 The planned capital: Islamabad, Pakistan	12
2.5 The planned capital Abuja, Nigeria	14
2.6 The planned capital Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan	16
Chapter 3: Legitimacy in authoritarian regimes	20
3.1 Introduction	20
3.2 An explanation of legitimacy	20
3.3 Sources of legitimacy	24
3.3.1 <i>The soft authoritarian toolkit</i>	24
3.3.2 <i>Six claims to legitimacy</i>	25
3.4 Legitimacy practices in Kazakhstan	27
Chapter 4: Methodology	32
Chapter 5: Discussion of the research results	35
5.1 General results	35
5.2 Results legitimacy claim: Foundational myth	37

5.3 Results legitimacy claim: Ideology	39
5.3.1 <i>Astana – a new beginning for Kazakhstan</i>	40
5.3.2 <i>Astana – a city full of promising potential</i>	41
5.3.3 <i>Astana - a symbol of the country's independence</i>	43
5.3.4 <i>Astana - a symbol of the country's pride</i>	46
5.3.5 <i>Astana – the heart of the nation</i>	48
5.4 Results legitimacy claim: International engagement	51
5.4.1 <i>Astana – the centre of Eurasia</i>	51
5.4.2 <i>Astana – seeking international recognition</i>	54
5.4.3 <i>Astana – an international role model</i>	56
5.4.4 <i>Astana – example of international commitment</i>	58
5.5 Results legitimacy claim: Performance	59
5.6 Results legitimacy claim: Procedures	63
Chapter 6: Conclusion	66
Bibliography	68
Appendix I: Demographic profile of the Republic of Kazakhstan	72
Appendix II: List of the analysed Nursultan Nazarbayev's speeches	74
Appendix III: Coding scheme of the qualitative content analysis	77

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Republic of Kazakhstan is a country in Central Asia, in the middle of the Eurasian region, globally known as the ninth largest country of the world, and its regime is identified as authoritarian. It is a post-Soviet country that has been ruled by its president Nursultan Nazarbayev from the very beginning in 1991, until he resigned in March 2019. On his initiative, the country relocated its capital city from Almaty, which is located in the south east of the country and surrounded by mountains, to Akmola, which lies in the north in the middle of the steppe, in 1997. After moving Kazakhstan's capital city, it was renamed Astana and after Nazarbayev's resignation, renamed after the first president of the country: Nur-Sultan. According to Adrien Fauve, the image of Kazakhstan changed along with the capital relocation:

“Representations of Kazakhstan in the Western media frequently rely on familiar clichés: steppes, yurts, the Aral Sea disaster, Baykonur and, of course, Borat. However, in recent years, the Kazakh government has sought to challenge these stereotypes by introducing a new imaginary for Kazakhstan: the capital city, Astana, as a post-modern, internationally oriented political and cultural centre. This image is promoted both externally, at global events beyond Kazakhstan's borders, and internally, by attracting world attention to the city.” (Fauve 2015, 110)

This quote shows how Kazakhstan's new capital city is used as an instrument for diversifying country's international and national image. Nur-Sultan, first named Akmola and then Astana, is a planned capital, like Brasília in Brazil, New Delhi in India and Canberra in Australia. This kind of capital has been purposively build in a specific location, mostly due to a better climate or due to an overpopulated area. However, in the case of Astana, the capital was relocated for different and rather undemocratic reasons, as this study finds: to suit the changes of an authoritarian regime in a new independent country. When you walk through the city, you can see elements of buildings from Abu Dhabi and Dubai, while a large part of the city is too expensive for Kazakh citizens to live in. Such a bizarre project is only possible to become reality in an authoritarian regime, like the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The country's capital relocation from the south to the north is unique, and this study aims to discover how such a development is conceivable. Therefore, this research attempt to find

out how Kazakhstan's first president Nazarbayev has been able to justify the construction of such a capital over the years, and what it says about the total legitimation strategy of the authoritarian country. The research question is formulated as follows:

In what way does the new capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which was relocated in 1997, fit in the authoritarian regime's legitimation strategy?

This study offers an explanation for how Kazakhstan's capital relocation in 1997 has been legitimised by the country's former president Nursultan Nazarbayev. This is done through a qualitative content analysis of Nazarbayev's public speeches from 1991 to 2017 as research material, wherein he discusses the capital relocation and its significance. It is found that the new capital is meant to be the showpiece of Kazakh culture and identity; and a symbol of economic prosperity and the regime's geopolitical vision. In addition, it should become the centre of Central Asia, and also Eurasia, which is in line with the country's legitimation strategy of i.e. playing the leading role in the Eurasian region.

The study, firstly, discusses the increasing phenomenon of planned capital cities worldwide. In the end of the second chapter on planned capitals, the capital relocation of Kazakhstan's new capital is elaborated. Secondly, a literature review is given of legitimacy in authoritarian regimes, and specifically legitimation strategies, of which several are selected for this study's research. Thirdly, the research methodology is demonstrated in the fourth chapter, wherein also the coding scheme for the analysis is demonstrated. Fourthly, the research results are presented in the following chapter that is divided into several sections for the discussion of the results per code, or in other words, the legitimacy claims identified in the literature review. Lastly, a conclusion is made in the final chapter that aims to provide an answer for the research question of this study.

Chapter 2: Planned capitals

2.1 Introduction

A capital city is usually of great importance to one's region or country, because it hosts the seat of the government and is therefore of great (national) significance. Its significance is different when compared to other, non-capital cities, which are mainly a place where people only live and work. Scott Campbell (2000) identifies capital cities as "symbolic theaters for national ideology, a reflection of the larger national stance towards urbanism, a catalyst for national economic development, and at least historically, a bridge between local culture and the 'imagined community' of the nation-state". In other words, a capital city can be seen as the business card or show piece of one's region or country. A capital city is "a unique symbol of any nation. This is because it is the physical and cultural personification of the nationalism of a country, a metaphor for a people's deep emotional and psychological unconsciousness of their nation state" (Ikejiofor 1997, 271). Capital cities often have a political or economic role, or a combination of both. Peter Hall (1993) makes a distinction in his work of six types of capital cities: multi-function capitals; global capitals; political capitals; former capitals; ex-imperial capitals; and provincial capitals. Besides that, he argues that super-capitals, which house for instance international organizations like Brussels, can also be considered as capital cities (Hall 1993, 71).

An established capital city does not have to remain the country's national capital. Capital cities can be relocated for different reasons. Since the Second World War, several countries, mainly in Africa, Asia and Latin America, have relocated their capital city or even built a complete new capital. A capital city that is intentionally build or constructed to become the new capital is in this thesis referred to as: a planned capital. The phenomenon of planned capitals is further explained in this chapter. First of all, an overview of worldwide planned capitals is given combined with a short discussion what it would mean for a country to build a new capital. Secondly, a number of cases of planned capitals and the country's reasons to move its capital are discussed into more detail per section. The chosen cases are Islamabad in Pakistan, Brasilia in Brazil and Abuja in Nigeria. These are chosen, because many scholars have often taken these cities as the prime examples of planned capitals in their academic

works. Lastly, the move of Kazakh’s capital Nur-Sultan, formerly known as Astana, is addressed, drawn from academic sources which have discussed the capital relocation.

2.2 Planned capital cities

Planned capital cities are capitals that are purposefully build or turned into the new capital of a country. A planned capital can either be constructed in an existing city or as completely new city from the ground, preferably a location which has no strong national historical importance (Doxiadis 1965, 6). Capital relocation is not a new phenomenon as might seem. For example, Russia already moved its capital from Moscow to St. Petersburg in 1703, which was moved back again later, and India relocated its capital from Calcutta to New Delhi in 1911 (Schatz 2004, 113). Yet, after the Second World War, the world has seen an increase in the relocation of capitals, as can be seen in table 1 below. Especially, “Asia and Africa saw a trend towards building new capitals, relocating from coastal cities to geographically central locations in the newly independent nation states” (Kreutzmann 2013, 136).

Year	Country	New Capital	Former Capital
1956	Brazil	Brasilia	Rio de Janeiro
1957	Mauritania	Nouakchott	Saint Louis (Senegal)
1959	Pakistan	Islamabad	Karachi
1961	Botswana	Gaberone	Mafeking
1965	Malawi	Lilongwe	Zomba
1970	Belize	Belmopan	Belize City
1973	Tanzania	Dodoma	Dar es Salaam
1975	Nigeria	Abuja	Lagos
1983	Ivory Coast	Yamoussoukro	Abidjan
1997	Kazakhstan	Nur-Sultan	Almaty
1999	Malaysia	Putrajaya	Kuala Lumpur

Table 1: Capital relocations (Gilbert 1989, 235; Schatz 2004, 115)¹

¹ This table consists of a combination of the tables made by Alan Gilbert and Edward Schatz. Where, amongst others, Schatz has not included the capital moves of Brazil and Malaysia, because he focuses in his article solely on post-colonial capital relocations, Gilbert has not included the capital move of i.e. Kazakhstan, because his work is therefore too dated.

Evidently, capital relocation has become an increasing phenomenon over the last century. The choice of a country to relocate its capital can be made because of several reasons, which can vary from one planned capital to another. The choice or rejection of a capital can be influenced by one main factor or a combination of several factors, which Richard Muir (1980) has categorized in his book. He has identified the following factors, also examples are given of capitals of which the choice was influenced by that particular factor, however a combination of several factors is more likely: the traditional factor (i.e. London, Rome and Athens); the factor of historical imitation (i.e. Moscow); dominant nation factor (i.e. Kiev, Minsk and Belgrade); the head link factor, i.e. international links (i.e. Dublin); the forward capital factor (i.e. Islamabad and Brasilia); the political compromise factor (i.e. Canberra and Washington); and lastly, the central location factor (i.e. Ankara and Madrid) (Muir 1980, 31-33). In addition, J.C. Nwafor (1980, 361) also the economic factor to this mix. Uche Ikejiofor (1997) lays out two contradictory arguments of Balogun's and Doxiadis's on when a national government considers to relocate its capital due to economic reasons. Firstly, Balogun argues that it should not be a government's priority to relocate its capital if the country has insufficient technological development resources (Ikejiofor 1997, 274). Secondly, Doxiadis considers that capital relocation could be a priority even when a country has limited resources, because a new capital could boost the economy (Ikejiofor 1997, 274). In addition, capital relocation is in most cases quite expensive.

The ruling elites which consider to move its capital would need solid and convincing reasoning in order to gain enough support. In the end, "a new capital must be (re)located to serve as a hub for economic exchange, the central node for infrastructure, and the model of effective administration" (Schatz 2004, 118). However, Edward Schatz (2004) suggests that capital relocation is more likely to occur under authoritarian than democratic rule. An authoritarian ruler would namely be less hesitant to invest huge costs in its country's capital relocation "in anticipation of future symbolic, political and economic gain" (Schatz 2004, 118). Furthermore, it is easier to repress opposition to the construction of a new capital in authoritarian than in non-authoritarian regimes.

This argument is in line with Oren Yiftachel's (1998) claim that urban and regional planning also has a 'darker side'. The general discourse on planning "tends to concentrate on its contribution to well-established societal goals [...]. Far less attention is devoted to planning's

advancement of regressive goals such as social oppression, economic inefficiency, male domination, or ethnic marginalization” (Yiftachel 1998, 395). Therefore, Yiftachel (1998) believes that urban planning could serve as perfect tool for social control. For example, those who hold power could express certain hierarchies “within urban space through the definition of areas and delimitation of zones that include or exclude certain social groups” (Macedo and Tran 2013, 141). Thus, capital relocation could be the perfect tool for authoritarian regimes in terms of social control. The regime would have the opportunity to design the capital in such a way to repress i.e. certain social groups. Also, capital relocation could serve as effective tool for solving nation building dilemmas (Schatz 2004, 135). A planned capital could namely solve former national issues and signify the start of a new political and economic era (Macedo and Tran 2013, 143). Edward Schatz (2004, 114) makes a distinction between Europe and other countries concerning capital relocation: “in Europe, capitals emerged as part and parcel of state and nation building; elsewhere, capitals emerged after legal claims to territoriality had been established”. Post-colonial countries, which of many are enlisted in table 1, fall in the second category. In such countries, there was a need to establish capital cities which would tighten the control for the elites and bring loyalty among the people (Schatz 2004, 115). Thus, the construction of those countries planned capitals was aimed to overcome nation building problems the country faced after gaining independence.

To conclude this paragraph, Edward Schatz (2004, 121-122) also provides a description of how capital relocation can play both roles of carrots and sticks. He argues that a new planned capital can bring carrots in the form of new economic and political opportunities. Also, a new planned capital can be a stick, because when the state apparatus is moved to the new capital, it is able to exercise stronger control over i.e. an area with dominating ethnic populations. Meanwhile, migration to the new capital could also increase the ethnic group that the ruling elites represent in the new capital region. This dual role that planned capitals can play, or only one, is what is shown in the description of several planned capital cities in the following paragraphs.

2.3 The planned capital: Brasilia, Brazil

A well-known planned capital is the current capital of Brazil: Brasilia. The Brazilian capital was moved to Brasilia on April 21, 1960, from the former Rio de Janeiro, which now is the third capital after Portugal had discovered Brazil in 1500 (Madaleno 1996, 273). The main goal of the new-born capital was to start new economic development, to integrate the interior and to gain a more significant role internationally, where also the seat of government would be located (Madaleno 1996; Snyder 1964; Macedo and Tran 2013). The opportunity of this planned capital to kick off a new economic development era is an example of a stick which Edward Schatz described. Brasilia is chosen to be built on an interior location in the country, practically in the middle of nowhere, because it provides an opportunity to start from scratch again (Stephenson 1970, 320). Therefore, David E. Snyder (1964) considers the relocation of Brazil's capital as an instrument for regional development. At the same time, the capital should serve as symbol of nationalism (Snyder 1964) and as the example of a new country (Macedo and Tran 2013). The government of Brazil presented the need for a new capital as follows: "[It] would help strengthen the social bonds of the state by becoming a symbol of national effort and national pride" (Stephenson 1970, 323). Furthermore, the relocation of Brazil's capital was also meant to become the model town of modernity.

According to Norma Evenson (1973, 118), "Brasília provided the first opportunity for a comprehensive application of the principles of the Modern Movement to the design of a major city". This is executed in such a way that Brasilia is considered to be the showpiece of modernism nowadays (Macedo and Tran 2013, Madelano 1996). The idea to relocate the capital existed already around the end of the 19th century and many ideas and plans were developed for the construction of a new capital (Madaleno 1996, 273; Macedo and Tran 2013, 143; Stephenson 1970, 320). Yet, Juscelino Kubitschek, who was elected president in 1955, was the first president who dared to execute the plans for capital relocation. He launched the idea for Brasilia as his dream under the following campaign-slogan: "50 years in 5" (Macedo and Tran 2013, 144). The relocation capital perceived popular support and those who objected, were often convinced through the argument that Brazilian people have desired a new capital all throughout the history of Brazil (Madaleno 1996, 274). The city is constructed based on the manifesto of the Congr s international d'architecture modern

(CIAM). As can be seen in figure 1 below, Brasilia has an 'airplane' design (Macedo and Tran 2013, 142). This design shows a clear distinction of working and living, wherein the main body of the plan is meant for work only, the two wings represent residential areas and leisure activities are located around the city. According to Isabel Maria Madaleno (1996, 276), the capital was intended to represent a social city wherein everyone received equal rights, opportunities and the same space to live and work in.

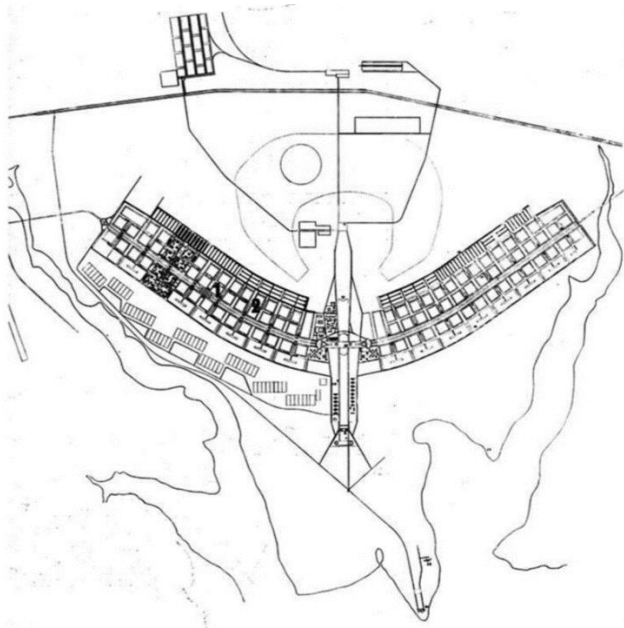


Figure 1: Brasilia's Pilot Plan (Plano Piloto de Brasília (Macedo and Tran 2013, 142)

The articles of Isabel Maria Madaleno (1996) and Joseli Macedo and Levi V. Tran (2013) discuss whether the created planned capital city Brasilia was a success. Madaleno (1996, 278) concludes that the reality of Brazil's utopia was "doomed", because the city, originally build to populate a maximum of 600.000 citizens, was not able to give accommodation to the large amounts of citizens coming from far. Rather, "the capital's administrative machine did not even wish to house them" (Madaleno 1996, 278). Therefore, many satellite towns around the new capital were established, counting 12 satellite towns in 1994 (Madaleno 1996, 278). Also, the planned capital did not succeed in bringing the expected economic development and it was certainly not the start of Brazil's nation (Madaleno 1996, 278). Furthermore, the planned capital was built in order to be a completely different and modern Brazilian capital. Yet, over time, Brasilia has become increasingly alike other Brazilian cities (Macedo and Tran 2013, 144). Nevertheless, the construction of Brasilia has been able to

become and remain the “icon of modernism” (Macedo and Tran 2013, 144), which supports the lasting worldwide amazement over the quickly built and highly modern designed city.

2.4 The planned capital: Islamabad, Pakistan

Every planned capital city has a different character and symbolism. In the case of Islamabad, Yongwoo Kwon (2004, 36) writes that “Islamabad put an emphasis on geography, weather and Islamic character considering new capital as a symbol of the independent country”. The capital should represent more than simply a residential and work area. Rather, the city should be “a spiritually symbolic center” (Kwon 2004, 26) or “a symbol of national effort and pride” (Gilbert 1989, 236). Also, president Ayub Khan, who seized power by a military coup in 1958 and proposed the construction of Islamabad, hoped that the new planned capital would strengthen the connections between east and west Pakistan (Gilbert 1989, 236). The president presented the establishment of Islamabad at the inauguration of the city at February 20, 1960 as follows:

“Islamabad has been my dream always—and it is not a dream which is unrealistic or unwanted . . . Let me tell you this, the capital of a country is the focus and the center of the people’s ambitions and desires, and it is wrong to put them in an existing city” (Sarshar 2019, 247).

