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**THE ROLE OF
KAZAKHSTANI HEIS AND
INTERNATIONAL
ACADEMIC PUBLISHING IN
KAZAKHSTAN'S POST-
SOVIET NATION-BUILDING**

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ABSTRACT

AIKERIM BEKTEMIROVA (KARGAZHANOVA)

The role of Kazakhstani HEIs and international academic publishing in Kazakhstan's post-Soviet national-building

My PhD thesis examines the post-Soviet nation-building of Kazakhstan through the lens of higher education. Kazakhstan presents an interesting case of a post-Soviet transitional country that encounters challenges in the process of transition from communism and state socialism toward democracy and market economy. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the independence in 1991 have significantly changed not only the economic and political landscape of Kazakhstan. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, the thesis is particularly interested in the ideational transformation interrelating these different dimensions with a view to ensuring the legitimacy of the new government guiding the nation in the new era.

Drawing on Foucault, Bourdieu, as well as Poulantzas, the thesis further develops Gramsci's notion of a system of intellectuals to shed light on the role of higher education institutions (HEIs) in establishing hegemony. This perspective foregrounds the contestations that inform the ways HEIs create, curate, and disseminate knowledge. These contestations continually play out between the evolving ideas of and perspectives on social reality, on the one hand, and the experiences of being involved or being excluded from the creation and curation of relevant knowledge, on the other.

The state policy of 2011 on research productivity (Kuzhabekova, 2017, p.121) serves as a point of departure for exploring this role of HEIs. The adopted policy is aimed at increasing the research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs by introducing a requirement for faculty members to publish in journals with a nonzero impact factor in order to qualify for promotion (Kuzhabekova & Ruby, 2018, p.266). The study situates this important HE policy reform in the broader context of the post-Soviet transformation and the attempt of the Kazakhstani government to re-position the country in a globalised world where English has become the lingua franca. Interviews with faculty members of different universities shed light on how this new publication policy impacts the relationship between the different HEIs as well as between the different generations of academics. It identifies important changes in how academics relate to the national as well as international system of intellectuals, to use Gramsci's term, with an important consequence for the type of knowledge that gets valorised by the imagined community of Kazakhstani HEIs.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

This PhD thesis examines the post-Soviet nation-building of Kazakhstan through the lens of higher education (HE). Kazakhstan presents an interesting case of a post-Soviet transitional country that encounters challenges in the process of transition from communism and state socialism toward democracy and market economy. However, the fall of the Soviet Union and Kazakhstan's independence in 1991 has had a tremendous impact not only on the economic and political landscapes, but Kazakhstan also faces serious challenges in the process of identity building, which has been complicated by the language conundrum. So, paying close attention to the political, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions of Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition is highly important, while looking at Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transformations through the prism of HE seems to be very promising.

The state policy of 2011 on research productivity serves as a point of departure for my interest in the Kazakhstani HE, specifically, the knowledge production at Kazakhstani higher education institutions (HEIs). The adopted policy is aimed at increasing the research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs by introducing a requirement for faculty members to publish in journals with a nonzero impact-factor to qualify for promotion (Kuzhabekova & Ruby, 2018, p.266). Since the non-zero impact factor journals indexed by large databases like Scopus and Web of Science (Yessirkepov et al, 2015, p.1915) are mainly biased towards English-language publications, this essentially results in greater priority being given to English-language publications at Kazakhstani HEIs, which led me to wonder how such state of affairs might affect the research production in local languages (Kazakh and Russian).

Although this policy requirement served as a starting point for my research interest in Kazakhstani HEIs, I wanted to extend the scope of this thesis beyond the narrow focus on HE. The goal of the proposed research is not only to examine the immediate consequences of this particular policy for the Kazakhstani HEIs and its faculty members, but with its help to capture the major changes and continuities happening in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, as I assumed that this policy requirement not only reflects the Kazakhstani state's goal of enhancing HEIs' research and innovation capacity, but can potentially shed light on contestations and areas of tension inherent in the post-Soviet transition and transformation of Kazakhstan.

Firstly, drawing on Gramsci's theory of "hegemony", the thesis is particularly interested in the ideational transformation interrelating the political, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions with a view to ensuring the legitimacy of a new government guiding the Kazakhstani nation in the post-

independence era. Relying on Poulantzas, as well as Bob Jessop, this thesis further develops Gramsci's notion of the "system of intellectuals" to shed light on the role of HEIs, as part of civil society, in establishing the hegemony or constructing a counter-hegemony. This perspective foregrounds the contestations that inform the ways HEIs create, curate, and disseminate knowledge. Hence, we can view the university as a contestation site, where tension continually plays out between the evolving ideas of and perspectives on social reality, on the one hand, and the experiences of being involved or being excluded from the creation and curation of relevant knowledge, on the other.

Secondly, Foucault will not only help to take a more nuanced view on power relations and power dynamics, but it can also help to shed light on the subtle, elusive, ubiquitous nature of power in a modern neoliberal society. So, Foucault leads us to a better understanding of the technologies of "governmentality", which the Kazakhstani state increasingly relies to ensure the Kazakhstani faculty members' compliance with the neoliberal agendas of Kazakhstani HEIs, such as the 2011's publishing requirement. Thirdly, Bourdieu can help to shed light on the fact that language skills, as part of the "symbolic capital", can have a "symbolic power", since they carry a certain meaning and prestige within any given "symbolic order". Hence, relying on the concept of "symbolic order", I will try to understand the hierarchy of language use at Kazakhstani HEIs, while the notion of "symbolic power" can provide insight into what symbolic value and weight the various linguistic mediums of research publication (English, Kazakh and Russian) hold within that symbolic order.

As I noted earlier, it is important to situate my research on Kazakhstani HE in its broader economic, political, and socio-cultural contexts. By accounting for broader economic, political, and socio-cultural developments when studying HEIs and their publication strategies, I can not only map the continuities and changes taking place with Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition but also gain a better understanding of its implications on Kazakhstani HE. Firstly, the economic system has been one of the first things to be transformed in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. As the collapse of the Soviet Union raised hopes that the economies of former Soviet republics would attain rapid economic growth and quickly catch up with developed countries, the transition to a market economy was believed to be the surest way to that end. So, the Kazakhstani economy, which was in line with the state socialism during the Soviet times, has been in the active process of transitioning to a market economy since gaining independence in 1991. However, despite the rapidness and comprehensiveness of its pro-market reforms, Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition failed to produce a full-blown market economy, as the oil rentierism and central decision-making helped to keep some of the redistributive mechanisms in the hands of a state apparatus.

Moreover, the process of Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition was not limited to economic reforms, but it also entailed an extensive political transformation. As the disintegration of the USSR in 1991 brought down the Soviet political system and led to the demise of communism, Kazakhstan was also undergoing a transition from being a communist state governed by a single party towards the establishment of a democratic state. However, despite Kazakhstan's constitutional commitment to uphold democratic principles and a set of democratic institutions in place, there has been a major stagnation in the process of Kazakhstan's transition to democracy, and decreasing confidence in the viability of its democratic reforms.

However, the economic and political dimensions alone do not offer a full picture of Kazakhstan's post-socialist transformation, as the post-socialist transition is not only about erecting market-economy structures and installation of the democratic system but also entails a major ideological shift. So, though the Soviet regime has left behind a set of cultural and ideological constructs, with the collapse of the USSR, the new common identity, state language, and other expressions of nationhood had to be put in their place. In particular, it is important to highlight the re-structuring and re-articulation of identity, as an important tension that the post-Soviet nation-building in Kazakhstan has been confronted with.

On the one hand, the newly independent Kazakhstani state drew upon the Kazakh ethnicity as a key ideational resource for its post-Soviet national-building to assert the titular ethnic group's legitimacy in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. At the same time, the complex ethnic composition of Kazakhstan further created challenges for the construction and development of a legitimate state identity in Kazakhstan. So, despite the Kazakhstani state's interest in strengthening the ethnic Kazakh identity, there was also a need to develop a common basis for identity, since legitimising the Kazakhstani statehood solely on the basis of Kazakhness could alienate numerous ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan. Hence, it would not be misleading to say that the Kazakhstani state has been puzzled by attempts to balance the state's definition by its titular Kazakh ethnicity and the need to have due regard to ethnic diversity. One of the vivid examples of this identity dilemma has been the language issue and the linguistic policies undertaken by the Kazakhstani state. With the Kazakh being elevated to the 'state language' status, while the Russian being recognised as an 'official language', it can be stated that the Kazakhstani language policy, in line with Kazakhstani nation-building, attempts to serve as a balancing act by forging a middle-ground between the ethnic-based and civic-based Kazakhstani identities (Burkhanov, 2017, p.3).

So, as post-Soviet Kazakhstan confronted major challenges in the course of its economic (e.g. the adoption of a free-market economy), political (e.g. the move towards democratization), and socio-cultural (e.g. the shift towards Kazakhization) transition, my first overarching research question will be “Whether the Kazakhstani state has fully broken with the Soviet legacy after the fall of Soviet Union or not? Has there been a genuine change (economic, political, socio-cultural) in Kazakhstan with the fall of the Soviet Union or not?” (RQ1).

Moreover, amidst these broader economic, political, and socio-cultural transformations, the Kazakhstani HEIs have also been undergoing major reforms, as the fall of the Soviet Union sparked a period of significant change in the HE system. Firstly, Kazakhstan’s departure from the centrally planned economy and transition to a market economy brought about an exciting new direction for the HE sector to move with the establishment of private HEIs, restructuring of state-owned HEIs, and introduction of tuition fees. Secondly, as Kazakhstan has been undergoing a transition from being a communist state governed by a single party towards the establishment of a democratic state, there have also been moves towards the implementation of greater institutional autonomy and shared governance at Kazakhstani HEIs. Thirdly, as the Kazakhstani state has been in the process of search for and construction of a post-Soviet Kazakhstani nationhood, it is also necessary to consider the Kazakhstani HEI’s prominent role in the development of cultural values and ideological infrastructure of a new Kazakhstan. So, the Kazakhstani HEIs have been caught between two competing goals: the promotion of education in the native Kazakh language, which has become an important element emblematic of Kazakhstan’s national independence and ethnic revival, on the one hand, and the adherence to a non-discriminatory language policy line towards the Russian-medium education to ensure the broad-based legitimacy of a new Kazakhstani state, on the other.

However, it would be misleading not to note the lingering Soviet legacies, which turned out to be highly resilient in the post-Soviet Kazakhstani HE system. One of such Soviet-inherited features is the Soviet practice of separating teaching and research “with the Academy of Sciences taking the primary role in knowledge production”, while “Soviet universities dedicated themselves to the dissemination of established ideas” (Smolentseva, 2003, p.394). Such allocation of institutional functions, which greatly precluded the growth of research and development capacities of Soviet HEIs, is also having an impact on the development of university-based research at current Kazakhstani HEIs. So, as post-Soviet Kazakhstan inherited from Soviet times, the HE system along with its inherent characteristics and accompanying issues, which are still having a lingering effect on the

development of Kazakhstani HEIs, another important research question of mine is “Whether the Kazakhstani HE reforms stand for full break with past or entail important continuity?” (RQ2). Thus, the economic, political, and socio-cultural intricacies of this process of reforming Kazakhstan’s HE system, which has been taking place in parallel with the overall post-Soviet transition of Kazakhstan, should not be ignored.

The case of Kazakhstani policy of 2011 on research productivity provides a prime opportunity to delve into my proposed research questions. This publishing requirement can not only offer a unique vantage point to look at the changes and continuities taking place in the Kazakhstani HE system but is also situated at the critical juncture point between the economic, political, and socio-cultural transformations happening in Kazakhstan. Firstly, this policy is situated at the very heart of language dilemmas, especially, enlightening the language aspect of knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs. The 2011’s policy on research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs has been tacitly leading to a preference for English as a linguistic medium of knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs. Although the English is officially recognised by the Kazakhstani state as a language of “successful integration into the global economy” (Nazarbayev, 2011), and is believed to help the Kazakhstani HEIs to become more competitive on the global arena, I assume, such policy on research productivity is not without its repercussions on the use of Kazakh and Russian as languages of scholarship and academic research in Kazakhstan. Thus, the linguistic implications of 2011’s policy on research productivity open up an interesting perspective for examining the knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs, which are taking place within the broader context of a revival of the Kazakh language as part of heightened national consciousness, increasing demand for English as part of Kazakhstan’s developmental goals, and the lingering importance of Russian as a part of Soviet legacy. Therefore, the linguistic and ideational consequences of this publishing requirement for the role of Kazakhstani HEIs as contestation sites should be closely examined.

Secondly, the policy of 2011 on research productivity is highly illustrative of the shift of Kazakhstani HEIs away from the Soviet model towards the Western image of a “research university” (Smolentseva, 2018, p.394), which most importantly entails the diversification of HEI’s roles, in particular, the addition of ‘knowledge producing’ function. So, as it was noted earlier, during the Soviet times, due to the Soviet practice of separating teaching and research, the faculty members were primarily involved in the dissemination of existing knowledge, while the HEIs were mainly the sites for the transfer and transmission of knowledge. Nevertheless, to meet the demands of a globally competitive, knowledge-based economy, the research and innovation capacities of Kazakhstani HEIs

had to be developed, for them to become centres of high-quality, broad-based, cross-disciplinary research. So, with the addition of a research-producing function, the Kazakhstani faculty members had to embrace a new role of producer of knowledge, while the Kazakhstani HEIs have become the places of knowledge creation. Thus, focusing on the functions of Kazakhstani HEIs, in particular, the evolution of research function, which was absent at Soviet HEIs, and reflects the Soviet practice of separating teaching and research, seems to be an exciting aspect to explore.

So, focusing on the ‘knowledge producing’ function, now evolving at Kazakhstani HEIs, especially, its linguistic dimension, provides an exciting perspective for examining Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet transition and nation-building efforts. In particular, it will be especially interesting to better understand how the linguistic medium of research publication (English, Russian, Kazakh) can affect the faculty members’ capacities for involvement in the knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs. The prioritisation of English, as a preferred linguistic medium of knowledge production, by the Kazakhstani state, which is a reflection of the global hegemony of English as a lingua franca of academic scholarship, can possibly lead to disparity in possibilities of faculty members, having a different set of language skills and capabilities, to take part in knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs. Moreover, as the 2011’s policy emphasises English-language publications as one of the key factors qualifying the faculty members for promotion at Kazakhstani HEIs, my study also seeks to explore how this academic publication policy impacts the selectivity of academic recruitment and promotion processes at Kazakhstani HEIs. Thus, my third research question is “Who is likely to benefit from this publishing requirement, who is likely to be excluded, and how this policy can transform the hierarchies that informed the setup of the Kazakhstani HE during the Soviet time?” (RQ3).

So, these three research questions guided the entire process of the proposed research, including the data collection and data analysis processes. Firstly, the case study was found to be the most suitable methodology to explore the knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs in contexts of Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet nation-building. My reliance on the single-case design was justified by an intrinsic interest in Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet national-building, with my study enquiring into specific instance of Kazakhstani HE reform and being aimed at highlighting circumstances and consequences of 2011’s policy on research productivity. Moreover, for the purposes of this study, I relied on two qualitative techniques to gather data: critical discourse analysis (CDA) and interviews, which complemented each other as methods of data collection. On the one hand, the discourse analysis of policy documents reflects the official stance of authorities as formally laid down in policy documents in regard to

Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition and HE reform. On the other hand, the interviews with faculty members generated important insights into key actors' perceptions of and attitudes to the organisation and regulation of research production in terms of its linguistic medium at Kazakhstani HEIs. All in all, I argue that looking at Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transformations through the prism of HE, which is not only inextricably related to the politics and policy of the newly-established Kazakhstani state but has also been central to Kazakhstan's economic goals and aspirations, and can also be viewed as a contestation site for identity construction and nation building, seems to be very promising.

This thesis is organised into 8 chapters. This introductory chapter provides information on the problem space to position the forthcoming research within the broader context of Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition and tease out the main research questions. Chapter 2 discusses the key concepts by Gramsci, Foucault, and Bourdieu, which informed my own conceptual framework. Next, Chapter 3 aims to provide an overview of the economic, political, and socio-cultural aspects of Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transformation, while Chapter 4 focuses on the intricacies of reforming Kazakhstan's HE system in the post-Soviet period. Chapter 5 provides an explanation and justification for the research design and methodology used, describing the processes of data sampling, data collection, and data analysis. The next two chapters present and discuss the research findings, with a particular focus on the HE governance model in Chapter 6 and the hierarchy of language use in Chapter 7, followed by a conclusion in Chapter 8.

Chapter II

Conceptual Framework

In this chapter, I will discuss the key concepts developed by Gramsci, Foucault, and Bourdieu in order to develop my own analytical framework for understanding the ideational dimension of transformation and nation-building in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, as well as the role of Kazakhstani HEIs in this context.

1. Why to rely on theories? Why do we need theories?

Before outlining the theoretical notions that will comprise my theoretical framework, a legitimate query such as "Why rely on theories?" arises. Why do we require theories? How may a specific collection of theoretical concepts aid in approaching the research problem at hand? Theories and theoretical concepts are excellent tools for providing different analytical lenses through which we can examine various issues, allowing us to shift our focus from the specific to the general, and assisting us in our search for explanations of the underlying causes of observed phenomena. As a result, theory is a vital component of any given research. My dependence on theoretical concepts, on the other hand, is essentially motivated by the Critical Realist aspect of my study. In my research, I will rely on Critical Realism (CR), which views the structure of reality as being complex and stratified and consisting of three overlapping domains: "real 'structures or mechanisms (what is), 'actual' things or events (what happens regardless of whether it is observed), and 'empirical 'observations or experiences" (what happens that is observed) (Belfrage & Hauf, 2017, p.254). Although the empirical domain is where actors experience events and make observations about things, and where the phenomenon can be identified and registered as a discernible pattern or regularity (Easton, 2010, p.123), the most important thing for the CR is to generate "a satisfactory explanation of why this phenomenon occurs." (Houston, 2001, p.850). Hence, the CR researcher needs to go beyond just mapping the empirical observations and aim at thoroughly examining "the structure of objects as well as their causal powers" within the real domain (Houston, 2001, p.850). However, as Bhaskar (1989) asserts, "the causal laws must be analysed as the tendencies of things, which may be possessed unexercised and exercised unrealised, just as they may, of course, be unperceived" (pp.9-10). As a result, because the real domain is what is potential, what may not be open to direct perception and be easily accessible (or even happen), the task of uncovering the unseen, non-tangible causal mechanisms operating within the real domain that cause the observable phenomenon in the empirical domain should not be underestimated. Thus, the primary goal of CR research is to arrive at plausible explanations of phenomena by investigating causal processes in the real domain and understanding

how they function as tendencies to impact the phenomena we experience in the empirical space (Danermark et al, 2001, p.49).

First of all, one can ask, how can we move beyond the observations and experiences at the empirical level to attempt to reach and understand the causal structures and generative mechanisms within the real domain? I believe that access to the real domain, bypassing the actual and empirical domains, can be gained with the help and guidance of theories and theoretical instruments. The reliance on theories in CR research can primarily be explained by the fact that “there is...no unmediated access to the world: access is always mediated” (Fleetwood, 1995). So, the CR asserts that an enquirer “can never fully gain a totally accurate picture of the social world only ever have a transitive view of the world” (Houston, 2001, p.851). So, theories and theoretical concepts are part of this transitive dimension that was created in an attempt to understand and explain the world around us. Thus, as there is no direct access to reality, but the access to the real domain is always mediated, the central role of theory in this mediated access to reality should be specifically underlined.

Next, because the causal mechanisms may not be apparent, the fundamental problem is identifying the causal processes within the real domain, which are only observable on the empirical domain. The necessity of paying attention to the enabling and containing factors of a phenomenon we see should be emphasised in this regard (e.g., What conditions needed to be in place to make the phenomenon I observe possible/more likely to happen?). As theoretical concepts can be helpful to pick out certain features of the world, it is therefore important to acknowledge that we rely on a certain set of theories and theoretical concepts to identify and deduce the enabling and constraining conditions of a phenomenon under consideration. Thus, it can be stated that the CR researcher cannot directly observe and register the causal mechanisms within the real domain, and the causal structures and generative mechanisms can only be said to be present by reference to the explanations of enabling and constraining conditions provided by theories and theoretical concepts. Overall, as the CR “accepts that there are no (defensible) theory-neutral observations, descriptions, interpretations, theorisations, explanations” (Fleetwood, 1995), it can be stated that theory is at the heart of the CR’s approach to research. In the following sections, the set of theoretical concepts by Gramsci, Foucault, and Bourdieu on which I will be relying will be thoroughly examined.

1. Gramsci

Gramsci made an important contribution to critical political economy studies that highlight the dialectics between the economy and the political. He rejected the Marxist approach that understands

the political as a simple expression of the economic, though without neglecting the importance of the latter. Unlike “the classical Marxist approach to power, which was one-sided in the exclusive attention it paid to the role of force” (Enwistle, 1978, p.252), at the centre of his theory of hegemony is the ideational power that provides the ruling class with the legitimation it requires to carry out and defend its ruling role without being constantly challenged by other social groups. Coercion would not be enough for a ruling class to stay in power. A key reason is the social formation a capitalist society requires, which entails a specific subjectivity, life, and consumption style in addition to sets of beliefs, norms, and values that are so well internalised by a majority of the population that they are taken for granted. Such a theoretical approach is well-equipped to understand the complexity of the transformation of a post-Soviet country as I hope to show in the subsequent chapter before I zoom in on Kazakhstani HE.

Before elaborating on Gramsci’s key concept of “hegemony”, it is important to clarify his understanding of the economy-state-society interrelations. So, first, the economic, political, and ideological aspects within the state need to be distinguished. Gramsci’s conception of the state consists of a “base”, which is an economic sphere of the means and relations of production, in the form of property rights, employer–employee relations, division of labour, and the “superstructure”, which is the sphere of political and ideological reproduction, in form of political, ideological, legal, cultural institutions. Traditional Marxists, in line with the economic determinism, greatly emphasise the role of a ‘base’, and argue that the ‘superstructure’ directly mirrors the organisation of productive forces and the structure of productive relations, as it is the economic forces that “condition the general process of social, political, and intellectual life (Marx, 1985). As Marx (1859) famously stated, “the sum total of relations of production constitute the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure, and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness” (p.4). However, this Marxist stance on relation between the ‘base’ and ‘superstructure’ has long been criticised, as it seemed to be “mechanistic in that it makes little allowance for a reciprocal causation from the superstructure or from consciousness to the economic foundation, and fails to specify the mechanism through which change in one part of the social structure is translated into change in the other parts” (Ruyle, 1975, p.8).

Hence, Gramsci contends that it is not that simple and straightforward, but instead, a more complex mediation process takes place between the ‘base’ and ‘superstructure’. Although the ‘superstructure’ can reflect the ‘base’, as it is informed by the values of existing economic structure, it is the ‘superstructure’ that through its political, cultural, and ideological activity provides legitimacy and

credibility to the base with its current mode of production. Therefore, Gramsci's contribution to Marxism is that he moved beyond Marx's "hierarchical model", which consists of "an economic base, a corresponding juridico-political order that provides legal guarantees and political support to the profit-oriented, market-mediated economy, and an even more remote superstructure comprising ideology and other forms of consciousness" (Jessop, 2017, p.192). Unlike the classical Marxist model, which lacks a coherent theory of the state, and thus, fails to explain how "both the juridico-political and ideological levels nonetheless reacting back on the economic base" (ibid. p.191), Gramsci's more nuanced approach offers a possibility for the different types of spaces within the state (economic, political, socio-cultural) and their intricate interconnection to be understood in its complexity.

Moreover, the reconsideration of the traditional Marxist conception of relations between the 'base' and 'superstructure' also calls for distinguishing the "political society" and "civil society" within a state. So, it is important to highlight Gramsci's differentiation of these "two major superstructural levels" (Gramsci, 1971). He discerned two separate levels within the superstructure by stating: "one that can be called civil society" (1) and "that of political society" (2) (Gramsci, 1971, p.12). While the 'political society' corresponds to "direct domination or command exercised through the State", the 'civil society', as "the ensemble of organisms commonly called private", corresponds to "the function of hegemony which the dominant group exercises throughout society" (Gramsci, 1999, p.145). Nicos Poulantzas, another famous Marxist scholar, very much in line with Gramsci, also differentiated between the repressive and ideological apparatuses of the state that exist beyond the arena of economic production. Poulantzas (1969) argued that "the system of the State is composed of several apparatuses or institutions of which certain have a principally repressive role, in the strong sense, and others a principally ideological role". So, for Poulantzas (1969), "the repressive apparatus of the State" consists of "government, army, police, tribunals and administration", while "the ideological apparatuses of the State" amounts to institutions like "the Church, the unions, the schools, the mass media (newspapers, radio, television)" (p.77). However, we should not reduce the whole 'political society' to a mere 'state repressive apparatus', as not all of the state entities and institutions are of a purely repressive nature (e.g., Parliament). It can rather be argued that each state entity or institution can exhibit a different combination of coercion and consent, tilting more or less towards repressiveness (like a two-faced Janus). Overall, this divide (political society vs. civil society) takes us a step further, drawing our attention to various apparatuses within the two societies, some of which may be mutually beneficial, while others are direct competitors. Nevertheless, despite being

recognised as two distinct analytical units, civil society and political society are very closely entangled, as demonstrated by the Gramscian notion of the “integral state”.

With a better understanding of Gramsci's view of economy and state, let's examine Gramsci's concept of "hegemony." Hegemony can be incredibly helpful to get insight into the means through which the state is legitimised and maintained, to better understand how, for example, the bourgeois rule obtains the general public's acceptance, and how a set of neoliberal values, norms, and practices are justified and consolidated in society. First of all, Gramsci's perspective on the role of the economy implies that state power cannot be exerted by simply controlling the economic levers (e.g. the bourgeoisie class controls the economy, therefore they control the capitalist state), and the focus should not only be on the economic interests driving the ruling elite but nonetheless greater emphasis is needed on the ideational struggles that are taking place in society. So, Gramsci criticised the fact that the capacity of ideational power and its ability to peacefully win over the masses is greatly underestimated. He argued that the power does not rest solely on coercion (either economic or political), as “the man is not ruled by force alone, but also by ideas” (Bates, 1975, p.351). Hence, he believed that the state rule can be “based on consent of the led” (Bates, 1975, p.352), if the ruling elite manages to establish its “intellectual and moral leadership” over the subordinate groups (Ramos, 1982). Thus, the role of ideational power, which is situated in civil society, underpinned by an extensive set of civil society organisations, in supporting the state rule and reproducing the hegemony, should be specifically highlighted.

