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Каким образом усиление народных связей и углубление сотрудничества в гуманитарной сфере может повлиять на реализацию проекта «Один пояс – один путь» в среднеазиатском регионе?

В 2013 году китайский лидер Си Цзиньпин во время своего официального визита в Казахстан выдвинул новый проект «Один пояс – один путь». Китайская инициатива «Один пояс – один путь» выделяет пять основных направлений. Основная цель этой статьи – анализ идеи пятой задачи, то есть усиление народных связей и углубление сотрудничества в гуманитарной сфере, которая является неотъемлемой частью стратегии. Очень важно раскрыть, каким образом усиление народных связей и углубление сотрудничества в гуманитарной сфере может повлиять на реализацию и осуществление проекта «Один пояс – один путь» в среднеазиатском регионе. Концепция Новый Шелковый Путь на основе взаимогодной стратегии в рамках инициативы «Один пояс – один путь» нацелена усилить периферийную дипломатию и создать различные многосторонние отношения. В этом контексте, распознавая значение мягкой силы, Китай старается расширить свое влияние через всю Среднюю Азию для усиления народных связей. В связи с этим, в статье тщательно анализируется, каким образом Китай стремится усилить и укрепить развитие в культурной, образовательной, научно-технологической сферах, а также человеческого потенциала.

Ключевые слова: «Один пояс – один путь», усиление народных связей углубление, сотрудничества в гуманитарной сфере, периферийная дипломатия, многосторонние отношения, мягкая сила.

Introduction

China's new foreign policy comprises innovative ideas about how the People's Republic of China could establish itself as a preeminent power in the Asian region for the long term (Callahan, 2016).

In September 2013, President Xi Jinping officially proclaimed China's 'One Belt One Road' project (OBOR) that caused many discussions among international relations scholars. Major General Ji Mingkui (professor at China's National Defense University) emphasized the role of the OBOR against terrorism problems and for further development of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in the context of security. Consequently, in 2014 the SCO decided to create the Silk Road Economic Belt security building (Fallon, 2015). Overall, the main objectives of this initiative are aimed at reinforcing policy communication, trade, monetary collaboration, people to people relations (Wang, 2016). Callahan (2016, p.226) states that in theoretical terms, the new initiative is not simply about connectivity in terms of the «hardware» issue of physical infrastructure, but is an issue of «software» which concerns the connectivity of ideas, cultural and educational institutions, human resources, heritage politics, migration and diplomacy itself.

In this article, the focus is on the fifth point of the Belt Road Initiative: strengthening 'the

people to people' concept (Szcudlic-tatar, 2013:3) that focuses on cultural, educational relations, social stability and heritage diplomacy covering tourism, student exchange and academic expertise, technological investment, and science and human resources capacity. As a new, extensive project, this initiative provides grounds for research. Winter's (2016b, 2016a) papers argue that people-to-people relations has not received much attention from scholars and experts. Similarly, Brzezinski and Mearsheimer (2005 cited in, Gill and Huang 2006) argue that all the analysis and debates relating to the rise of China have been dedicated to the military and economic sphere of its growing power. Winter (2016a) thinks that international experts discussing the OBOR's infrastructure part, omit the analytical part of the initiative such as culture, history and ideas. This is a considerable oversight, and by analyzing the importance of the 'people to people relations' within the framework of OBOR policy in Central Asia, this gap in the literature will be filled.

Methodology and theoretical approach

Methodology throughout this article will introduce the fifth pillar of the OBOR initiative 'people-to-people relations', and will fit its areas into a theoretical framework. The OBOR and its main objectives will be situated in the framework of

the national security and geopolitical strategy. Then, the role of people-to-people initiatives within this article will be identified. The theoretical approach employs concepts such as peripheral diplomacy and multilateralism within the OBOR initiative. The research will be based on official and unofficial materials which will identify connections between ideas, institutions and behaviour in Chinese foreign affairs.

In order to explain these concepts in a more detailed way, materials will be used from Callahan (2016), Kaszmarski (2015), Hoo (2017), Swaine (2016) and Niquet (2006). It is often argued that the Chinese government is combining new methods and ideas referred to as the «Chinese Dream» (Jonhnsn, 2016, p.14). New policies such as comprehensive diplomacy and security, the new institution of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and, most importantly, the OBOR, aim to construct a «community of shared destiny» (Callahan, 2016:226). It will be argued that cross-border interactions could produce political uncertainty regarding corruption and infrastructure obstacles, especially in developing countries. Although financial aid will be supplemented through the AIIB, capital cannot ultimately guarantee social stability and security in the region.