From the moment that Pakistan gained independence from Great Britain in 1947, it was widely discussed what would become the new official capital of the country, while considering whether the temporary capital Karachi might suffice as permanent national capital (Kwon 2004; Doxiadis 1965). However, in 1959, president Ayub Kahn chose to start constructing a planned capital called Islamabad, what would be the official future capital of Pakistan (Kwon 2004, 25). The president was inspired by the newly build capital Chandigarh of an Indian province and wanted to compete with India’s New Delhi through building a similar capital city in Pakistan (Sarshar 2019, 252). The location of Islamabad was carefully selected through several analytical studies by Pakistani experts. These studies showed that the best location of the planned capital was on the northern part of the Potwar Plateau, near Rawalpindi, because, amongst others, it is centrally located on the junction of several relevant highways, including Asia’s main highway; it has the best possible Pakistani climate;

and it is the best developed Pakistani region (Doxiadis 1965, 11-13). These and other findings made in the master plan by Constantinos A. Doxiadis, a Greek urban planner, was officially approved on May 24, 1960 (Kwon 2004, 27) and construction work of Islamabad was started in 1961. In those years, the country faced a population increase what occasionally caused urban problems. It was thus necessary that the new capital city should be able to grow in the future along with steady population growth. Therefore, the planning principles of 'Dyapolis', supported by Constantinos A. Doxiadis, was applied to Islamabad what would eventually merge with Rawalpindi into a "dynamic metropolis" to allow unstoppable future growth (Doxiadis 1965, 20). Furthermore, the construction of the new planned capital city then represented "the optimism of the 1960s, the continuing confidence in the prospect of an accelerated post-colonial development, and the desire to create a liveable urban environment (Kreutzmann 2013, 138).

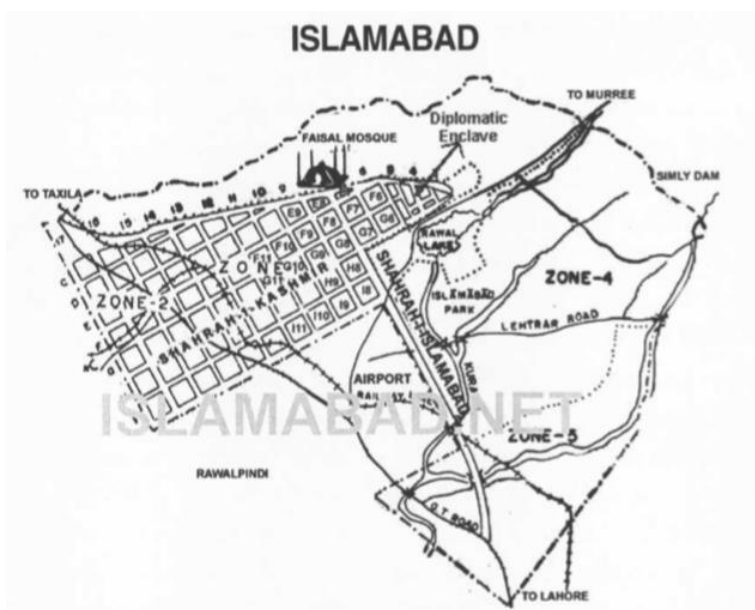


Figure 2: Total concept of Islamabad (Kwon 2004, 27)

At this day, the construction of the planned capital Islamabad has not yet been finished. According to Yongwoo Kwon, in 2004 "only a third of the total construction [of Islamabad] was finished due to political unrest, low economic capacity and skyrocketing land price" (Kwon 2004, 37). Nevertheless, the continuous growth of Islamabad does go along the envisioned principles of Dyapolis by Doxiadis (Kreutzmann 2013, 145).

2.5 The planned capital Abuja, Nigeria

The African country Nigeria moved its capital from Lagos to the new planned capital Abuja in 1975. The special established Committee on the Location of the Federal Capital recommended the capital relocation because of the following reasons, which are drawn from their official report: the former capital was incapable for the dual role as federal and state capital; one certain ethnic group dominated Lagos; there was a general wish and need for a new capital that would stand for “Nigeria’s aspiration for unity and greatness” (Ikejiofor 1997, 272-273). However, Uche Ikejiofor (1997, 275) adds the political dimension, because the country had difficulty to sustain control from the former capital Lagos due to Nigeria’s colonial history and the existence of several large ethnic groups, especially from an unpractical and not central location. Alan Gilbert describes Nigeria’s motivations for capital relocation as necessity in order to “help overcome tribal discord” (Gilbert 1989, 236). In addition, Jonathan Moore outlines Nigeria’s goal for capital relocation as follows: “The new capital was to be a truly neutral in which northern, eastern and western peoples could co-exist in harmony, free of historical legacies which dominant groups had imposed on existing urban centres” (Moore 1984, 174). In terms of location, a central location seemed preferable, because of “the compactness of the country, administrative convenience, and the need for even development and above all national unity” (Nwafor 1980, 362). In line with Islamabad, the planned capital Abuja should be a multi-functional capital city with a primary focus on the government’s administrative functions (Nwafor 1980, 364).

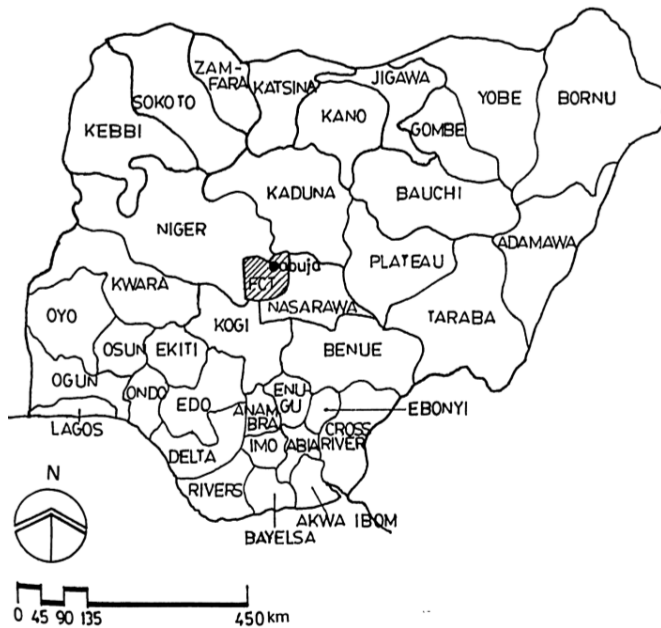


Figure 3: Political map of Nigeria showing state boundaries and the location of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and Abuja (Ikejiofor 1997, 272)

The Nigerian government hoped after the construction of the new planned capital Abuja to start with a complete clean slate. Yet, the dominating position of northern ethnic groups in the decision on capital relocation has led to the believe that Abuja is rather a northern, than a Nigerian capital (Moore 1984, 174-175; Ikejiofor 1997, 280). Also, the government had hoped that capital relocation would bring national unity. In other words, it was hoped that the Abuja would be an emblem of ‘united’ Nigeria. However, as Ikejiofor remarks, the construction of the planned capital city Abuja transpired in “a very largely unplanned and disunited country” (Ikejiofor 1997, 278). Besides, J.C. Nwafor (1980, 366) argues that moving a national capital to a more central location is not the solution for disunity in the country. For example, in the case of sixteenth century Spain, which moved its capital to Madrid in a more central location then, capital relocation did not have the tiniest influence on the political tensions the country faced (Nwafor 1980, 366). Furthermore, the planning process and construction of Abuja also shows the ‘darker side’ of Oren Yiftachel. This darker side is reflected in Uche Ikejiofor’s (1997, 285) analysis what shows that planning decisions on i.e. land use were taken for the benefit of a number of individuals instead of the general good, opposed to the earlier outspoken promises. Also, the government has installed policies what presumably dissuaded low-income families to move to the capital. Therefore, such developments contributed to the believe that “Abuja was conceived merely as an avenue for

privileged members of Nigerian society [...], where they can enjoy the amenities of a modern community without the nuisance of the 'common man'" (Ikejiofor 1997, 286).

2.6 The planned capital Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan

In 1997, the new planned capital Nur-Sultan (also prior known as Astana² and Akmola) was moved from the old capital Almaty (prior known as Alma-Ata). Notably, the Republic of Kazakhstan has known several name changes over the years. The most recent name change is of the capital Nur-Sultan, which was renamed after the resignation of Kazakhstan's first president Nursultan Nazarbayev on March 20, 2019. Nursultan Nazarbayev was also the person who initiated the capital relocation, which was officially decided by the Supreme Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan on July 6, 1994 (Gawęcki 2013, 36). However, Nur-Sultan had already been a capital before of the Tselinnyi District, then called Tselingrad, for a few years during Soviet rule (Gawęcki 2013, 36). Leon Yacher (2011) refers to Kazakhstan's new capital as a 'forward capital', and thus it falls in Muir's (1980) category of the forward capital factor. Yacher describes forward capitals as cities that "tend to provide an opportunity for the state to create a new or different expression of the current self-view at the time of its creation" (2011, 1004). The construction of Nur-Sultan is of great importance to the authoritarian Kazakh regime, especially because it is "the cornerstone of state- and nation building, a brand that is broadcast on the world arena" (Fauve 2015, 110). Also, this is in line with Schatz's (2004) argument that capital relocation occurs mostly in authoritarian states, like Kazakhstan.

² 'Astana' means translated literally in Kazakh also 'capital'.

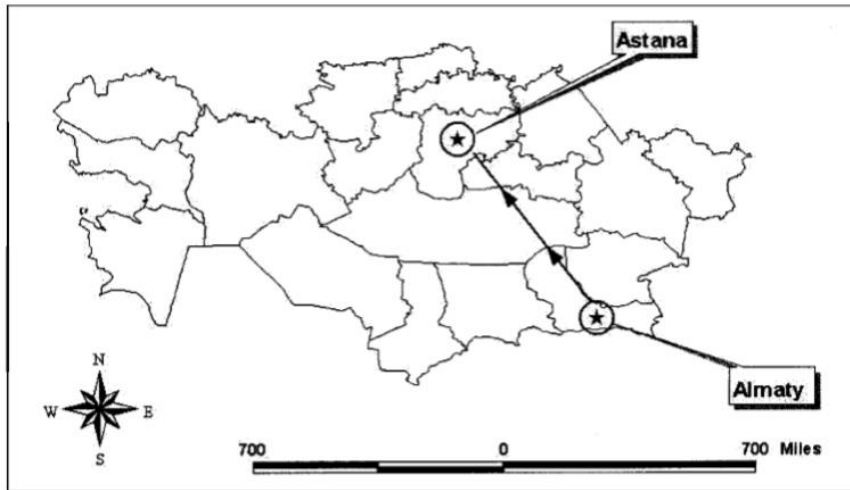


Figure 4: Capital cities of Kazakhstan (Wolfel 2002, 496)

The former president Nursultan Nazarbayev describes the official reasons for capital relocation in his book “The Kazakhstan Way” as follows:

“Foremost among the officially announced reasons was the lack of prospects for developing Almaty, as the city was located in a valley surrounded by foothills. Mention was then made of the old capital’s increasing ecological problems, the area’s dangerous propensity for seismic activity, its proximity to the Chinese border and geographically inauspicious location, making communication with the republic’s other regions difficult. Further reasons included the need to develop Kazakhstan’s northern region [... other] arguments put forward in favour of Akmola were of a geographical and geopolitical character, mentioning the fact that it was in the centre of Eurasia and Kazakhstan and at the crossroads of transport networks.” (Nazarbayev 2010, 385-386)

A country-wide survey of 2010 taken by Natalie Koch (2014) shows the perceived ideas on the capital relocation by the public, which is shown in figure 5 below. The most popular perceptions for capital relocation are that Almaty is located in an earthquake-prone zone and a country’s capital should be in the country’s centre (Koch 2014, 142-143). Almaty was indeed located in a region with seismic-activity and it was expected that an earthquake would hit the region rather soon than later (Schatz 2004, 122).

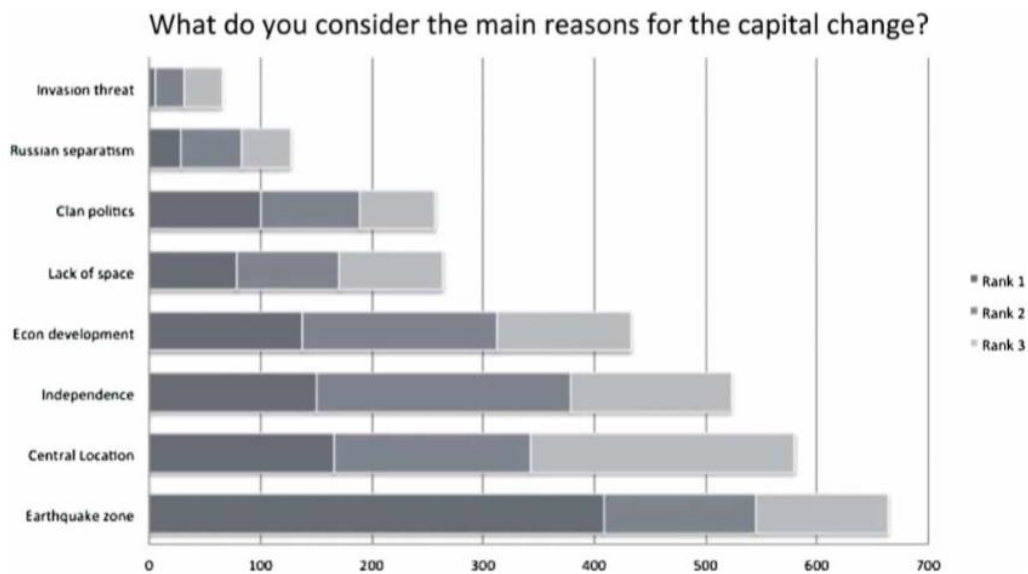


Figure 5: Questionnaire: What do you think were the most important reasons for the capital change? Closed question with the possibility to write in an 'other'. October 2010. (Koch 2014, 143)

Besides these official and publicly perceived reasons, academic scholars have also noticed other, including political, motivations for relocating the Kazakh capital. Richard, L. Wolfel writes that the capital relocation “is seen as a symbolic action to promote the sovereignty of Kazakhstan over a region that is predominantly non-Kazakh” (2002, 485). Meanwhile, Edward Schatz (2004) considers that Kazakhstan has chosen to build a planned capital city, because of the nation building difficulties it faced after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Capital relocation has supported the attempts to deal with those difficulties, what Schatz (2004) thinks is comparable to the capital relocation experiences of multiple post-colonial African states. Bernhard Köppen confirms Schatz’s consideration by declaring that the construction of Nur-Sultan is aimed for constructing a “new unified Kazakh nation-state” (2013, 590). Köppen also argues that the new capital is “intended to promote the demographic, functional, and urban equalization of Kazakh territory and catalyze significant economic development” (2013, 595). This argument is also reflected in Wolfel’s (2002, 495) identification of three main groups of political motivations: (1) Kazakhstan’s clan structure; (2) Almaty’s proximity to China; and (3) the country’s demographic geography. Concerning the last identified group, Kazakhstan is divided into two different nationalities, the northern part being mainly inhabited by Russian speakers and the southern part by mostly Kazakhs³, which has brought many conflicts. Moving the capital to the north would motivate Kazakhs

³ The demographics of Kazakhstan in 1991 can be found in Appendix I.

to also move north and the government would be able to expand their control over non-Kazakhs (Wolfel 2002, 486). Besides, the capital relocation also shows that the Kazakh nation chooses to get rid of its colonial past which is associated with the former capital Almaty (Wolfel 2002, 488).

Altogether, there appear to have been many different motivations for the Republic of Kazakhstan to relocate its capital to present day Nur-Sultan in the northern part of the country. Besides these reasons, Nursultan Nazarbayev needed to find support for his initiated capital relocation. Therefore, in the next chapter, a further in-depth study of legitimacy and legitimation is given, which helps the understanding of how the first president of Kazakhstan has attempted to legitimise the capital relocation from the south to the north.

Chapter 3: Legitimacy in authoritarian regimes

3.1 Introduction

In the scholarly literature, legitimacy and legitimation have received increased interest due to the end of many communist regimes in the former Soviet Union (Barker 2001, 7). A third wave of global democratization was expected, but many of the former Soviet countries have transitioned into authoritarian regimes. Also, the former Soviet regimes in Central Asia have shown hints of authoritarian rule or have been classified as authoritarian state, including the Republic of Kazakhstan, which is the main subject of this thesis. The country has been characterized as authoritarian regime, which relies on multiple sources of legitimacy in order to sustain its authoritarian rule. An extraordinary development in the authoritarian country is the relocation of the capital to Nur-Sultan.

In order to understand in what way the former president of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev has tried to legitimise the capital relocation, a further in-depth study of legitimacy and legitimation is necessary, which is done in the this chapter. In this chapter, an effort is made to compose a theoretical framework of legitimation strategies for authoritarian rule. This framework serves as backbone for this research. First of all, an explanation of legitimacy and relevant considerations concerning legitimacy are given. Secondly, several sources of legitimacy are discussed, which are mainly applicable to the five Central Asian countries. Lastly, legitimation strategies used in Central Asia, and especially Kazakhstan are up for discussion.

3.2 An explanation of legitimacy

In this section, a more in-depth explanation of legitimacy is given. To specify, Johannes Gerschewski (2013) categorizes three pillars of stability that an authoritarian regimes relies on and develops over time to sustain its autocratic rule. The first of these pillar is legitimation, besides repression and co-optation (Gerschewski 2013). Therefore, legitimacy is of great significance for the ruling government of a country. Legitimacy means that rulers

“possess a distinguishing, specific monopoly of the right to rule” (Barker 2001, 24). Margaret Levi, Audrey Sacks and Tom Tyler (2009, 356) bring a legitimacy model, wherein they present legitimacy as “a sense of obligation or willingness to obey authorities (value-based legitimacy) that then translates into actual compliance with governmental regulations and laws (behavioral legitimacy)”. This implies that when the ruling party is considered to be legitimate, voluntary obedient behaviour would follow. David Beetham (2013) provides the following three necessary conditions of legitimacy:

“For power to be fully legitimate, then, three conditions are required: its conformity to established rules; the justifiability of the rules by preference to shared beliefs; the express consent, of the subordinate, or of the most significant among them, to the particular relations of power. All three components contribute to legitimacy, though the extent to which they are realised in a given context will be a matter of degree.” (Beetham 2013, 19)

Martin Brusis (2016) takes these three dimensions of legitimacy and combines them in a table with modes and institutional objects of legitimation. Brusis has developed the following table, which he believes is mainly applicable to authoritarian regimes that mostly rely on elections.