Next, the complex relationship between consent and coercion should be underlined, as “the balance of coercion and consent is crucial to Gramscian understanding of hegemony” (Konrad, 2012). For instance, Gramsci uses the “iron fist in a velvet glove” and the “centaur” as metaphors to illustrate the coexistence of consent and coercion. As a result, despite the state's legal monopoly on physical violence, it cannot rule only through brute force and direct dominance exercised through the repressive machinery (especially, as controlling and maintaining the police and armed forces can be expensive, particularly if there is a sustained resistance). Hence, securing the widespread consent of the masses through the ideological apparatus of civil society is still extremely important in order to reach the equilibrium point between consensual hegemony and coercive dominance, and sustain the rule of the regime in the long run. However, it is important to keep in mind that the dominance of a ruling class is ultimately based on coercive means of the repressive apparatus, which “is always present behind them [institutions of ideological state apparatus], that it defends them and sanctions them, and finally, that their action is determined by the action of the repressive apparatus itself”

(Poulantzas, 1969) (and also backed by the economic power of ruling elite to decide where to invest the means of production with consequences for the extraction of surplus value). Therefore, the Gramscian concept of hegemony presupposes “a dialectical unity of the moments of civil society and political society” (Humphrys, 2018, p. 36). This “dialectical unity” can be viewed as a “process of envelopment or enwrapping (*involucro*) of civil society by political society”, as Gramsci “presents the image of political society as a ‘container’ of civil society, surrounding or enmeshing and fundamentally reshaping it” (Thomas, 2009, p.189).

Although civil society is the realm of consent, it should also be viewed as a space where the majority of ideational contestations occur, as different factions within society may uphold and promote various ideas about political, economic, and social aspects of life. So, it can be stated that the repressive state apparatus “possesses a very rigorous internal unity which directly governs the relation between the diverse branches of the apparatus” (Poulantzas, 1969). In contrast to more stable entities of political society, the institutions of civil society are more autonomous “among themselves and in relation to the State repressive apparatus” (Poulantzas, 1969). Hence, civil society can be considered as a prime site, where the strategic attempts by various social groups to promote their competing ideas, values, and norms take place. As Koch (2022) put it, civil society is “the terrain upon which social classes and groups struggle for political, cultural, and social leadership or hegemony over other classes and groups” (p.3).

In this regard, Poulantzas, further elaborating on Gramsci’s notion of an integral state, proposed the idea of a state as a mediator of such conflicts and contestations. So, Poulantzas (1975) rejected the idea of fully equating the state with the ruling class by limiting it to narrow bourgeois economic interests but rather argued that the state is “a materialisation and condensation of class relations” (p.25). As a result, while the capitalist state's ultimate objective is to secure the bourgeoisie class's dominance, it also plays a vital role in mediating class tensions and ensuring societal stability, both of which are required to ensure the reproduction of ruling class hegemony. The end result of such a mediation process undertaken by the state can be a ‘social compromise’, which takes place through the co-optation of certain ideas and silencing of others, as the state ultimately has to “maintain the unity and cohesion of a social formation” (Resch, 1992). Thus, the major importance of a notion of ‘social compromise’, which makes it possible to determine the quality of a hegemony, should not be underestimated.

In a similar vein, another renowned Marxist scholar, Bob Jessop (2022) also views the state as “a relation between class forces mediated through the institutional architecture of the state” (p.86). Moreover, Jessop (1990) proposed the concept of “strategic selectivity”, which refers to a state’s tendency to “offer unequal chances to different forces within and outside that state to act for different political purposes” (p.367). As a result, he emphasises a state's ability to prioritise some competing ideas, views, and claims above others. Overall, such a relational approach, offered by Poulantzas and Jessop, gives us the possibility to have a broader understanding of the state, as not just an instrument of class rule, but rather as an “institutional ensemble” that organises the social relations and mediates the class conflicts (Jessop, 2018).

Notwithstanding the fact that there can be a harmonious relationship of “civil society integrated under the leadership of the state” (Humphrys, 2018), the possibility of a relation of antagonism between the state and civil society also should not be ruled out. So, though civil society is where hegemony is largely produced and reproduced, it can also be a source of counter-hegemonic ideas. Hence, the institutions of civil society also have an immense potential to provide the ideational resources capable of turning the subordination into resistance to the hegemonic domination. On the one hand, the attempts to disrupt the existing balance of forces can take the form of “a war of manoeuvre”, as the subordinated groups decisively act on their determination to throw off the yoke of oppression and embark on open confrontation with the ruling class. However, “a war of manoeuvre” is not possible if the ruling power has the major ideational support of the civil society. In this case, the emerging factions, which seek to rise to power, need first to change the balance of ideational forces within the civil society in their favour, before finally taking over the political power. So, the subordinate groups’ attempt to challenge the current relations of hegemony can materialise into “a war of position”, which is a more indirect and protracted type of counter-hegemonic struggle.

In light of a counter-hegemonic struggle that can take the form of either ‘a war of manoeuvre’ or ‘a war of position’, the fact that hegemony rests on the ability of the ruling class to persuade the ruled ones that their goals and interests are the same, should be underscored. So, it is crucial for the ruling class to co-opt the subordinate groups by forming strategic alliances with them, and by reaching a plausible social compromise. Hence, it can also be necessary for the ruling classes to accede to some of the demands of oppressed groups and make concessions to win the consensus of the majority. In case when those in power can no longer elicit consent, and the consensus between the ruling and ruled class breaks down, an “organic crisis”, which is “a serious rupture to the stable basis for hegemonic order”, can erupt. Such a comprehensive crisis reveals the fundamental contradictions inherent in the

social structure, as it is characterised by the deep misalignment of all three dimensions of a state: economic, ideational, and political (e.g., the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991).

On the one hand, a genuine 'organic crisis' results in "a profound restructuring of the institutions of and conditions for social reproduction", as such deep crises of social order open possibilities for the dominated to overthrow the class domination (Gill, 2012). However, from the Gramscian perspective, the 'organic crisis' does not immediately result in the rise of a new hegemony, as it also entails a transitional period, when "the old is dying and the new cannot be born" (p.27). So, the period of 'interregnum' signifies "a time-lag separating the death of one royal sovereign from the enthronement of the successor" (Baumann, 2012, p.49). This is when the former hegemonic order has already failed, while the new hegemonic order has not yet risen to replace the old one. On the other hand, if the real shift in the constellation of social forces does not happen, a "passive revolution" can take place with "the reorganisation and restoration of class power" (Hesketh, 2017). The meaning of the concept of 'passive revolution' can be broken down into parts: firstly, the 'revolution' refers to "the capacity of the ruling class still to deliver substantive and real historical gains, producing real social transformations", while the 'passive' denotes "the attempt to produce these transformations without the extensive involvement of subaltern classes" (Thomas, 2006). So, in this form of "revolution from above", the ruling classes manage to stay in power, and attain "the passivity of subaltern classes through the partial fulfilment and simultaneous displacement of their demands" (Roccu, 2017). Thus, the political settlement in the form of a social compromise reached between the ruling and the ruled groups is what ultimately contributes to the stability and longevity of a ruling-class hegemony.

As hegemonic values, norms, and beliefs exist in concrete forms of knowledge and ways of knowing like newspapers, books, pieces of art, and literature, the pivotal role of education, as one of the primary means for establishing, justifying, and reproducing hegemony within the civil society, should be highlighted. Individuals internalise specific value systems, learn approved bodies of knowledge, acquire necessary skills, and cultivate appropriate behaviour and outlooks on life through education, so educational institutions can be viewed as key sites for the propagation, dissemination, and perpetuation of a state ideology (though there are others like the media and religion, depending on the characteristics of a country under consideration). Indeed, this indicates that educational institutions are one of the key instruments within the ideological state apparatuses that can help the ruling class to facilitate hegemony. However, by stating that "every relationship of hegemony is necessarily an educational relationship" (p.666), Gramsci (1971) also tried to provide us with a broader understanding of the hegemonic influence of education, which is not simply limited to formal

schooling, or the process of a state mandating the content of education, but rather “as a quintessential political activity, central to understanding and transforming society” (Pizzolato & Holst, 2017). Such a comprehensive understanding of education can shed light on how the reproduction of hegemonic-approved modes of knowledge and intellectual practices, as well as the exclusion of other forms of knowledge and knowing, have far-reaching consequences that extend far beyond the walls of educational institutions and formal educational processes, to determine and define the economic, political, social, and cultural aspects of life.

Next, Gramsci (1971) also stressed the role of the “system of intellectuals”, who played a crucial role in the ideational struggle taking place in civil society (p.134). This Gramscian notion can help to shed light on the role of faculty members in establishing hegemony and foreground the contestations that inform the ways HEIs create, curate, and disseminate knowledge. By equipping us with certain ideas and perspectives, intellectuals “establish currents of public opinion in media, pamphlets, reviews and newspaper articles, conversations, and oral debates” (Gramsci, 1971, p.131). So, intellectuals are not only producing and developing knowledge and beliefs that can form and mold the hegemony but also play a crucial role in consolidating and popularising them among the masses. However, the intellectuals can also employ their capacity to establish the major ideational trends and tendencies for organising and building the counter-hegemonic resistance. Thus, as Gramsci (1994) states, “it is them who sustain, modify and alter modes of thinking and behaviour of the masses” (p.14). As a result, it may be argued that intellectuals play a significant mediating function between the ruling and the ruled, contributing to or subtracting from consensus support for the ruling classes, and forming or breaking the perception of the dominant class as representing the interests of the majority.

In this regard, two types of intellectuals that Gramsci highlights in his theory of hegemony should be recognised: “organic” and “traditional”. “Organic” intellectuals can be defined as the ones who emerge from and are tied to a ruling class within an existing economic structure, while “traditional” intellectuals can be viewed as the ones who are autonomous and independent from the current ruling group. Although these should be regarded as the ideal types (as there can be different shades of grey in the actual empirical manifestation of intellectuals), it is still very important to bring to attention the ways one group of intellectuals can be more supportive of the current status quo by taking an active part in the promotion of hegemonic norms and values, while the other group can be more interested in dismantling the existing hegemonic order by developing the counter-hegemonic forms of knowledge. So, intellectuals play a major role in ensuring that “norms and values become broadly accepted as legitimate and relevant, even when they indirectly privilege some social groups over

others” (Hartmann, 2015). Although Gramsci’s (1986) conception of an intellectual is broad enough to include a wide range of educators and practitioners (e.g., economic experts, political activists, religious leaders, journalists, artists, social media influencers, etc.), he also stated that “all men are intellectuals, but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals”. This is a vital point, as it alludes to the important ‘division of labour’ informing the capitalist societies: manual and intellectual work, which also has major implications for the hierarchy within the system of intellectuals. Thus, in my study, I will be focusing on faculty members at Kazakhstani universities, whom I identify as one of key members of the system of intellectuals, as they are directly engaged not only in the dissemination but also in the production of knowledge.

Lastly, I want to note the heuristic value of Jessop’s notion of ‘hegemonic project’ and emphasise the difference between the broader phenomenon of “hegemony” and a more concrete instance of “hegemonic project”. The hegemony can be defined as “the successful mobilisation and reproduction of the active consent of dominated groups by the ruling class through its exercise of a political, intellectual, and moral leadership oriented to a collective will or national-popular consensus”, which is an aspired “ideal” state that can “never be fully reached in empirical reality”, but “can only ever be partially and temporarily realised” (Jessop, 2016). On the contrary, the “hegemonic project” can be viewed as a concrete attempt (observable on the empirical level) to assert and maintain hegemony, which is embedded in “constant struggles both between elites and non-elite forces (to consolidate vs. to undermine hegemonic projects or present counter-hegemonic alternatives) and within elite groups (to redefine and remold the political, ideological, and economic underpinnings of existing frameworks)” (ibid). So, the notion of a hegemonic project, as actual and strategic attempts for attainment of the hegemony, allows us to pay more attention to the fact that no project can gain the totality that the original idea of hegemony suggests. Moreover, in line with the CR, differentiation between the concepts of hegemony and hegemonic project, which can be boiled down to the level of abstraction, can be helpful to see that hegemonic projects are situated at the level of empirical, the hegemony itself belongs to the domain of actual, while the real domain contains the causal structures and generative mechanisms for hegemony. Thus, it can be stated that the hegemony manifests itself empirically by the way of hegemonic projects that may support each other, and as a result, strengthen the hegemony. However, the hegemonic projects may also conflict with each other to such an extent that they undermine the hegemony’s internal coherence.

Table 1. Research questions informed by Gramsci

<p>1. RQs on economic dimension:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the articulation between the economy and state in the Soviet period? • What is the articulation between the economy and state in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan? • Has there been a change in the articulation between the economy and state? If yes, how it differs? If no, can we identify a continuity?
<p>2. RQs on political dimension:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the articulation between the political and civil society, as part of integral state, in the Soviet period? • What is the articulation between the political and civil society in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan? • Has there been a change in the articulation between political and civil society? If yes, how it differs? If no, can we identify a continuity?
<p>3. RQs on socio-cultural dimension:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the characteristics of ideational dimension (ideology, language) that underpinned the Soviet rule? • What is the characteristics of ideational dimension (ideology, language) that underpins the post-Soviet Kazakhstani state? • Has there been a change in the characteristics of ideational dimension? If yes, how it differs? If no, can we identify a continuity?
<p>4. RQs on HEIs and faculty members:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the role of HEIs in the Soviet period? What is the role of HEIs in the post-Soviet period? Has there been a change in the role of HEIs? If yes, how it differs? If no, can we identify a continuity? • What was the role of intellectuals in the Soviet period? What is the role of intellectuals in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan? Has there been a change in the role of intellectuals? If yes, how it differs? If no, can we identify a continuity?
<p>5. Some general RQs:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the nature of social compromise in the Soviet period? What is the nature of social compromise in the post-Soviet period? Has there been a change in the nature of social compromise? If yes, how it differs? If no, can we identify a continuity? • Was the fall of Soviet Union an organic crisis? Is Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition a passive revolution?

Overall, the key takeaways of this discussion are summarised in Table 1 above, which outlines the research questions informed by Gramsci that this thesis set out to answer. So, this section described the important Gramscian principles that can be used in my research on knowledge creation at Kazakhstani HEIs. First of all, Gramsci's outlook on the role of economy (base is important, but does not fully determine superstructure) and broader conception of a state (integral state: political society plus civil society) lends itself to my analysis of the Kazakhstani state, as it will help me to better discern the changes in economy-state-civil society interrelations as Kazakhstan underwent its post-

Soviet transition. Secondly, the concept of hegemony, which enlightens our understanding of ideational dominance as key to securing a consensual rule, can be helpful to look at the post-Soviet transition in Kazakhstan, which has been a complex process unfolding through a broad array of strategies that seek to legitimise a number of major changes (e.g. application of neoliberal economic reforms, democratisation reforms, Kazakhization, etc.). Since the notion of a hegemonic project is better equipped for empirical analysis, as was noted earlier, it will be helpful to define Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition as a process by which a range of Soviet hegemonic projects (e.g. command economy, Sovietization) came under contestation to be replaced by a set of new, post-Soviet hegemonic projects (e.g. neoliberal market economy, liberal- democracy) with the fall of Soviet Union. Moreover, as hegemony is a form of rule that combines the forms of coercion with consent and compromise, the new hegemonic projects of post-Soviet Kazakhstan had to be justified by the Kazakhstani state to win the acceptance of the general public. For example, the promise of faster economic growth, more efficient redistribution, and improved welfare provided a justification for the neoliberal reforms and helped with the legitimation and consolidation of a new hegemonic project of neoliberalism in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. Thus, drawing on Gramsci, this thesis is particularly interested in the ideational transformation interrelating these different dimensions with a view to ensuring the legitimacy of the new government. All this will help to situate my research on Kazakhstani HE in its broader economic, political, and socio-cultural context, before elaborating on the role of Kazakhstani universities. The Kazakhstani universities are currently not only the main entities for knowledge production and knowledge dissemination, but they should also be viewed as major contestation sites, where competing and contradicting ideas and perspectives are voiced and discussed, promoted, or opposed. In this regard, the key role of faculty members, as part of the system of intellectuals, should be underlined, as their ideational potential and intellectual capacities can have a major impact on either the success or failure of hegemonic projects of neoliberalism, liberal democracy, and nation-building undertaken in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan and the long-term viability of existing social compromise. Therefore, the role of the Kazakhstani state in mediating the ideational contestations within the system of intellectuals, and its capacity to create a cohesive balance between different groups of intellectuals at Kazakhstani universities also needs to be closely discussed.

1. Foucault

Next, I will elaborate on Foucault's theoretical concepts that will be employed in my study. While Gramsci gives a broader view of complex mediation processes taking place between the ruling and the ruled and stresses the importance of hegemony as a "predominance by consent" (Ramos, 1982),

he did not have a chance to further develop a more nuanced conceptualisation of how the hegemonic power is acted out in the context of consent. In this regard, Foucault can be incredibly helpful, as he further develops an understanding of power, by focusing on the specifics and subtleties of modern governance and social control, and discerning “by what means, mechanisms, procedures, instruments, tactics, techniques, technologies and vocabularies is authority constituted and rule accomplished” (Dean, 2004, p.31). So, whilst Gramsci deepens our understanding of “consent in the context of larger economic and political structures”, Foucault, with his “micro-approach”, can offer us “a more sophisticated understanding of both the effectiveness and the limits of consensual power” at more local and diffused level (Attack, 2006, p.87). Thus, Foucault brings the subject-constituting effects of hegemony to the fore, hence highlighting the productive (not only constraining) effects of normative power.

By referring to Foucault’s concept of governmentality, which allows us to account for the role of subjectivity and internalisation in the context of ideational power, we can get a better understanding of the nature of modern governance, which largely relies on seemingly neutral and ubiquitous techniques of social control (Gordon, 1991, p.3). Foucault highly doubted the applicability and effectiveness of “the old mechanism of the power” in increasingly complex, modern societies (p.249). He connected this to the rise of neoliberalism, which was “taking the formal principles of a market economy and referring and relating them to, of projecting them onto a general art of government” (Foucault, 2008, pp.131-132). Hence, his notion of governmentality signifies “a historical shift from the centralised power to the recognition of the need to engage with society” (Chandler, 2014, p.1). Although, in modern ‘neoliberal’ societies, individuals seem to enjoy more personal freedoms, and are no longer subject to absolute authority, what appears like a liberation of individuals and what looks like a greater freedom can in fact be a disguise under which the modern governments increasingly rely on governmentality practices. This novel understating of power is Foucault’s key contribution, which makes the most sense in societies where freedom has become a key hegemonic value, while his ideas would not make much sense in a society, where individuals do not have much freedom and the entire society is ruled by tradition and/or fear of punishment. Thus, in this section, I will be elaborating on Foucault’s (2008) account of power, which has been increasingly “modelled on the principles of a market economy” (p.131), and how I intend to use it for my analysis of Kazakhstan and its post-Soviet transformation to a capitalist state, emulating a liberal-democratic society.

In line with Gramsci's hegemony, which is about the combination of coercion and consent, Foucault's conception of power as "a guidance" (Führung) "does not exclude consensual forms or the recourse to violence", but rather views coercion or consensus as "effects or instruments" of power, the "means of government among others" (Lemke, 2010, p.51). However, Foucault has a more decentralised approach to power, as he "tried to eliminate all conceptions of fundamental source of power" (Daldal, 2014, pp.160–161). Hence, for Foucault, governance is not "located in a single, centralised source like the state or the economy" (Lemke, 2010, p.52), but instead "power, as well as the resistance it generates, are diffused and not localised in some points" (Daldal, 2014, p.149). Thus, in Foucault's understanding, power is neither "a fixed and predictable element in social structures", nor "imposed from above through social structures and hierarchies", but power is "a fluid concept closely connected to the strategies of discourse—with the ways we talk, and the systems of talk in which we participate" (Allyn & Bacon, 2005). However, notwithstanding the thick description that the Foucauldian power analysis produces, what this 'decentralised' approach loses, in turn, is a notion of causality (e.g. Foucault's accounts of power can help us to understand the 'how', but not necessarily the 'why').

Firstly, unlike the direct domination and top-down imposition of regulations, governmentality is an indirect and subtle approach that entails "techniques and strategies by which society is rendered governable" (Foucault, 2008, p.82). In Gramscian terms, Foucault helps us to understand how power is exerted by consent, but not coercion. So, instead of forceful control over individuals and their behaviour, it is all about internalisation of the rules of expected conduct by individuals, which is achieved through "structuring and shaping the field of possible action of subjects" (Lemke, 2010, p.52). Secondly, governance, in Foucauldian terms, also refers to "the regulation of conduct by the more or less rational application of the appropriate technical means" (Hindess 1996, p.106). This perspective allows "a rational reading of governance", which is "beyond spontaneous forms of its exercise", and can be viewed as the "attempt to shape human conduct by calculated means" (Li, 2007, p.275). Thus, by relying on Foucault's governmentality, we can take a look at "the conditions of a consensus or the prerequisites of acceptance" (Lemke, 2010, p.52) created at Kazakhstani HEIs, in the context of civil society, far away from the direct control of repressive state apparatus, to rationally control and technically manage the conduct of faculty members.

Next, Foucault is particularly helpful in giving us a critical account of the way "objectification", which is "the process through which human beings are made into subjects" (aka turning people (subjects) into things (objects)) (McLaren, 2012, p.64), takes place in modern 'neoliberal' societies. Thus, three modes of objectification can be outlined "by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects",

such as the “dividing practices” (1), “scientific classification” (2), and “self-subjection” (3) (Foucault, 1982, p.777). But, unlike the Marxian objectification of social reality in the context of the capitalist mode of production (e.g. estranged labour, alienation of the worker), Foucauldian objectification allows us to get a sense of how knowledge and various forms of scientific discourse contribute to the objectification of individuals. So, given the major role of science and scientific discourse in establishing and legitimising the modes of objectification, the part that Kazakhstani HEIs, as the main knowledge-producing and knowledge-disseminating entities, and the Kazakhstani faculty members, as the key knowledge producers and disseminators, can play in the processes of objectification, should be specifically underlined. However, as in light of the neo-liberalization of Kazakhstani HE, “a requirement for university faculty members to publish in journals with a nonzero impact factor in order to qualify for promotion” was introduced by the Kazakhstani MoES (Kuzhabekova & Ruby, 2018, p.266), it can be stated that the Kazakhstani faculty members, through being subject to such requirement and attempts to elicit compliance to it, are increasingly being treated as “an object” [objectified]. For instance, the Kazakhstani HE management has been trying to alter the faculty members, so that they can become a desired type of academician, embodying certain skills, practices, and dispositions (e.g., knowing English and regularly publishing in non-zero impact factor journals).

So, within the context of this dissertation, I will be focusing on the third mode of objectification, “self-subjection” (Due to limited space, a brief outline of the “dividing practices” and “scientific classification” is provided in Appendix 1), which can be defined as “the way a human being turns him or herself into a subject” (Foucault,1994, p.327). Hence, Foucault (1988) points to the fact that individuals subject themselves to control and regulation through the processes of self-reflection, self-evaluation, and self-improvement, which can entail “certain modes of training and modification of individuals, not only in the obvious sense of acquiring certain skills but also in the sense of acquiring certain attitudes” (p.18). This mode of objectification is very much in line with the basic premise of Foucauldian technologies of governmentality, which is the willing participation of the governed (Lemke, 2010, p.52). At this point, it is also necessary to clarify that, while the first two modes of objectification, “dividing practices” and “scientific classification”, imply that an individual is in “an essentially passive, constrained position”, the third mode of objectification, the “self-subjection”, differs from them, as it involves a person who actively takes part in the very process of subjectification. Therefore, the idea of individuals being subjectified can be broken down into, on the one hand, “to the individual as being subject to someone else by control and dependence” (1), and on the other hand, “being tied to their own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge” (2) (Foucault, 1982, p. 331).

This prompted me to consider how much the Kazakhstani HE sector's neoliberal policy backdrop and the regulatory regime that surrounds the publication requirement at Kazakhstani HEIs shape the subjectivity of Kazakhstani faculty members. So, applying the concept of self-subjection to the Kazakhstani HE sector, it can be stated that the Kazakhstani faculty members are frequently undertaking research training programs, courses, seminars, and master classes, with the aim of elevating their research profile and successfully navigating tenure and promotion at their university. For example, many of the Kazakhstani faculty members undertake research seminars (e.g., Thomson Reuters on “Resources for Scientific and Scholarly Research”) in hopes of increasing their research potential, improving the quality of their research, and increasing their chances in the competition for faculty positions. Hence, it can be assumed that the Kazakhstani HEIs are increasingly employing a new neoliberal form of subjectivity, as the faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs, aspiring to live up to this desired subjectivity, are subjected to the growing pressure to publish their research in international, high-impact factor journals. Thus, it raises questions as to whether and how Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet transition goes hand in hand with the reconfiguration of academic subjecthood at Kazakhstani HEIs. Therefore, there is a need to more closely examine the techniques of governmentality (e.g., making use of performance-based control mechanisms), which are employed to make possible the neoliberal subjectivities for Kazakhstani faculty members, and the academic practices, which faculty members resort to in order to live up to a subjectivity that is deemed desirable at Kazakhstani HEIs.

But as Foucault emphasises the “ubiquitous, diffuse, and circulating” nature of power, which “is everywhere” and “comes from everywhere” (Foucault, as cited in Philip, 1983, p.34), this all-encompassing essence of power in modern society makes it highly pervasive and difficult to resist. So, there remains a question: How Foucault’s conception of power as subtle and elusive in nature can open up the potential for resistance? Do the Kazakhstani faculty members really have agency and freedom to resist being transformed into “docile bodies”? This has led some to argue that Foucault’s theory of power makes individuals’ resistance to such normalising forms of power impossible, and fails to adequately account for human agency, which is largely subsumed by the structure (Wheatley, 2019). Thus, though Foucault tried to get out of the totality trap by insisting that where there is power, there is resistance (e.g., in *History of Sexuality*, 1978, p.95), he was not able to solve the problem himself. Therefore, another one of the major drawbacks of Foucault’s theorisation of power (in addition to his decentralised account of power) is “the lack of a convincing explanation to how individuals could become aware of disciplinary constraints” and “act against them” (Tarascio, 2018), if it can produce an illusion of freedom of choice, self-control, and self-management, which conceals

the actual purpose of technologies of neoliberal governmentality, and precludes the possibilities for resistance.

However, it can be argued that objectification does not necessarily annul the capacity of individuals to act independently or to make their own choices, as they can still exercise their agency, which brings us to Gramsci’s concept of the ‘system of intellectuals’, who have a potential to develop a counter-hegemonic resistance. As a result of their ability to raise their own and others' critical awareness (e.g., Gramsci (1994) classified intellectuals as "purveyors of consciousness" (p. 14), faculty members can devise tactics and strategies to avoid being subjugated to neoliberal policies and regulations at Kazakhstani HEIs. While some might demonstrate overt resistance to new norms that stand in sharp contrast to the values that were previously espoused, other faculty members might resort to covert practices when coping with the neoliberal technologies of governmentality.