In addition, other mechanisms cannot control public opinion. Moreover, developing countries such as Central Asia are politically and economically vulnerable countries. In this instance, it will be argued that countries along the OBOR have to work very thoroughly and consciously to overcome such risks and create well-managed mechanisms of trust. Furthermore, it will be argued that China, apart from the security problem in Xinjiang, aims to create economic prosperity through the OBOR and reduce ethnic tension in the region. While the OBOR is an international project, China's key interest is in the western frontier that also will be discussed within the framework of SCO. Taken together, peaceful periphery nations would signify prosperity for China. Therefore, PRC has to cooperate with its peripheral nations and deepen people to people interactions to implement its goals.

Furthermore, the examples of people-to-people exchanges focusing on culture, education, science, technology and human resources will be contextualized. As a theoretical model the Nye's (1990) concept of 'soft power' will be used to discuss these aspects of initiative as a part of Chinese attempts to reinforce its foreign policy among Central Asian countries within the OBOR strategy.

It is important to estimate the success of the OBOR through soft power diplomacy.

Currently academic research on cultural relations along the New Silk Road countries is not numerous. However, Weiqing Song's «China's approach to Central Asia» (2016) will be used that illustrates China's role in cultural and educational cooperation in Central Asian region. Then, newspaper magazines and official websites in the English, Russian and Kazakh languages will be used («The Diplomat», Ministry Foreign Affairs, BBC and CGTN).

This study used the qualitative data approach in its discursive analysis, as well as the epistemological approach. The documents referred to will not be limited to ones written in the English language; official documents written in the Kazakh and Russian languages were also be taken into account.

Discussion

In terms of the geopolitical perspective, almost all non-authoritative Chinese sources (Li and Yanzhuo) agree that the OBOR Initiative is a new strategy that aims to uphold the global effort made by Xi Jinping to reinforce and strengthen the peripheral diplomacy of Beijing and build a new type of multilateral relations based on win-win cooperation in international politics (Swaine, 2016). Furthermore, Xi Jinping needed and wanted to have a policy initiative to engage with Central Asian countries. In practical terms, Central Asian countries are aware that China is seeking to establish a commercial as well as a political relationship within this collaboration. Additionally, Johnson (2016, p.17) suggests that the government's «going out strategy» goes beyond its political objective, to encourage the Chinese to collaborate and find new investment opportunities in Central Asia. Thus, China will provide the requisite financial support to implement initiative.

However, Kaczmariski, (2015) claims that critics suggest that the Silk Road is more about politics than efficiency because the concept of the OBOR is established as an important tool with geostrategic ramifications in the foreign policy of China. In that context, Callahan (2016) argues that the New Silk Road aims to leverage the PRC's economic power to decide political, security, and economic problems in domestic and foreign affairs. From China's view the OBOR helped the 13th Five Year Plan of the PRC to enhance economic development in the region (Xi, 2013 cited in Callahan, 2016). It is also help to eradicate security problems in Xinjiang, and simultaneously seek to harness

economic collaboration to eliminate political, as well as economic tensions with Central Asian neighbour countries. According to Callahan (2016), the aim of the PRC's aim is to pull its neighbouring countries in a Sinocentric direction which covers economic, political, cultural and security relations. The grand strategy of China is to redirect the new world order and combine it with new governance ideas, norms and rules (ibid, 2016). Similarly, Zhou, Hallding and Han (2015) argue that China intends to institutionalize the *yuan*, create an alternative choice in the international financial system, and change its regional security and regional political setting. By pursuing these aims, OBOR could very significantly increase China's geopolitical clout, as well as regional influence.

Fallon's (2015) and Zimmerman's (2015) papers considers that SREB represents domestic purposes. Therefore, Chinese policymakers see it as an advantage to develop the less progressed western and central parts of the PRC. Swaine (2016) further argues economic development in western and central frontier will help to eradicate Islamic extremism and stimulate security both within China and in Central Asia. Hoo (2017) considers that instability in Xinjiang and Central Asia will be an obstacle for the OBOR's success. For further deep analysis the papers of Gill and Huang (2006) and Finaley and Zang, (2015) will be used to explain how the OBOR will promote economic and security relations between western frontiers and Central Asian neighbor countries. As well as the role of SCO within the framework of the OBOR will be emphasized.

