

**ABSTRACT**

Kazakhstan is a country located in Central Asia that has a close and cordial relationship with Russia. However, Kazakhstan decided to abstain during the Resolution S/2018/355 proposed by Russia in UNSC. Therefore, the research question proposed by this study is as to why beside the close and cordial relationship between Kazakhstan and Russia, did the former chose to abstain on UNSC S/2018/355 which dealt with the issue of Syria? In order to answer the proposed research question, this author utilizes three main theoretical frameworks. Firstly, neoclassical realism to address the importance of elite perception and international system in explaining Kazakhstan's Syria policy. Secondly, the formation and influence of elite perception. Lastly, the role of international system in shaping the elite perception and its influence in Kazakhstan's foreign policy towards Syria. The author argues that Kazakhstan's decision to abstain in Resolution S/2018/355 is heavily influenced by the elite perception and the ongoing dynamics in the international system. This thesis discovers three main findings. First, Kazakhstan's elite perception towards Syria is influenced by its history and geographical proximity. Second, Russia and the West's interference happens amidst the uncertainty of international system after the Annexation of Crimea. Third, the uncertainty is accompanied by elite perception of its limited national capabilities compared to other great powers in the conflict which leads Kazakhstan to play it safe.

*Keywords: Kazakhstan, Foreign Policy, Elite Perception, International System, Resolution S/2018/355*