Table 2. Research questions informed by Foucault	
1. RQs on governmentality:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the nature of HE governance in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan? Is Kazakhstan's post-Soviet approach to HE governance an instance of neoliberal governmentality? • What was the nature of HE governance in the Soviet period? Has there been a change? If yes, how it differs? If no, can we identify a continuity?
3. RQs on self-subjection:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a desirable ‘academic’ subjectivity at Kazakhstani HEIs?

Overall, this discussion of key concepts by Foucault informed the research questions, which are summarised in Table 2 above. I believe Foucault’s notion of governmentality can provide me with a unique approach to the analysis of Kazakhstan’s HE governance. This notion will assist me in better understanding the changes in the governance structure of Kazakhstani HE that are preparing the way for a more arm's length mode of governance that employs, to use Foucault's word, the technologies of governmentality. These technologies of governmentality are part of a wider neoliberal transformation that reflects a change in the mode of production and the political agenda of the party in power. So, the study will explore how the change in academic publishing (the 2011’s publishing requirement) influences the strategic selectivity at Kazakhstani HEIs through the technologies of governmentality. As for Foucault, the chief underlying principle is “governing the forms of self-government” (Lemke, 2002, p. 52), there is a need to specifically focus on how the faculty members allow their self-subjection through self-reflection, self-evaluation, and self-improvement of their academic activity at Kazakhstani HEIs.

1. Bourdieu

Although Foucault's "theory of disciplinary power" and Bourdieu's "theory of symbolic power" are very similar in the sense that both are trying to "come to terms with the increasingly elusive character of power in modern society", Foucault renders it "impossible to identify any determinate social location of the exercise of power or of resistance to its operations" (Cronin, 1996, p.55). Hence, Bourdieu's capacity for "connecting relations of domination both to identifiable social agents and to the institutions of the modern state" (Cronin, 1996, p.55) can be very instrumental to "pay attention to the agents, and how they form and re-articulate structure through negotiation" (Jensen, 2014). So, while Foucault can help to see how the neoliberal technologies of governmentality are becoming integrated into the very structures of Kazakhstani HE governance and sheds light on the modes of objectification that are being employed to make the new 'neoliberal' subjectivities possible for the Kazakhstani faculty members, Bourdieu provides means to connect these neoliberal practices of governance with a more detailed understanding of their realisation and actualisation as power mechanisms, which play a major role in the network of relations between individuals. For instance, with the help of Bourdieu, we can get a more nuanced view of how the increasing prestige of the English language, which has been shaped by the self-subjectification (e.g. as the faculty members internalise that the knowledge of English is necessary to become more competitive and successful in the HE field), is playing out in the relations between various faculty members (e.g. knowing English vs. not knowing English) and affecting the social dynamics at Kazakhstani HEIs (e.g. the conferment of professorship, academic tenure, etc.).

Moreover, there are important parallels between Gramsci and Bourdieu. They converge in their keen interest in the role of cultural norms and values in ensuring domination, as both were aimed at "developing sophisticated notions of class struggle in which culture played a key role" (Burawoy, 2012, p.2). Furthermore, both emphasised the role of state power, as for Gramsci "the state is central to the organisation of hegemony", while for Bourdieu too, "the state is central to maintaining and naturalising this common-sense social order" (Burawoy, 2012, p.1). There is even a convergence between Gramsci's 'ideology' and Bourdieu's 'doxa', which refer "to the learned, fundamental, deep-founded, unconscious beliefs, and values, taken as self-evident universals, which inform an agent's actions and thoughts" (Chovanec, 2018). Thus, it can be stated that some aspects of Gramsci and Bourdieu complement each other well. For instance, while Gramsci can help to theorise about the hegemonic position of the English language in global academia, at the same time accounting for the

possibilities of resistance against its hegemonizing effect within the Kazakhstani system of intellectuals, Bourdieu can help to better understand the ways the linguistic hegemony of English is actually getting reproduced on the daily basis in the relations between the different groups of faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs. So, one of the greatest strengths of Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power is that it offers a far more developed and nuanced account of the reproduction of social structure in advanced capitalist societies. Thus, in the remainder of this chapter, I will elaborate on Bourdieu's explanation of the relationship between power and language, specifically the role of symbolic capital in generating a hierarchy within the intellectual system, and how I aim to apply it to my own research on Kazakhstani HEIs.

According to Bourdieu (2000), "linguistic capital" can be defined as "the legitimate competence in a language as is established by dominant groups, which goes beyond general linguistic proficiency to cultural resources, such as discourse conventions and social norms/values" (p.474). Moreover, for Bourdieu, the linguistic capital is "the product of the relation between a linguistic habitus and a linguistic market (field)" (Bourdieu, 1991, p.17). On the one hand, Bourdieu believes that language can be conceived as "a sub-set of the dispositions which comprise the habitus", as it was "acquired in the course of learning to speak in particular contexts (the family, the peer group, the school, etc.)" (ibid.). Hence, the linguistic habitus is capable of structuring and regulating "the subsequent linguistic practices of an agent" (Bourdieu, 1991, p.17), as it greatly contributes to the development and formation of an individual's linguistic identity (Chovanec, 2018). On the other hand, Bourdieu states that the social world is comprised of "intersecting fields conditioning and constraining the behaviour of individuals" and affecting their "motivational apparatus" (Robinson & Ignatow, 2017, p.951). Hence, one's choice of language use is also determined "by one's relational position in a field", which can be best described as a "site of struggle for power and prestige" (Chovanec, 2018). For example, the Kazakhstani HE can be considered an 'academic' field with a number of different linguistic capitals as key positioners (e.g., English, Russian, Kazakh), where a struggle is taking place between faculty members possessing a different set of linguistic capitals, with their linguistic competencies have been shaped by their respective linguistic habituses.

Bourdieu (1986) also views linguistic capital as being a "symbolic capital", which can be defined as "the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognised as legitimate" (p.17). For example, it can be argued that nowadays the English, as the language most strongly associated with institutional prestige and scholarly reputation, is generally regarded as being one of the most 'valuable' symbolic capitals within the 'academic' fields. However, as "social selves

are always situated at the intersection of multiple and competing social locations (or field positions)” (Decoteau, 2016, p.303), an individual’s linguistic capital can act out differently in the social dynamics of different fields, thus, affecting the respective position of the individual within the social matrix of various fields. For example, at a Kazakhstani University, within the Faculty of Kazakh Philology, the knowledge of the Kazakh language can be recognised as a valuable symbolic capital, while at the Department of Russian Philology, the knowledge of Russian is the most legitimate symbolic capital, which renders the English a less of a symbolic capital in these particular fields. Thus, it can be stated that language, being a symbolic capital, affords its holder a certain symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1992, pp.50-52). So, a certain language can be “arbitrarily defined as superior”, as it acquires and exerts “power over other capitals, instead of being recognised as just one form of it”, thus “legitimising its greater share of social resources” (Gartmann, 2012, p.970). In particular, the fact that symbolic power can be employed to “legitimise the arbitrary and unequal distribution of resources, subjective hopes and objective chances in society” should be highlighted (Siisiäinen, 2008, p.4). Therefore, Bourdieu’s concepts of “symbolic capital” and “symbolic power” can be incredibly useful to recognise the language as a mechanism of power at Kazakhstani HEIs.

Moreover, the symbolic capital not only endows its owner with a symbolic power but also with the opportunity to accumulate other forms of capital. Although the process of converting one capital into another is a complex process (e.g. the economic capital is “immediately and directly convertible into money”, while the cultural and social capital are “convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital” (Bourdieu, 1986)), the linguistic capital, depending on “the value that linguistic products receive in fields such as the school, university, labour market, etc.” (p.254) (aka depending on its symbolic power), can potentially be transformed by its holder into other forms of capital. Nevertheless, not only the distribution of symbolic capital is highly uneven, but also, unlike the material forms of capital (e.g., economic capital), the symbolic forms of capital are “affixed upon them through a relationship with subjects capable of perceiving and evaluating them and which demand to be grasped according to their specific logic” (Bourdieu, 2013, p.293). Hence, Bourdieu stressed the fact that symbolic capital hinges on “the representations that agents form of it” (ibid.). In particular, the link between the conversion rates and the field of power should be noted, as the ruling regime can have a major influence on the language’s rates of conversion (e.g., Russian had a high conversion rate during the Soviet rule). Therefore, the conversion rates between different forms of capital are not constant and can undergo changes (e.g. the impact of the collapse of the Soviet Union on the conversion rates of the Russian language), as what (e.g. the research publications in Russian) could previously be easily exchanged into a cultural capital (e.g. academic qualifications like Ph.D.) or guarantee an economic capital (e.g. monetary reward in form of honorarium), now can have a less

symbolic value with the low rates of conversion into a qualification or profit. Therefore, Bourdieu can be highly instrumental in discerning the varying levels of recognition and prestige being placed on English, Russian, and Kazakh languages at Kazakhstani HEIs.

However, it should also be noted that “any capital, whatever the form it assumes, exerts a symbolic violence as soon as it is recognised, that is, mis-recognised in its truth as capital and imposes itself as an authority calling for recognition” (Bourdieu, 2013). So, a language can be viewed as not only a source of symbolic power but also as of potential symbolic violence, since individuals may rely on language not only to understand others and relate to social reality but also to dominate and define the meaning for others, as language entails a possibility to construct and modify the reality. Therefore, the role of “symbolic order” in creating, maintaining, and reproducing social hierarchies needs to be emphasised. Since Bourdieu’s (1989) focus was the social hierarchy and class structure of modern capitalist societies, it is important to consider that “not all judgments have the same weight, and holders of large amounts of symbolic capital are in a position to impose the scale of values most favourable to their products” (p.21). So, in line with “the ranked diversity of beliefs and tastes corresponding to different classes”, the symbolic powers of various linguistic capitals are also part of “the broader symbolic order through which the hierarchies of society, and the meanings of those hierarchies, are stabilised and made normal” (Burawoy & Von Holdt, 2012, p.10). As faculty members, by possessing a different set of linguistic skills, and being representatives of different linguistic communities, can cluster along the linguistic lines, it is important to gain insight into the ways these different ‘linguistic ’groups of faculty members are managing their symbolic powers in order to better understand how the symbolic order at Kazakhstani HEIs is maintained and getting reproduced. However, it does not mean that the symbolic power of certain language is undisputed or irreversible. As a symbolic order is rather “contested, fluid, ambiguous”, the dominance of certain symbolic order is always dependent on its continuous internalisation by individuals, and its incorporation into the habitus in order for it to “get settled into common-sense shape” (Burawoy & Von Holdt, 2012, p.1). Thus, Bourdieu (1992) refers to the “complicated ways in which linguistic practices and products are caught up in, and molded by, the forms of power and inequality, which are pervasive features of societies as they actually exist”. All in all, using Bourdieu's concept of "symbolic order," I will attempt to comprehend the hierarchy of language use at Kazakhstani HEIs by learning about the symbolic power of various linguistic skills (English, Russian, Kazakh), as well as their impact on the strategic selectivity that informs the hierarchy that characterises the Kazakhstani intellectual system.

Table 3. Research questions informed by Bourdieu

1. RQs on symbolic value/ symbolic power:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What symbolic value does different linguistic capitals (Kazakh, Russian and English) have at Kazakhstani HEIs? How the symbolic powers of different linguistic capitals affect the research and publishing practices at Kazakhstani HEIs?
2. RQs on conversion rates:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the conversion rates of different linguistic capitals at Kazakhstani HEIs? How the symbolic powers of different linguistic capitals influence the faculty members' promotion and tenure, including the awarding of academic ranks, at Kazakhstani HEIs?
3. RQs on symbolic order:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the structure of symbolic order at Kazakhstani HEIs?• How this symbolic order is reflected in the hierarchy among faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs?

Overall, Bourdieu's ideas provide valuable insight and inform the set of research questions, which are outlined in Table 3 above. Bourdieu's concepts help to see how the normalisation of new linguistic practices is being made possible within the Kazakhstani academia, and the dominance of the English language is getting reproduced through the establishment of relevant hierarchical arrangements at HEIs. This affects the possibilities of faculty members, having a different set of linguistic capital, and corresponding symbolic powers, to take or not to take a decent part in the knowledge production process at Kazakhstani HEIs. The next chapters, which provide a brief historical overview of the Soviet and post-Soviet periods before delving into the Kazakhstani HE system, will provide some answers to my research questions, while interviews with faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs will hopefully provide others.

In this chapter, I discussed the key concepts by Gramsci, Foucault, and Bourdieu on which I relied to develop an analytical framework for my study. Firstly, Gramsci's notion of hegemony promises to offer a more holistic view of Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transformation informed by a combination of coercion and consent that ensures the legitimacy and sustainability of a new government guiding the Kazakhstani nation in the post-independence era. A Gramscian perspective also can help to pay closer attention to the role of faculty members, as part of a system of intellectuals, in establishing the ideational dimension of the post-soviet hegemony in Kazakhstan. Secondly, Foucault and his notion of 'governmentality' can be highly instrumental in developing a more nuanced understanding of the HE governance and the regime of control that surrounds academic publishing in the Kazakhstani HE system, as his perspective lends itself well to identifying power relations and dynamics. Thirdly, drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of "symbolic capital", "symbolic power", and "symbolic order", I will try to better understand the hierarchy of language use at Kazakhstani HEIs, and get an insight

into what meaning, value, and prestige the various linguistic mediums of research publication (English, Kazakh, and Russian) have.

Chapter III
OVERVIEW
OF
KAZAKHSTAN'S POST-
SOVIET
TRANSFORMATION

1. Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition as a "passive revolution"

After the introduction of key theoretical concepts developed by Gramsci, Foucault, and Bourdieu and identifying some general research questions, I will now move on to discuss how they help us understand Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transformation. At the centre is the transformation of the relationship between the economy and the state, the set-up of political society in this context, and the state-civil society articulation. So, I will engage in a brief overview of Kazakhstan's Soviet past and post-Soviet present with a view to identifying important enabling conditions and containing conditions of the nation-building in Kazakhstan. Due to the CR nature of my research, in the conduct of a historical overview, I will rely on analytical tools of "abduction" and "retroduction", which were developed by Charles S. Peirce, and hold the promise of explaining occurrences on empirical level by identifying causal mechanisms within the real domain that are capable of producing them.

I will start with 'abduction', which corresponds to the first stage of inquiry (Mcauliffe, 2015) to describe my phenomenon of interest - Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition and transformation. The 'abductive inference' can be viewed as a "means of interpreting and redescribing different components/aspects from hypothetical frameworks and theories" (Meyer & Lunnay, 2013). Drawing on Gramsci, I will show in this chapter that Kazakhstan's nation-building can be conceived as a composite 'post-Soviet' hegemonic project (encompassing economic, political, and socio-cultural projects), which entailed major changes, but is also characterised by many continuities, as it does not stand for a full break with the Soviet legacy after the 'organic crisis' induced by the collapse of Soviet Union, but as an instance of 'passive revolution' gave way to the nomenklatura-driven transformations.

Firstly, in line with the Gramscian analytical framework inspired by Jessop, I want to conceptualise Kazakhstan's post-Soviet nation-building as a composite 'hegemonic project', as this notion sheds light on contestations that are particularly strong in a moment of interregnum, when "the old is dying and the new cannot be born" (Gramsci, 1971 p. 275). In this situation, a number of different projects, economic, political, and socio-cultural, compete with each other in order to make up a post-Soviet hegemonic project. According to Jessop (2016), in order "to fully understand any hegemonic project, one must analyse it as an attempt to", firstly, "devise an economic strategy for national survival in a specific historical conjuncture of the capitalist world system" (the economic accumulation strategy); secondly, "reorganise the mode of functioning of the state apparatus accordingly through the formulation of a specific governmental rationality" (the political system); and thirdly, "disseminate a

specific set of social philosophical values of what constitutes a just society” (the ideological vision) (Jessop, 2016). Drawing on this perspective, in my account of the broader context of my empirical study, I will distinguish between different projects that make up the post-Soviet nation-building Kazakhstan was engaged with after the fall of the Soviet Union: the economic project of transition to a market economy to establish an ‘economic accumulation strategy’, the political project of democratisation to set the ‘organisational agenda for institution-building’ and the socio-cultural project of identity-building to devise a new ‘ideological vision’.

However, it is also necessary to clarify that, first, the hegemony of Soviet rule had to end and its hegemonic projects (e.g., communism, command economy, Sovietisation, etc.) had to fail, allowing the new ‘post-Soviet’ hegemony to replace it and alternative hegemonic projects (e.g., neoliberal market economy, liberal-democracy, etc.) to be attempted in newly-independent Kazakhstan. Hence, Gramsci’s concept of “organic crisis” can be particularly helpful in explaining the failure of Soviet hegemony that led to the eventual dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. As outlined in the previous chapter, Gramsci understands an ‘organic crisis’ as a specific type of crisis. With the hegemonic projects no longer coming across as appealing to the masses, and the ruling regime no longer being able to generate a consensus, the ‘organic crisis’ occurs when there are indications of “incurable contradictions” in the very structure of a ruling order (Gramsci, 1996). But in order to fully understand the concept of organic crisis, it is important to realise that the organic crisis is not just a temporary difficulty that any regime usually encounters from time to time (Fazi, 2018), but rather “a confluence of crises in nearly every sphere”. For Gramsci, the ‘organic crisis’ is rooted in “a comprehensive breakdown, one that encompasses all elements of society – economic, social, political, and ideological” (Dawson, 2018). Along these lines, we can understand the crisis the Soviet Union encountered as an ‘organic crisis’: given the major economic decline, policy failure, a weakening ideology, and rising counter-hegemonic nationalism, this major crisis qualifies to be termed as an “organic crisis” (Due to limited space, a brief discussion of the main reasons behind the “organic crisis” that led to the fall of Soviet Union is provided in Appendix 4).

So, as the Soviet Union fell apart, and the faith in the viability of the Soviet hegemonic projects faded, “a profound restructuring of the institutions of and conditions for social reproduction” had to take place in post-Soviet Kazakhstan (Gill, 2012). However, I argued that the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as an ‘organic crisis’, rather gave way to the elite-driven and elite-controlled transformations in post-Soviet Kazakhstan in the form of a ‘passive revolution’ characterised by major changes, but also by many continuities. As outlined in the previous chapter, unlike the ‘war of manoeuvre’, which

is characterised by a radical, abrupt change that “erupts the established order” (Ortner, 2022), the ‘passive revolution’, which can be viewed as “revolution without revolution”, is a “slow and well-controlled process” (Katz, 2010). So, with Nursultan Nazarbayev, as the first secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party, automatically becoming the first President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and many members of the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party also retaining their positions of power, the power bloc of the post-Soviet Kazakhstan can be best characterised as a ‘nomenclature’ ruling elite.

So, the ruling class that came into power in Kazakhstan after the end of the Soviet Union resembled in many respects this Soviet nomenklatura elite, with the continuity of personnel, but also in terms of the political, as well as economic privileges they secured. On the one hand, the nomenklatura elite of Kazakhstan, by occupying important positions of power, exerted major control over the post-Soviet Kazakhstani ‘political society’. It could have been assumed that, under the neoliberal conditions, a completely new ruling elite will emerge in Kazakhstan to replace the traditional, ‘nomenklatura’ ruling elite of the Soviet period (as was case in the post-Soviet Czech Republic, for example (Kryshtanovskaya & White, 1996)), as they would appear as “ill-suited” to run the new Kazakhstani state, especially to lead the pro-market and pro-democratic reforms. However, “the comprehensive transition in formal political, economic and social institutions masked a considerable degree of power continuity” (Murphy, 2006), since the ‘nomenklatura’ ruling elite, now embracing the marketisation and democratisation reforms, proved to be highly persistent in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan. Moreover, it can be stated that the Kazakhstani nomenklatura elite not only managed to retain their political power but through possession of high-ranking political positions was also able to acquire economic resources that helped them to consolidate their economic dominance. So, on the other hand, the nomenklatura ruling elite has also been dominating the Kazakhstani economy with its command over the main industry sectors and major private businesses (e.g., they hold interests in banking, mining, oil and gas, metals, etc.). Moreover, the patron–client schemes have become an important mechanism for the accumulation and redistribution of economic resources among the ruling elite in Kazakhstan (e.g. legalising informal incomes, illicit payments, illegal takeover of businesses, fraud, etc.). Thus, the elite loyalty ties and informal networks, derived from the former Communist Party membership, the family-clan belonging, or other personal connections, have greatly structured the political society and the economic landscape of the post-Soviet Kazakhstan (Franke et al, 2009).

However, it cannot be stated that there was no change at all in the ranks of the ruling elite, and the ‘political society’ of post-Soviet Kazakhstan remained exactly the same as it was before the fall of the

Soviet Union in 1991. Although it was the 'nomenclature' elite who was in power after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the post-Soviet period did also mark the advent of a completely new 'business' elite - a younger generation of entrepreneurs, less involved with the Communist Party (Murphy, 2006, p.545). Their emergence took place due to "practically free central credit that the National Bank gave out in early years of independence" and led to their concentration in the financial and banking spheres (Satpayev, 2005). Although this emerging 'business' elite was able to accumulate their capital "thanks in large part to economic liberalisation, economic relations created by the transition from a planned to a market economy, and the legalisation of the institution of private property", their willingness to convert their economic powers into political, and access Kazakhstan's 'political society' had limited success (ibid.). On the one hand, some of this emerging 'business' elite has been effectively co-opted and assimilated into Nazarbayev's regime. On the other hand, the 'nomenklatura' elite have also tried to repress and eliminate some representatives of this new 'business' elite, in order to prevent their rise to political influence in Kazakhstan, especially, in case of suspected sympathy with the liberal opposition (e.g., through illegal takeover of businesses, legal harassment, assassinations etc.). Thus, the fall of the Soviet Union did not necessarily lead to the complete change of a ruling elite (e.g. through lustration) in Kazakhstan, but rather resulted in the rejuvenation of the old Soviet 'nomenklatura' elite, which either co-opting or eliminating the representatives of a new 'business' elite, gained a strong foothold in both political and economic spheres of a new Kazakhstan. All in all, it can be stated that Kazakhstan's post-Soviet ruling elite is not a monolithic group, "but consists of different groups, subgroups, and key personalities, whose level of influence directly depends on their degree of proximity to the main centre of political decision making-the country's president" (e.g. the inner circle: president's family, companions, proteges; the outer circle: business elite, regional elite), and hinges on the balance of power reached between these elite groupings (Satpayev, 2005). All these adductive inferences discussed above are summarised in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Abductive inferences	
1.	Drawing Gramsci, I seek to explore whether the Soviet Union, facing the major economic decline, failing state apparatus, weakening ideology, and rising counter-hegemonic nationalism, was hit by a major crisis that qualifies to be termed as an ‘organic crisis’.
2.	However, I would like to show that the dissolution of Soviet Union, as an ‘organic crises’, gave way to the ruling elite-driven transformations in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan in form of a ‘passive revolution’, to use Gramscian term.
3.	Thus, Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet nation-building efforts, as an ongoing ‘passive revolution’, which has been framed into a new hegemonic project with corresponding economic accumulation strategy (the economic project of pro-market transition), organisational agenda for institution-building (the political project of democratisation) and ideological vision (the ideological project of Kazakhization), entailed major changes but is also characterised by many continuities with Soviet legacy.

Secondly, I will rely on the analytical tool of ‘retroduction’, which is “a means of knowing the conditions fundamental to the existence of phenomena” (Mcauliffe, 2015) in order to understand what is basically constitutive of Kazakhstan’s ‘post-Soviet’ hegemony and hegemonic projects. As the goal is “identifying the circumstances without which something (in my case the post-Soviet hegemony in Kazakhstan) cannot exist” (Meyer & Lunnay, 2013), I will take Gramsci’s conception of an ‘integral state’ as a primary reference point. As Gramscian concept of ‘hegemony’ entails a certain configuration between the base, political society, and civil society (e.g. the ruling class needs to have control over the means of production (economic force), the state with its repressive apparatus (coercion), and exert an ideational power over the civil society (consent)). Thus, re-constructing the interconnection between these three can be a useful way to analyse the constitutive factors that make Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet hegemony and hegemonic projects possible. Furthermore, depending on the articulation of the economy, state, and civil society, the social compromise struck between the ruling and the ruled is a key component of hegemonic dominance. By extending the frame of reference back to the Soviet period, I will be able to pinpoint the major changes and main continuities that took place with the shift from ‘Soviet’ hegemonic project to an emergent ‘post-Soviet’ hegemonic project of Kazakhstan. I assumed that the unique combination of changes from and continuities with Soviet times is what actually characterises Kazakhstan’s nation-building as a ‘post-Soviet’ hegemonic project.

2. The economic dimension

First of all, there has been a shift in Kazakhstan’s mode of production in the post-Soviet period. The Soviet Union used to be a centrally planned, command economy, which was based on state-

ownership of the means of production. However, with major economic strains experienced throughout the Soviet Union (e.g. inefficiency, shortages, and stagnation), it can be stated that “the crisis of the prevailing mode of production” (one of the reasons, among others, of organic crisis) was becoming apparent in the late Soviet period (Simon, 2010). So, with the fall of the Soviet Union, it was believed that Kazakhstan’s survival and economic development can be attained by the shift to the capitalist mode of production. Thus, the Kazakhstani economy, which was characterised by the ‘socialist ’ mode of production (the state ownership of the means of production) during the Soviet times, has been in the process of transitioning to a capitalist mode of production (the private ownership of the means of production) in the post-Soviet period. This pro-market transformation was an integral part of Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet hegemonic project undertaken by the ‘nomenklatura ’ ruling elite after the fall of the Soviet Union.

So, there was a general consensus among the reformers, both internal (the members of the Kazakhstani government) and external (the foreign experts and advisers on the transition) (Larsson, 2010), on the preference for a market economy. In light of growing disenchantment with the centrally-planned, command Soviet economy, it was commonly accepted that the post-Soviet states should be transitioning “in the direction of a market economy” (Aslund et al, 1996, p.228), as “the private ownership of production is by definition more efficient than state ownership”, and will become “the quickest path to economic growth” (Dresen, 2011). However, in the moment of interregnum that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, there has been a major contestation over how to best secure this transition to the capitalist mode of production, and what should be the speed and sequence of these pro-market reforms. On one hand, a group of radical reformers argued in favour of the immediate and rapid introduction of market reforms in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. This so-called “shock therapy” approach emphasised that the shift from a command economy to a free market economy necessitated drastic reforms (Pettman & Papava, 2005, p.78). This course of radical economic reforms was based on the Washington Consensus, the policy prescriptions advocated by a number of “Washington-based institutions” such as the International Monetary Foundation, World Bank, and the US Treasury Department (Williamson, 2000). Moreover, this reform package was also attached to loans, as the state embarking on such a “structural adjustment program” gained access to credit from these international financial institutions.