By indicating above activities it is considered that security in the region is one of the primary objectives of peripheral diplomacy along the New Silk Road. However, Beijing believes that one of the most important components of people to people relations is that cultural and educational exchange is essential supplement to security and economic partnership, thereby essential supplement of multilateral relations between Central Asian countries. In this context, the Chinese government is facilitating youth educational and cultural exchanges under the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) framework that will ensure that more than 30,000 government scholarships will be made available to youths in SCO member states over ten years (Xi Jinping, 2013). Furthermore, China will invite 10,000 teachers and students from Confucius Institutes in the SCO member states to come to China for educational and scientific purposes (ibid, 2013). According to Winter (2016a) China has

invested about \$40 billion in the Silk Road Project. How much of this sum will be allocated to culture and people is still not clear.

Sadovskaya's (2007) paper goes into one of the main issues of concern of the 'Belt Road Initiative' – the lack of specialists in the region. This is one of the reasons why educational exchanges need to be set up between China and Central Asian countries to implement the concept of the OBOR. As a primary step, at the ninth International Education Exhibition in Shanghai, the «Center for International Programs» of Kazakhstan introduced a new development project of the International Presidential Scholarship «Bolashak». As the organisers declared, in the sphere of education, this exhibition was one of the most important and largest events in China. This event brought together 90 best universities and educational institutions from 28 countries to demonstrate their achievements and introduce and discuss new directions in international educational cooperation (inform.kz, 2013).

OBOR and the New Silk Road

As part of its global attempt to reinforce societal development and wield soft power, China has been encouraging and promoting cultural, educational and heritage programs with Central Asian countries (Zhiqun, 2013). Therefore, China's policies are now evolving beyond trade, industry and economic components because the humanitarian sphere, education, science, and culture all need to be encouraged.

Szczudlik-tatar (2013) and Niquet (2006) claim that the New Silk Road is not a new idea, but rather has been evolving since the 1990s. It has always been related to issues concerning the extension and control of the country's territory, as well as territorial security. However, Hu's visit to Central Asian countries in 2005 is important in this context because it promoted cooperation in the spheres of culture, disaster relief, education, journalism, heritage diplomacy, tourism, and building human resource capacities (Sun, 2007).

On September 7, 2013 Xi Jinping declared the New Silk Road concept in Astana, the capital city of Kazakhstan (Fallon, 2015). The definition of the New Silk Road stresses the «historic and cultural heritage shared by all countries around the world... Jointly building the Belt and Road is in the interests of the world community. Reflecting the common ideals and pursuit of human societies, it is positive endeavour to seek new models of international cooperation and global governance, and will inject new positive energy into world peace and development» (Visions and Actions on Jointly Building the Silk Road

Economic Belt and 21st- century Maritime Silk Road, 2015 cited in Fallon, 2015, p.141). The idea behind creating the New Silk Road project has gained enormous attention across the media and expert fields, and can be coined as a slogan: «One Belt and One Road» (OBOR) (Kaczmarek, 2015, p.1) According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China, Xi Jinping (2013) announced five important pillars: policy communication, road and transport connectivity, unimpeded trade, monetary circulation, and understanding between people. China's grand strategy of mutual economic development involves more than 60 countries, and the New Silk Road Concept has become the key tool in Chinese foreign affairs. In October of 2013, President Xi Jinping announced another significant project aimed for the 21st century of the Maritime Silk Road to develop maritime partnership and trade. While OBOR includes many more countries than Central Asia, the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) reflects the desire of Xi Jinping to construct and expand the Chinese approach within the Central Asian region: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (Hoo, 2017). Before establishing the initiative, the Chinese political elite discussed the significance of Eurasia, and historical recognition has been implemented. «China Dream» was discussed in 2012 before Xi Jinping made his official speech (Anonymous, 2014 cited in Callahan, 2016). In that context, the Premier of CCP, Wen Jiabao, pronounced that Central Asia is now one of the most important areas for investment and consumption. Consequently, he stressed the need to deepen and consolidate the culture and people-to-people interconnections (Jiabao, 2012 cited in Hoo, 2017). A highly influential Chinese scholar, Wang Jisi (Dean of the School of International Studies at Peking University), put forward the idea of the resurgence of the Silk Road, especially through the Central Asian countries, which was followed by tour by the Chinese leader, Xi Jinping (China analysis Belt Road, 2016 cited in Hoo, 2017). In terms of space, president Xi (2013) has said that his hometown, Shaanxi province, should be the starting point of the New Silk Road, which therefore has broad capital coverage.