Conditions of legitimacy (Beetham)	Modes of legitimation	Institutional objects of legitimation
Conformity to rules (legal validity)	Demonstrating rule enforcement	Boundary rules: nation state; political and economic system
Justifiability of rules in terms of shared beliefs	Demonstrating responsiveness	Input and output institutions
Legitimation through expressed consent	Demonstrating popular approval	Elections: mass organizations; legislature

Table 2: Modes and objects of legitimation (Brusis 2016, 11)

Applying these criteria to specific regime types is difficult in the first instance because the classification of regimes is fraught with difficulties, because most organizations or scholars solely focus on the measurement of democracy in a specific country. For example, Freedom House (Tukmadiyeva 2018) has classified the Republic of Kazakhstan as a ‘consolidated

authoritarian regime’, because, according to its methodology, the country scored 6.71 on Freedom House’s democracy scale in 2018. However, what it precisely means for an country to be classified as ‘consolidated authoritarian regime’ is simply explained as follows: authoritarian regimes are “closed societies in which dictators prevent political competition and pluralism and are responsible for widespread violations of basic political, civil, and human rights” (Freedom House 2018). This explanation is also applied to any other country that has a similar score on the democracy scale, without further specification of what kind of political regime the country has. However, Steffen Kailitz (2013) has made an attempt to classify different political regimes. His classification is shown in table 3. This framework is not a guarantee that these are the only possible political regimes types, but it does provide an overview on what different political regimes are mainly out there. This literature review mainly focuses on autocracies, thus electoral, one-party and personalist autocracies.

			By procedure to select and control the ruler directly by the people			
Legitimation of actual ruler(s)	By a dignified source outside the political regime	By selection and control of an institution that protects the popular will	Multiparty legislative elections	Multi-candidate election of ruler	Fairness of elections	Executive constraints
Liberal democracy	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>
Electoral autocracy	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Communist ideocracy	<i>Yes (communist purpose)</i>	<i>Yes (communist elite)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
One-party autocracy	<i>No (not ideocratic)</i>	<i>Yes (party)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Monarchy	<i>Yes (monarchic origin)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Maybe</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Military regime	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes (military)</i>	<i>Maybe</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Personalist autocracy	<i>Maybe, but not established (not monarchic)</i>	<i>No (neither party nor military)</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>

Table 3: Patterns of legitimation in political regime types (Kailitz 2013, 45)

As can be seen in table 3, normally, in democracies, ruling parties become legitimate through fair elections, which means that the general public considers the chosen government to be “rightly” chosen (Omelicheva 2016, 483) or “proper” (Whiting 2017, 1912). Even though, the number of authoritarian states is declining worldwide, academic scholars find that there is an increasing trend for authoritarian states more frequently adopt democratic oriented

institutions (Brancati 2014). Many observants, mainly Western observants, monitor the democratization process in countries around the world. Especially, the European Union, the United States and the United Nations monitor those processes and have oftentimes attempted to put pressure on non-democratic countries through international sanctions. Yet, according to Julia Grauvogel and Christian von Soest (2014), international sanctions mainly contributed to a stronger incentive of an authoritarian regime to sustain autocratic rule. Dawn Brancati (2014) argues that such authoritarian states do adopt democratic institutions in order to delay truly the democratization process while consolidating stronger autocratic rule. For this, authoritarian regimes use the following five different mechanisms: signalling, information acquisition, patronage distribution, monitoring, and credible commitment (Brancati 2014). Jennifer Gandhi and Ellen Lust-Okar (2009) remark that elections are an effective instrument to perform a number of these mechanisms, like monitoring and information acquisition.

Also, in authoritarian regimes, which usually have no fair elections, rulers have to rely on other forms of legitimacy. Susan H. Whiting (2017, 1909) argues that “legitimation is widely identified as both the goal and outcome of the construction by authoritarian states of law and legal institutions”. Rulers of authoritarian regimes thus aim to seek legitimacy sources which then result in the citizen’s acceptance of their legitimate rule. According to Mariya Y. Omelicheva (2016, 481), authoritarian regimes “persist [their rule] through effective authoritarian legitimation, measured by the degree of congruence of the presentations of their rule as legitimate and the broader spectrum of beliefs, values and expectations held by the people”. In other words, the durability of authoritarian rule, without relying on solely repression measures, depends on its ability to sustain sufficient legitimacy claims. An authoritarian regime is able to choose from a wide range of legitimacy claims, depending on what is possible and what best suits the nation. An authoritarian regime’s claim to legitimacy can consist of multiple claims to legitimacy, with one occasionally more relevant than the other, depending on the timing (Omelicheva 2016, 483). Also, a regime’s legitimation strategy may change over time (Burnell 2006, 549). A number of possible claims to legitimacy are further specified in the next section.

3.3 Sources of legitimacy

The scholarly literature classifies many different claims, strategies, forms and sources of legitimacy, of which several are discussed here on the following pages. In this section, it is chosen to focus on sources of legitimacy which are applicable to the Central Asian states. The first part of this section discusses the soft authoritarian toolkit of Edward Schatz (2009), whom identifies the Republic of Kazakhstan as soft authoritarian regime (Schatz 2008). In the second part, six claims to legitimacy of Christian von Soest and Julia Grauvogel (2015), which are drawn from Brusis (2016) explicitly for the Central Asian region, are explained into more detail.

3.3.1 The soft authoritarian toolkit

Authoritarian regimes can be distinguished into hard and soft authoritarianism. The distinction between the two forms of authoritarianism lies in that soft authoritarianism counts on both means of coercion and persuasion while hard authoritarianism relies especially on coercion means (Schatz 2009, 203). For example, Anne-Marie Brady (2009) argues that mass persuasion can serve as legitimation tool, practiced mainly by hard authoritarian regimes. This legitimation tool “can be to both promote a regime’s ideology and persuade the public that it is performing the tasks of government effectively and equitably” (Brady 2009, 434). Soft authoritarian regimes rather rely on other sources of legitimacy than repression. Natalie Koch (2013, 42) refers to the difference between soft and hard authoritarianism as more “rationed” than relying only on “naked coercion”. Joseph S. Nye (2004, 256) defines soft power as “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments. When you can get others to want what you desire, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction”. Soft power indicates that a soft authoritarianism regime seeks strategies that appeals to the public in turn for legitimacy.

Edward Schatz (2009) has constructed a soft authoritarian toolkit, which consists of five strategies. Firstly, the soft authoritarian regime has a certain amount of “true believers” whom support the regime (Schatz 2009, 206). Secondly, the soft authoritarian ruler prevents the mobilization of potential opposition through (financial) rewards. Thirdly, the regime

occasionally uses means of force to control the possibility of successful opposition forming. Fourthly, the regime makes sure that the country's media channels broadcast mainly narratives that are favourable to the regime, while permitting a certain amount of freedom. And lastly, successful discursive pre-emption, which means that the regime uses propaganda to prevent strong opposition narratives (Schatz 2009, 206-207). According to Schatz (2009), this soft authoritarian toolkit determines the success of soft authoritarian rule without relying on coercion alone. However, he does wonder how it is possible that one soft authoritarian regime flourishes and another fails. Natalie Koch (2013) argues she might be able to answer that question by including a sixth tool in the soft authoritarian toolkit, namely: nation building strategies.

According to Natalie Koch (2013, 43), a successful nation building project helps to connect a person to its homeland and the state, which Koch refers to as territorial and statist bonding. This way, "people come to interpret their own actions as supporting some broader, moral order (like nationhood or statehood), [and] these actions are likely to support authoritarian state-society relations" (Koch 2013, 43). Michael Barr (2011, 84) argues that "the process of identity building [indeed] aims to link citizens to the state through the nation". Thus, the authoritarian regime's ideology becomes part of a person's ideology when the person identifies itself with the state. An authoritarian regime could use this strategy by adding, for example, national sport to its nationalist agenda, which brings "international 'prestige' and 'ranking'" (Koch 2013, 43). Such a strategy has already been attributed in a few countries, like the Soviet Union and North Korea, in order to strengthen authoritarian rule (Koch 2013, 43). Therefore, nation building could also serve as instrument to legitimise authoritarian rule.

3.3.2 Six claims to legitimacy

Christian von Soest and Julia Grauvogel (2016) have analysed the legitimisation strategies of political elites in all former Soviet countries between the early 1990s and 2010 (Brusis 2016, 12). They follow Burnell's (2006) classification of legitimisation modes and draw from a new Regime Legitimation Expert Survey (RLES) for non-democratic regimes of the former Soviet Union between 1991-2010 (Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016). Based on these, Von Soest and

Grauvogel (2016) develop six claims to legitimacy, which can be found in table 3. They consider a regime’s claim to legitimacy quite relevant “for explaining its means of rule and, in turn, its durability (Easton, 1965; Brady; 2009), because relying on repression alone is too costly as a means of sustaining authoritarian rule” (Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016, 19).

Types of claims
Input-based:
(1) Foundational myth
(2) Ideology
(3) Personalism
(4) International engagement
(5) Procedures
Output-based:
(6) Performance

Table 4: Summary of claims to legitimacy (Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016, 20)

The six claims, or also called dimensions of, to legitimacy have the potential to be linked together, but are certainly different from each other (Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016, 20). The claims are explained as follows:

- (1) Foundational myth: This means that rulers draw their legitimacy from their relevant role in the country’s state-building process. The most prone periods for rulers to draw their legitimacy from are periods of i.e. war or revolutions (Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016, 20).
- (2) Ideology: The ideological claim to legitimacy can be founded on nationalism, religion or communism, which, according to Burnell (2006, 548), can be strengthened through state propaganda. Especially, states, which recently gained independence, are prone to lean on nationalism (Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016, 21). This claim to legitimacy can be strengthened through state propaganda.
- (3) Personalism: The authoritarian regimes tends to rely on an individual’s strong charisma. For example, the leader could emphasize its central and influential role in the regime’s successes (Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016, 21).

- (4) International engagement: International engagement and recognition can serve as legitimacy claim, because it strengthens the ruler’s legitimacy domestically (Burnell 2006, 549; Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016, 21).
- (5) Procedures: The regimes founds its political legitimacy on procedures i.e. national elections (Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016, 21-22).
- (6) Performance: This claim becomes relevant when the state is able to provide for the societal needs. In this case, the regime legitimacy “stems from success in satisfying citizens’ needs” (Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016, 22).

The (political) ideology, performance and international engagements claims to legitimacy by Von Soest and Grauvogel (2016) are quite similar to the claims of Legitimacy of Burnell (2006). The other three claims to legitimacy are not. However, Burnell comes with another claim. He (Burnell 2006, 548) also identifies theocratic rule, what is drawn from clerics or other religious actors, and hereditary rule, as mostly old authoritarian regimes do, as sources of legitimacy.

3.4 Legitimacy practices in Kazakhstan

This section discusses the Republic of Kazakhstan as authoritarian state and in what way the country legitimates itself. Kazakhstan is a natural resource-rich country, which, according to the research by Michael L. Ross (2001) that proves the oil-impedes-democracy claim, would indicate that authoritarian rule is strongly reinforced in Kazakhstan. However, as the study of Edward Schatz (2006, 265) shows, the Central Asian countries provide little support for Ross’s thesis, because the Republic of Kazakhstan reinforces softer authoritarian rule than its likewise resource-rich neighbours Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, even though Kazakhstan’s natural resource endowment is higher than its two neighbours. This is also shown in table 5.

	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan	Kazakhstan
Resource endowment	Low	Low	Medium	Medium-low	High
Regime type	Soft	Soft/mid-range	Hard	Hard	Soft/mid-range

Table 5: Estimated resource endowments and regime type in Central Asia (Schatz 2006, 266)

Schatz (2006, 269) argues that the legitimacy claims of Kazakhstan differ in comparison to other Central Asian countries like Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Other scholars also refer to Kazakhstan as “a special case in a number of respects” (Mellon 2010, 146), especially concerning the new national ideologies that the Central Asian states have sought to establish since independence in 1991 (Matveeva 2009, 1105). Which claims to legitimacy all Central Asian countries rely on, is illustrated in the figure below.

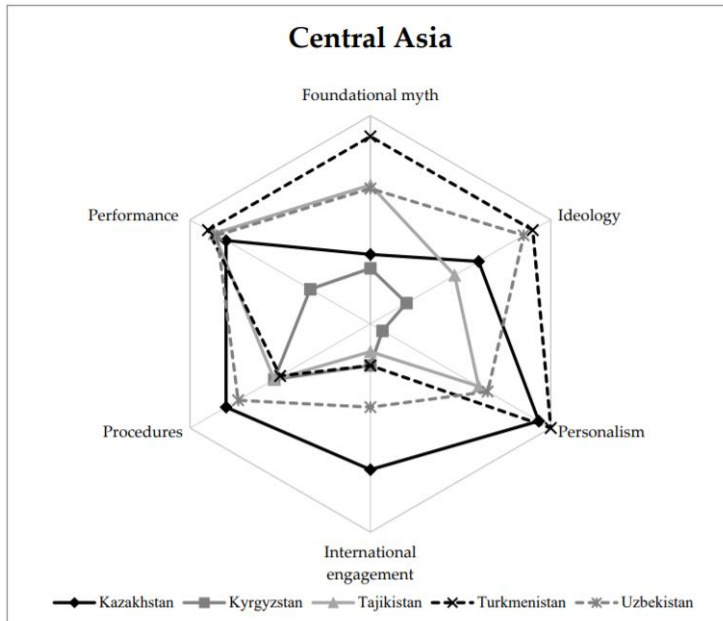


Figure 6: Legitimation strategies in Central Asia (Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016, 32)

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the new sovereign Central Asian states were up for the challenge of building their own statehood (Mellon 2010, 137). Roeder (2007, 11) states that “if the USSR had preserved the Bukhara, Khiva, and Turkestan republics rather than dividing these among five union republics, we would today be celebrating the independence of Bukhara, Khiva, and Turkestan rather than Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan”. The Central Asia states were thus formed by the Soviet Union, which meant that the states do not have a pre-Soviet history (Schatz 2006, 269). The process of building independent statehood has therefore been difficult.

In the case of Kazakhstan, the formation of statehood was mainly troublesome due to the ethnic diversity of the country. On the one hand, there are many ethnic Russians in the north, whom could be chased off when focusing solely on the Kazakh identity (Schatz 2006, 270; Mellon 2010, 146). On the other hand, Kazakhstan is a nomadic country what would have been denied when the elite would have decided to refer to its historic roots, even

before the famous figure Gengis Khan (Schatz 2006, 270). Therefore, the Kazakh regime makes barely any claim to a foundational myth (Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016, 32). Also, democratic processes after independence were directly out of the question as well, because the first president Nursultan Nazarbayev was known as the future Soviet vice-president or prime minister (Schatz 2006, 270). Instead, Anna Matveeva (2009, 1105) argues that the Kazakh regime has used the ethnic diversity of the country as foundation for the country's statehood. According to Matveeva (2009, 1105), the regime created the identity that it "acts as a guarantor of the preservation of multi-ethnic diversity, and actively promotes the idea of 'Kazakhstan—our common home' in the public sphere". Mariya Y. Omelicheva (2016, 489) argues that Kazakhstan has combined this identity with the performance and international engagement claims to legitimacy.

The performance claim is key to Kazakhstan's legitimacy strategy, according to the study of Christian von Soest and Julia Grauvogel (2016, 34). Therefore, the regime oftentimes mentions the socioeconomic development of the country, mainly by highlighting the successful economic development it has made since the 1990s (Del Sordi 2016, 78; Omelicheva 2016, 487). The performance claim could only be successfully used after the country experienced an economic boom in the 2000s. For that reason, the Kazakh regime established some sort of social contract with the public, what means regime support in turn for satisfying the citizen's needs (Del Sordi 2016, 77).

Thus, the performance legitimacy claim was not used prior to the 2000s due to poor economic performance. Instead, the Kazakh regime kicked off its post-dependence years with the international engagement legitimacy claim, when other legitimacy claims were found invalid (Schatz 2006, 70). This claim is still of great significance to the Republic of Kazakhstan. The country considers itself as regional leader, and promotes this image both internationally and nationally, in order to bolster legitimacy domestically (Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016, 35; Schatz 2006; Matveeva 2009, 1117; Del Sordi 2016, 75). The elite of Kazakhstan showed its international commitment by engaging in several world organizations, i.e. the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and maintaining close multilateral foreign relations with several main world players, i.e. China, Russia and the USA (Schatz 2006, 270-273). Also, the country has engaged in international peace and security processes, because Nursultan Nazarbayev believes that due to the country's beneficial

geographical location, “between East and West, between Europe and Asia, and between Islam and Christendom, [the state is] being unique in its ability to foster tranquility in a multiconfessional and multiethnic domestic society” (Schatz 2006, 274). Therefore, Kazakhstan has also taken the role as international mediator thanks to its multi-ethnic diversity. Furthermore, Kazakhstan was awarded the OSCE presidency in 2010, which indicates that Kazakhstan’s international engagement is recognized widely internationally, and for that reason, the regime feels comfortable to sustain its authoritarian rule (Matveeva 2009, 1117).

Besides that, in terms of the procedure legitimacy claim, Christian von Soest and Julia Grauvogel (2016, 34) mention that Kazakhstan stabilized further authoritarian rule through procedural mechanisms, i.e. elections. This means that the country’s elections are predetermined while upholding the idea of having ‘democratic’ elections (Matveeva 2009, 1111). Also, in terms of the country’s ideology, the Kazakh regime tends to prioritize stability and economic development over democracy (Matveeva 2009, 1109; Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016, 33). For example, the regime promotes long-term strategies, like ‘Kazakhstan-2030’, which should bring economic prosperity in the future (Matveeva 2009, 1109). Also, the regime has managed to maintain stability in the country by generating the idea of a unified country, through i.e. the creation of the Assembly of the People, wherein each ethnic group is represented (Omelicheva 2016, 489), and the lack of national conflicts in the 1990s (Del Sordi 2016, 76). Furthermore, Kazakhstan’s national ideology enforces the power of the former president Nursultan Nazarbayev, whom is seen as the successful leader that led Kazakhstan through difficulties the country faced after in the years following independence, while at the same time the president also strengthens the country’s ideology by i.e. promoting it in his books and speeches (Von Soest and Grauvogel 2016, 33).