On the other hand, another faction of reformers was committed to a different idea on how the market reforms should be implemented in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. The rationale given by this faction was that gradualism provided a more organic alternative to the radical ‘shock therapy ’ approach. This

gradualist approach was based on the idea that instead of embarking on major market reforms all at once, a slower-paced and peace-meal introduction of changes will yield better results (Dewatripont and Roland, 1992; North, 1994; Stiglitz, 1999; Arrow, 2000). It was emphasised that such a gradualist strategy could help to minimise the social costs associated with a transition such as economic recession, falling output, unemployment, high inflation, and deteriorating living standards (Murrell, 1992; King, 2002). Moreover, this evolutionary approach advocated the need to first create the institutional conditions and ensure the structural changes necessary for capitalist development (e.g., institutional mechanisms to enforce the rule of law, ensure competition, and protect property rights in a newly formed free-market economy) (Hecht, 1994; Liew, 1995; Popov, 2000; Roland, 2001).

So, what was the outcome of this ideational contestation over different strategies of economic development (shock therapy vs. gradualism) available to the post-Soviet Kazakhstani state? The final decision tilted towards "shock therapy", as the post-Soviet Kazakhstan, following the Russian example, opted for radical reforms. Pomfret (2005) attributes this decision to the fact that Kazakhstan's "economic policy in 1992-94 was driven in large measure by President Nazarbayev's attempts to maintain close economic ties with Russia" (p.859). However, set against the backdrop of the dire economic situation in Kazakhstan, it can also be argued that the choice of 'shock therapy' approach was fuelled by the "desire to get more tangible results over a shorter period of time", as it raised optimistic expectations that "moving rapidly forward with economic reforms will bring prosperity, albeit through a difficult transition" (Nurumov & Vashchanka, 2019). Moreover, the neoliberal policymakers also pointed to the need to take advantage of a period of extraordinary politics following the collapse of communism", which provided a brief window of opportunity to implement reforms" (Svejnar, 2002, p.4). So, Svejnar (2002) stated that this hastiness was fuelled by concern that the "managers and workers of state-owned enterprise might seek to halt, or even roll back, privatisation and liberalisation efforts to prevent layoffs and other social costs" (p.4). Thus, the post-Soviet Kazakhstani state promptly embarked on price liberalisation, privatisation, trade liberalisation, and macroeconomic stabilisation to ensure a rapid transition to a capitalist economy (The "shock therapy" reforms in Kazakhstan are outlined in more detail in Appendix 1).

Although the hallmark of adopted 'shock therapy' was the need for "rapid and comprehensive reforms" (Larsson, 2010, p.12), as Kazakhstan had to quickly "stabilise, privatise, and liberalise" (Rodrick, 2006, p.1), the pro-market transition is not only about "how rapidly these measures should be implemented", but also "to what extent they should be directed by the government, and how freely the market should be allowed to act" (Larsson, 2010). Hence, it is important to look at the articulation

between state and economy, which was produced as a result of 'shock therapy' in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. The 'Washington Consensus' policy prescriptions embraced by the Kazakhstani state are founded on free market principles, which asserted that "states ought to abstain from intervening in the economy, and instead leave as much as possible up to individuals participating in free and self-regulating markets" (Thorsen, 2010). So, the 'shock therapy' reforms tried to reduce the role of the state to a bare minimum, as the Kazakhstani state needed to withdraw from regulating the economic activities and restrict itself to the task of ensuring a stable macroeconomic framework to enable a successful policy reform. Firstly, as the prices for consumer goods and services used to be set and controlled by the government during Soviet times," the ambitious dismantling of price controls began in January 1992 in Kazakhstan" (de Broek, 1997, p.195). Secondly, the restructuring of state-owned enterprises started to be undertaken in Kazakhstan in 1992 to facilitate the establishment of the private sector and foster the proliferation of small and medium-sized firms (Estrin et al. 2009). Thirdly, as Kazakhstan abolished the state monopoly and liberalised trade, introducing the national currency and making it convertible was a major step taken in 1993 to facilitate both internal and external trade (Akimov & Dollery, 2014). Lastly, Kazakhstan started the implementation of its policy of macroeconomic stabilisation in 1994, which was based on the principles of monetarism, and emphasised the need to increase the interest rates, while decreasing the government spending (Woźniak, 2008).

Although the "shock therapy" reforms did facilitate the establishment of a free market economy in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, which adopted a number of market economy features (e.g. private property, market relations, market pricing mechanisms, maximisation of profit, integration into the global economy, etc.), and has been characterised by a relatively higher level of marketisation in comparison to other Central Asian states (e.g. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan resisted more strongly the move to a free market economy), it retained "certain elements of the Soviet command-based administrative system" (Satpayev, 2005, p.284). Whilst communism entails collective ownership of the means of production by the proletariat, in reality, the productive forces in the Soviet Union were administered by the Soviet state on behalf of Soviet workers, as the Soviet state had to be regarded as a representative and trustee of all Soviet workers. So, the production and allocation of goods were highly centralised in the Soviet Union and managed by the Soviet state through "five-year" plans (a set of economic and social targets) and a range of state organisations such as the Supreme Board of the National Economy, the Gosplan and Gosstab. Thus, the Soviet Union can be classified as a case of state socialism: a centrally planned command economy characterised by the state ownership of the means of production, which was governed through the Communist Party directives and regulations.

As a consequence, despite the large-scale privatisation of the 1990s, the Kazakhstani state still controls a number of sectors of the national economy through state-owned enterprises and tries to ensure the state coordination of the economy. For example, the “most important industries are organised into large groups of companies owned and managed by independent national managing holdings, with politically powerful people on their boards and in top management” (e.g. the Kazakhstani state controls “the shares in the largest firms in all branches of the oil, gas sector, transport sector, postal sector, mobile services, electricity distribution, generation, and supply”) (OECD, 2017). The ownership structure of the oil sector, due to its major importance in Kazakhstan, requires special attention. Initially, the oil rights were sold to major international oil companies (e.g. Chevron in 1993, Mobil in 1996), as the Kazakhstani oil was “relatively expensive and technically difficult to extract, thus requiring Western help to develop and exploit it” (Groce, 2020). However, in the early 2000s, this trend was reversed by the “massive re-nationalisation scheme”, as “the government shifted the oil ownership structure toward greater involvement by state-owned institutions” (e.g. KazMunaiGas). Although the state-owned enterprises play a major role in the social compromise, “as providers of employment”, “suppliers of goods and services”, (and as a source of resource rent, in the case of the oil sector), such degree of state ownership also “creates market distortions” and “hampers the development of a private sector” (Azour, 2021). So, calls have been made to “reduce the state’s footprint in the economy, by reassessing and reducing the role of state-owned enterprises and by ensuring a level playing field for competition” (IMF, 2022). Hence, it can be stated that Kazakhstan, as a largely state-led market economy, maintained some aspects of the Soviet command economy. Thus, with the political apparatus dominating the economic base, it can be stated that the Kazakhstani economy, as a result of neoliberal reforms, has moved from the state socialism of the Soviet era to state capitalism in the post-Soviet period.

Next, it is important to look at who stood to gain from Kazakhstan’s pro-market reforms. So, if we question what these swift pro-market changes truly accomplished, we can see that there are winners and losers in this economic shift, with riches delivered to some but not to the majority of Kazakhstanis in the 1990s. On the one hand, it can be stated that the fast-track ‘shock therapy’ has largely benefited the ruling elite of post-Soviet Kazakhstan, who utilised their political power to divert the economic transition to their advantage. The privatisation can serve as a great illustration. Although the initial small-scale privatisation in 1992 (Jermakowicz et al, 1996) caused no major complaints, the following phases of restructuring the medium and large-scale state-owned enterprises in the period between 1993-1995 (the 2nd and 3rd stages of privatisation), to facilitate the establishment of the

private sector, has become associated with amassing of fortune by the nomenklatura elite and creation of a new class of oligarchs in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan (Pomfret, 2005, p.864). So, not only did “the vague definition of the conditions for privatisation” result in chaotic privatisation characterised by widespread corruption and rampant rent-seeking behaviour (Saab & Kumar, 1997, p.188), but the privatisation was also widely abused as an instrument of redistribution and concentration of economic and political power” (Vlácil, 1996, p.30). Thus, it can be concluded that the initial transition to a market-based economy in Kazakhstan has taken a path that was lucrative to the nomenklatura ruling elite, as they now became a propertied, asset-rich class in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

Although the economic transition of such scale can generally be regarded as a costly process, as post-Soviet Kazakhstan experienced a severe recession, rampant inflation, and growing unemployment in the 90s, the costs of this transition were not distributed evenly. So, it was the Kazakhstani people who endured most of the economic hardship that accompanied the rapid shift to capitalism. Firstly, considerable inequality was produced due to the “negative distributive effects” of price liberalisation programs (Birdsall & Nellis, 2005), while the hyperinflation led to a substantial erosion in the real income of the general Kazakhstani population (Buyers, 2003). Moreover, the transformation of the labour market left some people unable to secure stable employment and a decent income, while “the breakdown of social safety nets was endemic in the early 1990s” (Shahbaz et al. 2017, p.5337). Hence, the diminished role of the Kazakhstani state, as an agent of redistribution and social provision, also exacerbated the social inequality in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. Although the negative distributive effects of the “massive transfer of wealth from the welfare state and working-class people into private capital” were justified as a byproduct of compliance with the market principles, which liberalised the controlled market, allowing the free market forces to take over, many felt that the neoliberal policy reforms aggravated the social injustice.

However, as the state is responsible for regulating class conflicts and maintaining social cohesion (Jessop, 2002), one can ask how the Kazakhstani state was able to manage this growing strain between the haves and the have-nots. The rising social tensions regarding the differential outcomes of pro-market reforms were mediated through the institutional arrangements (e.g. economic rentierism) and external trade patterns (e.g., dependence on the export of natural resources) inherited from the Soviet state. Firstly, it is necessary to note that despite the high social costs of shock therapy, “the biggest payoff to Kazakhstan from its more market-friendly economic policies” has been “the large inflows of foreign direct investment”, in particular, into the extractive sector (World Bank, 2000). So, notwithstanding the continued state control over the key industrial sectors (e.g., the extraction

industry and infrastructure), post-Soviet Kazakhstan exhibited openness to foreign investment. Seeking to attract more FDI, Kazakhstan “conducted a policy of ensuring macroeconomic environment stability” to enhance “the investment climate within the country” (Lee, 2010, p.86). Thus, “the dramatic fall in net public wealth”, which took place “between 1990 and 1995, following the so-called shock therapy and voucher privatisation” (Novokmet et al. 2017), gradually gave way to improvement in the welfare of the majority of Kazakhstanis, as the Kazakhstani state managed to generate major economic growth in the 2000s (Larsson, 2010) through the surge in the export of natural resources (Shahbaz et al. 2017, p.5337). On the one hand, the FDI to the oil sector (~\$3-4 billion per annum) had a positive spillover effect on the rest of the Kazakhstani economy (IMF, 2004) by stimulating the development of non-oil (but oil-related) industries (ADB, 2018)). On the other hand, the “impacts of the oil boom through the labor market” also helped to alleviate poverty and improve the living conditions of Kazakhstani people (Pomfret, 2012, p.153). Although “the direct employment impact of the oil-and-gas industry on national employment has been small”, the growth of the oil sector still helped to redistribute wealth by way of employment, as the “spending of oil rents by the public and private sectors supports the growth of services in other sectors that are relatively labour-intensive” (Atakhanova, 2018). Therefore, it can be argued that “the resource boom”, mainly produced by the oil sector, considerably reduced the social tensions in the 2000s, which was building up in Kazakhstan throughout the 1990s, and helped to remove the pressure from the Kazakhstani state for some time (e.g. until the periods of low oil prices and devaluation crises in 2009, 2014, 2019, when the poverty rate started to rise again). All in all, the Kazakhstani state felt the need to make a social compromise that aimed to improve the welfare of the majority, to timely mediate the rising social tensions and maintain the social cohesion needed for the longevity of post-Soviet hegemony, while the extraction sector, which has been the most crucial in terms of, generating the GDP growth and creating employment, played a major role in this social compromise.

As the positive economic outcomes of Kazakhstan’s pro-market reforms were largely driven by the “resource boom”, which was fuelled by the “high world prices for oil and gas”, “rather than by emergence of new activities” (Pomfret, 2005; Pomfret, 2021), the Kazakhstani economy should be defined as rentier capitalism, which is a form of capitalism that is “organised around rent extraction rather than wealth creation” (Sanghera & Satybaldieva, 2022). Drawing on Gramsci, we can argue that any hegemonic project, to be successful, needs to be backed by a viable “economic accumulation strategy” (Jessop, 2016). So, the post-Soviet Kazakhstani economy generally rests on the ‘oil-fueled’ accumulation strategy with “fossil capital” as the leading fraction of this economic accumulation strategy. The economic role of a resource provider assigned to Kazakhstan during the Soviet period

also paved the way for economic rentierism in post-Soviet Kazakstan. Although the discovery of oil on the territory of Kazakhstan happened in the pre-Soviet period (in 1899), with the establishment Soviet Union, oil production has been rapidly expanding (Kanapiyanova, 2019, p.29). So, with the development of new fields, Soviet Kazakhstan became the second largest producer of oil in the Soviet Union (Kanapiyanova, 2019, p.29). Thus, as Soviet Kazakhstan's economic model was already heavily reliant on oil extraction, this Soviet-era structure of production incentivised the economic rentierism of the newly independent Kazakhstani state (Sairanen, 2019).

As was noted earlier, the Kazakhstani state controls access to its lucrative oil industry, which makes it "the principal recipient of the external rent in the economy" (Beblawi, 1990, p.88). However, as the Kazakhstani state is also "a site of social struggle over the institutionalisation and enforcement of rent relations, and the appropriation and distribution of surplus value" (Andreucci et al., 2017), the structural selectivity of the Kazakhstani state, which "consists in a complex set of institutional mechanisms and political practices that serve to advance particular fractional or class interests" needs to be highlighted (Jessop, 2016). Hence, I want to emphasise the selectiveness of the 'oil-fuelled' economic accumulation strategy with the Kazakhstani elites seeking to "establish the parameters for strategic selectivity" in ways that support their economic interests (Clark & Jones, 2012). So, it can be argued that the external rent from the oil and gas sector has largely profited the high-ranking officials in the government and the national oil-gas corporations, while the widespread corruption has also encouraged the misappropriation and mismanagement of revenues from oil resources (e.g. the senior state officials are prone to plunder the oil revenue, as the deals between government and oil companies lacked transparency). Thus, the lucrative extractive industry has increasingly constituted the Kazakhstani ruling elite's economic base in the post-Soviet period (Ostrowski, 2009). So, instead of oil wealth being redistributed back to the Kazakhstani population, the calculated allocation of resource revenues takes place among the ruling elite by delivering profits for the relevant political allies through the "patron-client relations embedded in the country's energy sector" (Groce, 2020, p.480). Thus, the tendency for the autocratic rulers of rentier states like Kazakhstan to "siphon off the oil funds for themselves and rent-seeking elites at the expense of delivering goods to citizens" needs to be underlined (McCullaugh, 2013).

So, despite the stable streams of revenue from market-driven extraction of natural resources, the Kazakhstani state is still struggling to close the income gap and promote inclusive growth. Although "a steady growth ensured by the extractive industry contributed to an increase in government expenditures in health care, education, and social protection in absolute terms" (UNICEF, 2015), the

domestic spending in Kazakhstan, including social assistance spending, is still lower than both the regional average and the average for its income group (World Bank, 2020). Moreover, there is also a likelihood for targeted increases in public spending before major political events such as elections in rentier states like Kazakhstan, as evident in manipulations of fiscal policies and fiscal deficits (e.g. initiating and inaugurating public projects like new factories, roads, schools, and other public facilities before election) (Kendall-Taylor, 2012). Furthermore, the Kazakhstani state also tends to spend a lot of money on image-oriented, prestige-enhancing, “populist” projects, which can be “highly powerful symbolically but economically senseless” (Franke et al, 2009). Thus, it would not be misleading to state that the distribution mechanisms in Kazakhstan “lack general welfare orientation” and “intended to purchase support where needed” (Franke et al, 2009). Therefore, though the oil and gas revenues allowed the Kazakhstani state to partially resolve the social tensions by producing economic growth, this accumulation strategy, which has had an uneven impact on populations’ economic conditions and a modest increase in social welfare, can fail to act as a placating factor against public discontent in the long-run potentially aggravating the quality of the post-Soviet hegemony.

This becomes even more acute in the light of overall instability of the ‘carbon’ accumulation strategy. As the ‘carbon’ accumulation strategy is primarily based on one strategic capital, the oil, and is fuelled by the global oil extraction industry, this leads to a heavy dependence on oil revenue. So, the limits of the oil-fuelled accumulation regime already began to appear in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. With the fall in oil prices in 2008, the volatility of oil prices has become a major source of threat to the economic stability of Kazakhstan, which can potentially lead to a deep accumulation crisis. Hence, the Kazakhstani state began to acknowledge the need for “diversifying its industrial base beyond the oil sector to improve income distribution and job opportunities” (Shahbaz, 2017; Pomfret, 2021).

In summary, in the moment of interregnum that the collapse of the Soviet Union created, several different pro-market reform projects emerged, competing with each other. Although the economic project of ‘shock therapy’ gained momentum, which entailed a set of radical and comprehensive neoliberal reforms, post-Soviet Kazakhstan can be viewed as a case of economy with the main elements of market economy (e.g. private property and market relations) coexisting side by side with the residual institutional arrangements of the Soviet period (e.g. tight state control and coordination of economy; economic rentierism and dependence on export of natural resources), which the Kazakhstani state used to further its own variety of state capitalism. In this regard, the state ownership of natural resources in Kazakhstan should be specifically emphasised, as the degree of state

dependency on natural resources makes it possible to determine an economy-state nexus in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. So, Kazakhstan's articulation between the state and economy, whereby the state has direct access to the revenue generated by economy by the way of ownership, is very different from the 'economy-state nexus', where the access to the wealth generated by the economy is mediated via a tax regime. Thus, post-Soviet Kazakhstan can be best described as a state-led, rentier capitalism heavily reliant on the "oil-fuelled" economic accumulation strategy. Not only the premise that underlay the Kazakhstani economic reforms was that the "shock therapy" would immediately secure the transition to a free market economy, but what was also underestimated by the foreign advisers and domestic reformers was the "footprint of state socialism". So, the fact that the post-Soviet context is not a "tabula rasa" on which the new market institutions can be quickly constructed should be underlined (Lane, 2013). As such neoliberal reforms, like the Washington consensus, are governed by the assumption of the universal applicability of reform packages, there is an acute need to better understand the context where the process of transition to a free-market economy takes place, as "the previous social institutions of socialism are constraints, which can limit and channel the course of reform" (Lane, 2010). Thus, the Gramscian approach can highlight that the Soviet institutional arrangement and patterns, which have existed for decades, can continue in some altered and adapted forms in the post-Soviet period, as some actors, such as the ruling 'nomenklatura' elite of Kazakhstan, can be interested in actively reproducing these Soviet frameworks, which empowers them and builds on norms, values, and institutionalised realities that are taken for granted.

2. The political dimension

Next, the fall of the Soviet Union not only transformed the economic system of Kazakhstan but also affected its political setup, since a new form of government had to be put in place of the communist state apparatus. As post-Soviet Kazakhstan embarked on a transition to liberal democracy, the 'democratisation' project has been serving as an organisational agenda for institution-building, which can be said to be supplying "the individual agents and organs of the state" with "a coherent template or framework" in the post-Soviet period (Jessop, 2016). Kazakhstan's post-Soviet democratisation project also proved divisive by creating disparate interests and expectations among the ruling elite. Initially, the choice of political institutions of democratic government was not contested and was viewed as the most favourable model of development for post-Soviet Kazakhstan. However, certain segments of the power bloc gradually developed contradictory positions toward Kazakhstan's democratisation project, with some growing less willing to facilitate the establishment of genuinely democratic institutions in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. The contestations over the political setup of post-

Soviet Kazakhstan, particularly, reflected in the changes of Kazakhstani constitution, will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

But first, let us go through the key features of the Soviet political system in order to better comprehend what was the starting point of Kazakhstan's political transition. Although the USSR was formally "a federal union" of fifteen national republics (Constitution of the USSR, 1977, Article 81), in fact, the constituent Soviet republics had little autonomy, and the Soviet Union was a highly centralised state-controlled from Moscow (A brief discussion of how Kazakhstan got integrated into the Soviet Union is provided in Appendix 7). The structure of the Soviet government deserves some special attention due to the far-reaching influence of the Communist Party on the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of power. Although there was a formal representative institution in the Soviet Union, the Soviet state was not a liberal-democratic one, as the Soviet citizens had no real say in politics. So, despite the Supreme Soviet being "the sovereign organ of the people" in the Soviet Union (Twoster, 1960, p.237), which legally had "the right to form governments, pass laws, and amend the Constitution" (Little, 1971, p.57), its main function boiled down to approving the political decisions already made by the Communist Party. Moreover, the authority of the executive branch of the Soviet government, which resided with the "Councils of Ministers" (Quigley, 1990, p.209), and the power of the judiciary branch of the Soviet government, which was headed by the "Supreme Court", were also "circumscribed by the top echelon of the Communist Party" (Quigley, 1991, p.69). The lack of separation of power between the Communist Party and the Soviet government resulted in the 'nominal' nature of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the Soviet government, which largely had a decorative function due to "the strong role played by the Communist Party in governmental operations" (Quigley, 1991, p.67). So, it can be argued that the Communist Party not only "effectively controlled the activities of all political institutions" (Little, 1971, p.57), but also "undermined the role of the legislative, executive, and judicial officials" (Quigley, 1990, p.207). Against this backdrop, we gained a better understanding of the major transformation, that post-Soviet Kazakhstan had to undergo, from being an authoritarian, communist state governed by a single party towards the establishment of liberal democracy.

And by no means, the change from authoritarian to democratic regime, in particular the installation of formal democratic institutions and procedures, has been a simple process for Kazakhstan (A brief survey of key democratic institutions established in Kazakhstan in the process of transition towards democracy is provided in Appendix 2). So, the post-Soviet Kazakhstan's democratisation project and the ideational contestations associated with it can be broadly divided into two phases: 1) The period

from 1991 to 1995, which was characterised by a competitive political system gradually taking shape; 2) The period after 1995, which became defined by the onset of political repressions and digression of democracy. So, in the first phase, “in the early 1990s, Kazakhstan was moving towards a kind of managed democracy” (Olcott, 2010, p.95). This found a reflection in a limited, representative government, which was structured by the Constitution of 1993 that puts emphasis on the parliamentary structure and gives broader power to the legislature. And as “the legislature was beginning to develop some of the fundamental characteristics of an institution capable of providing the checks and balances essential to the functioning of a pluralistic society”, Kazakhstan can be said to be making incremental progress toward the development of democracy (Olcott, 2010, p.109). All in all, it can be stated that this period (1991-1994) “saw the creation of opposition parties, outspoken government critics, and most importantly, a feisty legislature that challenged Nazarbayev for political control” (Williams & Hanson, 2022).

So, though “Kazakhstan was freer or more democratic in the first stage, between 1991 and 1994” (Ruffin & Waugh, 1999, pp.58-60) due to “emerging pluralism and electoral competition” (Isaacs, 2010, p.8), “these promising beginnings were abandoned over time” (Olcott, 2010, p.2). These negative developments were prompted by the growing inter-elite conflicts over interest unfolding within the branches of the Kazakhstani government. Firstly, the heightening tension between the executive and legislature should be noted, as “the nomenklatura elite - which was, after all, the group principally represented in the legislature - began to divide into those who felt advantaged by the new political and economic world and those who did not” (Olcott, 2010, p.92-93). Despite the fact that Nazarbayev “initially enjoyed a strong mandate to rule”, which allowed him to smoothly transition from the position of First Secretary of Kazakh SSR to the position of President of Republic of Kazakhstan, some segments of nomenklatura elite within the Kazakhstani legislature “came into conflict with Nazarbayev when he attempted to liberalise economic reforms that threatened the interests of many of the powerful regional elites” (Williams & Hanson, 2022). Hence, Nazarbayev’s ‘shock therapy’ approach, especially, the privatisation policies, was not only unpopular with the general Kazakhstani population, but some of the legislators also started to oppose his bold marketisation reforms. This contention between the executive and legislature branches of the Kazakhstani government reached its height in 1995, when “some of the most open anti-Nazarbayev factions talked of putting forward an alternative economic development plan” (the New Economic Policy), which advocated for the “slowed privatisation”, “change in tax structure”, and “advantage to local producers over foreigners” (Olcott, 2010, p.108). Thus, it can be stated that this discord between the executive power and legislative body, including the ideational contestations (Nazarbayev’s shock

therapy vs. gradualism) over the course of economic development, were essentially a reflection of the fierce inter-elite conflict over the control of economic base unraveling in the Kazakhstani government. Therefore, Olcott (2010) argued that, as “several legislative critics had presidential ambitions, most of whom had been involved in abortive efforts to create presidential parties” (p.109) in the run-up to upcoming elections, the ruling elite closely associated with President Nazarbayev “have grown more fearful of the vagaries of political control that are associated with grassroots political parties and voluntary political organisations, not to mention those that result from a competitive political party system” (p.95).

Secondly, this collision between the executive and legislative branches further led to a crisis between the legislative and judicial branches of the Kazakhstani government. As it was the legislative branch that “emerged as a major centre of opposition to his attempted reforms and, thus, a challenge to his consolidation of political power” (Williams & Hanson, 2022), President Nazarbayev sought to “reduce the role of parliament” in order to “ensure that anti-regime groups will have trouble in mobilising public support” (Olcott, 2010, p.95). These disagreements across and within different branches of the state culminated, in March of 1995, in the historic decision of Kazakhstan’s Constitutional Court, which was pressured to invalidate the parliamentary elections of 1994, and ruled the preliminary dissolution of the acting Kazakhstani Parliament. This court decision was immediately followed by a national referendum in April 1995, which extended Nazarbayev's term in office until 2000 by automatically canceling the presidential elections scheduled to be held in late 1995 or early 1996 (Olcott, 2010, p.108). Although the decision of the constitutional court was formally based on the allegation of procedural irregularities, it allowed Nazarbayev not only to dissolve the existing parliament, which became an impediment to his vision of economic reforms in post-Soviet Kazakhstan but also provided him with the opportunity to pave the way for a weaker legislature united under the command of a stronger executive. Moreover, the judiciary branch was also subsumed under the control of the president and executive branch, when in 1995, the Constitutional Court was “replaced by a seven-member Constitutional Council” with “three of its members, including the chairman, appointed by the president” (UNHCR, 1998). Thus, the dissolution of the parliament of 1995 marked the start of a new phase, which resulted in the curtailment of the influence of legislature, the more authoritarian direction of the Kazakhstani government (Buyers, 2003, p.82), and became a major digression point for Kazakhstan’s ‘democratisation’ project.