People to people interrelation

By highlighting cultural awareness among the people, Xi Jinping (2013) has declared that one of the most important factors in implementing the OBOR is «to increase understanding between our people. Amity between the people holds the key to good relations between states. To have productive cooperation in the above-mentioned areas, we need

the support of our people. We should encourage more friendly exchanges between our people to enhance mutual understanding and traditional friendship and build strong public support and a solid social foundation for regional cooperation».

Niquet (2006, p.3) suggests that this strategy is based on a new concept of security which focuses on promotion of «trust, equality, mutual benefits and co-ordination». Similarly, Callahan (2016) explains that Chinese leaders and academics consider the problem to lie in regional security architecture. The security architecture in Asia was constructed through bilateral security negotiations between the United States and its allied countries. In 2014, China in CICA Xi Jinping (2014a cited in Callahan, 2016, p.232) criticized such kind an alliance system by suggesting a 'New Asian Security Concept'. Similarly, Kaczmarek (2015) argues that a special Xinhua news agency has created a website, and the Chinese government promotes the slogan such as Marshall Plan in a Chinese way. «The concept is kind of 'packaging' for China's economic expansion, lending it an attractive form» (Kaczmarek, 2015, p.3). Introducing this expansion as a tool of multilateral partnership is important and beneficial for China and its contributors. This kind of partnership will reduce concerns in countries which could be the object of Chinese soft power. For all countries along the route, it is important they support comprehensive, collaborative, sustainable and common security that was constructed on win-win strategy to all (Callahan, 2016 and Kaczmarek, 2015). In this case, the New Silk Road concept should negate the negative perception which has been noticed because of Chinese assertiveness with respect to territorial disputes in South China Sea.

According to Song (2016) multilateral diplomacy has become the new focus of Chinese foreign policy. Beijing is more used to bilateral diplomacy, and tends to be suspicious of multilateral organizations, which were perceived as a Western control over other countries. Through cooperation with outside, China has gradually come to consider that its national interests are interlaced with other countries in an interdependent manner. First, the PRC understands that a stable and manageable environment is important for its national development. Second, China realizes that to protect overseas interests, external collaboration is needed. Multilateralism is beneficial for countries responding to a common challenge and requirements. Chinese strategy towards multilateralism is demonstrated by its involvement with the World Trade Organization in 2001, which is crucial for economic development. In

addition, the Chinese Communist Party's 18th Plenary Committee reported that multilateral relations such as the United Nations, the Group of Twenty (G20) and the SCO are priorities for government to make the world amenable and just. In terms of SCO this is self-apparent; it is Chinese experience in a leadership position within multilateral diplomacy. China has never used its leading role in multilateral organization. In this context, the Central Asian region enables China to practice with the role of multilateral leadership.

From the geopolitical perspective, China has interests towards Central Asia for various reasons. First, China's motivation to expand its impact in Central Asia is one of protecting its own borders. A strong collaboration with Central Asia will provide counter balance regarding external power, and avoid encirclement. China is rich in natural reserves, export of goods and serves the role of a transit route in the region (Song, 2016). In this context, the PRC relies on maritime routes, but some of these are out of China's control or unstable. Central Asia is an alternative for China. Moreover, geographic proximity plays an important role, especially in the western province Xinjiang. Finally, the most important of China's desires is to enhance its cultural, educational, and heritage politics in the region, including other types of soft power (ibid. 2016).

Chinese analyst Wang Jisi (2012 cited in Song, 2016, p.3) launched a strategy «Go West, that promotes Chinese assertive approach towards western frontier.» He argues that, today, China has to change its direction to the northwest because of constrains in the southeast and opportunities in Central Asian region. In that context, stability in Xinjiang is one of the concerns surrounding the security of the PRC, and it constitutes one of the primary factors determining China's policy towards Central Asia (Niquet, 2006). The problems of economic development and political control still exist. In addition, Niquet (2006) declared that Xinjiang has significantly difference to the Han Chinese origin, and indigenous people are close to the population in Central Asia, both culturally and ethnically. This could be explained because of government policies that enable Han Chinese to migrate to minority areas. According to Zhongguo Minzu Tongji Nianjian, (2000 cited in Clothey, 2005, p.406) in 1953, Xinjiang had only 7% of the Han Chinese population, with 93% of the ethnic minorities. However, in 2002, the Han Chinese increased to 40%, whilst the remaining 60% was other different ethnic minorities (Zhongguo Minzu

