

“China’s domestic security policy as an instrument of securitization of infrastructure projects implemented in Central Asia”

The objective of the project is a comprehensive characteristic of domestic security policies of the People’s Republic of China (China; PRC) and their employment beyond the country’s borders. Under the incumbent general secretary, Xi Jinping, unprecedentedly vast reforms have been implemented. They started in 2013 with changes within the field of security. A new body of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the Central National Security Commission, was established that year, which led to an ultimate shift of power in this field from the government, the State Council, to the CPC, as well as an integration of different types of military and security forces. Considering the fact that the issue of security is China’s prioritized field of governance, it should be subject to detailed research that should be started from a domestic perspective. The need for examining PRC’s domestic policies is repeatedly stressed by researchers, as such studies can be the means of understanding Beijing’s global strategies. Moreover, Xi Jinping’s assertive approach in the international arena suggests that the mentioned reforms are ultimately targeted at concentrating power globally. This is of great importance to PRC’s security policy, taking into consideration the ongoing tensions between the PRC and the USA, as well as the implementation of projects related to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – an unprecedentedly extensive infrastructure program that is to officially include around 70 countries worldwide. The BRI is often seen as Beijing’s manner of creating a new, sinocentric world order. The order that requires not only significant foreign policy changes, vast investments in infrastructure, but also a new **security strategy** to protect Chinese interests both domestically and abroad.

The main research problem of the project is to determine the impact of PRC’s domestic security policies on the securitization of its foreign economy projects, especially in the region of Central Asia (CA). Analogously, **the main research question** is: **What are the implications of China’s domestic security policies for its foreign economic projects, in Central Asia in particular?**

The CA region was chosen firstly because of its proximity to China. The CA countries are currently most engaged in the implementation of the BRI projects, and the outcomes shall be observed in this area first. The proximity also makes it very likely that PRC’s security concerns and agendas will be most prominently observed in this region. Secondly, the area serves as a deeply diversified cross-section, as the countries are at a different level of development and wealth.

The choice of a vast scope of research is an effect of a very careful reflection aimed at designing a holistic picture during this study. Therefore, the main research question is complemented by five **subquestions**:

1. What are the major security policies and projects designed by particular institutions that are responsible for maintaining the stability of the Party rule?
2. In what ways the policies considering domestic political security are related to the other areas of security?
3. In what manner does China employ, or might employ in the future, its security policies in Central Asia in order to securitize its interests and projects?
4. What impact does the employment of China’s domestic security policies in Central Asia have on the country’s political and economic interests in the region?
5. To what extent China’s security policies correspond to the assumptions of the Copenhagen School of security studies?

The **methodology** involves a vast review and analysis of written sources, as well as conducting semi-structured qualitative interviews with experts specializing in the field of China’s security policies, the BRI, and China-Central Asia relations. The interviews shall be first conducted in China and Kazakhstan. The outcomes of the research shall be later discussed with Western experts in the U.S. The review and analysis of written material shall include original Chinese-, Russian- and English-language sources, such as laws, politicians’ official statements, press releases, and other government and Party publications, available on-line. Archive sources and existing scientific literature will be examined during the three research trips, as not all of the sources needed for the purpose of the research are available in Poland.

The realization of the project shall comprise **an important contribution to research fields** such as security and international relations and will allow for delivering specific results in a form of scientific articles that are to be published in reputable English scientific journals from the Scopus and Web of Science.