As President Nazarbayev suspended the existing constitution and started drafting a new one, he, first of all, “urged amending the constitution to make the parliament less fractious” (Olcott, 2010, p.22),

in order to consolidate it under the president's rule (and also prevent it from being too independent and critical). The new constitution, which was accepted through a hastily staged referendum in August of 1995, introduced the presidential system of government by transferring more powers to the executive. The adoption of a new constitution was followed by a series of constitutional amendments, which further strengthened the extensive executive powers of a president and excluded the masses from the political processes in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. On the one hand, these constitutional 'tweaks' contributed to Nazarbayev's presidential rule's longevity: in 1998, a constitutional revision eliminated the upper age limit of 65 years and increased the president's term of office from 5 years to 7 years, while, in 2000, the Constitutional Council ruled out a decision that exempted Nazarbayev from any term limits (Nurumov & Vashchanka, 2019). Moreover, as the Parliament granted Nazarbayev the title of "Elbasy" (meaning "Leader of the Nation") in 2010, Kazakhstan was increasingly turning into "an autocracy, and in a highly personified form" (Satpayev, 2015).

If we are to ask, what allowed the ruling regime to undertake these numerous constitutional changes without due regard to public opinion, the answer lies in the rentierism of Kazakhstani economy, discussed in the previous section. So, apart from dependence on oil sales, and vulnerability to the price swings of oil, rentier capitalism has another major feature "of paramount importance, cutting across the whole of the social fabric of the economy affecting the role of the state in the society" (Beblawi, 1990, p.88). The concern is that the Kazakhstani state is capable of generating revenue and running the state without being reliant on a system of taxation (Satpaev & Umbetalieva, 2015). Such autonomy of the state from taxation greatly affects the political set-up of a state and its relations with citizens, as it exempts the state from being accountable to its citizens. Unlike the states where state revenue is based on their domestic economic production and mechanism of taxation of population, Kazakhstan, without a productive domestic sector, largely sustains its state budget with the help of external rent derived directly from the sale of oil, while the taxation is also not overly critical for the state provision (Luciani, 1990, p.70). So, unfortunately, this absence of the "need to extract income from the domestic economy or from local citizens through taxes" has a far-reaching impact on state-society relations - it "results in a relationship between state and society that is based on the distribution of favours and benefits" (Schliep, 2017). Unlike the states, where "taxpayers are more involved in government decisions since these decisions are supported by their onerous taxes" (Franke et al, 2009, p.112), the rentier states enjoy a certain autonomy in relation to society, as its "citizens demand less in response to the government's benevolence" (Schliep, 2017). However, being a rentier state, the Kazakhstani state lacks generous social spending, and is also not reliant on direct redistribution of the oil revenue. These factors can have a major effect on the articulation between the state and society

(e.g. some segments of the population can feel that the Kazakhstani state is not generous/benevolent enough to marginalise their participation in political decision-making), and the nature of social compromise in post-Soviet Kazakhstan (e.g., less satisfaction with the standards of living, more willingness to participate in protests in case of rising unemployment and economic crisis).

The fact that Kazakhstan's democratisation project took an unexpected turn, with the new constitution greatly expanding the executive powers of President Nazarbayev, was justified by a range of arguments. Firstly, it was argued that the consolidation of power in the presidential office is a major prerequisite for the proper development of "legal infrastructure necessary to secure private property and attract foreign investment" (Olcott, 2010, p.22). Secondly, the idea that Kazakhstan "lacks a parliamentary culture" and "strong democratic traditions" (Olcott, 2010, p.23) was underlined, while the President can compensate for that by serving as "the organiser and arbiter of interaction for all three branches of power, and their accountability to the people" (Nazarbayev, 1995). Thus, "the concentration of power in the hands of an experienced statesman and administration like Nazarbayev" was framed as a strategic and necessary step that can help post-Soviet Kazakhstan to "withstand difficulties in its economic and socio-political transition" (Mishra, 2009). Overall, the gradual increase of presidential powers, as embodied in the 1995 Constitution and its several revisions, leads to one of the fundamental aspects of Kazakhstan's contemporary political system, which is personified authoritarianism.

Moreover, the constitutional adjustments also brought about the limitations of political pluralism: in 2007, the new amendments to the constitution were adopted, which shifted the election system for the lower house of parliament (Majilis) "from mixed-member proportional representation to party-list proportional representation". This led to the consolidation of pro-presidential parties (Isaacs, 2013), which merged to form the dominant party Nur-Otan that swept all the parliamentary seats in 2007 (Nurumov & Vashchanka, 2019). Hence, the Nur-Otan party has become a main vehicle for President Nazarbayev's rule in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. With its candidates winning every election, due to the absence of genuine political alternatives" (OSCE, 2021), getting the majority of seats in the legislature, and occupying prominent government positions, Nur-Otan currently enjoys a dominant position as a "party of power" in Kazakhstan (Bowyer, 2008). However, this constitutional adjustment not only asserted the dominance of Nur-Otan over the political landscape but also restricted the scope of electoral politics and weakened the oppositional field, which was left without any viable oppositional parties. Thus, the lack of political pluralism in Kazakhstan's 'political society', due to the uncontested dominance of Nur-Otan and hindrances for genuine opposition parties to

access the 'political society', deprives the masses of institutionalised mechanisms for discussing and bargaining the revision and improvement of the terms of social compromise (e.g., in Parliament).

Although the extent to which Kazakhstan is genuinely democratic has been constantly called into question, especially after 1995, the democratisation project still had a major image-building purpose: Kazakhstan had to proclaim its aim of embracing democratic principles to gain legitimacy from the international community after the fall of Soviet Union. Hence, despite the reluctance to adopt "real" democratic reforms, Kazakhstan was putting considerable effort into "fake" democracy, as it still desired recognition from the international community as a democracy, and was interested in maintaining its legitimacy in the eyes of the international community. On the one hand, Kazakhstan was able to get some credit internationally by claiming to be on a trajectory towards democracy, which allowed it to attract many foreign aid donors and major FDI inflows. On the other hand, the failing democratisation was to some extent tolerated by some part of the international community for economic reasons (e.g., "access to the country's valuable natural resources" (Olcott, 2010, p.2)), as "the autocratic structure guaranteed stability, which was needed for foreign contracts and investments" (Franke et al, 2009). All in all, despite its formalistic character that allowed reforming to the extent necessary to secure FDI and not to get into sanctions, the 'democratisation' reforms still provided the Kazakhstani state with a set of 'legal' institutional forms and frameworks for organising hegemony in the post-Soviet period.

So, Kazakhstan has been exhibiting considerable constitutional fluidity and instability (e.g., the constitution has been changed in 1995, and amended six times: in 1998, 2007, 2011, 2017, 2019, and 2022). These constitutional tweaks not only demonstrate how the political arrangements have been highly fluid in post-Soviet Kazakhstan but also show that a number of tools (e.g., national referendums, court decisions, constitutional amendments, exemption from term limits, elections, etc.) have been tactically deployed to manipulate the Kazakhstani state's strategic selectivity with the aim of consolidating President Nazarbayev's regime and hampering the ability of others to compete for control over political society. Thus, it can be argued that through the adjustments of the constitution, which affected the relations between various branches of government and their relative powers, Nazarbayev and the ruling elite closely associated with him were striving to set the framework for 'strategic selectivity' of the post-Soviet Kazakhstani state in ways that support and promote their political and economic interests. Nevertheless, Kazakhstan's democratisation project has been greatly shaped by the ideational contestations between various factions of the ruling elite and the specific institutional arrangements that they wanted to establish within the post-Soviet state apparatus.

So, if we are to sum up the post-Soviet set-up of the Kazakhstani state apparatus (executive-legislative-judiciary), as a result of numerous constitutional modifications, it can be stated that the key powers are concentrated in the office of the President. So, the President of Kazakhstan “remains the key figure to which all executive powers are subordinated” (Mishra, 2009). Moreover, such a presidential form of government also “subordinates the judiciary and the representative branches of the government to the executive” (Mishra, 2009). Hence, it can be stated that currently “there is no institution in Kazakhstan capable of providing legal protection or balancing the president’s power” (Olcott, 2010, p.22). Although post-Soviet Kazakhstan had a good start in the initial years of its independence and was slowly heading towards democracy with rising political plurality, this positive trend reversed, as Nazarbayev’s regime started to increasingly “perceive the emergence of various opposition parties and groups as a direct challenge to their position” (ibid.). As the consolidation of Nazarbayev’s power and suppression of any anti-regime activities started to gradually take hold, the post-Soviet Kazakhstan, amidst the heightened institutional conflicts (executive vs. legislative; legislative vs. judiciary), returned to its symbolic ‘starting point’ of authoritarianism. Thus, similar to the Soviet ruling elite, the Kazakhstani power bloc continued with the tradition of strong central leadership.

However, as there are no two autocracies alike, a few key differences between the political set-up of the Soviet state and the Kazakhstani one can be pinpointed. Firstly, unlike the legal monopoly of the Communist Party, which was the only party permitted by the Soviet Constitution, the post-Soviet Kazakhstani Constitution does formally allow political parties, other than the pro-presidential Nur-Otan, to contest seats in elections. However, not only did the establishment of a multi-party political system in post-Soviet Kazakhstan fail, but the lack of separation between the ruling Party and the functioning government was effectively carried over. So, the political dominance of Nur-Otan has almost led to the “synchronisation” of the party and the presidential government of Kazakhstan (Isaacs, 2013). This can essentially be viewed as a continuation of the one-party rule of the Soviet period, as post-Soviet Kazakhstan gradually became a single-party state with other parties constituting no alternative. Secondly, in the case of Kazakhstan, authoritarianism took a more personified character, which led to the personal dictatorship and cult of personality of Nazarbayev. So, the entire political system in Kazakhstan has been fixed on one person, and “his ability to keep the situation under control, not giving one or the other of the competing groups such power that they are able to expand their political and economic interests” (Satpayev, 2005). All in all, both the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Kazakhstan apparently lack a strong legislative and judiciary branch, which, in the case of the Soviet Union, would have been able to limit the authority of the Communist Party,

while in the case of post-Soviet Kazakhstan, could provide the "checks and balances" to a presidency. Thus, it can be stated that, despite the existence of representative bodies, both the Soviet state and the post-Soviet Kazakhstani state largely excluded the masses from active participation in state affairs.

All in all, it can be concluded that despite the democratic reforms undertaken, Kazakhstan failed to make a shift from a communist dictatorship to a liberal democracy. Rather than a transition to democracy, a consolidation of an authoritarian regime seems to be the main characteristic of the post-Soviet 'political society' in Kazakhstan. Since the realisation of the democratisation project stalled, the changes in post-Soviet Kazakhstan cannot be characterised as a product of genuine revolution, but should rather be viewed as a 'passive revolution', since the elements of the old Soviet nomenklatura regime were able to orchestrate the post-Soviet transition in a way that benefits them. As already outlined in the previous chapter, we can understand the 'passive revolution' as "an instrument in the hands of the ruling classes" (Gianmarco, 2019), who, by "protecting their fundamental interests and the ultimate hegemony" (Cammaerts, 2015), take the flow and direction of 'passive revolution' under its control. So, the obvious failure of democratic reforms helped with the further conservation and continuation of the rule of a certain segment of the Soviet 'nomenklatura' elite, which managed to come to power after the fall of the Soviet Union. It is hardly surprising that the Soviet nomenklatura elite had no interest in advancing 'real' democratic changes in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, preferring to maintain the institutional structures inherited from the Soviet era, as meaningful democratisation would constitute a huge danger to their dictatorship. Thus, the downward democratic trajectory of post-Soviet Kazakhstan towards authoritarianism, but without the formal abolition of the democratic constitution (to maintain international reputation and keep attracting FDI), has been handy to the ruling elite. Moreover, since the general Kazakhstani population was excluded from real political influence, it can be argued that the new arrangement of power, which emerged in form of presidential system in 1995, largely reflects the agreement reached within the fragmented Kazakhstani ruling elite (e.g., within the "old guard" nomenklatura elite and with the nascent 'business' elite), with those who supported Nazarbayev's economic initiatives, as they benefit from his pro-market reforms, being co-opted into the power-bloc, while those who opposed and impeded the implementation of his economic and political reforms being excluded.

3. The socio-cultural dimension

Next, in line with Gramsci, it can be stated that the hegemony relies not only on the Kazakhstani ruling elite's ability to control the economic base (e.g. through orchestrating the pro-market reforms and exercising control over the energy sector) or govern the political society (e.g. through limiting

the democratisation reforms and strengthening the authoritarian regime) but also on their ability to sustain a rule over the civil society through the reliance on coercive and consensual means. Thus, as Kazakhstan's post-Soviet hegemonic project should also be analysed in terms of the nature and dynamics of relations between the state and civil society, in this section, I will be looking at the state-civil society articulation in post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

It can be stated that, in Soviet times, the civil society was subject to a total state control. The existing civic organisations had an explicitly communist ideology and operated under the patronage of the Communist Party, while “any associational life, political organisations, or social movements that existed separate from the party-state institutional web” were banned (Howard, 2003, p.23). The Soviet state also conducted strict censorship of the Soviet media, art, and literature, and effectively blocked any material that was deemed to be ideologically inappropriate (Fletcher, 1995). However, by the time of the dissolution of the USSR, there had been some rudiments of civil society in the Kazakh SSR, because Gorbachev's Perestroika policies of the 1980s created the foundations of civic space necessary for public discussion and expression of opinion in the Soviet Union. Thus, despite the lack of a clear-cut, organised nationalist movement in late Soviet Kazakhstan, the protests against the nuclear testing at Semipalatinsk (the “Nevada-Semey” movement) can be an example of one of the most sustained civic movements of the late 80s and early 90s in Kazakhstan.

So, upon the fall of the Soviet Union, post-Soviet Kazakhstan has been in the process of further building its civil society. According to Ruffin & Waugh (1999), in the initial years of independence, “there were significant developments in freedom of speech and in media” and “certain permissiveness in regard to peaceful assembly, meetings, and demonstrations”, which resulted in the rise of “a number of voluntary organisations, associations, and movements” (pp.58-60). For example, the 90s witnessed exponential growth in the number of non-governmental organisations (e.g., ~400 NGOs by 1994; ~1,600 by 1997), which were largely established “with the financial and organisational support of the international donor community” (e.g. USAID, UNDP, Soros Foundation, TACIS, etc.) (Pierobon, 2016, pp.206-207). The Kazakhstani state, in turn, has been actively developing the legal and institutional framework to regulate the activities of emerging civil society. However, in the 2010s, this initially lax relationship between the state and civil society gradually gave place to tighter control by the Kazakhstani state. This can be attributed not only to the intensifying consolidation of Nazarbayev's regime, which was discussed in the previous section but also to the heightening social tension in Kazakhstan, as the series of terrorist attacks and a brutally suppressed protest took place in 2011 (Pierobon, 2016). As a result, the legal environment for civil society organisations started to

deteriorate, resembling the iron fist that has lost its velvet glove, to use Gramsci's famous metaphor (e.g. tightening of the legislation concerning the activities of independent civil society organisations: the Law on Religious Activities and Religious Associations (2011), Law on National Security of Kazakhstan (2012), the Trade Union Law (2014), the new Criminal Code (2015) were adopted, while the Law on Communication (2014), the Code of Administrative Offences (2014) were amended). Thus, after some tentative steps to open up the civil society in the '90s and 00s, its further free development has been hindered by the Kazakhstani state's increasing adoption of "comprehensive legal barriers that make it more difficult for CSOs to enter the political process, engage in political activities" (Beimenbetov, 2021, p.136).

So, notwithstanding the initially more lenient state approach to civil society, it can be stated that the state's rule over the Kazakhstani civil society is largely maintained with the help of coercive means. The Kazakhstani state has a tight grip of control over the repressive state apparatus, including the security agencies and law-enforcement organisations, through which the coercive power is exercised in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. So, the Kazakhstani state conducts systematic repression, not only of the members of the political opposition, but also of the civic activists, NGO members, and regular citizens, as the repressive state apparatus responds with retribution to any critique, dissent, or protest. According to Human Rights Watch (2022), the Kazakhstani state "arbitrarily arrests peaceful protesters", who are found guilty of violating "the procedure for organising and holding peaceful assemblies" (Article 488 of the Code of Administrative Offences). Next, the charges of "inciting social, national, clan, racial, or religious discord" (Article 174 of the Criminal Code) have also been regularly used to "criminalise freedom of expression" and "limit the right of people to voice critical opinions" (Amnesty International, 2016). Moreover, the Kazakhstani repressive apparatus also often resorts to the "misuse of vague and over-broad criminal charges", such as the alleged membership in groups deemed extremist or terrorist (Article 405 of the Criminal Code), in order to put restrictions on the freedom of association (Human Rights Watch, 2021). As the existence of active, free, and engaged civil society hinges upon the freedom of expression, association, and assembly, serious violations of these freedoms indicate the Kazakhstani state's major encroachment on the autonomy of civil society. Thus, with the widespread practices of arbitrary arrest, detainment, and ill-treatment of civic activists, dissidents, and journalists, the highly political nature of Kazakhstan's repressive apparatus and its misuse of coercive methods should be noted.

Although the repressive state apparatus and its coercive means help to impose discipline on dissenting Kazakhstanis, Gramsci reminds us that a government cannot rely on coercion alone to run the integral state of post-Soviet Kazakhstan. So, how does Kazakhstan's ruling class garner broader support for

its post-Soviet hegemonic project? How it is able to sustain its hegemony in the long run? The answer lies in consent, and the ideological apparatus erected by the Kazakhstani state to aid the repressive apparatus. So, it is important to keep in mind that Gramsci's concept of hegemony consists of both coercion and consent, and we can think of them as two sides of the same coin. Hence, Gramsci asserted that the state rule "may ultimately be based on force, but it does not rely solely upon it" (Greene, 2015). The hegemony entails a "combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent" (Mathur, 2017). Thus, Gramsci specifically highlighted the paramount role that consent and ideology play in allowing the state to maintain its hegemony. Therefore, it can be stated that hegemony is largely achieved through consensual means, and reliance on coercion can be thought of as a means of last resort.

In a similar vein, Beimenbetov (2021) argued that the Kazakhstani state has been trying to balance "a combination of co-optation and intimidation strategies" in its dealings with civil society (p.116). So, while coercive institutions remain in place as a safeguard for the regime, the Kazakhstani state has also relied on consensual tactics and ideological state apparatuses to sustain its hegemony. Hence, despite the Kazakhstani state's heavy reliance on the repressive apparatus to maintain its power, Kazakhstan cannot be defined as a state where coercion fully predominates over consent, as it has also been actively engaged in the process of manufacturing public consent in the post-Soviet period. In the parts that follow, I shall outline the consensual processes, such as financial co-optation (e.g. through the tendering system) and institutional cooperation (e.g. through the state-sponsored umbrella institutions) that the Kazakhstani state uses to strengthen its control over the civil society.

First, let's take a look at the financial incentives as consensual means employed by the Kazakhstani state to ensure its hegemony in civil society. So, despite the Kazakhstani state's adoption of a restrictive regulatory framework to control and constrain civil society, the "amelioration of the financial environment" was noted by Pierobon (2016), who argued that the "significant increase of state budget available to NGOs for the implementation of social projects" was aimed at enhancing "the cooperation between the state and the non-profit sector" (p.215). Hence, the "system of social contracts" was introduced in 2002, while with the adoption of the Law on Social Orders (2005), "the mechanism of social procurements was consolidated" in Kazakhstan (Pierobon, 2016). The expanding reliance of the Kazakhstani state on the financial incentives to co-opt and engage civic society organisations can also be attributed to the fact that Kazakhstan is a rentier state. The oil rent has not only helped to sponsor better living conditions for the Kazakhstanis (e.g. through the economic growth, creation of employment, and modest, but steady expansion of social welfare),

which have had a pacifying effect against the social discontent (though apparently not for all and not always as the past unrests indicate) but also allowed the Kazakhstani state to fund the civil society organisations through the system of social orders. Furthermore, since Kazakhstan has been "upgraded," first as a middle-income economy in 2006, and then as an upper-middle-income country in 2015 (EBRD, 2022), this has resulted in a decrease in financial commitment from international donors, as Kazakhstani civil society organisations have become "less eligible to receive development cooperation aid" (Pierobon. 2016, p.218). This fall in foreign funding also helped to compel civil society organisations to cooperate more with the Kazakhstani state, as they became interested in bidding for state grants to survive financially. So, by incorporating civil society organisations into the state realm via the state financing system, the Kazakhstani state has not only decreased the civil society organisations' reliance on external sources of funding but has also been able to ensure the further development of civil society through the public sector. Thus, the oil rent enhanced the Kazakhstani state's capacity to curtail the autonomy of civil society.

Another strategy for the consensual management of the Kazakhstani civil society has been the reliance on a set of state-sponsored umbrella organisations, which help to maintain a broad-based state control in the key spheres of society. So, there are several key civil society organisations, which, as part of the ideological state apparatus, serve as an important ideological tool in the hands of the Kazakhstani state. Firstly, this includes the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, which was established as a consultative and advisory body, and unites "more than 800 ethnic and cultural associations" existing in Kazakhstan (The Law on the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, 2008). In fact, it is not only a brainchild of President Nazarbayev, who served as its chair until April 2021, but can also be viewed as an embodiment of Kazakhstan's ideological commitment to inclusive nation-building in Kazakhstan. Secondly, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan (Muftiate), which is "the largest religious non-governmental organisation", has become "a unique channel for the political, moral and cultural shaping of Muslims" in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. Thus, Kozhbankhan and Kaldybekova (2021) highlight in their study how the Kazakhstani state, despite its secular nature, has been playing a proactive role in the management of Islamic religious affairs and frequently employs the Muftiate to promote the state values and garner the support of Kazakhstani Muslims. Thirdly, as in recent years, social media has added a virtual dimension to civil society, notably, used by the younger generation, the Kazakhstan state has been paying special attention to social media sites and platforms. In this regard, the role of a video production company, Salem Social Media, as a vehicle for the Kazakhstani state to "cultivate close ties to social media influencers", needs to be emphasised (Freedom House, 2022). With control over "several major YouTube and

Instagram accounts with a combined 2 million followers” (Freedom House, 2020), Salem Social Media is believed to help the state to co-opt popular Kazakhstani bloggers and social media influencers (Kosnazarov, 2019). Lastly, the case of “Zhas Otan” deserves some attention. Although this organisation positions itself as a voluntary association of Kazakhstani youth, which has an extensive basis at HEIs, in fact, it is a youth wing of the pro-presidential Nur-Otan Party (Sharipova, 2019). Thus, under the guise of the “spiritual and moral development of young people”, the goal of “consolidation of the youth in support of the strategic policies of the president” has been actively promoted by Zhas-Otan (Sharipova, 2019). Moreover, the Zhas-Otan, which bears some striking similarities with the Soviet youth organisation “Komsomol” (e.g., involvement of youth in party activities, using the young wing as a stepping-stone to the main party), can be viewed as a “quintessential example of the Soviet state-society paradigm” in post-Soviet Kazakhstan (Sharipova, 2019). Thus, as the Soviet state also operated a vast set of civic organisations, such as trade unions, sports organisations, and youth divisions of the Communist Party, which served as a vehicle through which the Soviet state fostered the consent and strengthened its hegemony in civil society, it can be argued that the Kazakhstani state has been increasingly relying on familiar Soviet institutional frameworks when structuring its state-society relations in the post-Soviet period.

Moreover, this assemblage of state-organized civic organisations has not only helped the Kazakhstani state to engulf the civil society but also allowed to incorporate a wide range of intellectuals, who can be helpful to define and defend its post-Soviet hegemonic project (e.g. ethnic minority leaders and cultural representatives through the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan; Islamic clergy and religious scholars through the Muftiate; social media professionals, internet influencers and bloggers through the Salem Social; young professionals and students through Zhas- Otan). Nevertheless, this all-encompassing set of state-organized, state-sponsored civic organisations, which were established in the key social spheres (culture, religion, internet, education/youth), have not only been helping to structure and regulate the relationship between state and civil society but also to blur the boundaries between the state and civil society, very much in line with Gramscian “dialectical unity of the moments of civil society and political society” (Humphrys, 2018, p. 36). Although this set of civic organisations, which form the basis of the Kazakhstani ideological state apparatus, may seem to be rather diverse and fragmented, they are all in fact unified by a common ideology. But what is the common ideological basis of the post-Soviet Kazakhstani hegemonic project? What is the ideological vision that helps the Kazakhstani state to keep them organised under its hegemony? In the following, I will outline the nature of the ideological shift in post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

As the fall of the Soviet Union was characterised by an organic crisis, the dismissal of Soviet ideology destabilised public morals and left an ideological vacuum in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. This ideological void posed a major threat to the legitimacy of post-Soviet Kazakhstan, and it may stymie the implementation of anticipated economic and political changes. So, the need for a common ideological vision, in order to hold the wider population congruent with the post-Soviet hegemonic project, its corresponding accumulation strategy (rentier capitalism) and organisational agenda for institution-building (democratisation), was recognised. However, the renewed cultural and ideological foundation, which underpinned Kazakhstan's post-Soviet hegemonic project, has not gone uncontested. Despite the general agreement regarding the need for a new ideological vision to provide a renewed sense of purpose after the fall of the Soviet Union, the Kazakhstani state was puzzled by a major identity dilemma. Thus, the ideological aspect of the post-Soviet hegemonic project has also proved divisive, as the ideational contestations over what values, beliefs, and symbols should constitute a new Kazakhstani nation produced some visible fault lines.

On the one hand, the ethnic-nationalists favored the idea that the keystone of the nation-building process needs to be the revival of the language, culture, and history of the Kazakh people. So, for this fraction, the Kazakhstani state's post-Soviet socio-cultural policy had to gravitate towards the promotion of ethnic Kazakh identity. The idea of building the Kazakh nation-state was not unexpected: with most of the former Soviet constituent republics turning to their ethnic origins, this path of post-Soviet nation-building acquired for the ethnic-nationalists the qualities of a natural-like process. So, the Kazakhization policies were also accompanied by a variety of narratives on the merits of such a move. First of all, there is broad consent amongst scholars, as well as commentators that the ideological focus on the revival of Kazakh heritage is highly instrumental to "assert the titular nationality's legitimacy and hegemony over the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan" (Davenel, 2012). Especially, as the "Russian Question" in Northern Kazakhstan, which, to this day, has a significant population of ethnic Russians, has always alarmed the Kazakhstani state due to potential separatist sentiments among the ethnic Russian nationalists. Secondly, the Kazakhization process, which was chiefly aimed at "preserving the superiority of basic values and resources of the Kazakhs" (Karin & Chebotarev, 2002), was also justified by the presumed need to redress the historical injustices that ethnic Kazakhs endured. So, such emphasis on the pre-eminence of Kazakhs, as a titular nation in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, was explained as a "remedial political action" driven by the desire to compensate for "decades of dominance by foreign actors" (Chong, 2007). However, such an ideological move not only "advanced the national cause of the Kazakh people" (Olcott, 2010, p.17), but also set the strategic selectivity of the post-Soviet Kazakhstani state in favour of ethnic Kazakhs.