Tongji Nianjian, 2003 cited in Clothey, 2005, p.406). As a result, it causes ethnic consciousness among Uighurs as a threat to their identity (Finley and Zang, 2015). Beijing realizes that control of Xinjiang entails control of the periphery and of cross-border contacts. Thus, the central authority of China insisted on good relations with the new Central Asian republics to prevent any ethnic conflicts on its western frontier (Kellner, 2004 cited in Niquet, 2006).

The Chinese government believes that during the cooperation, people will gradually come to understand the difference between China's opening up policy and so-called neo-colonialism. Li Peilin (Closer to China: 'One Belt One Road' II, 2015) alleges that China does not seek a way to impose its values and culture on anyone else. Furthermore, the PRC does not pretend that its values are universal, and does not consider that its values are necessarily suitable for other countries in the world (ibid, 2015).

Cultural exchanges

The Belt and Road Initiative covers a wide range of fields, including culture, education, science, technology and human resources which are some of the main aspects of OBOR's international politics. In Chinese, they are called *Renwen*, which means humanities collaboration (Song, 2016). Song (2016) claims that education, culture, science, technology and human resources are a natural consequence of the cooperation. Xiong Chengyu (Dean, Communication Studies, Tsinghua University) declared that the OBOR, on the whole, is not only an economic act, but also a cultural act (Closer to China: 'One Belt One Road' II, 2017). When president Xi Jinping stated the New Silk Road Initiative, he mentioned five areas of connectivity in particular. Developing the understanding between people is one of them; however, the most crucial is cultural connectivity. The New Silk Road aimed to link China with Central Asia, and go even further to Europe. In that context, cultural connection is important because of the different understandings of culture amongst the different people. In that case, China is motivated to increase its soft power through proposing cultural and educational spheres.

The term 'soft power' presented by Nye (1990) received considerable attention from scholars and the general public. According to Nye (1990, p.167) soft power, or what could be called co-optive power, is as crucial as a hard power in some aspects:

If a state can make its power seem legitimate in the eyes of others, it will encounter less resistance to its wishes. If its culture and ideology are attractive, others will more willingly follow. If it can establish

international norms consistent with its society, it is less likely to have to change.

Power symbolically was determined as a result of practicing one's influence through enforcement. In other words, power is perceived as having a materialistic definition. The concept of soft power changed this traditional thinking of power. Hard power, which is based on tangible areas such as economy and military, is well presented in international relations. However, it is also important if soft power influences the public, and creates behavioural outcomes. In this context, many states have to win people's «hearts and minds» (Nye, 2004, cited in Lee, 2015, p.355).

Some scholars call into doubt the term 'soft power', whereas others establish it as an analytical framework. Nevertheless, McClory (2013, cited in Song, 2016) suggested five indices to demonstrate the influence of soft power on states: government, diplomacy, culture, education and innovation. This ranking derived was from three aspects given by Nye (2008) high and popular cultural connection, political influence, and ideology, and legitimate foreign policy. In 2007, Hu Jintao, at the 17th National congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) declared that the government must «enhance culture as part of soft power of our country to better guarantee the people's basic cultural rights and interests» (Rosecrance and Guoliang, 2009, p.20).

According to Song (2016), in 2009, China declared that it was planning to distribute about 7 billion annually for Chinese media activities to enhance the image of the country at the global level.

Educational exchange, science, technology and human resources

Above, Nye (2008) mentioned three aspects of soft power, namely culture, political influence and foreign policy. Culture itself is a comprehensive set of practices that produce important meanings for people, and it has different manifestations. Nye differentiated culture into two forms: high culture (education, literature) and popular culture (mass entertainment) (ibid.). Lee (2015) sees higher education as a manifestation of culture and political influences that has immense potential to produce soft power for a country. However, interaction between education and international relations has lacked in attention. Therefore, for China, educational exchange is an important aspect of enhancing mutual understanding between peoples of different states as it will reinforce person-to-person exchange. In the contemporary world, soft power in education is apparent through the impact of the Chinese Confucius Institutes (CI) (Lee, 2015). In

this context, Chinese CIs represent the practice of the internationalization of education, particularly cross-border studies.