In sum, the Republic of Kazakhstan makes use of several claims to legitimacy, which consists of promoting the country’s economic prosperity and multi-ethnic unified state nationally, and promoting its international commitment for gaining international recognition, which is also used for strengthened domestic legitimacy. In this study, it is checked whether these claims to legitimacy match or differ from the claims to legitimacy that the first president of the Republic of Kazakhstan has used concerning the capital relocation from Almaty to

Astana, what is a typical planned capital. The methodology chosen for this research is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Methodology

In this chapter the research methodology is explained. The research aim is to find legitimacy claims in Nursultan Nazarbayev's public speeches in order to understand how Kazakhstan's capital movement has been justified and operated by the first president, and in what way that way of reasoning conforms to the larger legitimation strategy of the authoritarian regime. Qualitative content analysis has been chosen as research method. According to Mariette Bengtsson (2016, 10), "In qualitative content analysis, data are presented in words and themes, which makes it possible to draw some interpretation of the results". Thus, qualitative content analysis allows to analyse written or spoken word by selecting relevant phrases and/or words in order to draw inferences of the meaning of it, which is suitable for an analysis of public speeches.

Nursultan Nazarbayev's spoken word has been chosen for subject of study, because this study is interested in his own publicly made mentions on Kazakhstan's capital relocation. Therefore, the total scope of research are official public speeches by the former president of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, which are drawn from his official personal website (<http://personal.akorda.kz>). The speeches are from the years 1991 to 2017, thus they cover almost Nazarbayev's entire ruling period. Also, it is certain that this website has a sound collection of all official speeches from Nursultan Nazarbayev, because when speeches of him were found at other places, those speeches were also found at the official website of the former president. In addition, the speeches are organised per year and presented in chronological order, which gives a clear overview of the times Nazarbayev has spoken publicly. These speeches are in Russian, what the researcher is able to understand. This allows for a further in-depth study of the original meaning of Nazarbayev's spoken word instead relying on translated speeches. However, the further the years progress, Nursultan Nazarbayev tends to occasionally use more Kazakh and therefore, some paragraphs in a speech are in Kazakh, what is not understood by the researcher. Therefore, only the Russian parts of the public speeches are analysed.

Per year an average twenty speeches could be found on Nazarbayev's official website, and that yearly average added up to the other years is a number too high for this study.

Consequently, purposive sampling is used to strategically select samples that are relevant to

the formulated research question. This sampling is done through looking for speeches wherein the words Астан- (shortened for Астана, what means Astana) and/or столиц- (shortened for столица, what means capital) are used⁴. Therefore, after a careful analysis of all official speeches, a total number of 79 relevant speeches has been selected for study, wherein Nursultan Nazarbayev discusses the relocation of Kazakhstan's capital, its developments, its relevance and meaning of it. A demonstration of the selected speeches is given in Appendix II. Then, in these selected speeches is looked for relevant phrases and sentences which say something about the new capital. This is done on the basis of a coding scheme, what is required to conduct a successful qualitative content analysis.

This coding scheme is formed based on a hybrid form of reasoning, which means that both deductive and inductive reasoning has been used. The pre-determined legitimacy claims of Christian von Soest and Julia Grauvogel (2016) are chosen as guidance for the main codes, because those claims were developed specifically for Central Asian authoritarian states. Then, the first twenty relevant speeches by Nursultan Nazarbayev are taken for a pilot. This pilot was conducted in order to determine the description and formulation of each codes and see whether all claims to legitimacy are applicable to Nazarbayev's justification and operation of the capital relocation. The results were found representable and therefore, the coding scheme that is shown on the following page has successfully been created. The examples in the scheme are drawn from the pilot. The six created codes are named as follows: FM; ID; IE; PF; PR; and PS. The coding scheme can be founded in the Appendix.

The qualitative data analysis programme Atlas.ti has been used for this qualitative content analysis. Firstly, the relevant 79 speeches have been uploaded into the programme. Secondly, phrases and sentences in these speeches have been coded through the six created codes, which allowed to categorize relevant quotations accordingly the claims to legitimacy. These codes have been checked several times. Finally, inferences have been drawn from the results and are presented in the following chapter: the research chapter. These inferences have been made by seeking similarities, differences and comparisons among the quotations

⁴ Астан- is shortened for Астана, what means Astana, and столиц- is shortened for столица, what means capital. These words are shortened due to Russian cases, which mostly change the meaning of a word by changing the end of it.

of one specific code. Therefore, the results are presented per code, thus per legitimacy claim.

It should be mentioned that the inferences, which are drawn from Nazarbayev's public speeches, are based on the researcher's own interpretation. Therefore, it is possible that another scholar might interpret the results a bit differently than is done in this research. However, the way of interpreting have been substantiated in the research chapter, which allows another scholar to understand this researcher's way of reasoning. In addition, it is necessary to understand that the study is based on Nursultan Nazarbayev's spoken word, thus, it is a representation of what he said publicly, but that what he said does not necessarily have to been based on truth. Therefore, the real justification and operation of Kazakhstan's authoritarian regime might in practice be different. However, the goal of this research is to analyse what Nazarbayev has declared in the open on the capital relocation and not what has really been undertaken by the regime. The former is an entirely different subject of study. Therefore, as this study focuses on only Nazarbayev's public opinion, the results are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion of the research results

5.1 General results

This chapter presents the results found in this study. The research is performed by a qualitative content analysis of public speeches by the first president of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, between the years 1991 and 2017. From these speeches a careful selection is made of speeches wherein Nursultan Nazarbayev discussed the country’s capital relocation of Almaty to Astana. A total overview of those selected speeches can be found in Appendix II. In the selected speeches is sought for quotations on Kazakhstan’s capital relocation. Then, these quotations are linked to the six legitimacy claims by using the coding scheme, shown in appendix as well. The general results are first shown in this section. Afterwards, the results per claim to legitimacy are discussed into more detail in the next sections. Those sections are organized following the order of legitimacy claims as presented in the coding scheme, thus as follows: foundational myth; ideology; international engagement; performance; and procedures. There is no section on personalism. The reason for why there is none is given a bit later in this section.

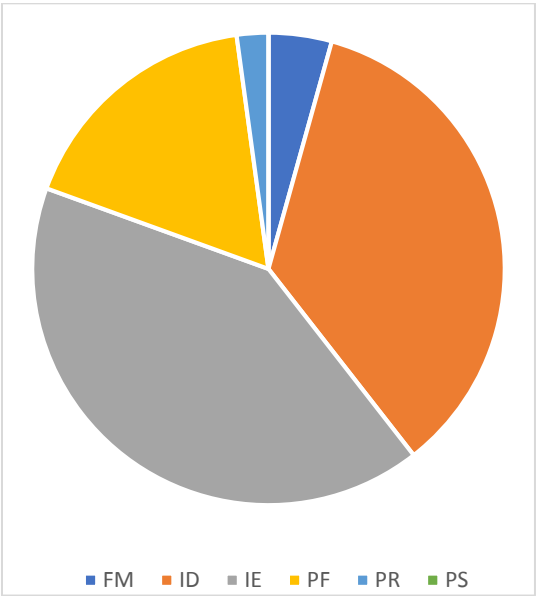


Figure 7: Legitimacy claims in Nursultan Nazarbayev’s speeches

The figure above gives an initial indication of the research results. As this is a qualitative research, and not quantitative, the circle diagram is used to give an overview to what extent

the quotes are linked with a specific legitimacy claim. In that way, it is used to provide a demonstration of what legitimacy claim is deemed very or less relevant by Nursultan Nazarbayev. Therefore, no specific numbers are given.

First of all, as figure 7 indicates, the claims of legitimacy on ideology and international engagement seem to have been linked with a large number of quotations in Nazarbayev’s speeches. Secondly, a smaller number of quotations related to the legitimacy claim on performance is found. Thirdly, in the analysis, there are also linkages found of quotes with the legitimacy claims on foundational myth and procedures, but these appear to have been linked to the smallest extent. And lastly, there is no mention found of any legitimacy claim on personalism. A possible explanation for why no claim to legitimacy on personalism has been found, could be the fact that the analysed speeches are done by Nursultan Nazarbayev himself. Therefore, it might have been typical when he would have emphasized his i.e. own ‘great’ contributions, especially when he aims for gaining national support and legitimacy. Also, as president, it would presumably be recommended that he rather focuses on the national significance of the capital relocation than on his own role in the movement.

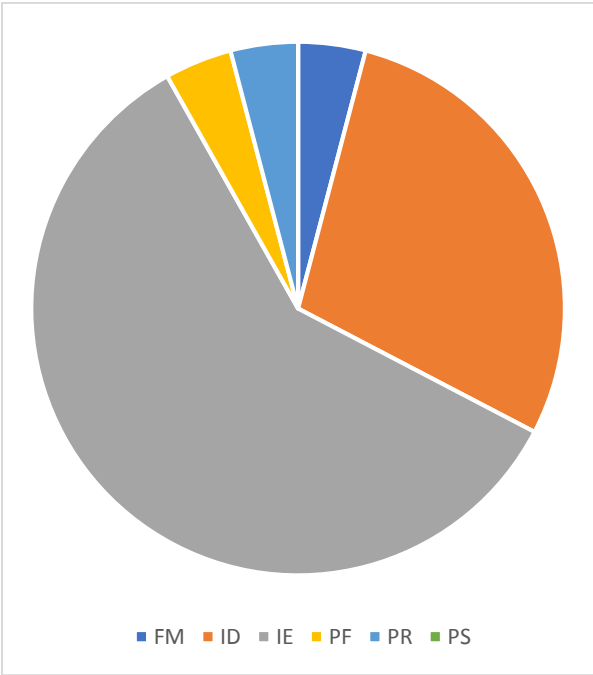


Figure 8: Legitimacy claims in Nursultan Nazarbayev’s speeches with an international audience

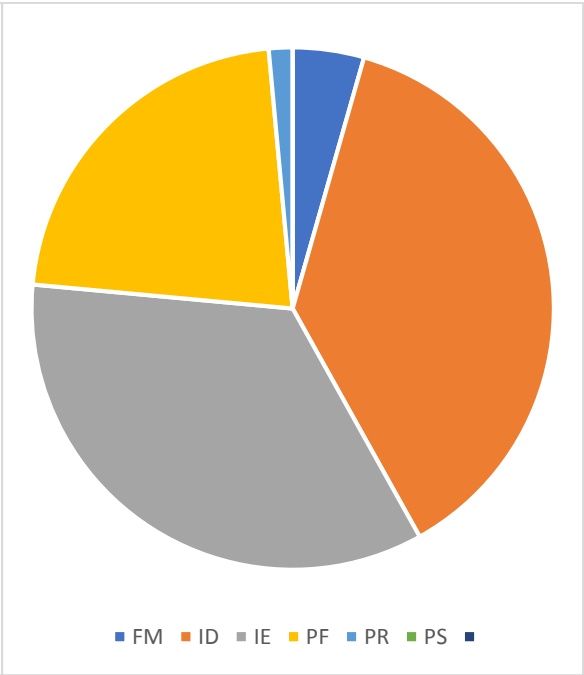


Figure 9: Legitimacy claims in Nursultan Nazarbayev’s speeches with a national audience

In addition, it is interesting to seek for distinctions concerning what Nursultan Nazarbayev specifically said on the capital relocation in front of what audience. On the left figure 8 is

shown, which is about the legitimacy claims used by Nazarbayev with an international public, and on the right, figure 9, with a national audience. It is evident that in front of an international public, Nursultan Nazarbayev tends to use the legitimacy claim on international recognition more frequently than domestically, however it is not that surprising. The usage of this claim is found less relevant with a national audience, but in front of that particular audience, it seems that the ideology and performance claims are used more frequently. Especially, the performance claim is found quite relevant in Nazarbayev's speeches with a national audience. Furthermore, it is less noteworthy to add relevance to Nazarbayev's usage of the legitimacy claims on foundational myth and procedures due to the small number of quotations. In what way the former president of Kazakhstan has used the five legitimacy claims is further elaborated on in the following sections, starting with the legitimacy claim on foundational myth. In the section several Russian quotes can be found, of which the translations of the researcher can be found in footnotes.

5.2 Results legitimacy claim: Foundational myth

This section focuses on foundational myth as legitimacy claim, what means that in the qualitative content analysis is looked for phrases or sentences in which the historical relevance of the ground, on which the new capital is situated, is connected to the location's opportunities at that present day. The quotations found for this legitimacy claim are very few, which is also clear in figure 7. Therefore, this section is short in comparison to some other sections in this chapter.

In the quotations found on the legitimacy claim on foundational myth, the former president Nursultan Nazarbayev has shown how far back the history of the Akmola region, where the new capital is located, goes and what important role this region has played throughout history. In other words, how relevant that region's history is for the current capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan. At the third Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Astana on July 1, 2009, Nazarbayev refers to Astana as “это столица страны, которая на протяжении всей своей истории была центром сплетения исторического и культурного

наследия величайших цивилизаций”⁵ (Nazarbayev 2009). In this quote, he identified the location of the new capital of great significance because it is part of the heritage of the world’s greatest civilizations, however he did not name which civilizations precisely. In another speech during the opening ceremony of two monuments in the new capital on June 1, 2010, Nursultan Nazarbayev argued that the people of Kazakhstan continue the mission that their ancestors have started, which is to develop and strengthen the centre of the steppe in Eurasia (Nazarbayev 2010). Here, he clearly promoted the idea that the significance of the new capital’s development can be found in the region’s history. This historical significance goes back to the last period of the oecumene, what in ancient Greek means ‘habitable world’, according to Nursultan Nazarbayev (Nazarbayev 1998).

During the official opening ceremony of Astana on June 10, 1998, the president mentioned:

“Это пространство, раскинувшееся на стыке двух континентов, было не только полем брани и захватнических сражений, но и объединяющим центром религий, культур и народов. Задолго до всемирно известного Шелкового пути здесь пролегал Степной путь, соединявший народы и страны древней Эллады и Дальнего Востока.”⁶ (Nazarbayev 1998)

The Akmola region was thus already known as a major transit route from the east to the west of the habitable world many centuries ago. In addition, Nursultan Nazarbayev has also stated that the potential of constructing a main capital in the region was already seen in the Soviet period, because the Soviet Union considered to move the region’s capital to several possible cities, including Astana (Nazarbayev 1997). This location was considered due to the noticeable geographical advantage of the location (Nazarbayev 1997). Besides, the Soviet Union also named the then called city Tselinograd as the administrative centre of the Union’s Virgin Lands Campaign. Therefore, Nursultan Nazarbayev considered that “В том, что новая столица нового Казахстана строится в сердце целины, также имеется определенная дань уважения старшему поколению и признание его заслуг”⁷

⁵ [“the capital of the country, which has throughout its history been the centre of historical and cultural heritage of the greatest civilizations”].

⁶ [“This area, which spreads over the crossroads of two continents, was not only a battlefield and aggressive battles, but also a unifying centre of religions, cultures and people. Long before the well-known Silk Road crossed this steppe, it connected people and countries from ancient Greece to the far east.”]

⁷ [“The fact that the new capital of new Kazakhstan is build in the heart of the virgin lands, there is a certain tribute to the older generation and recognition of its accomplishments”]

(Nazarbayev 2004). Thus, Nursultan Nazarbayev has deemed the relocation of the capital to Kazakhstan's the virgin lands as an acknowledgement of the country's wise and older generations.

In sum, Nazarbayev has argued that the Akmola region has played an important role throughout history as transit route and meeting point of multi-ethnic people. The former president has attempted to connect the history of the region to Kazakhstan's new capital in the same region through i.e. arguing that the people of the Republic of Kazakhstan continue their ancestor's mission. This is the foundational myth he has promoted in his speeches a few times. Furthermore, Nursultan Nazarbayev has used the historical image of the region, as the multi-ethnic meeting centre of the Eurasian region, as foundation for the current image of Kazakhstan's new capital. The construction of the capital's image is further explained in the following section.

5.3 Results legitimacy claim: Ideology

During the official announcement of Akmola as Kazakhstan's new capital on December 13, 1997, the first president of the Republic of Kazakhstan said that a modern national capital should be able to fulfil the geopolitical needs, which are “постоянно развивалась, демонстрируя мировому сообществу потенциал экономического роста, повышения благосостояния населения и укрепления стабильности страны”⁸ (Nazarbayev 1997). In this section, it is mainly focused on the last part of the quote, what says that a country's national capital should strengthen the stability of the country. This must have been quite relevant to Nursultan Nazarbayev, because in his speeches, he has attempted to strengthen the country's stability through building an ideology by using the capital relocation in 1997.

This section discusses the results of the content analysis concerning the legitimacy claim on ideology, which has been mentioned many times by the first president of Kazakhstan, as shown in the figure in the very first section of this chapter. This claim to legitimacy is in this research defined as: Phrases or sentences wherein is referred to the new capital's strengthening role of Kazakhstan's (national) ideology, which consists of the desire to build a

⁸ [“constantly developed, showing the world community the potential of economic development, increasing the welfare of the population and strengthening the country's stability”]

multi-ethnic state(hood) through i.e. focusing on the country's stability and development. The section is divided into different topics, which are drawn from the ideology claim.

5.3.1 Astana – a new beginning for Kazakhstan

This sub section shows that along with the capital relocation of Kazakhstan, the president considered it as a new start of the Republic. The former president Nursultan Nazarbayev believed that along with the relocation of Kazakhs capital, the formation of Kazakhstan's statehood was also finalized (Nazarbayev 1997). He stated this believe when Akmola was officially announced as the new capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan on December 13, 1997:

“Сегодня с полным основанием можно сказать, что с передислокацией столицы завершился важнейший этап в становлении нашей государственности, в укреплении независимости страны.”⁹ (Nazarbayev 1997)

This implies that the new capital signified the start of putting this formalized statehood into practice. In other words, the capital relocation embodied a new start of the new independent nation, an entirely blank page. This reference to a new beginning has been repeated by Nursultan Nazarbayev on several occasions. For example, in his new year's address at the end of 1997, Nazarbayev referred to Akmola as the city of hope, a city that looks towards the future (Nazarbayev 1997). At another occasion, during a visit to the Military Academy of Kazakhstan's military on January 16, 1998, the former president mentioned that the new capital also embodies the new image of sovereign Kazakhstan:

“Страна обрела новую столицу – Акмолу, которая олицетворяет и новый облик Казахстана – евразийского светского государства. [...] – мирного государства, не имеющего каких-либо претензий к другим странам.”¹⁰ (Nazarbayev 1998)

These quotations from the late 1990s clearly show that Nursultan Nazarbayev has promoted the capital relocation as a new start of the country, what he has identified as an Eurasian and sovereign state and what in turn is also represented by Kazakhstan's new capital Astana.

⁹ [“Today there is any possible reason to say that with the capital relocation, the important stage in the formation of our statehood, concerning strengthening the country's independence, has come to an end.”]

¹⁰ [“The country has found a new capital – Akmola, which represent a new image of Kazakhstan – a Eurasian secular state [...] – a peaceful state that has no claims to any other country.”]