On the other hand, the opponents of ethnic Kazakh nationalism argued that the ideological centerpiece of the post-Soviet hegemonic project has to be the ethnic diversity of Kazakhstan, as the Soviet period left Kazakhstan a melting pot, where ethnic minorities accounted for more than half of Kazakhstan's population. Despite the Kazakhstani state's keen interest in reviving the Kazakh culture and strengthening the status of the Kazakh language due to the heightening of ethnic consciousness following the independence, legitimising the Kazakhstani statehood solely on the basis of Kazakhness posed the risk of alienating and antagonising numerous other ethnic groups living in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan. So, post-Soviet Kazakhstan was puzzled by the attempts to organise its hegemony by balancing the state's definition by its titular ethnicity and the need to have due regard to its ethnic diversity. Thus, it can be argued that none of these identity projects (Kazakhization vs. ethnic diversity) gained total momentum, but Kazakhstan's post-Soviet hegemonic project was rather trying to forge a middle ground between the aim of preserving diversity of languages, traditions, and cultures of Kazakhstan, and the goal of revival of language, culture and history of Kazakh people (A more detailed discussion of the socio-cultural landscape of the post-Soviet Kazakhstan, including the topics of identity-building, ethnic diversity and national branding, is provided in Appendix 3).

The Kazakhstani ruling elite was also trying to resolve this identity dilemma for its own advantage. On the one hand, making Kazakhization a cornerstone of the post-Soviet project could boost President Nazarbayev's legitimacy "among Kazakh segments of the population", who has been "associating his personality with the guarantee of independence" (Nurumov & Vashchanka, 2019, p.229) and "saw Nazarbayev as embodying Kazakh statehood" (Olcott, 2010, p.27-28). On the other hand, by making ethnic harmony one of the pillars of state policy, the Kazakhstani leader has also been trying to create a virtue out of Kazakhstan's ethnic diversity, which will be part of its positive national and personal branding. Thus, President Nazarbayev was aware of the fact that, in order to "be a popular leader" he needed to "enjoy the strong support of Kazakhs" and "to be supported or at least tolerated by the country's non-Kazakh population as well" (Olcott, 2010, p.30). In general, it can be stated that the Kazakhstani ruling elite become "skilled at playing the inter-ethnic card", as their post-Soviet hegemonic project has been presented as providing "a safer and more stable approach to the development of the nation-state in comparison with untamed nationalist movements that could have come to power through parliament" (Nurumov & Vashchanka, 2019, p.226).

This post-Soviet Kazakhstan's dilemma between the desire to push for Kazakhization policies, on the one hand, and the need to preserve the inter-ethnic accord, on the other, has some parallels with the Soviet Union's diversity policies, which also attempted the unification and homogenisation through

the Russification, while also accounting for the ethnic differentiation. Hence, the Soviet state, which officially advocated ethnic equality, was formally supportive of the right of its numerous ethnic groups to self-determination. However, Mälksoo (2017) argued that the “Soviet concept of the right of peoples to self-determination was adopted for tactical and propagandistic purposes”, and in fact, “it was a means to their real ends, which were to come to power and establish the rule of the working people *inter alia* by nationalising the means of production”. So, despite the aim of the Soviet Union to create a society devoid of any social stratification, there was a subtle ethnic hierarchy with the dominant ethnic group, the Russians, extending a hegemonic rule over other ethnic groups in the Soviet Union. Although the Bolshevik revolution did greatly transform the social and political structures of the Russian state, the cultural dominance of Russians remained and continued into the Soviet Union. All in all, the Soviet approach to ethnic diversity management (the need to advocate multiculturalism, on the one hand, the promotion of Russification to achieve national unity at the expense of ethnic minorities, on the other) found some continuity in the way the post-Soviet Kazakhstani state has regulated its identity and language policies (also trying to straddle the fence between the managing its ethnic diversity, on the one hand, and fostering the Kazakhization, on the other).

Given the circumstances, the Kazakhstani state resorts to both coercive and consensual means in building its post-Soviet hegemony. On the one hand, the post-Soviet Kazakhstani state has been devoting considerable effort to produce consent with the help of its ideological apparatus (e.g., the Kazakhization along with multi-ethnic civic identity; the financial incentives to NGOs; a set of state-sponsored civic organisations, etc.). On the other hand, it has also been enforcing the discipline through coercive measures, when consensual means fail (e.g., through restrictive regulatory framework and law enforcement means). Hence, the Kazakhstan state ultimately rests upon coercion of the repressive apparatus, despite the consensus-building efforts through the ideological state apparatus. However, it should also be underlined that the Kazakhstani state would not be able to maintain its hegemony in the long run by resorting to coercive means only. Thus, it can be stated that the Kazakhstani state has to maintain in its arsenal a range of consensual and coercive tools provided by both the repressive and ideological state apparatuses, as it depends on the combination of coercive and consensual tools to ensure its hegemony. Although the exercise of hegemony in authoritarian states like Kazakhstan, in its very essence, is different from the bourgeoisie hegemony of a liberal-democratic state, with the ratio of coercion to consent tending to tilt more towards coercion in authoritarian regimes, while leaning predominantly towards the consensual means in a liberal-democratic, a certain equilibrium between consent and coercion can be reached by striking a plausible

social compromise. Thus, in the following section, I want to highlight the paramount role of social compromise, as an ability to “bring the contending interests and forces into a successful compromise and balance” (Gibson, 2004, p.21), in sustaining the hegemony.

4. The social compromise of post-Soviet Kazakhstan

Lastly, it is incredibly important to underline “the attempts of the powerful to make differentially beneficial ideals, policies, and priorities appear as self-evidently optimal for everybody, masking a particular interest behind a universalist veil” (Mulvad, 2019). So, in order for the attempted hegemonic project of the post-Soviet Kazakhstan to be conceived as relevant, and to gain legitimacy from the wider population, there had to be some hegemonic appeal present. Thus, following Gramsci, we can expect that the Kazakhstani ruling elite needed to reach a social compromise with the general Kazakhstani population, which can be described as one emphasising the commitment to economic prosperity (1), political stability (2), and inter-ethnic peace (3). These three pillars (economic, political, and socio-cultural) of the post-Soviet social compromise along with its enabling and constraining conditions are summarised in Table 5 below and will be discussed in greater detail in the section below.

Table 5. Enabling and constraining conditions		
	Enabling conditions for current hegemonic order/ruling regime:	Constraining conditions for current hegemonic order:
<u>1. Economic</u>	Short-term: 1. Control over the resource industry (e.g., oil, gas); 2. Stability of the extraction and export of natural resources; 3. Open economy favourable to FDI; Long-run: 1. Diversification of economy to lessen the dependence on extraction sector; 2. Kick-starting the knowledge-based economic growth;	Short-term: 1. Dependence on oil rents to finance government expenditures; 2. Volatility of prices on global markets; 3. Disruption of export routes (e.g. oil pipeline); Long-run: 1. Falling economic growth that leads to rising unemployment and poverty;

<u>2. Political</u>	<p>Short-term:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The balance of power within the ruling elite (e.g. cooptation, alliances); 2. Authoritarianism - a strong executive power to preserve the current status quo; <p>Long-run:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Democratisation reforms; 2. Greater personal rights and freedoms; 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Intra-elite competition and conflicts over economic/political resources that can destabilise the political system; 2. Popular pressure for democratic accountability; 3. Popular dissatisfaction over economic, political situation and rising social unrest;
<u>3. Socio-cultural</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The inter-ethnic peace and stability; 2. Developing common state-identity (civic-based Kazakhstani identity); 3. More balanced language policy; 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emphasis on ethnic-based identity (e.g. Kazakhisation); 2. Lack of a common societal foundation (values, norms, ideals);

Firstly, as “organising consent starts from an economic compromise between a dominant class and subordinate classes” (Im, 1991), in order to conceal the fact that the hegemonic project undertaken is primarily beneficial only to the Kazakhstani ruling elite, some concessions from above had to be made to prevent the discontent from below. Although the Kazakhstani ruling elite does not have absolute control over the national economy, it has a major dominance over one particular, though especially important sector of the Kazakhstani economy. So, with the help of its lucrative oil industry, which has been highly attractive to foreign investors due to its major extractive potential, the Kazakhstani ruling elite was capable of satisfying some of the immediate needs of the Kazakhstani people. Although the newly independent Kazakhstan experienced major hyperinflation, plummeting production, and lost livelihood immediately after the fall of the Soviet Union, its immense reserves of oil and gas ensured a swift rise to prosperity. With the oil prices rising, the ruling regime was seen by many as beneficial to the national wellbeing, because it boosted the economy, attracted foreign investment, created employment opportunities, increased salaries, and improved living conditions. Indeed, there has been a dramatic drop in the poverty rate, and the middle class began to emerge in Kazakhstan, as the reforms helped many Kazakhstan people to secure the basic necessities of employment, housing, transport, and education. So, the social compromise of post-Soviet Kazakhstan can be said to be fulfilled with the help of oil money. At the time of booming economic growth and rising oil prices, the ruling elite kept its credibility, as it was seen as making sufficient concessions.

Hence, most of the Kazakhstani population was genuinely supportive of the ruling elite and its reforms, which managed to produce rising prosperity in post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

Secondly, this rapid economic growth and improved standards of living provided some political stability for the ruling regime. So, post-Soviet Kazakhstan has been considered as the beacon of peace and stability in Central Asia, especially, in contrast with its more turbulent and crisis-prone neighbors. This internal stability in Kazakhstan has been founded on a number of factors, the first of which is the relatively peaceful coexistence of its multi-ethnic population (Saidbayev, 1992). Although the pre-eminence of Kazakhs, as a titular nation in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, was actively promoted by the Kazakhstani state, the post-Soviet hegemonic project also had to appear as protecting the rights and promoting the interests of the minority ethnic groups in Kazakhstan to get their support. So, despite the challenges the Kazakhstani state has been confronting in striking the right balance between its identity and language policies, a great deal of effort was devoted to framing this post-Soviet hegemonic project as a coherent ideological vision. Thus, recognising the need to balance ethnic (Kazakh) affiliation and ethnic diversity, the Kazakhstani state has been paying specific attention to the issue of inter-ethnic concord, while fostering the culture of unity and harmony between representatives of various ethnic groups has become one of the principles of the Kazakhstani state policy.

Moreover, the power equilibrium reached among the members of the ruling elite has also been an important factor that prevented political upheavals (e.g., elite infightings, usurpations, treasons, etc.) until recently. In this regard, one of the major features of the post-Soviet Kazakhstani political system, its closed character, which is reliant on the constant 're-shuffling' of the members of the inner ruling circle, needs to be highlighted. This "rotation within the ruling top-end of the system" is not only aimed at "the distribution of power between competing political figures" (Satpayev, 2005) and "the stabilisation of interests between the insiders", but also helps to "limit self-reliance of the elites" (Fayzullina, 2013). So, though the inner circles of the ruling elite have not been changed for years, and they are "subject only to nominal swap of seats", the major efforts are devoted to counterbalancing the elites and not letting anyone accumulate excessive powers that can endanger stability inside the ruling elite (ibid.). Thus, this feature of the Kazakhstani political system helps to maintain the balance of power between the members of the ruling elite to prevent schisms that can become a threat to the political system.

But most importantly, it should be noted that there has also been a general acceptance of limitations to individual rights on the part of the Kazakhstani population, as it was believed that individual freedoms and democracy can be waived in favour of internal stability (ethnic and political) and economic prosperity. The ideas such as “Kazakhstan’s special path” (aka ‘managed democracy’) and the “choice of an ‘Asian model ’of political and socio-economic development following a thesis of ‘first the economy and then politics” (Satpayev, 2005) were popularised to strengthen this argument. Therefore, the social contract in post-Soviet Kazakhstan was based on the idea that the Kazakhstani people are guaranteed improved welfare, inter-ethnic peace, and political stability in return for full obedience to the Kazakhstani state. Overall, as “hegemony is maintained not only through the dominant groups but also the subordinate groups that legitimise it” (Lears, 1985), the acceptance by the Kazakhstani people of such terms of the social contract and its role in maintaining the status quo in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan should not be underestimated.

However, it is important to emphasise once again that the current regime was able to wield state power and frame policies that are primarily favourable to the inner circle of the Kazakhstani ruling elite. Furthermore, the Kazakhstani ruling elite's claim to represent the deepest interests of the Kazakhstani people in its hegemonic project (which is largely dependent on the financial possibilities provided by oil rent) has been rather unreliable or even unpredictable (e.g., in the case where the ruling elite will have nothing to pay for its population's conformity), especially given that the Kazakhstani economy has always been exposed to the volatility of the global energy market. Although President Nazarbayev has long been seen as a guarantor of stability (e.g. domestically, of social and political stability, and internationally, of foreign investment interests), the segments of a ruling elite closely associated with him have already lost their legitimacy after the January 2022 protests, as they grew to be seen as only concerned with promoting their own selfish interests at the expense of general people’s wellbeing.

With Kazakhstan currently facing conditions of economic insecurity due to oil dependence, prolonged democratic stagnation, and popular unrest, such a state of affairs has been damaging to the legitimacy of the ruling elite, and endangering the hegemonic status of the current regime, as they are no longer seen as benefitting the Kazakhstani society as a whole. As the Kazakhstan ruling elite constantly monitors the social mood for any anti-government sentiments, the question still remains as to whether the current ruling regime will be able to respond consistently and sufficiently to the present challenges and pressing demands, as there is a need for a state that is capable of effectively mediating the existing tensions and organising a genuine social cohesion. These are vital points, as it also raises the question

as to what role HEIs play in this context. Therefore, it is important to note that the social compromise “is always relative, always partial, and always provisional” (Jessop, 1988, p.151). As was demonstrated by the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, or Kazakhstan's January 2022 protests, the paramount importance of ‘honouring ’such social contracts between the state and people, and their vital role in negotiating, compromising, and co-opting the population into the hegemonic project should be emphasised, as it is what can ‘make-or-break ’the hegemony.

All in all, as this chapter that overviews Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet transition has demonstrated, Kazakhstan’s transformations can be best viewed as an instance of ‘passive revolution’. So, while Kazakhstan's post-Soviet hegemonic project of 'neoliberalism' did imply a shift to a free-market economy, the fact that the Soviet 'nomenklatura' ruling elite (Nazarbayev, as First Secretary of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, and his inner circle) managed to remain in power and impose its hegemony in post-Soviet Kazakhstan can indicate that this is not a case of ‘war of maneuver’. Furthermore, with many continuities with the Soviet period taking place (e.g., the state control over the economy, the state extraction of natural resources, dependence on oil revenue, and one-party rule), it can be stated that the concept of ‘passive revolution ’best characterises Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet transition. However, the historical overview also highlights some important discontinuities, as some economic sectors were privatised, while the government now seeks to balance multiculturalism and homogenization through *kazakhization* as part of its nation-building efforts. All in all, with Kazakhstan, striving to adjust to the market economy (economic project), struggling to build democratic institutions (political project), and actively engaged in the construction of a new Kazakhstani identity (identity-building project), it can be stated that the unique combination of changes from and continuities with the Soviet times is what actually characterises Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition.

Chapter IV
OVERVIEW OF
KAZAKHSTANI HE

In the previous chapter, I described Kazakhstan's transition from the 'Soviet' to the 'post-Soviet' hegemonic project by providing a quick summary of the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. I was able to identify the fundamental changes and continuities that occurred as a result of this transition, and I believe that the unique combination of these important changes and continuities characterises Kazakhstan's post-Soviet nation-building. Keeping these changes and continuities in mind, I'd like to concentrate in on Kazakhstan's HE system. As a result, as post-Soviet Kazakhstan underwent major economic (adoption of free market economy principles), political (democratisation reforms), and socio-cultural (post-Soviet nation-building and identity-construction) transformations, parallel changes occurred in Kazakhstan's higher education sector. As a result, I would like to outline the key changes and continuities that occurred in Kazakhstan's HE system with the shift to the 'new' hegemonic project, which will be useful in determining the main prerequisites that paved the way for modern Kazakhstani HEIs', as well as the characteristics that characterise its role and functions.

1. *The implications of economic transformations on Kazakhstani HE*

A. Privatisation and commercialisation of the Kazakhstani HEIs

To begin with, Kazakhstan's transition from a centrally controlled economy has resulted in an exciting new direction for the HE sectors. And the incorporation of market features characterised the HE reform undertaken by the Kazakhstani state immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union. A key part was the introduction of tuition fees, breaking with a Soviet policy according to which the Soviet state “assumed full responsibility for financing the training of specialists” (Harris, 1959, p.687). As the Soviet constitution (1936) guaranteed to Soviet citizens the right to free HE (Article 121), characteristics such as “free of charge, accessible for commons, equal for minorities and truly public” were the major defining principles of the Soviet HE (The Great Soviet Encyclopedia, 1978).

So, one of the most significant changes of the post-Soviet period was the opening of private HEIs, with the 1993 legislation “On Higher Education” permitting private universities to operate in Kazakhstan. This led to a dramatic increase in the number of private HEIs functioning in Kazakhstan and rapid expansion of the Kazakhstani HE sector in general. While there were 61 HEIs in Kazakhstan before the Law of 1993, all of which were public, state-owned institutions (Zhumagulov, 2012), with the passing of the 1993 law allowing the construction of non-state HEIs, the number of private HEIs reached 182 by 2001. (Bayetova & Robertson, 2019). These private HEIs, which can be “organised under different types of legal entities, including the joint-stock company status, limited partnerships,

or fully private”, are now on equal footing with the public ones, as they are also “subject to regular certification and accreditation” in order to hold an institutional license issued by the Kazakhstani state (ibid.).

Moreover, the introduction of private HE providers was in line with more general privatisation of the state-owned enterprises in post-Soviet Kazakhstan (Estrin et al. 2009), which was extended to the HE sectors with the passing of Law “On the List of the Republican State Enterprises and Institutions to be Privatised” (2000). So, during the early 2000s, the privatisation of state HEIs began, and a number of public HEIs became joint-stock companies (JSCs), with the Kazakhstani state sharing the ownership of an HEI with other shareholders. As a result, the number of state HEIs in Kazakhstan decreased, with 12 public HEIs being reorganised into JSCs (Zhakenov, 2002). This restructuring scheme was linked to the promise that the former state-owned HEIs, now having the legal status of privately owned entities, would “enjoy greater autonomy in decision making and financial management and more flexibility in terms of governance”, while also developing “exceptionally strong links with businesses and industry” (Bayetova & Robertson, 2019).

However, the rapid expansion of Kazakhstani HE sectors through privatisation was not without repercussions. Unfortunately, the commercialisation of Kazakhstani HE resulted in a “negative reputation of private universities”, as some of HEIs were accused of “selling diplomas and grades” (Bayetova & Robertson, 2019) by turning into “for-profit diploma mill universities” (Ahn et al, 2018, p.220). So, “after rapid growth of the number of private institutions since 2000”, the calls for optimisation of the Kazakhstani HE system were voiced, and the Kazakhstani state made “efforts to reduce this number through, for example, mergers or closures” (OECD, 2018, p.4). Nevertheless, the shift to a market-based economy has significantly impacted the composition of Kazakhstani HE sectors. By the 2000s, the private HEIs constituted a majority in the Kazakhstani HE system⁵ (~ 70%) (Zhakenov, 2002). To this day, the predominance of private HEIs remains.

Next, the introduction of the Law on Education (1999), which allowed the Kazakhstani HEIs to enroll students on a fee basis, should also be underlined. This established the “two-channel financing” for the HEIs; one from the state budget and another from the fee-paying students. As Kazakhstan faced a severe economic recession in the immediate post-Soviet period, these changes allowed the Kazakhstani HEIs to rely on tuition fees, which by being a significant source of revenue helped to supplement the low levels of public funding. Moreover, as adjusting the Kazakhstani HE sector “to the conditions of a market economy” reduced the Kazakhstani state’s financial commitments, with

the introduction of tuition fees the Kazakhstani HEIs started to become a source of income instead of being a burden on the public budget (Asian Development Bank, 2004, pp.35-36). However, as Kazakhstan's "levels of investment in HE as a percentage of GDP are substantially lower than in many peer countries and far below the average investment in OECD countries", the tuition fees currently provide the largest share of financing for HE in Kazakhstan (e.g. the private spending on HE in Kazakhstan represents about 0.7% of GDP) (OECD, 2017). Nevertheless, it can be stated that the private funding helped to introduce financial diversity into the previously solely state-funded HE sector by supplying new revenue streams in the form of tuition fees.

Moreover, the marketisation reforms also resulted in the formation of a "dual-track tuition fee model" at Kazakhstani HEIs, which meant that the Soviet "tuition-free track" continued to coexist side-by-side with the newly introduced "tuition-fee track" (Smolentseva, 2022). So, this 'dual-track' system technically divides the HE applicants into two parallel segments: the admission to the 'tuition-free track' is based on merit (e.g. those who score the highest in the national test get the grant to study at HEI), while the admission in 'tuition-fee track' is based on price (e.g. those who can pay the price established by institution get admitted on the commercial basis) (Smolentseva, 2022). Recently, the Kazakhstani state also introduced a new model of HE funding, which meant that "state-funded educational grants and loans are provided directly to students, not universities", with the aim to push the Kazakhstani HEIs to "compete on a national level to recruit more students with government money" (Bayetova & Robertson, 2019). Although the Kazakhstani state annually provides a number of state grants for students with the highest scores on the Unified National Test, "the largest share of students in Kazakhstan receives HE on a fee-based basis", and only "29.8% study at the expense of state educational grants" (AY 2020-2021) (Bezler & Sedlarski, 2022). Hence, many raise concern that "in contrast with the relatively egalitarian Soviet system" (Smolentesva, 2022), the introduction of tuition fees and private HE providers have rendered the HE in post-Soviet Kazakhstan less accessible. Thus, the new strategic selectivity of the post-Soviet HE system, produced as a result of the commitment to commercialisation (e.g. the high and rising costs of HE) and the current HE funding model (e.g. the state grants are mainly allocated for the most academically able students), could have created some profound inequities in Kazakhstan by favouring those who are either financially set to afford the tuition costs or those who are considered to be the most academically gifted, while also ignoring the fact that it is students from better-off families, who can afford good schools and private tutoring.

All in all, these developments in the Kazakhstani HE sector, which led to the creation of private HEIs

and the reorganisation of state HEIs, allowed not only a substantial expansion of the HE sector, but also led to a considerable massification of higher learning, which means an increase in the number of academically trained intellectuals within the Kazakhstani systems of intellectuals. So, despite major budgetary constraints and diminished public spending that the Kazakhstani HE faced after the fall of the Soviet Union, there has been a major rise in student enrolment with the number of Kazakhstani students attending HEIs increasing from 313,000 in 1998 (WB, 2000, p.144) to 442,400 in 2000 (Zhakenov, 2003) and 477,387 in 2014 (MoES, 2015). Although this increase in the number of students can be primarily attributed to the emergence of private HEIs and the introduction of tuition fees, it can also be regarded as a part of the post-Soviet social compromise. Since one of the conditions of social compromise underpinning the 'post-Soviet' hegemonic project was to increase Kazakhstanis' levels of well-being by ensuring stable economic growth, the expansion of tertiary educational attainment (which became increasingly recognised as an instrument of economic success and social mobility by the Kazakhstanis) in order to promote the development of an indigenous middle class, can be viewed as part of the Kazakhstani state's attempt to garner wider support. Nevertheless, the fact that with the emergence of tuition-charging HEIs and fee-paying students, the Kazakhstani students turned into consumers of educational services, while the Kazakhstani HEIs became providers of educational services, has become one of the most significant changes that happened to the Kazakhstani HE system in the post-Soviet period as a result of 'pro-marketisation' project.

I have outlined so far how the introduction of market elements into the Kazakhstani HE (as part of the 'post-Soviet' hegemonic project) made its further expansion and diversification possible, increasing the intellectual quality of hegemony. Using Jessop's concept of 'strategic selectivity', we get a sense of how the HE reform made it possible to include children from families who had become more affluent with the transformation of the Kazakhstani economy so that they can now afford to pay the tuition fees. However, making access to higher education increasingly contingent on parents' economic capital risks exacerbating existing socioeconomic inequities in post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

B. Attaining a knowledge-based economy

However, the massification of HE was not only promoted to gain wider support, but it also reflects a change in the economic project and the attempt of the Kazakhstani state to strengthen a knowledge-based economy. As the Kazakhstani economy, largely fuelled by the extraction of natural resources, increasingly proved to be incapable of promoting sustainable growth in the long run, education was

recognised by the Kazakhstani state as being the key to becoming a globally competitive, knowledge-based economy (Aitzhanova et al. 2014).

The HE system was established in the Kazakh SSR by the Soviet state as part of the indigenisation project in the 1920-30s, as prior to the Soviet period no HEIs existed in Kazakhstan (Ahn, 2018, p.200). Since the Kazakh SSR was a national-territorial unit with its accompanying administrative and bureaucratic apparatus, one of the main goals of Soviet HEIs was to prepare local cadres for the Soviet state and Communist Party service. Importantly, the main overarching goal of Soviet HE was to supply the Soviet state with qualified specialists sufficient for the rapid industrialisation of the Soviet economy. In the case of the Soviet constituent republics, the focus was on creating HEIs that would be central to its national economy (Froumin & Kouzminov, 2018). For instance, in Soviet Kazakhstan, the major goal was to establish HEIs that would prepare specialists for agriculture and extractive industries, which had been actively developed on the territory of the Kazakh SSR. So, “almost every sectoral ministry in the Soviet Union and its republics had its own specialised HEIs” (Froumin & Kouzminov, 2018), while the Soviet HEIs were “tightly connected to associated economic sectors and industries themselves” (Jonbekova et al, 2020). Thus, similar to the Soviet state’s planning of production output, “the quantity of students and programmes for each institution was planned in accordance with the anticipated needs of different industries”, it can be stated that a more functionalist approach, which focuses on skill needs, dominated the Soviet HE policy (Froumin & Kouzminov, 2018).

As the development of HE was intricately linked to the economy and its needs during the Soviet times, parts of the HE reforms in post-Soviet Kazakhstan continued with this functionalist approach. However, with the Kazakhstani state now setting new priorities for economic development, the HEIs had to re-orient themselves toward the post-industrial goal of establishing a knowledge-based economy and the change in skills it requires. This has become a critical goal for post-Soviet Kazakhstan, which as a natural resource-intensive economy, has been vulnerable to recurrent crises “in the face of uncertain demand and fluctuating prices for their products” (Yusuf, 2015). So, the goal of building a knowledge-based economy was linked to the hopes that this would help to “diversify sources of growth and employment”, compensating for the fact that the extractive economy generated important revenues, but “few jobs and linkages to other sub-sectors” (Yusuf, 2015). Thus, the shift to a knowledge-based economy was recognised as a suitable “framework for the long-term sustainable development” of post-Soviet Kazakhstan (Toimbek, 2021), with the Kazakhstani state setting an

ambitious plan of becoming a “knowledge economy with a diversified industrial, service and export base” by 2050 (Yusuf, 2015).