Song (2016) explains that the Chinese education system is significantly different from that in Central Asia. Central Asian countries follow the Russian educational system, as a legacy of the Soviet model. For example, Long (2017a) argues that the Chinese language is still not a priority for Tajik students. Although the influence of the Russian language has decreased considerably since Tajikistan became an independent country, students still are likely to choose to learn English and Russian languages as their first choices (ibid.). Moreover, he emphasized that the influence of Western countries is apparent in the region. Particularly, Zhang (2009 cited in Song, 2016) points out Western values, such as human rights and democracy, have affected young people of the region significantly. In other words, the success of the China's cultural and educational expansion depends on its efficiency in cooperation with rival countries in the region (Song, 2016). In this context, the role of Confucius Institutes plays major role in China's attempts to enhance its soft power diplomacy.

According to Maitra (2016), Tashkent, the capital city of Uzbekistan, has been the centre of Chinese studies in Central Asia since 1957, especially for learning Mandarin. The Confucius Institute is not only the first in Tashkent and Samarkand, but also in the whole of Central Asia. The Chinese government supports the Confucius Institute in its efforts to encourage cultural and educational interconnections (Wong, 2017). The interesting fact here is that there is some considerable interest in teaching the Uzbek language in China. Minzu University of China, and the Beijing Foreign Studies University provide the teaching of Uzbek. The Chinese language is also very popular in Uzbekistan (Uzbekistan-China: new stage of cooperation – comprehensive strategic partnership, 2016).

According to Vaswani (2017), despite the controversial perception of the people in Kazakhstan, China makes an important impact in the region. She visited a Chinese language school in Almaty where many Kazakh people with different background and ages are learning the language. Nurzhan Baitemirov (chief executive of the east west Education group) has his own language school. He started with just one school in Almaty, and today runs about 17 across the country (ibid, 2017). According to his opinion, many people know English and Russian, but not Chinese. If a person knows Chinese it is easier for them to get a job, because Chinese is considered

(and is) as global language. It is apparent to the Kazakh people that the relationship between China and Kazakhstan is unlikely to change, therefore the influence of Chinese language expected to progress there (ibid, 2017). Some Kazakh people think that Chinese culture and language will help Kazakhstan develop into a more sophisticated and stronger economy.

According to the Centre of International Program Bolashak (CIP), the Chinese government offered about 55 scholarships to Kazakh citizens in 2017 (CIP, 2017). In 2016, about 14,000 Kazakh students were studying in China. Moreover, Xi Jinping stated that five CIs established, and four Kazakh research centres were opened in Chinese universities (Altynorda.kz., 2017).

In September 2014, Peter Nolan, as a director of Development Studies at the University of Cambridge, delivered a speech in the capital city Beijing (Zhendong, 2014). Zhendong (2014) said that the economist believes that technology infrastructure and exchange of specialists are very important to countries in the Central Asia region, therefore it is believed that OBOR will expand and develop an international political economy and articulate people-to-people interactions.

It is worth mentioning the role of the textile industry in Sino-Turkmen relations. This cooperation raises concerns in specific fields such as sericulture, which is silk farming. Both countries assure that they have their own thousand-year history of silk production through Silk Road history. Besides, Ashkhabad argues that Beijing's position is to act as a main supplier of technological and mechanical devices for the implementation and modernization of the textile industry in Turkmenistan. Beijing, for its part, continues importing silk cocoons, raw cotton and the production of cotton. Despite these controversies, China supplies silk production factories of Ashkhabad with new facilities. Further, this has included the contract to establish a new plant for the production of velvet and silk thread (Netral'nyi Turkmenistan, 2005 cited in Sir and Horak, 2008). While China and Turkmenistan have been contributing in specific fields, some unreliable Turkmen statistics declared that China depends on its relationship with Turkmenistan in terms of its silk industry. However, China receives huge support from the Chinese political leadership, which is considered a considerable advantage in building cooperation with Central Asian countries.