Therefore, from Nazarbayev's own words can be concluded that the way of how he identifies the Republic of Kazakhstan, is often how the capital is identified as well, and vice versa. For example, this mutual reflection of the capital and the country is also shown in Nursultan Nazarbayev's speech during an OSCE meeting held in Almaty on June 12, 2006. In this speech, the former president stated that the capital resembles the changes in the country: "Астане, городе, ставшем символом динамичных перемен, которые происходят в Казахстане"¹¹ (Nazarbayev 2006). Therefore, in Nazarbayev's speeches, the country and the capital can be considered as each other's reflection. Such reflections also appear in other sections of this chapter, what is already shown in the following sub section where Nursultan Nazarbayev presents Astana as a city full of promising potential.

5.3.2 Astana – a city full of promising potential

This section discusses the potential that the Republic of Kazakhstan has, according to what Nursultan Nazarbayev points out through referring to the symbolism that the country's new capital embodies. As noted in the former sub section, in Nazarbayev's new year's address at the end of 1997, the former president has referred to the new capital as a city that looks towards the future (Nazarbayev 1997). Around one year later, Nursultan Nazarbayev repeated this reference. At the official opening ceremony of Astana on October 10, 1998, he mentioned that the new capital brings confidence in the future of the reforms for the Republic of Kazakhstan (Nazarbayev 1998). In the same speech, the first president of Kazakhstan also called the construction of Astana a gift for future generations (Nazarbayev). Hence, Nursultan Nazarbayev prized the construction of Astana as the future of the Republic of Kazakhstan. He did not mention this reference for several years until 2011 during a meeting on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Republic's independence. Nazarbayev said that "Астана – это колыбель нашего будущего"¹² (Nazarbayev 2011). Thus, even after 14 years of capital relocation, the former president still promotes the new capital as the future of his country, a city which has still a lot to offer. In case Nazarbayev's word will be truth, Astana will exist for eternity:

¹¹ ["Astana, a city, that has become a symbol of dynamic changes, which occur in Kazakhstan"]

¹² ["Astana – it is the cradle of our future"]

“Как гласит древнеегипетская пословица: «Все на свете боится времени, но время боится пирамид». Наша новая столица – прекрасная Астана – и есть такой символ вечности.”¹³ (Nazarbayev 2015)

Nursultan Nazarbayev mentioned the former on the twenty first session of the Assembly of the people of Kazakhstan on April 2, 2015, wherein he compared the capital Astana to the pyramids of Egypt. Hereby he clearly promoted the new capital as a city of the future. Besides that Nursultan Nazarbayev has referred to Astana as a forward-looking city, he also has referred to the new capital as symbol of the country’s revival since independence. To illustrate, on March 12, 2002, during the first Congress of Journalists in Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev said that Astana is “символ нашего возрождения, воли и возможностей”¹⁴ (Nazarbayev 2002). Likewise, at the first Civil forum of Kazakhstan on October 10, 2003, he stated that “как символ нашего возрождения, выросла наша столица Астана”¹⁵ (Nazarbayev 2003). Hereby he meant that the growth of the country’s new capital also showed the strong comeback he believed that the Republic of Kazakhstan has made since independence. On December 15, 2016 in a meeting on the occasion of the country’s twenty fifth anniversary of independence, Nursultan Nazarbayev even referred to Astana as the saviour of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

“В самые тяжелые 1990-е годы Астана дала нам крылья надежды и научила побеждать в больших трудностях. Время было лихое. Не хватало всего. Не платили зарплаты, не платили пенсии. Несмотря ни на что, мы преодолели эти трудности и построили нашу столицу.”¹⁶ (Nazarbayev 2016)

This quotation shows that Nazarbayev tended to emphasize the achievement of the country, and therefore, the country’s strength and determination, because it has managed to relocate its capital while the nation had to face many difficulties in the first years after independence. The former president also mentioned this strength, that the people of Kazakhstan showed during the construction of the capital, on December 16, 2001, on the

¹³ [“As the agent Egyptians say: “Everything in the world fear time, but time fears pyramids.” Our new capital – beautiful Astana – is such a symbol of eternity.”]

¹⁴ [“a symbol of our revival, will and opportunities”]

¹⁵ [“as a symbol of our revival, our capital has grown”]

¹⁶ [“In the difficult 1990s, Astana gave us hope and taught us to overcome great difficulties. Time was dashing. No salaries were paid, no pensions were paid. Despite this all, we overcame these difficulties and built our capital.”]

occasion of the country's tenth independence celebration. He said that the country's capital relocation was “лучшая иллюстрация наших способностей, возможностей, энергии, желания и нашего упорства”¹⁷ (Nazarbayev 2001). At another occasion, Nazarbayev argued that the construction of Astana represented the capabilities of the young Kazakhstan (Nazarbayev 2005). Therefore, in his speeches, Nazarbayev has created the believe that the new capital shows the potential of Kazakhstan, because its people have been able to relocate its capital among the toughest conditions. Nazarbayev has thus attempted to connect the strength of the people and the country's revival with the capital relocation, what might have contributed to the people's feeling of inclusion. Therefore, the mentioning of such connections over the years might have consolidated strong support for the new capital. In addition, at Nursultan Nazarbayev's New Year's Address on December 31, 2017, he referred to Astana as “главного символа достижений и побед нашей страны”¹⁸ (Nazarbayev 2017). In this sense, the new capital has been used to represent the promising potential of the Republic of Kazakhstan, based on what it already has been able to overcome. This potential is nicely captured in the following quote by Nursultan Nazarbayev: “Сегодня весь Казахстан живет по «времени Астаны» - по времени высокой мечты и созидания”¹⁹ (Nazarbayev 2008). This quotation implies that all people of the Republic of Kazakhstan have faith in the city, which stands for their hopes and dreams, thus accordingly Nazarbayev's idea of what the new capital stands for.

In sum, Nursultan Nazarbayev promoted the new capital Astana as symbol of strength and people's confidence, the country's revival and the promising future of the country. In the following sub section, other symbolisms of Astana, which are named by Nursultan Nazarbayev in his speeches, are up for discussion.

5.3.3 Astana - a symbol of the country's independence

In the analysed speeches of Nursultan Nazarbayev also other symbolisms for the capital relocation are found. For instance, Nursultan Nazarbayev referred to Astana as “символом

¹⁷ [“the best illustration of our capabilities, opportunities, energy, desires and our persistence”]

¹⁸ [“the main symbol of the country's accomplishments and victories”]

¹⁹ [“Today, all Kazakh people live in the time of Astana – the time of superior dreams and creativity”]

нового Казахстана и подлинной гордостью страны!”²⁰ (Nazarbayev 2003), during the International Conference of Peace and Harmony on February 13, 2003 in Almaty. However, it is found that not only in this speech, but in many other speeches by Nursultan Nazarbayev, the president associated Astana with the nation’s independence and pride to a significant extent. The new capital as the symbol of Kazakhstan’s independence is discussed in this sub section. The symbol of pride is explained further in the next sub section.

To illustrate, on Kazakhstan’s independence day on December 15, 1998, Nursultan Nazarbayev referred to the new capital as “в конце столетия, на переломе веков ярким символом нашей независимости”²¹ (Nazarbayev 1998). Other mentions of Nazarbayev’s categorization of Astana as the symbol of the Republic of Kazakhstan’s independence have been made for example at the tenth session of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan in December 2003, the thirteenth Congress of the Nur Otan Democratic People’s Party in February 2011, and at the seventh Astana economic forum in May 2014 (Nazarbayev 2003, 2011 and 2014). In addition, in December 2008, the president called it even “олицетворение достижений независимости”²² (Nazarbayev 2008), thus not the country’s independence itself, but performances what contributed to the independence. How significant the former president actually found the meaning of Astana as independence symbol is reflected in the following quote from his speech at the third World Kurultai of Kazakhs on September 29, 2005:

“Государство только тогда является суверенным, когда оно в силах само вершить свою судьбу, вправе самостоятельно принимать решения по важнейшим проблемам своего собственного бытия. Наша Астана, воздвигшая Акорду в самом сердце Евразии, в самом средоточии казахской земли – плод самостоятельного выбора народа Казахстана. В ней воплотилась энергия разума, жар сердец и негибкая воля тех, кто является истинными хозяевами Великой степи. Этим мы поставили надежный заслон разрушительным тенденциям исторического беспамятства, размывания и исчезновения национальных традиций, языка, искусства, обычаев и нравов. Мы

²⁰ [“symbol of new Kazakhstan and true pride of the country”]

²¹ [“at the end of the century, at the turn of the century, a bright symbol of our independence”]

²² [“the embodiment of the achievements of independence”]

сделали это ради будущих поколений, ради свободного и счастливого завтра для нашего народа.”²³ (Nazarbayev 2005)

In this quotation, the new capital Astana is used as example of how independent the Republic of Kazakhstan is, because only a sovereign nation would have been able to make such an independent choice of capital relocation. This choice reflected the will of the people, whom chose with their heart for the creation of their own freedom and future. In this sense, the decision to relocate the capital from Almaty to Astana has been promoted very ideally. It is also used as proof for that the Republic of Kazakhstan acts truly as an independent state. In addition, concerning the note on the country’s future, the new capital was here again presented as a completely new blank page, what the last sub section showed as well.

In addition, Astana as the proof of independence is especially emphasized in another speech by Nursultan Nazarbayev at the celebration of Kazakhstan’s twenty fifth independence day on December 15, 2016:

“Наша столица стала источником святости духа независимости – духа созидания и единства! Сегодня Астана только в начале своей истории. С каждым годом она становится лучше и лучше, отражая высочайший взлет нашей государственной мощи. И мы сделаем все, чтобы она стала одним из вечных городов мира, ибо Астана – это святыня независимости.”²⁴ (Nazarbayev 2016)

Here the former president even entitled the country’s capital as the holy spirit or sanctum of Kazakhstan’s independence, what has increased annually. This quote also implies that the success of Astana has contributed to the success of the elite’s power. Therefore, Nazarbayev has portrayed the existence of the capital’s development as indispensable for the authoritarian regime. However, the president’s quote of 2005 above almost gives the

²³ [“The state is only sovereign when it is able to make its own destiny, it has the right to make own decisions on the most important problems that exist. Our Astana, which is located in the heart of Eurasia, in the centre of the Kazakh land, is the result of the independence choice of the people of Kazakhstan. It embodied the energy of the mind, the heat of hearts and the strong will of those who are the true owners of the mighty steppe. This way we have put a reliable barrier for destructive trends of forgetting our history, dilution and disappearance of national traditions, languages, customs and more. We did it for the sake of future generations, for the sake of a free tomorrow, for our people.”]

²⁴ [“Our capital has become the source of holy spirit of independence – the spirit of creation and unity! Today, Astana is at the very beginning of its history. Every year it will become better, while reflecting the rise of our national strength. And we will do everything to make it one of the world infinite cities, because Astana is the shrine or our independence.”]

authoritarian state a democratic dimension, because the decision for capital relocation was presented as reflection of the will of all Kazakh people, thus democratically chosen. In other words, that is the believe that the first president of Kazakhstan might have attempted to spread in order to justify the capital relocation as legitimate. Furthermore, Nazarbayev has also attempted to create a proud feeling among the people of Kazakhstan concerning the capital relocation, as is discussed in the sub following section.

5.3.4 Astana - a symbol of the country's pride

The first president of the Republic of Kazakhstan has argued in numerous speeches that the new capital of the country also reflected the pride of the nation. For instance, at Nursultan Nazarbayev's message to the people of Kazakhstan on February 18, 2005, he called Astana "гордостью всех казахстанцев"²⁵ (Nazarbayev 2005), and at the ninth Eurasian media forum in April 2010, the president represented the new capital of which the nation is proud (Nazarbayev 2010). It is noticeable that the occasions that Nazarbayev referred to the capital as the symbol of the country's pride are made after the year 2000. He was carefully in phrasing the symbol of pride as: "за короткое время Астана стала гордостью всех казахстанцев"²⁶ (Nazarbayev 2017) during a meeting with the head of foreign diplomatic missions in July 2017 in the capital of Kazakhstan. Thus, Astana has become the symbol of the country's pride, which it was not yet when the capital was relocated. That indicates that Nazarbayev in his speeches based this reference on the contributions that the people have made and the successes the capital relocation have brought. Successes of which the people of the Republic of Kazakhstan can be proud of, especially as proud nation. A feeling of pride that is able to grow stronger in the future.

It is especially noteworthy in what way Nursultan Nazarbayev referred to Astana as symbol of pride in the following quotation of his speech during the meeting on the five hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Kazakh khanate on September 11, 2015 in the Palace of Independence of Astana:

²⁵ ["pride of all Kazakh people"]

²⁶ [" in a short time, Astana has become the pride of all Kazakh people"]

“Находясь в самом сердце Евразии, нельзя не сказать о нашей столице, ставшей предметом гордости всех казахстанцев. Наша Астана – известный на весь мир сверкающий бриллиант нашей страны, она – золотой орел нашей свободы! Опыт возведения новой столицы стал ярким доказательством того, что мы можем ставить грандиозные цели и умеем добиваться их. Наш столичный град принес нам уважение всего мира. Слава Астаны стала славой казахстанцев, славой казахов.”²⁷ (Nazarbayev 2015)

According to this quotation, there is no doubt that Astana has become the pride of Kazakhstan’s people, because the glory of Astana at the same time represents the glory of the country and similarly its people. This again shows that the capital’s image reflects the country’s image, and the other way around. In addition, the quote above noted the strength of Kazakhstan’s people that Astana stands for as well, because Nazarbayev said that the construction has proven the people’s ambition and determination. These mentions are also made by the former president in the following quotation:

“В самом центре страны построена новая столица Астана, ставшая жемчужиной Евразии. Астана вобрала высь, глубину и ширь нашего национального духа. Для всех казахстанцев она стала символом обновления, уверенности народа в своих силах, гордости за наши свершения.”²⁸ (Nazarbayev 2011)

Nursultan Nazarbayev represented Astana as the pride of the Republic of Kazakhstan, or in his words as the pearl of Eurasia, what creates an international image of the country’s capital. Also, this quote recalls the proud feeling and the people’s confidence in their own competence that the capital’s construction as new beginning has brought. Furthermore, it is relevant to notice that Nazarbayev identified the new capital as the core of the country’s spirit, what can be interpreted as centre of the nation’s ideology. This is in line with what the president already said at the joint session of the Kazakhstan’s parliament and government in

²⁷ [“Being in the heart of Eurasia, we can say that our capital has become the pride of all Kazakh people. Our Astana is the word famous sparkling diamond of our country, it is the golden eagle of our freedom! The experience of constructing a new capital has become proof that we can set ambitious goals and can achieve them. Our capital has brought us the respect of the whole world. The glory of Astana has become the glory of Kazakhstan, the glory of all Kazakh people.”]

²⁸ [“In the heart of the new country a new capital Astana is built, which became the pearl of Eurasia. Astana has absorbed the height, depth and breadth of our national spirit. For all Kazakh people, it has become a symbol of revival, assurance of people in their strength, and pride of our achievements.”]

its newest capital, then still Akmola, at December 10, 1997. During this meeting, Nursultan Nazarbayev referred to the country's new capital as the location where from that moment on beats the heart of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Nazarbayev 1997). The next sub section presents in what way the first president of the Republic identified this heart of the homeland.

5.3.5 Astana – the heart of the nation

The so-called heart of the Republic of Kazakhstan has been identified by Nursultan Nazarbayev as “наш общеказахстанский дом”²⁹ (Nazarbayev 1998), which has been built by the people of Kazakhstan. This qualification represented the new capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan as a city where everyone is welcome, what is also the kind of city that Nursultan Nazarbayev has attempted to create. First of all, the former president believed that Astana embodied peace and harmony, because he said that “здесь утверждается новая духовность, новая «культура мира»”³⁰ (Nazarbayev 1999) in a speech wherein he discussed the honorary title “City of Peace”, which was given to Astana by UNESCO. In turn, this has likewise contributed to the nation's unity and cohesion (Nazarbayev 1999). The president stated this clearly when he announced Akmola as the new capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan on December 20, 1997:

“Перенос главного города Казахстана вверх по меридиану должен в будущем решить и не менее серьезную внутреннюю задачу, связанную с преодолением неравномерности этнодемографического развития страны.”³¹ (Nazarbayev 1997)

Therefore, the capital relocation was presented as an instrument that would bring unity among Kazakhstan's multi-ethnic people. For instance, at the first Congress of Journalists of Kazakhstan in February 2003, the first president of Kazakhstan showed that Astana has proven that the country is religiously diverse and spiritually cultured by constructing religious buildings, for example like the largest Jewish temple in Central Asia (Nazarbayev

²⁹ [“our all-Kazakhstan house”]

³⁰ [“here a new spirituality, a new “cultural world” is claimed”]

³¹ [“The transfer of the main city of Kazakhstan up along the meridian in the future needs to resolve and the serious internal task that is associated with overcoming the irregularity of the country's ethnic and demographic development.”]

2003). The Palace of Peace and Conciliation, also known as the Pyramid of Peace and Accord, is another example. This palace was built to show how much significance the country attaches to integration of its people (Nazarbayev 2008). Thus, for example, by building great religious buildings in the capital, Astana has contributed to the (international) image of Kazakhstan as multi-ethnic diverse country. Furthermore, Nursultan Nazarbayev believed that the new capital also contributes to the patriotic feeling of people in the Republic of Kazakhstan:

“Сегодня Астана – это архитектурное воплощение государственной мощи. В ее новых кварталах, площадях, парках и шедеврах зодчества, как в зеркале отражается великая история нашей независимости. Поэтому любовь к Астане – это сыновнее чувство каждого казахстанца к нашей общей Родине – Республике Казахстан. Это альфа и омега нового казахстанского патриотизма.”³² (Nazarbayev 2013)

In this quote, Astana is called the starting point of Kazakhstan’s patriotism. Here is the country also linked with the capital, because Nazarbayev argued that anyone whom loves the capital undoubtedly must also love the Republic of Kazakhstan. This love is associated with each other. The creation of love for the country is further inspired by the construction of relevant buildings and monuments in the capital of Kazakhstan. According to Nursultan Nazarbayev, the capital is therefore also used to establish a feeling of patriotism among the people (Nazarbayev 2010).

Also, according to Nursultan Nazarbayev, peace and harmony have become the business card of Kazakhstan’s society (Nazarbayev 2009). The reflection of Kazakhstan as peaceful and harmonious society is reflected in the country’s new capital, for instance because Nazarbayev called Astana “столица съездов лидеров мировых и традиционных религий”³³ (Nazarbayev 2009) at the eighteenth session of the General Assembly of the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in October 2009. Thus, Nursultan Nazarbayev has ensured that the open and welcoming culture of Kazakhstan’s new capital is well-known. To illustrate, Nazarbayev called the capital relocation as “символическим выражением нашей

³² [“Today Astana is an architectural embodiment of the national strength. Its new quarters, squares, parks and architectural masterpieces reflect the great history of our independence like a mirror. Therefore, a love for Astana is a love of every Kazakh for our common Motherland – the Republic of Kazakhstan. This is the alpha and omega of the new Kazakhstan patriotism.”]