As the Kazakhstani state recognised a developed human resource base as the key to knowledge-based economic growth, it has been reorganising the purpose and processes of the HE system accordingly. Especially, the importance of the internationalisation of Kazakhstani HE system was realised. For example, the Kazakhstani state has been actively reforming its HE system by joining the Bologna process in 2010. So, by restructuring the Kazakhstan HE system in line with the Bologna process the Kazakhstan state was aimed at bringing the Kazakhstani HEIs closer to the global standards and integrating it into the international community. Moreover, the Kazakhstani state also heavily invested in two ‘elite’ HE projects, the prestigious international scholarship program and the world-class university (WCU), as “a way to acquire the human capital needed for the country’s ambitious development plans” (Koch, 2014). Firstly, the establishment of the Bolashak Scholarship Program in post-Soviet Kazakhstan should be noted. This prestigious scholarship, which fully covers the study expenses, has granted more than 11,000 high-performing and talented young Kazakhstanis the opportunity to study at universities overseas since 1993 (Alimova, 2022). Although the Bolashak programme initially did not limit the choice of university, since 2007 the scholarships have only been granted for study at one of the top 200 approved universities based on the Times Higher Education Rankings and QS World University Rankings, indicating the Kazakhstani state's growing importance of international prestige and academic reputation (Sagintayeva & Jumakulov, 2015). Furthermore, because the overall goal of this scholarship programme is to develop human capabilities in areas capable of generating knowledge-based growth, a list of priority specialisations was developed for the Bolashak scholarship, in order to ensure the skills and qualifications that governmental agencies and organisations expect to be in demand in the future (Arystanbek, 2021). However, the recipients of the Bolashak scholarship had no longer guaranteed job placement, much in contrast to the Soviet times. Since some Bolashak graduates, despite “holding a positional advantage in the job market”, have been facing problems with finding suitable employment after completion of their studies, it can be stated that “the economy of Kazakhstan has not grown enough to fully absorb graduates” (Jonbekova et al, 2021). With some Bolashak students being educated in fields that are “either underdeveloped in Kazakhstan or non-existent” (e.g., nanotechnology, space technology), it becomes obvious that there exists a certain mismatch between the list of priority specialisations and the actual demands of Kazakhstani labour market (Jonbekova et al, 2021). Furthermore, as the internationalisation also increased the brain drain risk, there have also been major issues with ensuring

the return of recipients of the Bolashak scholarship to Kazakhstan upon completion of their studies, which compelled the Kazakhstani state to engage with another high-profile HE project.

So, in order to decrease the dependence on foreign education overseas, and to develop its own national brand of education, “a state-initiated model of the globally competitive university” was announced in 2006 (Koch, 2014). In 2010, the Nazarbayev University (NU), a highly internationalised, English-medium institution with an international faculty and staff, was established in Kazakhstan in order for Kazakhstani students to study for an overseas degree without leaving the country. NU’s emulation of the WCU can be compared to other national initiatives “for attaining WCU rank and status”, such as King Abdulaziz University (Saudi Arabia) or the National University of Singapore (Singapore), which also aim to boost the domestic HE sector to produce qualified professionals capable of leading their home countries (Tayeb, 2015). However, NU has not only become “the country’s flagship academic institution with aspirations to become a global-level research university”, but it also strives to “establish a benchmark for all HEIs of the country” (NU website). Although it is hoped that the establishment of NU will encourage other Kazakhstani HEIs to meet international standards, resulting in a positive spillover effect in the Kazakhstani HE system, other Kazakhstani HEIs are not as well funded as NU, which has received the most governmental funding since its inception (e.g., 1/4 of the public higher education budget in 2015). So, currently, “supporting student grants and other expenses at Nazarbayev University”, along with “supporting international study through the Bolashak programme”, constitute some of the major components of a public HE budget in Kazakhstan (OECD, 2017). Although the prestigious international scholarship program and the world-class university “play a critical role in developing human resources and generating new knowledge in the context of a knowledge-based economy” (Nian, 2011), the concentration of government resources in few ‘elite’ HE projects can hinder the even development of the HE sector in Kazakhstan, and further aggravate the inequality issue.

However, it is important to emphasise that WCUs not only play “a critical role in training the professionals, high-level specialists, scientists and researchers needed by the economy”, but “as elite research universities” can also help to “generate new knowledge in support of national innovation systems” (Salmi, 2016). Hence, the Kazakhstani state not only recognised its universities as a major source of human capital needed for building a knowledge-based economy, but university-based research has also been promoted “as a driver of economic growth” (Kuzhabekova & Ruby, 2018, p.266). What we can see here is that the internationalisation of the Kazakhstani HE system (e.g. joining the Bologna process, and initiating high-profile HE projects such as Bolashak and NU) is

gradually giving rise to a new conception of the university in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. What is notable is that internationalisation is considered the key qualifier of the prestigiousness of HEIs, reflecting Kazakhstan's greater reliance on the international market. All in all, the reform of Kazakhstani HE has been characterised not only by an expansion and diversification but also by increased segregation within the HE landscape with some elite institutions (e.g. NU) and the prestigious scholarship programs (e.g. Bolashak) receiving more public funding and attracting top-performing students than others. This not only produces a certain stratification within the Kazakhstani HE system but also introduces a new hierarchy within the Kazakhstani system of intellectuals, with the foreign faculty members, as well as Kazakhstanis holding the foreign diplomas being prioritised over the locally-educated faculty members.

C. Developing the research function of Kazakhstani HEIs

So, developing the research functions of Kazakhstani HEIs has become central to Kazakhstan's economic aspirations to become a knowledge-based economy - one that is less dependent on oil and more competitive internationally. Moreover, as the increasing importance of prestige and reputation in the HE market, fuelled by the fact that the Kazakhstani state made the inclusion of Kazakhstani HEIs in the global university rankings as one of the target indicators for its HE policy (Ahn et al. 2018), put forward the 'comprehensive research university' as an ideal type of HEI that can succeed in the market conditions (Sadlak and Liu, 2007). This has also incentivised the Kazakhstani HEIs to increasingly adopt this model.

However, the creation of research-intensive universities has shifted the production of research away from the Soviet Academies of Sciences, which used to be the main sites of academic research production. The Academies were part of a complex knowledge structure in the Soviet Union, representing the top of the system of intellectuals, to use Gramsci's term. The Soviet government asserted that "the academy, rather than universities should be the main centre of science and scholarship" in the Soviet Union, while "the reason behind the Bolsheviks' support for a special role of the academy was because the concentration of the main scientific research within the framework of one institution offered a better possibility for centralised control over science" (Tolz, 1997, p.26). So, the Soviet Academy of Sciences can be considered, as not only the highest scientific organ that dominated the field of science and research in the Soviet Union, but also as a complex institution that led a set of republican academies (a separate academy for each of the fourteen constituent republics) and regional branches (Siberian, Far Eastern, and Ural). Thus, with more than 8 major divisions and

120 separate institutes encompassing a range of fields (Harris, 1959, p.688), the Academy of Sciences assumed “a position of national leadership in planning, coordinating and performing R&D” in the Soviet Union (Kassel & Campbell, 1980). This vast scientific infrastructure was primarily focused on the needs of Soviet industry and defense, as “a particular strong effort in research and development is evident in specialised fields of physics and chemistry advancing critical industrial and defense technologies” (Kassel & Campbell, 1980).

Speaking of the state of science in Soviet Kazakhstan, the Kazakh SSR was represented by the Kazakh Academy of Sciences in this knowledge structure, which was officially established in 1946, as the Kazakhstani branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, and became the highest scientific organ of Kazakh SSR, which oversaw numerous scientific research institutes. Since the Soviet constituent republics like Kazakhstan mainly served the role of resource providers to the Soviet state, the main priority of science during the Kazakh SSR was geological (mining and metallurgy), agricultural, veterinary, and biological sciences in order to study the natural resources of the republic and to promote their rational use (Sairanen, 2019). Thus, the special focus was on areas whose active development was of strategic importance, while the scientific progress in non-priority areas (e.g., engineering, radio-electronics, automatic equipment) largely lagged behind in Soviet Kazakhstan. Therefore, similar to Soviet HEIs, which were largely sector-specific and focused on training specialists for particular industries, the scientific accomplishments and advances in Soviet science were in the spheres that were of principal importance to the Soviet state.

However, the Academy of Sciences of Kazakh SSR entered into a major crisis with the collapse of the Soviet Union and lost its significance as the main flagship of Kazakhstani science. Firstly, the unfavourable economic situation after the fall of the Soviet Union entailed the “degradation of the established Soviet Era scientific research infrastructure”, and a “reduction in the expenditure on research and development” (Kuzhabekova, 2018, p.3). Moreover, Kazakhstan lost a considerable part of its system of intellectuals, as the migration trends in the early years of the dissolution of the USSR entailed “the brain drain of academic talent” (Olcott, 1995). So, despite numerous attempts to revitalise, the growing organisational ineffectiveness and inability to react to modernisation demands epitomised the downward trajectory of Academies of Sciences across the former Soviet republics (Schiermeier, 2013). Nevertheless, the hegemonic crisis of the Academy of Sciences, as part of the larger ‘organic crises’ triggered by the collapse of the Soviet Union, opened up the space for new developments that led to a complete revamping of the research landscape, and the rise of HEIs as the new centres of knowledge creation in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

So, the state policy of 2011 on research productivity (Kuzhabekova, 2017, p.121) can be viewed as an attempt by the Kazakhstani state to increase the research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs by introducing a requirement for faculty members to publish in journals with a nonzero impact factor in order to qualify for promotion (Kuzhabekova & Ruby, 2018, p.266). In a similar vein, there is also a requirement for any candidate for a Ph.D. degree at Kazakhstani HEIs to publish at least one article in a non-zero impact factor journal included in the Web of Knowledge or in the Scopus database (Adambekov, 2016). This new regulation, undoubtedly, resulted in the elevated importance of research publications in Kazakhstani HE landscapes. On the one hand, it can be stated that this policy reflects the Kazakhstani state's aim of enhancing its R&D capacity and is part of the larger economic goal of attaining knowledge-based economic growth. As HEIs can drive investments and promote exports by providing a profitable research environment that produces innovations with potential commercial applications, Kazakhstani state policy supports Kazakhstan's transition to a knowledge-based economy by prioritising the development of research capacity at Kazakhstani HEIs.

On the other hand, a parallel can be drawn between the 'neoliberal' orientation of the Kazakhstani HE system and the introduction of a publishing requirement at Kazakhstani HEIs. As neoliberalism can be viewed as "a historically specific mode of government that is rooted in economic discourses of market competition" (Raaper, 2015), this new 'neoliberal' context undoubtedly affected "the way universities and other institutions of higher education have defined and justified their institutional existence" (Olssen & Peters, 2005). In line with this new neoliberal ethos of competition, there has also been an increased focus on performance indicators and global university rankings for assessing and benchmarking at Kazakhstani HEIs, due to a greater need to ensure the HEIs' quality, reputation, and prestige. Importantly, the research productivity indicators started to be widely included in the development strategies of Kazakhstani HEIs.

Although a considerable investment into HE has been made (Hartley et al, 2016) and many 'positive' developments have taken place in the Kazakhstani HE system since independence (OECD, 2017), Kazakhstan's "performance in research has remained unimpressive since its independence" (Kuzhabekova, 2017, p.121). In particular, the university-based research was recognised to be the most problematic (Kuzhabekova & Ruby, 2018, p.267). This partially can be attributed to the Soviet practice of separating teaching and research. So, "the bulk of the Soviet scientific activity was carried out at research institutes, affiliated with the Soviet or republican Academies of Science or sectoral ministries", while the Soviet HEIs "had a minor role in research, employing only one-third of the R&D personnel" (Chankseliani et al, 2021, p.8702). Although such "separation of research and

educational activities” helped to “secure the directed and vivid development of science in the interests of national defense and the economy of the USSR”, the downside of this was the fact that it did not “allow universities to link research and education in a consistent manner” (Froumin & Kouzminov, 2018). Hence, such allocation of institutional functions precluded the growth of research and development capacities of Soviet HEIs. Moreover, as most Soviet HEIs were largely sector-specific and focused on serving particular industries, such a high degree of specialisation led to “resource inefficiency and knowledge compartmentalization” (Ahn et al, 2018, p.201), which also contributed to a lack of research and innovation at HEIs. Thus, “the strict separation of elements, and their vertical, rather than horizontal integration” was one of the major characteristics of the Soviet education and science system (Froumin & Kouzminov, 2018). All in all, these characteristics of the Soviet HE system are still having a lingering effect on the development of university-based research at Kazakhstani HEIs.

Moreover, access to funding remains one of the most significant barriers to the development of university-based research at Kazakhstani HEIs. Currently, the Kazakhstani state is the largest funder of university-based research, but the state investments in R&D continue to be exceptionally low. As a consequence, the previously state-funded Soviet HEIs have been pushed to seek non-state income sources, due to the fact that there is no “recurrent funding to sustain” the R&D at Kazakhstani HEIs. Not only the overall government spending on HE has greatly fallen due to the “introduction of neoliberal reforms” (Bayetova & Robertson, 2019), but also the Kazakhstani MoES’s constrained funding priorities have limited the even growth of research and innovation capabilities of different Kazakhstani HEIs. Although the research activities at Kazakhstani HEIs have recently started to be funded by competitive mechanisms, such as short-term project-based funding, further attempts to diversification of the research funding of Kazakhstani HEIs have been undertaken, as the Kazakhstani HEIs are encouraged to pursue private funding through the attraction of third parties (e.g. “corporate sponsorship, private investment and profitable ventures of its own” (Jones, 2007, p.77)).

Conclusion of this section

Kazakhstani state has been establishing the framework for a new HE system - one that would be able to meet the demands of an emerging market economy and make stride towards a knowledge-based society. Although a number of departures from the Soviet HE system have taken place, one of the most significant changes was the expansion of the HE sector through the opening of private HEIs and the introduction of tuition fees for the Kazakhstani HEIs to engage in profit-based activities. This

market-driven expansion of HE in post-Soviet Kazakhstan has been beneficial for the hegemony and social compromise underpinning it (by widening participation for many, though not all). However, Kazakhstan largely remains an extractive economy, which experiences economic insecurities due to over-reliance on natural resources and failure to diversify its economy, which demonstrates the vulnerability of the current ‘accumulation strategy’ based on extraction and sale of oil (which also aggravates the hegemony of ruling elite). Hence, the Kazakhstani state is highly interested in increasing its HEIs’ research productivity and fuelling their innovative activity in order to set off knowledge-based economic growth. Science and academic knowledge have thus become increasingly a productive force as well, and no longer just a mechanism for creating hegemony. Moreover, the HEIs’ role, previously limited to the transmission of knowledge, has also broadened to include the research function. So, HEIs, which were the site for the transfer and transmission of knowledge during the Soviet Union, now with the addition of a ‘research producing function’, have become a place of knowledge creation. This can also be framed as a shift of the centre of knowledge production from a site that was tightly integrated into the Soviet research infrastructure to a Western-dominated infrastructure. Thus, it can be stated that the Kazakhstani HEIs rose to prominence in the post-Soviet period, and replaced the Soviet Academy of Sciences, as key knowledge-producing entities within the Kazakhstani ideological state apparatus. Nevertheless, some characteristics of the Soviet HE system still have a lingering effect on the development of university-based research at Kazakhstani HEIs: for example, the Soviet allocation of institutional functions (the separation of teaching and research) has been precluding the growth of R&D capacities of Kazakhstani HEIs.

The implications of political transformations on Kazakhstani HE

A. The move towards decentralisation of Kazakhstan's HE

Following our discussion of the effects of economic projects on the Kazakhstani HE sector, we should analyse the effects of political projects on the Kazakhstani HE system. So, with Kazakhstan’s shift from being a communist state governed by a single party towards the establishment of a democratic state, the parallel transition of Kazakhstani HE, from the Soviet centralised educational and scientific infrastructure system to a new model of HE embracing greater institutional autonomy, should also be considered. Thus, as the Kazakhstani state has been reforming its political system and undertaking democratisation reforms, the decentralisation of HE governance can be viewed as one of the factors that are conducive to democracy.

First, let us take a look at the relative autonomy of Soviet HEIs. In this regard, the importance of the

Soviet state in making decisions concerning the HE should be emphasised, as “following Soviet social doctrine, national higher education had to belong to the state and be organised and managed by the state” (Chauncey, 1959). So, during the Soviet period, the education policy across all constituent republics of the Soviet Union was the competence of the Soviet Ministry of Education in Moscow (Jonbekova et al, 2020). Consequently, the HE policy in Soviet Kazakhstan was determined centrally by the Soviet state at the all-Union level, with all HEIs in Kazakh SSR functioning in full conformity with the general line of the Communist Party and the program of the Council of Ministers (Khrapchenkov & Khrapchenkov, 1998). First of all, the Soviet HEIs were “centrally planned with respect to a number of students, allocation of students among types of schools, among fields of study, and, on graduation, among positions” (Harris, 1959, p.689), as “the inclusion of HEIs into the planning and distribution of manpower was the key organisational principle defining both the nature of academic work and the institutional landscape” in Soviet Union (Froumin & Kouzminov, 2018). Moreover, the Communist Party cells were established at academic institutions, which “led to the full integration of HEI administration and Party’s institutional representation at each HEI”. Hence, it can be stated that the Soviet HE, “as a creation of the Soviet government”, “represented a very unusual organisational construction with an umbilical connection to the Communist party” (Kurayev, 2015). Thus, there were few institutional or structural changes that could be initiated by the Soviet HEIs in the Kazakh SSR, as there was full “subordination of university administration to the central governmental apparatus” in the Soviet Union (McClelland, 1971, p.828).

The role that the Soviet Academy of Sciences played in control over the scientific field should also be noted. So, as the Soviet Academy of Sciences in Moscow was “entrusted with the important duty of coordinating and harmonising scientific work among its own institutes, other institutes, regional academies of science” (Harris, 1959, p.688), it not only held the centralised control over science across the Soviet Union but also established a link between the central unit and the regional sciences. Hence, the “concentration of all scientific activity within the framework of one institution” (ibid.), which included the country’s most outstanding scholars, provided the Soviet state with the opportunity to establish centralised control over science and academia in the Soviet Union. Drawing on Gramsci's concept of a "system of intellectuals," the organisational structure of Soviet education and science infrastructure provided crucial insights into how this system dealt with the Soviet Union's complexity and internal diversity. Initially, it was praised for its capacity for “coordination of programs of training specialists” and “ability to focus resources on scientific fields that appear to hold the most promise in terms of the overall policies and needs of the state” (Harris, 1959, p.687). Although such centralised higher education and scientific governance and its close alignment with

the national economy and industrial sectors was rather effective within the Soviet system of socialism and planned economy, its critics highlighted how it “suffered from bureaucratic automatism”, as “little or no allowance was made for professional initiative or institutional adaptability” (Johnson, 2008, p.165).

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the post-Soviet Kazakhstani state gained competence over the Kazakhstani HE system. In many ways, it attempted to maintain a centralised approach that gives the different institutions minimal discretionary power. Hence, much of HE is still centrally determined in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, as the Kazakhstani HEIs remain under the auspices of the government, with the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) having control over a significant portion of institutional operations. As a result, while the Government of Kazakhstan determines state education policy, the MoES, as the principal authorised entity in the field of education, is directly responsible for overseeing its implementation. This not only echoes the overall political system of modern Kazakhstan, as the top-down, highly centralised system of political governance is mirrored in the education system but it can also be conditioned by the institutional framework passed down from the Soviet period, as post-Soviet Kazakhstan's political leadership exploits the centralised institutional framework inherited from the Soviet period. Although the extensive marketisation and prestige-driven internationalisation of the HE system in line with its economic project enabled the rise of a more diverse and dynamic HE context in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, it can be stated that the Kazakhstani state continues to have “the all-encompassing centralised control that had existed under the Soviet regime” (Sarinzhipov, 2013).

Firstly, the Kazakhstani MoES oversees the establishment and operation of both public and private HEIs and grants the right to conduct academic activities at HEIs by issuing state licenses. It is also important to emphasise that the Soviet organisational principles, such as the requirement that “all Soviet universities had to be alike with unified curricula, the same structure, and a common authority” (Kuraev, 2016), are still partially relevant in the post-Soviet Kazakhstani HE system. Hence, the Kazakhstani HEIs are also expected to “produce similar academic programs and courses and offer a limited number of majors approved by the inter-ministerial committee” (Sarinzhipov, 2013), with the MoES requiring “the standardisation of degree programmes”, “the standardisation of program courses and core course curriculum”, and “the standardisation of faculty promotion”. As both public and private HEIs in Kazakhstan have to “comply with these MoES requirements” in order to “maintain their institutional licenses” (Sarinzhipov, 2013), it can be stated that “despite the appearance of a deregulated HE market, de facto regulation still exists through licensing” (Robertson, 2022). Overall,

it can be stated that the Kazakhstani state relies on the Soviet approach when dealing with the complexity and diversity of its HE system.

Moreover, it should be noted that the public HEIs have a limited capacity to decide autonomously on their governance and organisational matters in Kazakhstan. For instance, the heads of ‘national HEIs’ are directly appointed by the President, while the heads of ‘state HEIs’ are appointed by the MoES, and their ‘term of office’ is also closely regulated by the state (Law on Education, 2007). Hence, it can be stated that there is an “extensive influence of external authorities on the executive heads of national and state HEIs” in Kazakhstan (Sarinzhipov, 2013). Although “the governance and organisational model of private HEIs remains mostly aligned with that of public HEIs”, the private HEIs have comparatively greater organisational autonomy, as they can “autonomously decide on their internal academic structures” (Ahn, 2018). So, unlike the head of public HEI, the rector of private HEI in Kazakhstan is “accountable to the shareholders meeting”, which is “a body that is competent for his/her appointment and dismissal, as well as for fixing the term of office”. In a similar vein, the Kazakhstani HEIs established as joint-stock companies (JSC), while still being subject to government regulation, enjoy “greater autonomy in decision making and financial management and more flexibility in terms of governance”, as they have “the legal status of privately owned universities” (Bayetova & Robertson, 2019). Moreover, with the recent Kazakhstani reforms that are “moving the public university sector towards the joint-stock company status” (Ahn, 2018), it can be said that the ‘normalisation’ of decentralisation is gradually gaining ground in the Kazakhstani HE system with the realisation of ‘marketization’ project.

At this point, the special case of Nazarbayev University, which was granted the status of ‘autonomous educational institution’ by the Law “On the status Nazarbayev University” (2011), should be noted (Nurgaliyeva et al, 2018). This special status provided the NU with “wide academic, financial and managerial autonomy” (Nurgaliyeva et al, 2018) on the basis of the fact that is a “separate organisation of education, making an outstanding contribution to education, training and professional formation of the personality” (Article 4, Law on Education). However, Nurgaliyeva et al. (2018) pointed to the absence of “accurate legislatively-established criteria of providing the special status”, as “there are no qualitative or quantitative methods for determination of ‘the outstanding contribution’ of the university” in the Kazakhstani law (p.315).

Although the Kazakhstani HE system is closely regulated by the MoES, nonetheless, reconsideration of traditional approaches to university governance, and moves towards implementation of greater

institutional autonomy and shared governance have gradually been taking place in the Kazakhstani HE system. So, the Kazakhstani HEIs are capable of deciding on certain issues such as “the organisation of the educational process”, and “the selection and the appointment of teaching and administrative staff”, and they can also “set their own structure, the number and order of admissions of fee-paying students” (Law on Education, 2007). Moreover, ‘Boards of Trustees’ and ‘Boards of Overseers’ have recently been introduced to the Kazakhstani HE system. As the “governance reform in Kazakhstan seeks to diminish the role of the MoES and shift increased responsibility to the universities themselves” (Sagintayeva et al, 2017), the establishment of “boards of overseers, trustees or directors” was seen to be essential for stimulation of more accountability and responsibility (Bayetova & Robertson, 2019). Although by 2018, they were already functioning in 66 Kazakhstani HEIs, the concern was voiced that they actually “play an important advisory role only in several HEIs” (Nurgaliyeva et al, 2018). Hence, it can be stated that “learning to be autonomous presents challenges for the universities” (Sagintayeva & Kurakbayev, 2014, p.197), and “the concept of institutional autonomy was contrary to the command and control system with which institutional leaders were familiar” (Jonbekova et al, 2020), it can be assumed that the ruling elite (who can also be among university’s top management) might resist changing the HE governance practices, if it undermines their ability to control the process of knowledge production and transmission.

All in all, though there has been “the tension between the MoES’ centralised control over a significant portion of institutional operations and discourses on decentralisation”, the autonomy of Kazakhstani HEIs is gradually expanding “in terms of the content of education, diversification of funding sources, the introduction of Boards of Trustees and Supervisory Boards, reporting of rectors, etc” (Ahn, 2018). Thus, the institutional autonomy of Kazakhstani HEIs can be expected to widen, as according to the State Program of Education Development for 2011–2020, it has been projected that the “national research universities in 2015, national HEIs in 2016 and the rest by 2018” will have been granted institutional autonomy (MoES, 2010).

B. Academic freedom at Kazakhstani HEIs

Next, not only the institutional autonomy of HEIs but also their academic freedom is an essential component of the democratisation process (Bergan et al, 2020). So, the HEIs operate as knowledge-transferring institutions, which can help to provide citizens with a set of knowledge and skills that are necessary for them to effectively take part in civil society (Evans et al, 2019). Importantly, I want to underline the HEIs“ ’position as a site of critique and relatively unfettered knowledge production” (Pusser et al. 2012). This knowledge-creating capacity of HEIs is of paramount importance, as the

democratic processes in society are dependent on “the protection of the integrity of research” and “the processes and findings of the reflective inquiry to be made public and accessible”, which allows any knowledge produced “be subjected to rational critique and debate” (Sit, 2008). Consequently, academic freedom can be viewed as one of the key factors that enable a university’s knowledge-producing contribution to the democratisation processes.