In October 2016, China's Huawei Seeds for the Future program was established in Tajikistan (Huawei, 2017). About 10 students from Tajikistan

were sent to China for more than two-weeks' training. Students recognized Chinese culture, but simultaneously visited the laboratory of Huawei HQ company to learn more about ICT technology. The program Seeds for the Future encourages young students to learn more about ICT technology at an advanced level, and to develop and be involved in the enterprise culture of the Chinese company Huawei. In this case, the government of Tajikistan intends to continue to cooperate with Huawei Company, and additionally with the Ministry of Education of China, China's Ministry of Science and Technology, will establish other programs for future generations and common prosperity (Sir and Horak, 2008). Compared to Tajikistan, the realization of modern technology in Turkmenistan is problematic. However, Turkmenistan concluded a contract with Huawei's technologies of China to develop a national telecommunication networks in 2005 (Netral'nyi Turkmenistan, 2005 cited in Sir and Horak, 2008).

Chinese companies such as Tebian Electric Apparatus StockCo., Ltd., for its part, are planning to construct a number of projects such as Saikhun first contemporary city and «China Town» in Tajikistan (Azernews and Khovar Information Agency (n.d.) cited in Colarizi, 2015). This project will help to decrease the number of Tajikistan migrants working abroad and the national dependence on remittances. However, human resources studies revealed that Chinese projects see very little technical assistance. Companies usually supplement the workforce with their own specialists and workers, while workers from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan are migrating to other countries.

According to Sadovskaya (2007), the huge emigration in 1990 caused a negative demographic influence on labour market of Kazakhstan. Over 3 million people, 45% of them of working age, had university degrees and certificate. As a result of this emigration or brain drain policy, the country has suffered from a lack of human resources in spheres such as education, culture, healthcare and industry (Sadovskaya, 2005 cited in Sadovskaya 2007). Between 2000-2006, the number of qualified and highly experienced professionals has increased. If the economic situation continues to improve in Kazakhstan and other Central Asian countries, a larger workforce will be needed. However, Chinese migration and unregistered businesses in Kazakhstan have increased concern amongst Kazakh people about Sinocization. Nevertheless, Chinese migration means not only Han Chinese, but also Uighur and ethnic Kazakh. So far Chinese migration can be

considered as temporary settlement, rather than anything permanent. Some experts have pointed out that it is easier for Chinese people to start up their business and return home to expand it, or move to Europe, Canada or US because Chinese businesses prefer to employ Han Chinese.

Conclusion

Analysis of the above cooperation indicates that China differs in its investment and has strong incentive to implement cultural, and educational relations in cooperation with Central Asia. China believes that people-to-people relations in education, culture, science and technology prevent the entry of Western values and ideologies into region. However, this process is impeded first of all by a lack of Chinese openness, migration problems, a lack of specialists in particular spheres, and inadequate cooperation between these fields. Therefore, some form of breakthrough thinking is demanded of scholars to understand the changes of Chinese politics from isolation to openness. The success of Beijing's effort in OBOR depends on soft power resources, which could be achieved through effective mutual cooperation.

Central Asia is strategically important for the initiative for following reasons. First, the PRC and Central Asia share borders and have common political, cultural and economic connections. Particularly, significant parts of the Uyghur Autonomous Region Xinjiang culturally and religiously is closer to the Central Asian countries. Furthermore, Central Asian resources are important for China, and the third one is geographic proximity of the region through, which China is willing to enhance cross cultural relations. However, political instability of Central Asia restricts to some extent

its ability to enhance cooperation with China. In this case, recent decades demonstrate efforts of China and Central Asia to improve their relationship, and work against potential threats within the framework of the SCO. Within this multilateral institution, China strives to wipe out the terrorism and eradicate ethnic consciousness in the western frontier.

Then, it was considered how PRC uses multilateral diplomacy to alleviate the concerns of Central Asian countries about China's rise to consolidate their cooperation and promote a win-win strategy. Although the OBOR focuses on economic cooperation over security issues, to gain economic prosperity, a mutual understanding between people is needed. Investment and infrastructure cannot provide stability in the region and promote national unity as people-to-people relations do. Moreover, the OBOR could accomplish more activities than just propel the development in the western frontier. Overall, it is observed that the natural process of this strategy means that China, by promoting both geostrategic collaboration and own economic prosperity project, will eventually move from just economic relations to create a cultural as well as security cooperation.

It is worth mentioning that areas of the people-to-people interactions such as, cultural and educational exchange, science, technology and the human resources are relatively new and need to be further developed. It was argued that China's efforts to establish cultural relations, educational collaboration, and the promotion of science and technology is related to the soft power diplomacy of the state. Cultural, educational cooperation and other soft sources are important tools for encouraging mutual understanding between peoples of different countries and contribute to the strengthen of person to person interaction.

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