³³ [“the capital of congresses of leaders of world and traditional religions”]

открытости как Востоку, так и Западу, как Югу, так и Северу”³⁴ (Nazarbayev 1997) at the joint session of Kazakhstan’s parliament and government in the capital in December 1997. In addition, he also mentioned that Astana should become an example of tolerant inter-ethnic relations at the twenty first session of the Assembly of people of Kazakhstan in 2014 (Nazarbayev 2014). Nursultan Nazarbayev thus aimed to use the new capital for the country’s ambition to build a multi-ethnic statehood, also internationally, through showing off the capital’s acceptance of all cultures and religions. Also, he aimed to ensure that the Republic of Kazakhstan would be indispensable in the religious world. This is reflected in for example Nazarbayev’s mention of Astana being an inseparable part of the Islamic world at the first Summit of the Organization of Islamic cooperation science and technology in September 2017 (Nazarbayev 2017). Hence, such examples show that Nursultan Nazarbayev desired for the capital to play a relevant role nationally and internationally in order to ensure the regime’s durability. This is actually reflected in the following quote from Nazarbayev’s speech at the seventeenth session of the Assembly of people of Kazakhstan on April 18, 2011:

“Мы развиваем нашу молодую столицу как многоэтничный евразийский мегаполис. Здесь мирно соседствуют минареты мечетей и купола храмов. Казахстанцев и всех наших зарубежных гостей восхищает многоликость Астаны, ее уникальный дух толерантности. И эти черты перенимают все казахстанские города.”³⁵ (Nazarbayev 2011)

As it is noticeable in this paragraph, it seems that in the case of Kazakhstan, the legitimacy claims of ideology and international engagement tend to overlap at times, which makes sense, because the state also identifies itself as multi-ethnic both nationally and internationally. Therefore, the image of Kazakhstan’s capital that Nursultan Nazarbayev portrays nationally is comparable to the image he portrays internationally. In addition, this total section has shown that the ideology claim of the Republic of Kazakhstan is multi-faceted. According to Nursultan Nazarbayev, the country’s capital reflects Kazakhstan’s ideology of being independent, forward-looking, ambitious, proud of the nation, multi-ethnic and therefore religious diverse, and so on. This ideology also shines through in Kazakhstan’s

³⁴ [“a symbolic expression of our openness to the east and west, and the south and north”]

³⁵ [“We develop our young capital as a multi-ethnic Eurasian metropolis. Here, minarets of mosques and domes of temples peacefully coexist. Kazakhstan and all our foreign guests admire the diversity of Astana, its unique spirit of tolerance. And all these features are adopted by the Kazakh city.”]

international image. How Nursultan Nazarbayev has made use of the legitimacy claim on international engagement is further elaborated on in the following section.

5.4 Results legitimacy claim: International engagement

This section is about the legitimacy claim of international engagement that in the qualitative content research was defined as follows: Phrases or sentences that refer to the new capital's contributing role to Kazakhstan's claim of being, and goal of becoming, the leading regional player in Eurasia or considerations/developments, which contribute to this aim. This chapter's first section has already shown that Nursultan Nazarbayev has related to this claim many times, especially in the international context. In this section, the narratives he put out there is discussed in several sub sections, kicking off with Astana as the geographical centre of the Eurasian region.

5.4.1 Astana – the centre of Eurasia

During a session wherein Nazarbayev presented Akmola as the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the parliament on October 20, 1997, he stated:

“В масштабах Центральной Азии, располагающейся от афганской территории до северной оконечности Западной Сибири, от Каспия до Монголии, местоположение Акмолы как раз приходится на центр того перспективного района Евразии, куда могут быть устремлены инвестиции огромного масштаба. Акмола, географически совпадающая с перекрестком коммуникационных линий от Тихоокеанского побережья до Европы, в будущем может претендовать на роль крупного транзитного перевала.”³⁶
(Nazarbayev 1997)

In this quote, the location of Akmola was identified as the centre of the Eurasian region by Nursultan Nazarbayev, what he thought would become a strategic location for a major

³⁶ [“On the scale of Central Asia, which is located from the Afghan territory to the northern tip of western Siberia, from the Caspian sea to Mongolia, the location of Akmola just falls on the centre of the promising region of Eurasia, where investments of a huge scale can be directed. Akmola, which geographically coincides with the intersection of communication lines from the Pacific coast to Europe, in the future might claim the role of a major transit pass.”]

transit route. Nazarbayev argued that another might claim that location due to its geographical advantages and therefore, this claim was even used as reason to relocate the country's capital as quickly as possible (Nazarbayev 1997). That was not the last time that the former president referred to the new capital as centre of the region. In the quotations on international engagement as legitimacy claim, it is found that he has oftentimes used the need for capital relocation thanks to Akmola's geographical location. Akmola is namely located at the junction of major highways (Nazarbayev 1994), and as Nazarbayev mentioned at the official opening ceremony of Astana on October 10, 1998: "Находясь на пересечении всех путей и дорог, Астана лучшим образом содействует совершенствованию как внутренних, так и внешних сообщений для нас самих и для всех, кто сотрудничает с нами"³⁷ (Nazarbayev 1998). Thus, in Nursultan Nazarbayev's eyes, Astana would be the perfect centre for international communication and economy. In addition, according to Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan's role in the geopolitical arena would be strengthened through the relocation of the capital to the middle position between Europe and Asia (Nazarbayev 1994), what he mentioned at the plenary session of the first session of the Supreme Council of the thirteenth convocation in July 1994. This reason for capital relocation was repeated by Nursultan Nazarbayev during a business meeting on the prospect of Kazakhstan in Switzerland in January 2003. During this meeting, Nazarbayev argued that the capital relocation to Astana as the meeting point of Europe and Asia represented the strategic advantages of transit between both continents (Nazarbayev 2003). Therefore, the new capital of Kazakhstan is deemed as the ideal centre for the Eurasian region by Nursultan Nazarbayev.

The former president of Kazakhstan has expressed his consideration of Astana's important role in Eurasia very clearly in his public speeches. For instance, at the Republican Youth Forum of Kazakhstan's "Nur Otan" Democratic People's Party in June 2007, Nursultan Nazarbayev spoke of his adoration for the new capital city:

"Мы построили в сердце Евразии великолепную столицу – город будущего - Астану. Захватывающая динамика созидания, уникальная архитектура и энергия

³⁷ ["Being at the crossroads of all ways and roads, Astana successfully contributes to the improvement of both internal and external communication for ourselves and for all who cooperate with us"]

казахстанцев превратили Астану в сверхновую звезду в плеяде мировых столиц.”³⁸
(Nazarbayev 2007)

This quotation shows that Nursultan referred to the new capital of Kazakhstan as the heart of Eurasia. He used this reference to Astana in other speeches as well, while also using the terms the pearl or new miracle of Eurasia (Nazarbayev 2011). On the twenty fifth independence day of Kazakhstan in 2016, the former president even mentioned that he was certain that Astana would become a Eurasian metropolis (Nazarbayev 2016). These references to the new capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan, especially as geographical centre of Eurasia, show what ambitious plans Nursultan Nazarbayev aspired for the city. However, these were not the only kind of centres Nazarbayev envisioned the new capital to be, as is shown in the next paragraph.

Nursultan Nazarbayev identified the capital of Kazakhstan not solely as centre of Eurasia, but also as important centre of other regions. For instance, Nursultan Nazarbayev mentioned that “Наша новая столица за короткое время сумела заявить себя полноценным политическим, деловым, научным и культурным центром как Казахстана, так и всего центральноазиатского региона”³⁹ at the day that the capital received the title of ‘City of Peace’ by UNESCO (Nazarbayev 1999). Thus, Astana is not only considered as the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan, but of Central Asia as well, especially politically. For instance, on Kazakhstan’s independence day in December 2008, Nazarbayev said that the new capital “стала важным политическим центром всего Центральноазиатского региона”⁴⁰ (Nazarbayev 2008). Therefore, the capital of Kazakhstan also symbolizes the leading role of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Central Asian region. In addition, Nazarbayev referred to Astana as a global centre, which was affirmed when the international exhibition ‘EXPO-2017’ was held in the capital (Nazarbayev 2017). Besides that, he mentioned that Astana is becoming an international financial centre as well (Nazarbayev 2017). Nazarbayev presented the idea of this international financial centre in Astana at the twentieth St. Petersburg International Economic Forum on June 17, 2016: “Мы видим его как «финансовые

³⁸ [“We have built a magnificent capital in the heart of Eurasia – the city of the future - Astana. The exciting dynamics of creation, unique architecture and energy of Kazakhstan turned Astana into a supernova in a galaxy of world capitals.”]

³⁹ [“In a short time, our new capital managed to declare itself a complete political, business, scientific and cultural centre of both Kazakhstan and the entire Central Asian region”]

⁴⁰ [“it has become an important political centre of the entire Central Asian region”]

ворота» Евразии, центр притяжения инвесторского капитала и инноваций в области финансовых инструментов. Это имеет большое значение для всего Евразийского экономического союза”⁴¹ (Nazarbayev 2016). Thus, the creation of a financial centre in the new capital would contribute to Kazakhstan’s role in the Eurasian Economic Union. To conclude this section, based on the former president’s speeches, the capital relocation of Almaty to Astana is used as an instrument for the Kazakhstan’s international ambitions. Also, it is found that the capital is used to gain international recognition, which is argued in the next sub section.

5.4.2 Astana – seeking international recognition

At the new year’s address of 1998, Nursultan Nazarbayev said: “Уходящий 1998 год был Годом народного единства и национальной истории, мы презентовали всему миру нашу новую столицу – прекрасную Астану, показали возможности суверенного Казахстана”⁴² (Nazarbayev 1998). He presented 1998 as the year wherein the country showed its ‘magnificent’ new capital to the world, and at the same time also the potential of Kazakhstan. In other words, it was the year wherein the state has gained international recognition of its new capital that indirectly also showed the country’s achievements. This was not the first and last time that Nazarbayev referred to the construction of Astana in order to acquire recognition from the world community. The day that UNESCO attributed Astana the title ‘City of Peace’ in 1999 was also on the day which the former president Nazarbayev mentioned that the external and internal changes of the capital was recognized by the international community (Nazarbayev 1997). It is another reflection that the image of Kazakhstan is similar to the image of the capital. For Nazarbayev the accrediting of such a title to the country’s new capital must have been a confirmation of the greatness of the country and its capital. That is at least the believe that he created by this quote. Therefore, he made sure that the capital’s visitors would know it. For example, at the third World Kurultai of Kazakhs at the end of September in 2005, Nursultan Nazarbayev mentioned:

⁴¹ [“We see it as the "financial gate" of Eurasia, the centre of attraction of investor capital and innovations in the area of financial tools. This is of great importance to the entire Eurasian economic Union”]

⁴² [“The end of 1998 was a year of national unity and national history, we presented our new capital – beautiful Astana to the whole world, and showed the possibilities of sovereign Kazakhstan”]

“Всем вам, собравшимся в юной, прекрасной и величественной Астане – столице пробудившегося к новой жизни, возрожденного, процветающего, устремленного к вершинам XXI века Казахстана, я еще раз хочу сказать: «Добро пожаловать, да будут усыпаны цветами дороги, по которым ступаете вы!».”⁴³
(Nazarbayev 2005)

The former president basically referred to Astana as majestic where the best kind of life was lived, almost like a dream world. And Nazarbayev aimed for the whole world to know about it. To illustrate, at the eighteenth session of the General Assembly of the UN World Tourism Organization, he presented his hope that Astana would become one of the global tourist capitals (Nazarbayev 2009). It seems that Nursultan Nazarbayev has attempted to use the international recognition of new capital’s greatness to support the capital relocation, what would legitimise the decision domestically. This is shown in for example Nazarbayev’s mention of how much the country’s capital is admired by guests at the ninth Eurasian media forum in April 2010 (Nazarbayev 2010), a phrase which he has used in other speeches as well.

Another way to acquire international recognition of the capital is to make it a venue for international events. For instance, Nursultan Nazarbayev identified the new capital as an ideal venue by stating what large events the city had already hosted and what great events was coming up in 2017:

“В хронологию Астаны уже вписаны яркие страницы международных событий. Здесь прошли съезды лидеров мировых и традиционных религий, саммиты ОБСЕ, Шанхайской организации сотрудничества, Организации исламского сотрудничества и других международных организаций. Мы готовимся принять Всемирную выставку «ЭКСПО-2017».”⁴⁴ (Nazarbayev 2014)

⁴³ [“To all of you who have gathered in the young, beautiful and majestic Astana – the capital of Kazakhstan awakened to a new life, revived, flourished, and aspired to the heights of the XXI century, I want to say once again: "Welcome, let the roads on which you walk be covered with flowers!"]

⁴⁴ [“Bright pages of international events have already been written in Astana’s history. There were congresses of leaders of world and traditional religions, summits of the OSCE, the Shanghai cooperation organization, the Organization of Islamic cooperation and other international organizations. We are preparing to host the world exhibition "EXPO-2017".”]

Especially Astana as the venue for the 'EXPO-2017' was considered striking by Nursultan Nazarbayev, because he thought it is symbolic that the Republic of Kazakhstan is the first of all former Soviet Union states to host such a special international event (Nazarbayev 2016). In other words, this is another affirmation of the fact that Kazakhstan's potential was recognized internationally. In addition, at the fifth congress of leaders of world and traditional religions in June 2015, the former president approved that Astana as international venue contributed to the acquirement of international recognition for the country and capital city through stating that "Проведение в Астане съездов лидеров мировых и традиционных религий мы рассматриваем сквозь призму глобального признания успешности нашего опыта"⁴⁵ (Nazarbayev 2015).

Besides gaining international recognition of the country's new capital in order to bolster legitimacy domestically, Nursultan Nazarbayev also hoped that the Republic of Kazakhstan would become an international role model, as shown in the following quotation from his speech on the twentieth independence day on December 15, 2011:

"Я убежден, что понятие Дух Астаны, которое уже вошло в мировую историю, станет символом всеобщего стремления к мироустройству, основанному на принципах доверия, согласия, толерантности и единства в многообразии."⁴⁶ (Nazarbayev 2011)

The in this quote outspoken aspiration of Nursultan Nazarbayev to spread the 'Spirit of Astana' as international role model is further elaborated in the next section.

5.4.3 Astana – an international role model

This section discusses that Nursultan Nazarbayev has used the new capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan as assistance in the country's aspiration to become an international role model for religious diversity. For instance, at a meeting with heads of foreign diplomatic missions in October 2003, Nursultan Nazarbayev stated:

⁴⁵ ["We view hosting congresses of leaders of world and traditional religions in Astana as the prism of global recognition for the success of our experience"]

⁴⁶ ["I am convinced that the concept of Astana's spirit, which has already entered the world history, will become a symbol of the universal desire for a world order based on the principles of trust, harmony, tolerance and unity in diversity."}]

“Казахстан последовательно проводит политику, направленную на консолидацию усилий мирового сообщества по установлению и развитию диалога между цивилизациями и культурами. Будучи уникальным государством в плане религиозной терпимости и межэтнического согласия, Казахстан инициировал проведение в сентябре этого года в Астане I съезда лидеров мировых и традиционных религий. По общему мнению участников, это крупнейшее международное событие продемонстрировало наличие большого миротворческого потенциала нашей страны.”⁴⁷ (Nazarbayev 2003)

This quotation shows that according to Nazarbayev, the Republic of Kazakhstan wishes to contribute to a global dialogue between civilizations and cultures, and considers itself perfect for this part, because: “Будучи многонациональной и многоконфессиональной страной мы продвигаем идеи толерантности и межнационального согласия”⁴⁸ (Nazarbayev 2015). Therefore, the capital city was for instance the venue for the Congress of leaders of world and traditional religions for the fifth time already in 2015 (Nazarbayev 2015). The former president even stated that these congresses boosted the global dialogue on religions, which was not there before the first congress (Nazarbayev 2016). Moreover, Nursultan Nazarbayev stated that the architecture of Astana, that consists of cathedrals, mosques, churches, temples, et cetera, which reflects the country’s religious diversity, serves as an example for other capital cities (Nazarbayev 2006). He mentioned this at the second Congress of leaders of world and traditional traditions in September 2006 and he hoped that other countries would also build other palaces of peace and harmony, as in Astana (Nazarbayev 2006). Finally, Nursultan Nazarbayev stated: “Наша Астана известна миру как центр глобального межрелигиозного диалога”⁴⁹ (Nazarbayev 2010). Clearly, based on Nazarbayev’s words, the new capital has contributed to and has been a representation of Kazakhstan’s role in the global dialogue on religions. Eventually, it would hopefully become “символом всеобщего стремления к мироустройству, основанному на

⁴⁷ [“Kazakhstan has consistently pursued a policy which aims to consolidate the efforts of the international community for the establishment and development of a dialogue between civilizations and cultures. Being a unique state in terms of religious tolerance and inter-ethnic harmony, Kazakhstan initiated the first Congress of leaders of world and traditional religions in Astana in September this year. Based on the general opinion of the participants, this major international event demonstrated the presence of a large peacekeeping potential of our country.”]

⁴⁸ [“As a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, we promote the ideas of tolerance and interethnic harmony”]

⁴⁹ [“Our Astana is known to the world as the centre of global interreligious dialogue”]

принципах доверия, согласия, толерантности и единства в многообразии”⁵⁰ (Nazarbayev 2010). Therefore, it is argued that Nursultan Nazarbayev has used the new capital as international example, what in turn has also shown Kazakhstan’s international commitment. In the next sub section, this international commitment is further specified.

5.4.4 Astana – example of international commitment

According to Nursultan Nazarbayev, the capital relocation would not change the multi-vector foreign policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Nazarbayev 1997), but rather, “наше движение в центр государства есть отражение многовекторной направленности нашей внешней политики, нашего понимания интеграции”⁵¹ (Nazarbayev 1998). Thus, the capital relocation has been used to showcase Kazakhstan’s commitment to its chosen foreign policy, what could improve the country’s relationship with other foreign countries. It also confirms the country’s commitment to perform the role of regional leader of Eurasia, because this region consists of multiple different cultures what best suits a multi-vector foreign policy. Besides, Nazarbayev said himself that the new capital is “своеобразным инструментом дальнейшей стабилизации межнациональных отношений”⁵² (Nazarbayev 1997) at the fourth session of the Assembly of people of Kazakhstan on June 6, 1997. Therefore, what Nursultan Nazarbayev has pointed out in his speeches shows of what great significance the capital relocation is for Kazakhstan’s foreign policy. In addition, the capital is of great importance in Kazakhstan’s role in the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). To illustrate, during the signing ceremony of the Treaty on the EEU, Nursultan Nazarbayev referred to Astana as “колыбелью Евразийского экономического союза”⁵³ (Nazarbayev 2014). Therefore, based on this and other sub sections, it is argued that Nursultan Nazarbayev used his mentions on Kazakhstan’s new capital to engage internationally, through i.e. calling it the cradle of the EEU and thus, using the capital city in its foreign policy ambitions, claiming its role as global example for religious diversity, and showing the country’s international engagement. Thus,

⁵⁰ [“a symbol of the universal aspiration for a world order based on the principles of trust, harmony, tolerance and solidarity in diversity”]

⁵¹ [“our movement to the state centre is a reflection of the multi-vector orientation of our foreign policy, and our understanding of integration”]

⁵² [“a kind of tool for the further stabilisation of international relations”]

⁵³ [“cradle of the Eurasian Economic Union”]

Astana's international reputation is a sort of reflection of Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy goals. This claim on international engagement was thus mainly referred to by Nazarbayev in front of an international audience. However another legitimacy claim which was more often used with a national public is presented in the next sub section.

5.5 Results legitimacy claim: Performance

In the analysed speeches, a mention of around one fifth of all quotations have been found for the legitimacy claim on performance, which is also shown in the figure at the begin of this chapter. In the coding scheme, the legitimacy claim performance is described as: Phrases or sentences that state the promising or already accomplished socioeconomic developments thanks to capital relocation, what would satisfy the citizen's needs. This description implies that the relevant quotations found on the performance claim are about social and economic developments, which are possible due to the capital relocation in 1997.

A number of the quotations on performance were found in Nazarbayev's speech during the first session of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan of the thirteenth convocation on July 6, 1994, wherein he discussed the reasons for the country's decision to move its capital. There were obviously many reasons given, but in this section the reasons, which are relatable to the performance legitimacy claim, are discussed. In this speech, Nursultan Nazarbayev believed that the country's capital should be constantly developed in order to show that the Republic of Kazakhstan is able to fulfil the required status of a geopolitically situated country like Kazakhstan:

“Статус столицы сейчас требует, чтобы она соответствовала высоким параметрам в соответствии с геополитическим положением страны и ситуации в мире, постоянно развивалась, демонстрируя рост благосостояния и стабильность государства, являясь одним из его главных символов.”⁵⁴ (Nazarbayev 1994)

In other words, the former president Nazarbayev deemed it necessary that the new capital of Kazakhstan becomes the symbol of the country's growing welfare and stability. Therefore,

⁵⁴ [“The status of the capital requires that it meets the high parameters which is in line with the geopolitical position of the country and the situation in the world, constantly developed, demonstrating the growth of welfare and stability of the state, as one of its main symbols.”]

Nazarbayev thought that the new capital “должна быть ближе к крупным промышленным центрам”⁵⁵ (Nazarbayev 1994), thus it should be closer to major industrial centres. The city Akmola, in the middle of the steppe, seemed to be the perfect location for this necessity, because it is the geographical centre of Kazakhstan, near large economic regions and at the crossroads of large transportation roads (Nazarbayev 1994). Thus, that location would potentially bring many economic opportunities for growth, what would fit into Nazarbayev’s vision of the new capital as a symbol of increasing welfare and stability. Besides, the new location for the capital would probably also contribute to development in the northern regions of the country, according to Nursultan Nazarbayev (Nazarbayev 1994). Hence, these reasons could be considered as a way of justifying the capital move, because it should provide economic development for the entire country.

On December 13, 1997, Akmola was officially announced as the new capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan during a formal meeting on the occasion of Kazakhstan’s Independence Day, in Akmola. In this meeting, Nursultan Nazarbayev mentioned that the status of the capital should constantly be “демонстрируя мировому сообществу потенциал экономического роста, повышения благосостояния населения и укрепления стабильности страны”⁵⁶ (Nazarbayev 1997), what means that the capital of a country should represent the potential of economic growth, enhance the well-being of the people and strengthen the stability of the state. Again, there is this mention of what kind of symbolic meaning the new capital should have.

In the earliest speeches on the new Kazakh’s capital, Nursultan Nazarbayev has aimed to show what economic opportunities the new capital has for the country. For example, he argued that the location of the new capital is economically beneficial for developing a good national market infrastructure, because that location is around a similar distance from all Kazakh regions, thus right in the middle (Nazarbayev 1997). Also, Nazarbayev said that in Akmola more economically profitable projects were possible than in any other region of the country, and the already developed transport and communication infrastructure in Akmola was well-suited for further development (Nazarbayev 1997). These identified economic

⁵⁵ [“should be closer to large industrial centres”]

⁵⁶ [“demonstrating to the world community the potential of economic growth, improving the population’s welfare and strengthening the country’s stability”]

opportunities of capital relocation turned out to be right, according to Nazarbayev, which is explained in the next paragraph.

According to Nursultan Nazarbayev, the construction boom that the new capital Astana experienced, has also directly boosted the entire economy of Kazakhstan. For instance, many smaller and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have been established in the capital, while nearly twelve thousand jobs have been created as well during the year of 1998 (Nazarbayev 1998). Thus, the promised economic benefits of the capital relocation were already noticeable after a single year. This is reflected in the following quote, wherein Nursultan Nazarbayev romantically described the atmosphere of the new capital:

“Думаю, что все это – самое красноречивое подтверждение правильности нашего решения о переносе столицы: уже сейчас явственно ощущается ее неоспоримое влияние на все стороны жизни страны. Сам город живет в новом, учащенном ритме.”⁵⁷ (Nazarbayev 1999)

The former Kazakh president said this in the light of when Astana received the honorary title UNESCO "City of peace". On this occasion, Nursultan Nazarbayev also called the new capital “полноценным политическим, деловым, научным и культурным центром как Казахстана, так и всего центральноазиатского региона”⁵⁸ (Nazarbayev 1999), and argued that social conditions of the people’s lives in Kazakhstan have significantly improved (Nazarbayev 1999). Nazarbayev clearly attempts to emphasize the already noticeable socioeconomic successes that the capital relocation has brought.

In later years, Nursultan Nazarbayev continuously highlighted the socioeconomical successes and what role the capital relocation to Astana played in those successes. In the quotation below, for example, he mentioned that the new Kazakh capital has triggered the country’s economy and life, which in turn also forms an example for other Kazakh cities:

“Реализуется крупная общенациональная задача по строительству и обустройству новой столицы – Астаны, которая в кратчайший срок состоялась как

⁵⁷ [“I think that this is the most expressive confirmation of the correctness of our decision to move the capital: its undeniable influence on all aspects of the country's life is already clearly felt. The city itself lives in a new, rapid rhythm.”]

⁵⁸ [“a complete political, business, scientific and cultural centre of Kazakhstan and the entire Central Asian region”]

административный Центр, дающий импульс всей нашей экономической и общественно-политической жизни и ставшей притягательным городом для всех казахстанцев и хорошим примером развития для других городов страны.”⁵⁹ (Nazarbayev 2001)

In other words, based on Nursultan Nazarbayev’s words, the capital relocation from Almaty to Astana has inspired national economic growth and its successes are an example for other cities. Thus, Nazarbayev labelled Astana as the trendsetter for the country. This label is also reflected in another quotation from one year later, during a formal meeting on the occasion of the tenth independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

“Она стала крупным региональным центром притяжения, остро необходимым стране; центром «обкатки» современных технологий и инфраструктуры; локомотивом роста экономики; мощным импульсом развития отечественной стройиндустрии в условиях сильной конкуренции со стороны иностранных компаний; оживления в сфере развития автодорог и в целом транспортной отрасли.”⁶⁰ (Nazarbayev 2001)

Here Nursultan Nazarbayev even labels the capital as “локомотивом роста экономики”, thus Kazakhstan’s engine of economic growth, what indicates that Nazarbayev considered the growth of Astana as key factor in the growth of the country’s economy. This is also reflected in his Message to the People of Kazakhstan on April 4, 2003: “По примеру Астаны преобразились все областные центры страны. Программа «Расцвет Астаны - расцвет Казахстана» действует”⁶¹ (Nazarbayev 2003). Hereby, Nursultan Nazarbayev states that the idea of that Astana’s prosperity also influences the country’s prosperity is considered successful. This concept has been continuously used by the former president later on as well. For example, on September 29, 2005, he referred to the new capital as “символом всестороннего бурного и прогрессивного роста Казахстана”⁶² (Nazarbayev 2005), and on

⁵⁹ [“A major national task is implemented to build and equip a new capital – Astana, which in the shortest possible time took place as an administrative centre, giving impetus to our entire economic and socio-political life and has become an attractive city for all Kazakh people and a good example of development for other cities in the country.”]

⁶⁰ [“It has become a major regional centre of attraction, which was urgently needed by the country; the centre of “rolling” modern technologies and infrastructure; the engine of economic growth; a powerful impetus to the development of the national construction industry based on the conditions of strong competition of foreign companies; and revival in the development of roads and transport industry in general.”]

⁶¹ [“Following the example of Astana, all regional centres of the country have been changed. The program “Prosperity of Astana - prosperity of Kazakhstan” is functioning”]

⁶² [“symbol of the overall turbulent and progressive growth of Kazakhstan”]

October 10, 2007, as “символ растущей страны”⁶³ (Nazarbayev 2007). In addition, at the fourth Astana economic forum on May 3, 2011, the new capital was identified as an indicator for the level of development of the whole country (Nazarbayev 2011). The development of the new Kazakh capital, which is in line with the development of the country, should be connected with the revival of the state. In Nazarbayev’s words at his new year’s address on December 31, 2017, Astana is believed to set the pace of renewal in Kazakhstan (Nazarbayev 2017). In sum, the former president Nursultan Nazarbayev has clearly attempted to spread the idea that the economic growth of Astana also represents the economic growth of the Republic of Kazakhstan after gaining independence in 1991. In other words, as the president himself likes to put it: “Город стал [...] драйвером роста экономики страны”⁶⁴ (Nazarbayev 2015). Thus, Astana has been the so-called driver of Kazakhstan’s economic growth that in turn satisfies the citizen’s needs. This economic growth has been promoted in order to bolster legitimacy for the capital relocation, especially at the home front, as the figures in this chapter’s first sub sections also shows. In addition, another legitimacy claim that could bolster legitimacy for the capital relocation is discussed in the following sub section on the procedures claim.

5.6 Results legitimacy claim: Procedures

In the analysed speeches, little mention is found on what is relatable to the legitimacy claim procedures. In total, only a number of four relevant quotes were found. Therefore, unsurprisingly, this section is the smallest of all claims to legitimacy, but it nevertheless also provides the opportunity to discuss every single quotation. The definition of the procedures claim is as follows: Phrases or sentences in which is shown that the decision to relocate the Kazakh capital is democratic/legitimate, a decision that reflects the will of the people.

Off the quotations that are linkable to the procedures legitimacy claim, especially the following was found quite striking:

“Одним словом, решение о переносе политического центра страны в город Астану не было сиюминутным или случайным, принятым по воле одного или

⁶³ [“symbol of a growing country”]

⁶⁴ [“The city [...] has become the driver of the country’s economic growth”]

нескольких человек. Это глубоко продуманное и исторически обоснованное, нацеленное в будущее решение явилось итогом многовекового поиска, долгих раздумий и горячих споров. Как говорится, все было 40 раз измерено и 40 раз взвешено.”⁶⁵ (Nazarbayev 1998)

The former president Nursultan Nazarbayev said the former during the official opening ceremony of Astana on June 10, 1998. This indicates that the decision to move the Kazakh capital was a well-thought consideration and was made in favour of all Kazakh citizens and not just the elite, at least according to Nazarbayev. Thus, the capital relocation has been promoted as decision that reflects the will of the people, what is then justified legitimate. Nursultan Nazarbayev also stated that the decision, that was discussed for some time with several groups that had different interests, was as a matter of fact generally supported in another speech at the first session of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan of the thirteenth convocation on July 6, 1994 (Nazarbayev 1994). He mentioned this when he announced the plan to relocate Kazakhs capital for the first time, what forms the public discussion on the decision for capital relocation as legitimate procedure.

In another quote at a meeting on the occasion of Kazakhstan’s Independence Day on December 15, 1998, there is also mention of a legal procedure by Nazarbayev, which is that “местоположение новой столицы позволило рационализировать систему государственного управления”⁶⁶ (Nazarbayev 1998). Again, this legal procedure justifies Kazakhstan’s capital relocation as legitimate. In addition, the former president also used the procedures claim by appealing to geographical logic of the twentieth century, which he used in the same speech during the official opening ceremony. According to this logic, a country that is as large as the Republic of Kazakhstan, one of the ten largest countries worldwide, a centre of control is necessary, especially at the very centre of such a large region (Nazarbayev 1998). This way, Nursultan Nazarbayev promoted the idea that the decision to relocate the capital generally is rational, that it is the most logic decision concerning the geopolitical situation of the country.

⁶⁵ [“In short, the decision to move the political centre of the country to the city of Astana was not immediate or random, or taken by the will of one or more people. This is a deeply thoughtful and historically informed, forward-looking decision, what was the results of centuries-long research, much thought and heavy debate. As is said, everything was measured forty times and forty times balanced.”]

⁶⁶ [“the location of the new capital allowed to streamline the system of public administration”]

Interestingly, three of the four quotations were used in 1998 and the first one in 1994, thus in the same period of performing the capital relocation. Therefore, it could be argued that that Nursultan Nazarbayev only felt the need to justify the decision for the capital move legitimately during the formation process and the very beginning, but not later once the Kazakh capital was officially relocated. In addition, the former president has used this claim to legitimacy to the smallest extent, what could be explained through the fact that an authoritarian regime, like Kazakhstan, does not necessarily need procedures for legitimacy. Even though, Nazarbayev has slightly attempted to use this claim, especially in the striking quote where he pointed out specifically that it was not an accidental decision by a few people, he certainly has not considered it as the best legitimacy claim in comparison to the other legitimacy claims. This concludes the chapter on the research results. A final conclusion based on the results presented here is given in the following chapter.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study aims to find out in what way the new capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which was relocated in 1997, fits in the authoritarian regime's legitimation strategy. This is researched through conducting a qualitative content analysis of the former president Nursultan Nazarbayev's official public speeches on the capital relocation and its relevance from 1991-2017.

As figure 6 on legitimation strategies in Central Asia has shown, the authoritarian regime of Kazakhstan mainly relies on the legitimacy claims in the following order: personalism, performance, procedures, international engagement, and ideology. In the public speeches by Nursultan Nazarbayev on Kazakhstan's new capital, this study shows that the legitimacy claims on international engagement and ideology have been used to a great extent. In addition, the performance legitimacy claim has also been used, but to a lesser extent, especially in comparison with figure 6. Furthermore, the legitimacy claim on foundational myth is barely used by the regime, which this study also concludes based on Nazarbayev's spoken word. However, this study finds that barely any claim to legitimacy has been made concerning personalism, which is a huge difference compared to the regime's overall legitimation strategy. The former president Nursultan Nazarbayev has not made any mention on its influential role in the new capital's successes. This could be explained by the fact that he aimed to build, and especially needed due to the lack of, a new strong Kazakh statehood as new independent country, what was only possible by emphasizing the people's unified effort in the capital relocation. Also, that statehood was partly created by referring to the capital as the nation's pride and symbol of independence, which the people are able to identify themselves with. Especially, Nursultan Nazarbayev's mention that the decision of capital relocation has been made in favour of the will of the Kazakh people, as a procedure claim to legitimacy, strengthens the citizen's national and unified feeling.

The analysis shows that Nursultan Nazarbayev has used the new capital of his country in multiple ways. For instance, he has used the capital as reflection of the country's image as proud and independent ethnically diverse yet, unified nation, what constructed a new Kazakh identity. Another example, Astana has also been used to strengthen Kazakhstan's position of leading role in the Eurasian region, especially concerning the EEU, and the

country's engagement on the international stage, which fits in the regime's multi-vector foreign policy. In addition, the former president has practiced the new capital's as an instrument of Kazakhstan's driver of economic growth, what brought many words and therefore, also satisfied citizen's needs. These usages of the new capital by Nursultan Nazarbayev contributes to the authoritarian regime's legitimacy strategy, because this study find that it enforces that strategy considerably. However, it is recommended to realise that this study is an analysis of the former president's public spoken words, what indicates that it is not a complete analysis of how the regime has used the capital relocation in its favour. It rather gives an indication of how the authoritarian regime has attributed it to carry out its legitimation strategy.

To conclude, this study finds that the relocation of Kazakhstan's capital in 1997, from Almaty in the south to Nur-Sultan in the north, which is closer to the Russian border, has been convenient for the authoritarian regime, which was up for the challenge of building a new Kazakh statehood after becoming a sovereign independent country in 1991. Evidently, Kazakhstan's new capital, currently known as Nur-Sultan, is used as example of the country's multi-ethnic identity, economic prosperity, stability and the regime's geopolitical vision and role. This does not perfectly complement the overall authoritarian regime's legitimation strategy, but it certainly fits well into it as legitimation tool in several ways. Therefore, Kazakhstan's new capital is especially a useful legitimation instrument in the public sphere, and carry out the authoritarian regime's legitimation strategy both nationally and internationally.

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Appendix I: Demographic profile of the Republic of Kazakhstan

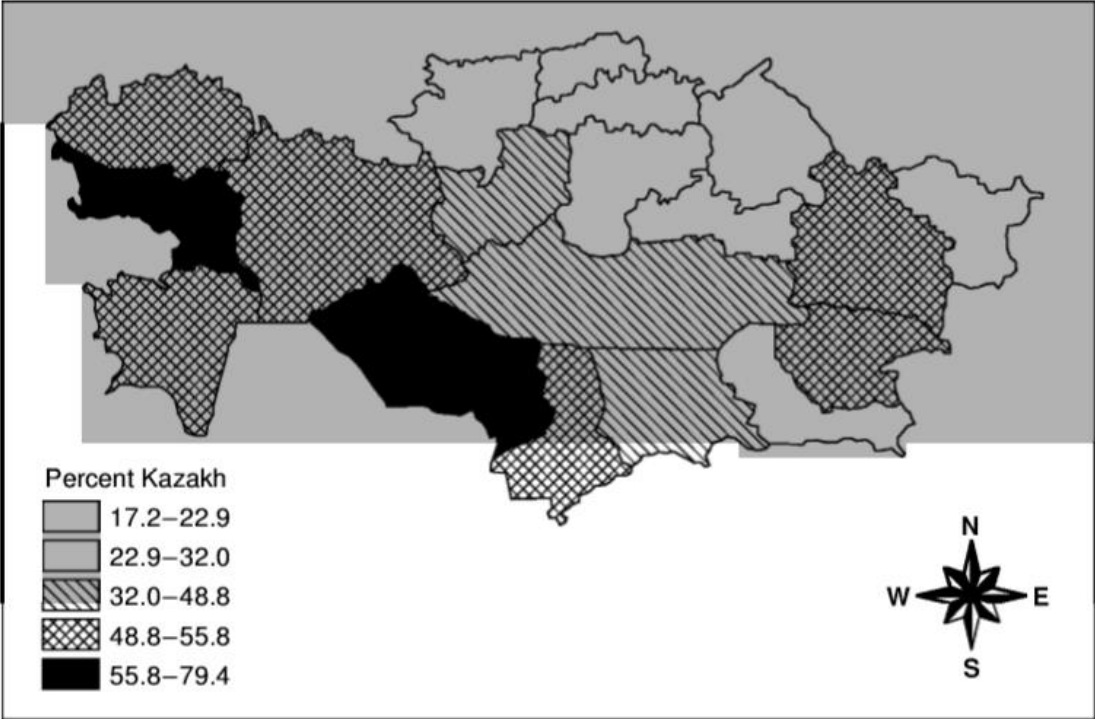


Figure A: Demographic profile of Kazakhstan in 1991 (Wolfel 2002, 490)

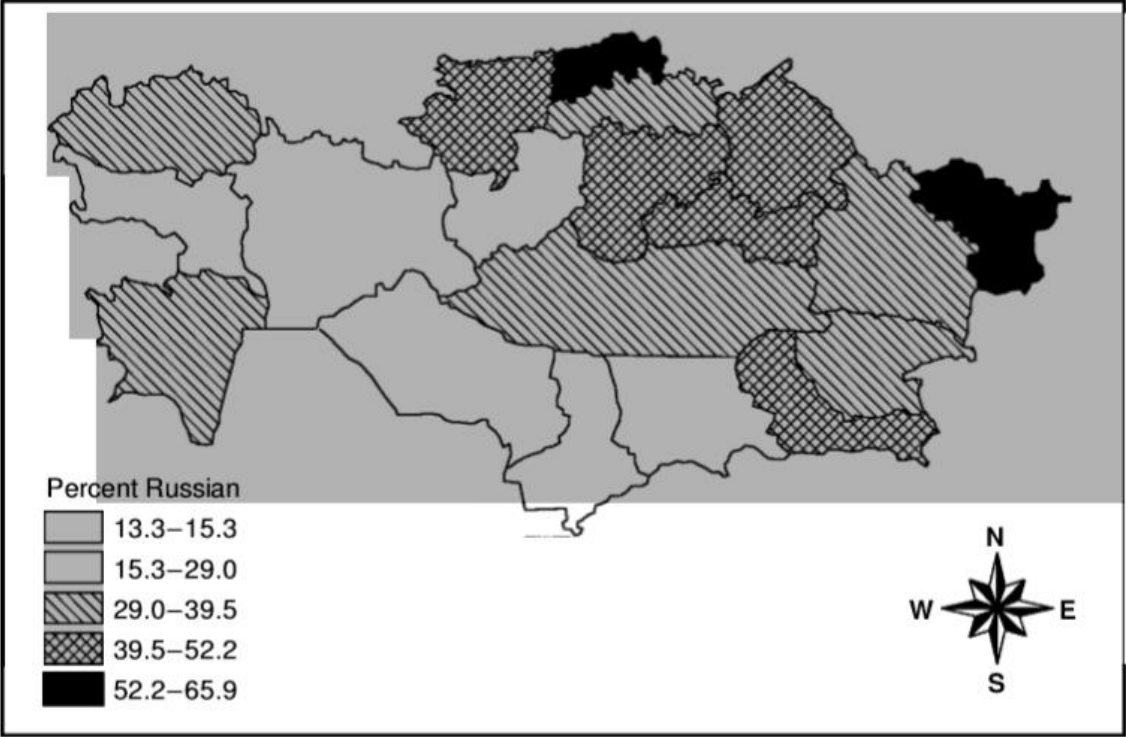


Figure B: Demographic profile of Kazakhstan in 1991 (Wolfel 2002, 491)

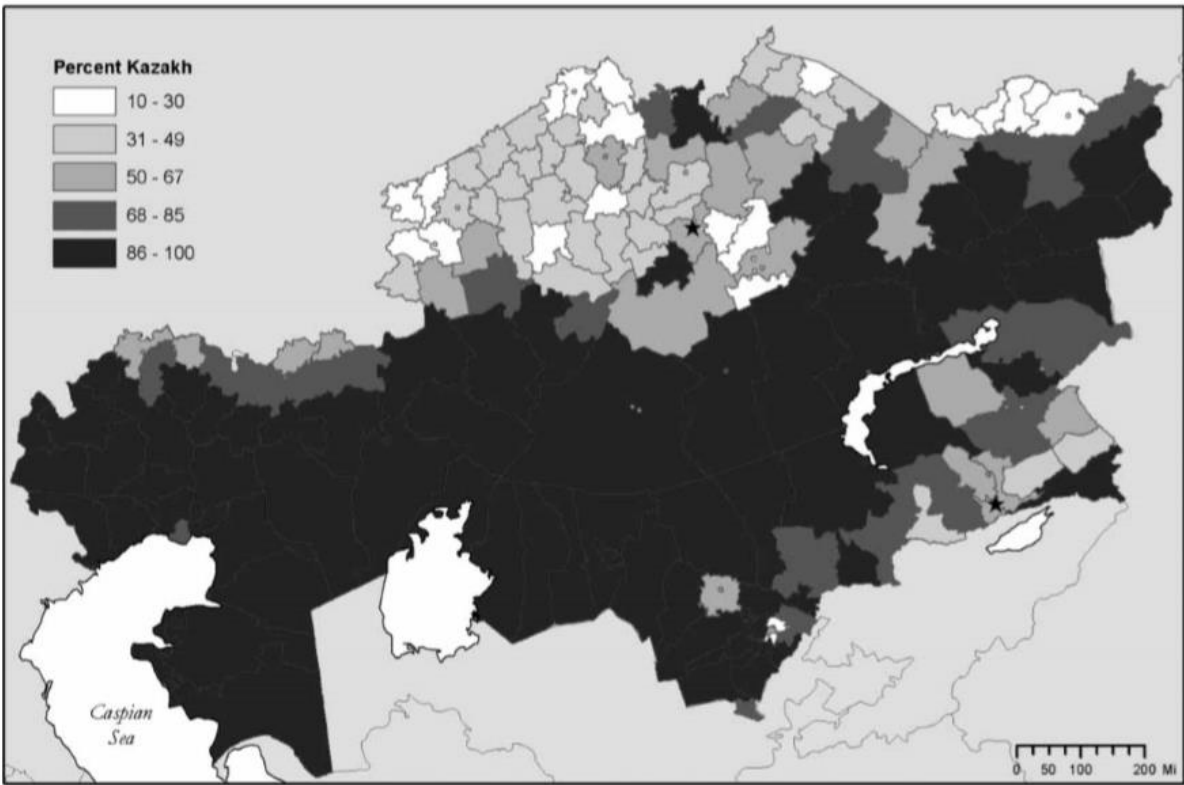


Figure C: Kazakhs as a percent of total raion population in 2009 (Koch 2014, 140)

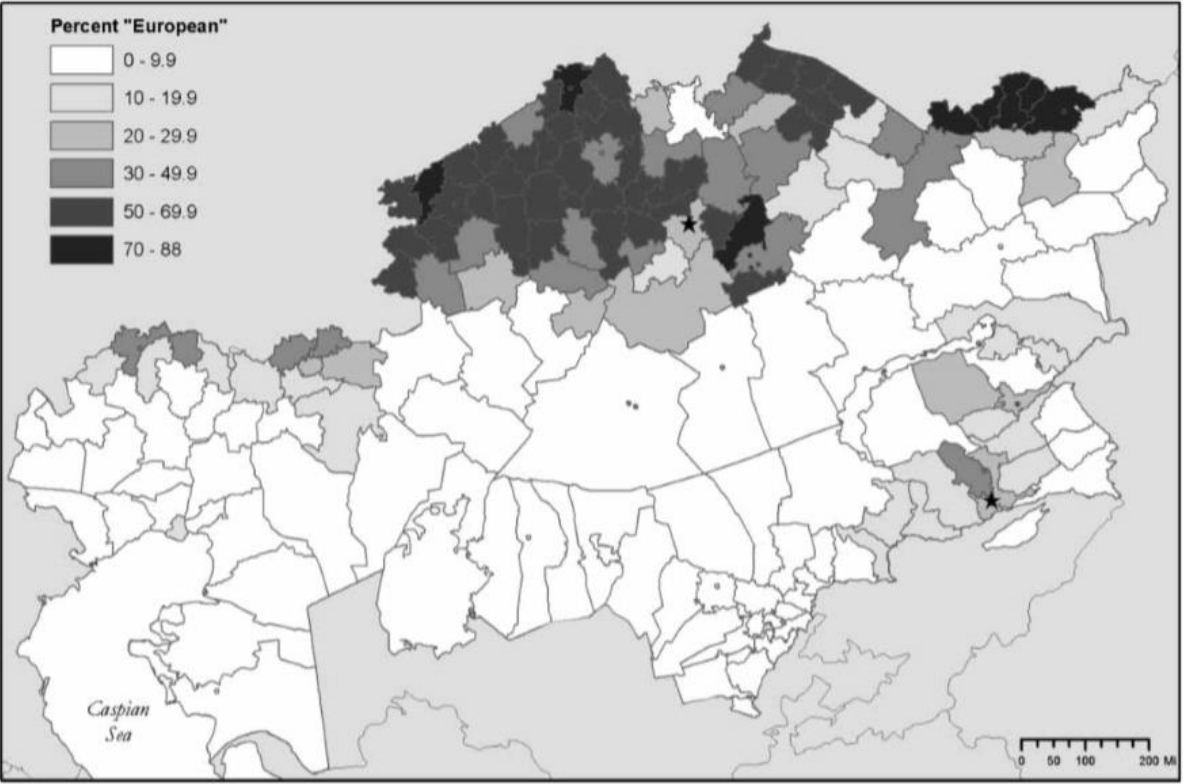


Figure D: 'Europeans' as a percent of total raion of population in 2009 (Russian, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Germans, Poles, Moldovans, Lithuanians, Greek, Italian, Bulgarian and English) (Koch 2013, 140)

Appendix II: List of the analysed Nursultan Nazarbayev's speeches

The speeches are presented in a chronological order.

Date	What	Audience
06.07.1994	Plenary session of the I session of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan of the thirteenth convocation	National
06.06.1997	IV session of the Assembly of peoples of Kazakhstan	National
20.10.1997	Joint session of the chambers of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan of the first convocation	National
10.12.1997	Joint session of the Parliament and Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, held in the new capital of Kazakhstan – Akmola	National
13.12.1997	Solemn meeting held in the new capital of Kazakhstan – Akmola on the occasion of independence Day and the announcement of Akmola as the capital of the Republic of Kazakhstan	National
31.12.1997	New year's address	National
16.01.1998	Visit to the Military Academy of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan	National
09.06.1998	V summit of the Turkic-speaking States, held in Astana	International
10.06.1998	Official presentation ceremony Astana, the new capital of Kazakhstan	International
15.12.1998	Solemn meeting on the occasion of independence Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan	National
31.12.1998	New year's address	National
06.08.1999	Occasion of the attribution of UNESCO, Astana the title "City of peace»	National
09.02.2000	Expanded meeting of the government of Kazakhstan	National
24.10.2000	Message to the people of Kazakhstan	National
11.07.2001	Meeting with domestic entrepreneurs	National
03.09.2001	Message to the people of Kazakhstan	National
16.12.2001	Solemn meeting held in the capital's Congress hall on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan	National
12.03.2002	I Congress of journalists of Kazakhstan	National
24.01.2003	Business meeting "Prospects of Kazakhstan", held in Davos, Switzerland	International
13.02.2003	International conference of peace and accord, convened in Almaty	International
04.04.2003	Message to the people of Kazakhstan	National
15.10.2003	I Civil forum of Kazakhstan	National
21.10.2003	Performance at a meeting with heads of foreign diplomatic missions, accredited in Kazakhstan	International
13.12.2003	Solemn meeting on the occasion of independence Day of Kazakhstan	National
23.12.2003	X session of the Assembly of peoples of Kazakhstan	National
06.02.2004	Solemn meeting on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the development of virgin and fallow lands of Kazakhstan	National
18.02.2005	Message to the people of Kazakhstan	National
29.09.2005	Performance at the III world Kurultai of Kazakhs	National
11.10.2005	Performance at international conferences "Strategy "Kazakhstan-2030" in action»	International
11.01.2006	Performance at the official entry ceremony as President of the Republic of Kazakhstan	International
01.03.2006	Message to the people of Kazakhstan	National

Date	What	Audience
26.05.2006	Lecture at the Eurasian National University named after L. N. Gumilev	National
12.06.2006	OSCE meeting	International
12.09.2006	II Congress of leaders of world and traditional religions	International
15.12.2006	Solemn meeting, dedicated to the 15th anniversary of independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan	National
10.06.2007	Republican youth forum of the people's democratic party "Nur Otan"	National
12.10.2007	conference dedicated to the 10th anniversary Strategy "Kazakhstan-2030»	National
02.01.2008	New year greetings of the President	National
23.10.2008	XIV session of the Assembly of people of Kazakhstan	National
15.12.2008	Solemn meeting on the occasion of independence Day	National
15.05.2009	XII extraordinary Congress The people's democratic party "Nur Otan»	National
01.07.2009	III Congress of leaders of world and traditional religions	International
05.10.2009	XVIII session of the General Assembly of the UN world tourism organization	International
15.12.2009	Solemn meeting on the occasion of independence Day	National
27.04.2010	IX Eurasian media forum	International
01.06.2010	Performance at the opening ceremony of the monument khans Kerey and Zhanibek	National
04.06.2010	XXIII plenary session of the Council of foreign investors	National
04.07.2010	Performance at the state flag raising ceremony	National
20.10.2010	XVI session of the Assembly of people of Kazakhstan	National
11.02.2011	XIII Congress of the people's democratic party "Nur Otan»	National
08.04.2011	Official entry ceremony as President of the Republic of Kazakhstan	National
18.04.2011	XVII session of the Assembly of people of Kazakhstan	National
03.05.2011	IV Astana economic forum	International
15.12.2011	Solemn meeting on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan	National
16.11.2012	The II Congress of the youth wing "Zhas Otan" of the people's democratic party "Nur Otan"	National
14.12.2012	Message to the people of Kazakhstan	National
05.09.2013	G20 Summit	International
14.12.2013	Solemn meeting on the occasion of independence Day	National
18.04.2014	XXI session of the Assembly of people of Kazakhstan	National
28.04.2014	A working visit to the Russian Federation, during which he addressed the Lomonosov Moscow state University	International
23.05.2014	VII Astana economic forum	National
29.05.2014	Signing ceremony Treaty on the Eurasian economic Union	International
15.12.2014	Solemn meeting on the occasion of independence Day	National
23.04.2015	XXI session of the Assembly of people of Kazakhstan	National
29.04.2015	Official inauguration ceremony President of Kazakhstan	National
22.05.2015	VIII Astana economic forum	International
10.06.2015	V Congress of leaders of world and traditional religions	International
11.09.2015	Solemn meeting on the occasion of the 550th anniversary of the Kazakh khanate	International
17.06.2016	XX St. Petersburg international economic forum	International
15.12.2016	Solemn meeting on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of independence	National
09.06.2017	Opening ceremony International specialized exhibition "EXPO-2017"	International
23.06.2017	V world Kurultai of Kazakhs	International

Date	What	Audience
03.07.2017	Meeting with the heads of foreign diplomatic missions	International
29.08.2017	Opening ceremony of the IAEA low enriched uranium Bank	International
10.09.2017	I summit of the Organization of Islamic cooperation science and technology	International
15.12.2017	Occasion of independence Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan	National
31.12.2017	New year's address	National

Appendix III: Coding scheme of the qualitative content analysis

Code (claim of legitimacy)	Description	Key words/phrases	Examples
Foundational myth (FM)	Phrases or sentences in which the historical relevance of the ground, on which the new capital is situated, is connected to the location's opportunities at that present day.	Историй; ... год- назад; древнегреческий; опережающие свое время; культурного достояния; археологический.	"Как видите, еще 72 года назад Акмола рассматривалась в качестве главного города Казахстана!"; "Это пространство [...] объединяющим центром религий, культур и народов."
Ideology (ID)	Phrases or sentences wherein is referred to the new capital's strengthening role of Kazakhstan's (national) ideology, which consists of the desire to build a multi-ethnic state(hood) through i.e. focusing on the country's stability and development	Нашего многонационального народа; самостоятельность; суверенитет; презентовать; государственность; общекзахстанский дом; многообразие.	"Мы презентовали всему миру нашу новую столицу – прекрасную Астану, показали возможности суверенного Казахстана."; "Построили новую столицу страны - символ нашего возрождения, воли и возможностей."
International engagement (IE)	Phrases or sentences that refer to the new capital's contributing role to Kazakhstan's claim of being, and goal of becoming, the leading regional player in Eurasia or considerations/developments which contribute to this aim.	Географический; центр; Евразия; евразийская страна; признание; находясь на пересечении; всему миру; многовекторной направленности; международные отношения; крупных транзитных перевал.	"Астана [...] продолжает свое стремительное восхождение, завоевывая большой международный авторитет и признание своим бурным ростом и уверенной поступью."; "Наше движение в центр государства есть отражение многовекторной направленности нашей внешней политики, нашего понимания интеграции."
Performance (PF)	Phrases or sentences that state the promising or already accomplished socioeconomic developments thanks to capital relocation, what would satisfy the citizen's needs.	Экономный; экономика; развитие; интенсивное производство; толчок; выгодный; общественно-политической жизни;	"Думаю, [...] уже сейчас явно ощущается ее неоспоримое влияние на все стороны жизни страны."; "Развитие столицы кроме этого дает толчок всей экономике, регионам и городам, безусловно."
Procedures (PR)	Phrases or sentences in which is shown that the decision to relocate the Kazakh capital is democratic/legitimate, a decision that reflects the will of the people.	Поддержка; принятым по воле одного или нескольких человек; объединить; решение.	"[...] заинтересованно и с разных позиций обсуждается общественностью. И, надо сказать, в целом находит поддержку."
Personalism (PS)	Phrases or sentences which highlight the significant and contributing role of the country's first president in the successes of capital relocation.	n/a	n/a