The state of academic freedom during the Soviet rule shall be discussed first. In this regard, the high politicisation of Soviet science and academia, due to “class struggle ”and the need to “contend with dissidents”, should be noted (Kurochkin, 2011). Firstly, the Imperial Academy of Sciences, which was viewed as a ‘bastion ’of bourgeois science and scholarship, was re-organised into the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union in 1925, as the Soviet leaders were undertaking the socialist transformation of existing ‘capitalist ’institutions (Tolz, 1997). Another important task of the newly-established Soviet state was to produce the new ‘Soviet ’intellectuals, opposite to the ‘bourgeois ’ intellectuals of Tsarist Russia. So, on the one hand, “the Communist Party kept a controlling hand over the national academic system through the screening process of all applicants at the enrolment stage”, as according to the Communist Party’s doctrine, the new Soviet intelligentsia had to be of the working class and peasant backgrounds, be Komsomol or Communist Party members (Kuraev, 2015). On the other hand, the intellectuals in the Soviet Union had to “follow party guidance and support official political declarations without expressing personal stances on the subject”, as the members of Soviet academia were “frequently suppressed and persecuted for being engaged in research or scholarly work that is so-called ‘ideologically suspect’, ‘counter-revolutionary ’and ‘bourgeoisie ’in its nature” (Kuraev, 2015). In regard to the Kazakh SSR, the political persecution of scholars, which reached its utmost height during Stalin’s regime, resulted in the majority of Kazakh intelligentsia being labeled as ‘enemy of the people’, and persecuted in the 1930s. Thus, the intellectual system underwent substantial changes throughout the Soviet period: not only did new ‘Soviet’ intellectuals of ‘proletarian’ background emerge, but members of the ‘old guard’ intellectuals were either destroyed in purges (coercive measures) or absorbed into the Soviet system (consensual means).

As the scientific infrastructure system was state-controlled, much of the research conducted by Soviet intellectuals was under the ideological pressure of the Soviet state. On the one hand, the scholarly work undertaken by the Soviet intellectuals was closely examined to ensure that it was not politically sensitive, and was well aligned with the Marxist-Leninist philosophy, before being approved as ‘ideologically correct’. The humanities and social sciences were the scientific fields that were especially affected by the ideological influence during the Soviet Union. As these particular fields

were heavily employed as tools for the propaganda of Communist ideology, it was important to ensure that the Soviet intellectuals produced scholarship that followed the Communist Party line. For example, history was frequently used to propagate the narratives that the Soviet state saw as vital to sustaining its hegemonic legitimacy. So, some themes and areas of research were forbidden or censored in the Soviet Union, while “these prohibitions were explicitly spelled out in the secret directives and other instructions circulated internally among censorship agencies” (Blum & Farina, 1998).

On the other hand, such a high degree of political and ideological intrusion into Soviet academia was aimed at “joining the political objectives of a proletarian state with scientific and research objectives” (Kassel & Campbell, 1980). So, the fact that Soviet scholars were subject to pressure from the Soviet state to undertake research relevant for the advancement of Soviet industry and defense needs to be empathised. As science was viewed in the Soviet Union as “the prime mover of technology”, the Soviet Academy of Sciences “was expected to help to solve the chronic problems of Soviet industrial innovation” (Kassel & Campbell, 1980). Thus, Soviet research and scholarship were realised in accordance with the Soviet hegemonic projects of a command economy, communism, and Sovietization. Generally, it can be stated that the Soviet academic system lacked academic freedom, as the Soviet state permitted neither freedom of inquiry, nor of opinion. The downside of this tight control over Soviet academia and repression of Soviet science was the fact that it “lacked the safety valve of diversity of judgment”, “neglected the personal interest of the individual scientists”, while the “political and dogmatic considerations interfered with freedom of scientific inquiry or interpretation”, and the “practical and short-range research at times tend to be developed to the neglect of basic research” (Harris, 1959).

Next, the post-Soviet Kazakhstani academia has also been enjoying minimal academic freedom, which can be attributed to the Soviet Union’s centralised model of science and education. So, according to the Academic Freedom Index 2020, Kazakhstan (score of 0.429) is in the category of countries with the C-status, which denotes the group of countries where academic freedom is not guaranteed (Kinzelbach et al, 2021). Although in comparison to the Soviet period, which was characterised by extensive repression of academia and widespread censorship of science, the freedom of expression is ‘de-jure’ permitted by the Kazakhstani state, ‘de-facto’, there exists some unspoken limits to academic freedom in Kazakhstan. For example, the limits to academic freedom “with respect to criticism of the president and his family” (Freedom House, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013), as according to the Law “On the First President of Kazakhstan” (2000), there are penalties for insulting the dignity

and honour of the First President. Although the concepts of institutional autonomy and academic freedom are increasingly gaining currency in recent policy documents, the principles of institutional autonomy and academic freedom are neither defined nor enshrined in key educational legislation such as the Law on Education (2007). Hence, caution is taken by the members of the Kazakhstani system of intellectuals in raising politically sensitive issues, as they refrain from openly engaging with some urgent socio-political problems of Kazakhstan. Thus, it can be stated that there is a fear of reprisal for inquiry and expression beyond sanctioned limits among intellectuals in Kazakhstani academia. Therefore, some concerns were voiced that the 'real 'science on 'sensitive 'socio-political issues of Kazakhstan is being done in the 'West 'by the 'Western 'Intellectuals. This is due to the fact that they have more academic freedom to engage in depth with such research topics compared with their Kazakhstani counterparts (Bokash, 2016).

Moreover, as the Kazakhstani state, through the Ministry, maintains a tight grip of control over the HE system, it has a major effect on the research production at Kazakhstani HEIs. At this point, it is important to emphasise that "there is an observed division of HEIs into HEIs with the special status and 'usual 'HEIs" in regard to their academic autonomy in Kazakhstan (Nurgaliyeva et al, 2018). So, as previously stated, NU is "unique in this system" not only "due to its predominantly international faculty and strategic partnerships with universities and research centres overseas" (Ruby et al, 2017), but also because it was founded as an "autonomous research university" adhering to the principles of academic freedom in teaching and research. According to the Law on Education (2007), this special status is awarded to "the separate organisations of education, making an outstanding contribution to education, training and professional formation of the personality" (Article 4, Point 12). On the other hand, as "the academic activity of other higher education institutions of Kazakhstan has been rigidly regulated", the majority of Kazakhstani HEIs have limited academic freedom in comparison to NU (Nurgaliyeva et al, 2018).

It can be assumed that the Kazakhstani Academy of Sciences currently enjoys more academic freedom than in the Soviet period. As the Academy was reorganised into a public association by the Decree of the President (2003), it was believed that this move would help the Academy to become more independent from the state. However, this newly acquired autonomy did not result in a major enhancement of the Academy's scientific capacity, as it not only changed the legal status of the Academy (it was stripped of its 'state 'status) but also cut off the vital funding streams from the state. Moreover, with some individuals becoming academicians without first being the corresponding members of the Academy, it can be stated that the Academy's statute and the rules of awarding

membership have been frequently violated (Mamashuly, 2022). So, the current members of the Kazakhstani Academy of Sciences include not only well-known and established scholars but also individuals, who are not actually engaged in any scientific work (ibid.). Thus, not only the violations of the procedures for awarding membership but also the academic status and competence of the members of the Academy currently raise major concerns. Therefore, with the Academy that was stripped of its former 'privileged' status, and membership in the Academy that is no longer considered a 'reliable' academic title, it can be stated that the members of the Kazakhstani Academy of Sciences largely lost their key position within the system of intellectuals in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan. Moreover, with the Kazakhstani state's focus being re-directed to universities-based research, it can be stated that the faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs have risen to prominence as the chief knowledge-producers within the current system of intellectuals in Kazakhstan.

Furthermore, "increasing faculty participation" can be viewed as being "central to promoting key values of higher education such as academic freedom and autonomy" at Kazakhstani HEIs (Sarinzhipov, 2013). However, despite the efforts on decentralisation of HE governance, there is still a lack of opportunity for Kazakhstani faculty members to engage in university governance, even when it comes to making decisions on academic and research matters. So, the decision-making power at Kazakhstani HEIs largely "remains with senior administrators" (Sarinzhipov, 2013), while faculty members' "participation in governance is usually limited to offering advice through the academic council" (Ruby, Kuzhabekova & Lee, 2016). Hence, with a lack of authority over academic matters (e.g., design and structure of academic programs and courses) at Kazakhstani HEIs, the faculty members can be viewed as "contract employees delivering predesigned courses with no incentive to bring new ideas and methods" (Sarinzhipov, 2013). Consequently, such limited role for faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs can lead to "shortages in incentives for creativity and accountability of faculty members" (OECD, 2017), and results "in frustrated and demotivated faculty who are not able to produce good quality teaching and research" (Sarinzhipov, 2013). Thus, as Kazakhstani faculty members have emerged as the key 'knowledge-producing' intellectuals within the post-Soviet 'system of intellectuals', it is important to note the constraints that their limited role in the HE governance and decision-making can entail for the further development of their research-producing capacity.

Conclusion of this section

I hope to have shown in this section that HEIs are not only central to Kazakhstan's economic aspirations but are also indispensable for its 'democratisation' project through sustaining a vigorous

civil society. The increasing preoccupation with research productivity at universities for the sake of reputation and global ranking also exhibits a contradictory side of these 'neoliberal' reforms in the HE sector. In order to enhance university-based research, which is premised on the values of institutional autonomy and academic freedom, highly prescriptive policies are advanced at Kazakhstani HEIs. In particular, the Kazakhstani state's publishing requirement can be said to call into question the democratic principles of institutional autonomy and academic freedom, as it attempts to intervene in and exert influence upon Kazakhstani HEIs' and faculty members' research and publishing practices and performance. Hence, the Foucauldian perspective can offer us an opportunity to uncover the dominant discourses and practices at Kazakhstani HEIs in order to see whether the techniques of governmentality and corresponding modes of objectivization are becoming integrated into the structures of Kazakhstani HE governance. However, arm's length governance, when the governing becomes performance and output-based while increasing the responsibility and risks of individual or institutional units, can co-exist with a heavier-handed, top-down bureaucratic structure. It can be seen in Kazakhstan's HE sector, which retained some elements of the 'Soviet' tightly managed and centrally planned governance system to be potentially detrimental to the institutional autonomy and academic freedom at Kazakhstani HEIs.

Although the Kazakhstani state is highly interested in relying on HEIs and university-based research as the vehicle for its knowledge-based economic growth, it seems to be hesitant (or reluctant) to also rely on it as a stronghold of democratisation by taking active steps to ensure that the principles of institutional autonomy and academic freedom are fully realised at Kazakhstani HEIs. This is generally in line with the stagnation in the realisation of the 'democratisation' project, which, as noted earlier, as part of 'passive revolution' has been in the interests of the ruling 'nomenklatura' elite, who might fear the vagaries of full-blooded democratization reforms (e.g. as a potential threat to their regime), and also be anxious to allow the creation of a free, autonomous, self-governed community of scholars in Kazakhstan (e.g. as a potential source of counter-hegemonic ideas and discourses). However, as institutional autonomy and academic freedom are key to research production at HEIs, the concern can be raised that the highly centralised nature of Kazakhstani HE governance is precluding a fuller evolvment of Kazakhstani HEIs' research-producing function, which might jeopardise the realisation of 'knowledge-based economy' project (aggravating the vulnerability of a ruling regime, and its dependence on current 'accumulation strategy' based on extraction oil). Although the ruling regime may be interested in maintaining its ideational dominance over civil society by tightening control over HEIs as part of the ideological apparatus, faculty members as part of the intellectual system, and academic knowledge as a mechanism for creating hegemony, it is critical to ensure that

Kazakhstani HEIs are not only open and intellectually free sites for the creation of new knowledge, but also sites of contestation.

The implications of socio-cultural transformations on Kazakhstani HE

A. *The national-patriotic orientation of Kazakhstani HEIs*

Thirdly, with the collapse of the USSR, the new common identity, state language, and other expressions of nationhood had to be put in the place of Soviet socio-cultural constructs. So, the Kazakhstani state was actively engaged in the ‘identity construction’ project, while the Kazakhstani HEIs (as part of the ideological apparatus) have also been central to the evolving ideas of post-Soviet nationhood in Kazakhstan. In this regard, HEI’s purpose as an ideological and cultural institution should be emphasised, which is “considered as part of the growing ‘third role’ of the university, outside of mainstream teaching and research” (Chatterton, 2000, p.177). Thus, the Kazakhstani HEIs can be viewed as an important site for identity construction and nation-building, which can enhance our understanding of HEIs’ role in Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet transformations.

Previously, “the rigorous subordination of all other possible functions of education to the economic function” in the Soviet Union was highlighted (McClelland, 1971, p.828), as the Soviet HE system became “an indissoluble part of the overall economic complex of the Soviet Union” (Froumin & Kouzminov, 2018). So, while the industrial objective was highly prominent during the Soviet times (due to the nature of the Soviet economic project), the ideological underpinning of Soviet HE was of no less important, and they both went hand in hand. As a consequence, “the cultural-educational work developed as a separate field of ideological activity and was part of both the party’s activity and of the cultural-educational function of the Soviet state” (Peters, 1956). For instance, the resolution of the All-Union Congress of Educators stated that: “we professors and instructors, obligate ourselves so to conduct our work that every day spent by a student in a higher education institution will nurture in him Bolshevik ideology, broaden his political and cultural horizon, and enrich him with knowledge of his specialty” (Pravda, 1946). Hence, the HE system during Soviet times helped to sustain the Soviet Union’s hegemonic objectives like a uniform commitment of prepared specialists to the Communist Party’s ideology, as the Soviet HEIs were an indispensable part of the “general system of proletarian cultural dissemination” (Froumin, 2018). Moreover, in the case of Soviet constituent republics, like Kazakh SSR, the Soviet state was also interested in integrating the indigenous population, through the medium of education, into the Communist ideology and Soviet hegemonic projects to prevent any opposition to Soviet rule. Hence, the Soviet HEIs also performed an important

function of creating the local ‘Soviet’ intelligentsia and bureaucracy in constituent republics, to ensure that “whole-hearted supporters of socialism occupy leadership positions in the economic and social sectors” across the far-flung Soviet Union. Thus, the Communist Party, which was the “leading and guiding force of Soviet society” (The Soviet Constitution, 1977, Article 6), was closely involved in the process of “creating a new technical intelligentsia capable of serving socialist industry” (Stalin, 1928) through “operational management of research and teaching via integrating primary party organisations” (Azimbayeva, 2017).

In a similar vein, the Soviet ideology had an influence on science and research in the Soviet Union. In particular, the Soviet ideological outlook on science shaped the understanding of what constituted ‘good’ research in the Soviet Union. As in the Soviet Union “the research and development activity was conducted within a framework of central planning”, it can be stated that “Soviet ideology inculcated an interest in applying the results of research”, while “the practical results have also been consistently emphasised in the prevailing ideology” (Amann, 1970). So, in addition to the Soviet scientific censorship discussed earlier, Soviet research also had to be preoccupied with “practical benefits” rather than the “scientific interest” of a researcher, be more “problem-oriented” rather than “discipline-oriented” (ibid.). Although “the unpredictable nature of all scientific activity, and of fundamental research in particular, makes it notoriously difficult to plan in the conventional sense” (Amann, 1970), the Soviet ideology highly emphasised the alignment of Soviet science with central planning (and the economic project). Hence, “the planned character of scientific development” in the Soviet Union, which “concentrated its efforts on the key problems of scientific and technological progress” needs to be underlined (Dobrov, 1973). Moreover, it can also be argued that the Soviet ideology stressed the practically oriented and problem-solving character of Soviet science in order to legitimise Soviet rule. Domestically, it helped to convince the Soviet people that with the help of Soviet scientific advancements industrial production was getting more efficient and more abundant, which meant higher economic growth and better standards of living. Internationally, it helped the Soviet state to demonstrate to the ‘Capitalist West’ the technological prestige and progressiveness of Soviet science (e.g. space race, nuclear arms race), which could also attract more countries into the Communist camp. Both of these factors, internal (economic growth) and external (international prestige), helped to elicit the consent of the Soviet people to the Soviet hegemonic rule. Although “the unprecedented level of centralised government control of personnel and resources allowed the Soviet government to focus on selected high-priority projects” (Graham, 1992), the Soviet ideological commitment to central planning, instead of broader scientific merit or personal scientific interest, imposed major constraints on Soviet research and led to the lack of genuine scientific pluralism

(which, I assume, might have been beneficial for the tighter ideational control over the system of intellectuals).

After the fall of the Soviet Union, “a new period of the history of Kazakhstani education development began”, which was “the period of national self-determination, the restoration of the national culture, of the Kazakh language and the development of national history” (Lee & Bozymbekova, 2021). As “patriotism” was recognised as “one of the key factors in the formation of the new Kazakhstan” (Nazarbayev, 2010), this “national ambition of leadership” was also reflected in the ideological function that Kazakhstani HEIs had to perform within the framework of the ‘post-Soviet’ hegemonic project. Similar to Soviet education, which was the main instrument in the ideological upbringing of Soviet citizens, “fostering patriotic and civic values of students” became “a continuous process from pre-school to higher education” in the post-Soviet Kazakstan (Lee & Bozymbekova, 2021). This patriotism was expected to hold the wider population congruent with the post-Soviet hegemonic project, as I have outlined in the previous chapter, but it also reflects the identity dilemma the Kazakhstani state was confronted with. On the one hand, the Kazakhstani ‘patriotic education’ was aimed at “valorizing the importance of the Kazakh culture and traditions”, since the Kazakh ethnicity was prioritised as a titular one in post-Soviet Kazakhstan (ibid.). On the other hand, the Kazakhstani ‘patriotic education’ also “calls for equality of all ethnic groups” to underline the inclusiveness of Kazakhstani identity that has to reflect “its multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-religious demographic composition” (Lee & Bozymbekova, 2021). Overall, this patriotic discourse found a wide reflection in the post-Soviet state discourse on Kazakhstani education. Although the ‘patriotic education’ is primarily provided at Kazakhstani HEIs through the social sciences and humanities disciplines (e.g. history, legal education, self-knowledge), it can also be viewed as “an organically integrated component of the overall process of learning and development”, which also finds its expression in extra-curricular and non-academic activities (Lee & Bozymbekova, 2021).

Moreover, the Kazakhstani state was also trying to strengthen the “national pride” through the earlier mentioned ‘international’ HE projects like the Bolashak Scholarship and Nazarbayev University. On the one hand, these undertakings can be viewed as “nation-building projects”, which are trying to create “a national brand” of Kazakhstani HE by “harmoniously combining the Kazakhstani identity with the best international educational and scientific practice” (Del Sordi, 2018). On the other hand, this prestigious international scholarship program (Bolashak) and the ‘world-class university’ (NU) can help to “promote national identity and nationalistic pride”, especially, “among the younger generation who participated in the system and directly benefited from it”, as it will be “associated

with gratitude to the state and love of country” (Koch, 2014). Thus, as fostering national values and strengthening patriotic sentiments among the Kazakhstani youth has become one of the goals of the Kazakhstani HE system, the Kazakhstani HEIs can be viewed as one of “the main sites for the spread of Kazakh nationalism” (Bayetova, 2020). Thus, the patriotic education at Kazakhstani HEIs “plays a fundamental role not only in establishing the legitimacy of the nation-state”, but also in “consolidating the solidarity of its various groups under one ideological ideal” (Lee & Bozymbekova, 2021).

Next, it is important to emphasise that the Kazakhstani HEIs can operate not only as knowledge-transferring institutions that disseminate the existing knowledge but also as knowledge-producing entities, which create new knowledge through research activity. However, unlike the Soviet ideological outlook on science, which was more inward-oriented due to the isolation of the Soviet Union and its scientific community, Kazakhstani science is growing more and more outward-oriented in the post-Soviet period. This can be attributed to the shifting priorities and new objectives of the hegemonic project, as the “higher education and research policy discourses across post-Soviet countries increasingly emphasise global norms, global reputation, and global competitiveness” (Chankseliani & Silova, 2018). Hence, the internationalisation has also become a significant priority for Kazakhstani education and science policy, as the Kazakhstani state hoped to improve its international standing and global competitiveness in the post-Soviet period. So, while “in a planned economy of the Soviet type, it was criteria laid down by the central authorities” (Amann, 1970), which determined the goals and priorities of Soviet education and science, the post-Soviet Kazakhstani HE and science have been greatly influenced by the ‘international’ criteria. Thus, in contrast to “the climate of secrecy (especially in the military sphere) and restricted movement of scientists abroad” (ibid.) that characterised the highly-isolated Soviet science, the post-Soviet Kazakhstani science has opened up to the global academic community, and became more oriented towards the international requirements. In this regard, the major role of international publications, as the main criteria in the evaluation and assessment of research output at Kazakhstani HEIs, should be underlined. However, there are still a number of barriers to building Kazakhstani HEIs’ scientific capacity and increasing their publication output, one of which is “the language barrier” which will be discussed in the following section.

B. The language policies at Kazakhstani HEIs

As I have outlined in the previous chapter, Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet hegemonic project presents an interesting dilemma. It is struggling to manage its diverse population as a multi-ethnic country, while

simultaneously being involved in the revival of the Kazakh language and culture as a newly-independent country; it is trying to redress the damaging legacies of the communist rule as a post-Soviet country, while also grappling with the subtle effects of globalisation as a developing country that is actively integrating into the world economy. As a result, the Kazakhstani HE can be a valuable analytical lens to investigate how the identity-building project is being formed, negotiated, and contested, and how the meanings connected with ethnicity, nationality, and languages are produced, promoted, and managed by the Kazakhstani state. During the Soviet times, one of the main characteristics of “Soviet nationalities policy was ethno-territorial federalism” (Jankiewicz et al, 2020), as the equality of all people and of all languages in the Soviet Union was one of the Bolsheviks’ major commitments (Comrie, 1981) (an important part of its social compromise with a non-Russian population of its constitution republics). Hence, after the victory of the October Revolution, the Soviet state “embarked on a massive program to provide secular schools to the non-Russian nationalities, with their languages serving as languages of instruction” (Anderson & Silver, 1984). This promotion of local languages in schools was aided by the “special section of the Commissariat of Enlightenment responsible for developing schools using the non-Russian language”, and accompanied by the “textbooks that were printed in 104 languages” (ibid.) However, the Soviet state’s initial commitment to equality of languages, and willingness to make concessions in regards to the usage of local languages were gradually reversed, since “the use of minority languages and minority-language education was reduced from the 1930s onwards, while the use of Russian as the language of inter-ethnic communication increased” (Jankiewicz et al, 2020). Most importantly, as the teaching of the Russian language was made mandatory in all non-Russian schools across the Soviet Union, Russian became the “all-union language” for all citizens of the far-flung Soviet Union (Anderson & Silver, 1984). Thus, the Soviet state believed that it was the Russian language that would serve “to cement the unity of Soviet culture and acts as an effective accelerator of the drawing-together of nations” (Solchanyk, 1982) for its hegemonic project.

So, in the case of Soviet constituent republics like Kazakh SSR, the Russian language was actively promoted to ensure the “greater unification of the Soviet people by linguistically integrating the people of Central Asia into the Union” (Dietrich, 2015). For example, the Cyrillic alphabet replaced the Latin alphabet in Central Asian republics to bring them closer to the Russian language (Dietrich, 2015). With the spread of the Russian language and culture across the Soviet Union, it was expected that the Soviet citizens would also gradually adopt the norms, values, and lifestyle that drew on ‘Russian’ models, thus, strengthening the Soviet cultural hegemony. However, this led to Kazakhs, as many other non-Russians in the Soviet Union, being left on the fringe of losing their ethnic and

linguistic identities in favour of association with the Soviet identity. This can attest to the relative success of the Soviet state's cultural hegemony. In a similar vein, the HE system of Kazakh SSR was also aimed at promoting the dominant Soviet identity at the expense of ethnic Kazakh one. Although the Soviet state tried "to support the development of the ethnic culture central for each particular republic", which entailed "the establishment of institutes for ethnic cultural studies in almost every republic", it was strongly believed that the "Russification was an important prerequisite for industrialisation" in Soviet Union (Froumin & Kouzminov, 2018). Hence, "the use of the local language as a language of instruction in higher education" was rather limited, "leaving local language instruction mostly for the culture-specific departments" (Froumin & Kouzminov, 2018). Thus, the Soviet HE system "became an instrument for Russification", which was sustained not only by "teaching in Russian", but also by "keeping major Russian higher education institutions as mentor institutions for similar HEIs in the republics" (Froumin & Kouzminov, 2018). All in all, though "the Soviets attempted to cover up the fact that the non-privileged nationalities, such as non-Russians in the USSR, did not have real equality by using inclusive rhetoric" (Burkhanov, 2017, p.13), it can be stated that the Soviet language policy largely failed the promise of "adequately providing nationalities their language rights" or "fulfilling the Communist Party's goal of creating a non-ethnic Soviet people" (Marshall, 1992).

In the post-Soviet period, the newly independent Kazakhstani state undertook some major language policy changes, which largely reflect the long-standing 'identity' dilemma (ethnic vs. civic identity) facing the post-Soviet hegemonic project. Firstly, the status of Kazakh language as a "state language" (1993) was employed to strengthen the position of Kazakhs as a core ethnic group in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. As the "Law on Languages" (1997) proclaimed that "the duty of every citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan shall be the mastery of the state language" (Article 4), it was introduced as mandatory language in schools, while the government communications have also been encouraged to be conducted in Kazakh language. Thus, it can be stated that the usage of the Kazakh language has gradually expanded in post-Soviet Kazakhstan (~ 83% of Kazakhstanis can speak Kazakh), but also due to the fact that the ethnic composition of Kazakhstan shifted in favour of ethnic Kazakhs.

However, Russian remains the dominant 'vernacular' language in Kazakhstan with more than 90% of Kazakhstanis speaking it (Egemen Qazaqstan, 2018). As a consequence, Russian was granted the status of "official language" to reflect the fact that it holds a strong position in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. So, the Russian language, on par with the Kazakh language, can be used in state institutions and local self-administrative bodies (Constitution, 1995, Article 7). However, this resulted in greater ambiguity

in nationality policy, since the difference between the 'state' language, Kazakh, and the 'official' language, Russian, is not fully clear. Nevertheless, as Kazakhstan is home to numerous ethnic groups that speak over 126 languages (Aksholakova & Ismailova, 2013), the "Law on Languages" (1997) safeguards the right of Kazakhstani citizens "to use their native language, freely choose the communication, upbringing, education and creative work" (Article 6). Thus, as the Kazakhstani state eventually opted for a more balanced language policy in order to provide inter-ethnic stability (Kassymbekov, 2003, p.69), it can be argued that the Kazakhstani state was hesitant, in fear of alienating its non-Kazakh population, to single out the Kazakh language as the sole basis of its cultural hegemony in post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

Next, the Kazakhstani state has also been determined to develop a multilingual society in Kazakhstan. This is reflected in a number of state policies and regulations on trilingualism. So, the Kazakhstan state is actively implementing a trilingual policy by stressing the skills of communication in the "Kazakh language as a state language", in "Russian as a language of interethnic communication", and "a foreign language (English) as a language of successful integration into the global economy" (Nazarbayev, 2007). Hence, trilingualism has been defined as "a strategically important task of education", and is part of the State Program for the Development of Education for 2011–2020. Although "three languages as individual subjects have always been taught" in Kazakhstan, "teaching of non-language curricular subjects through three different languages" has been "a new approach" stipulated by the trilingual education policy (Karabassova, 2020). However, the proportion of Kazakhstanis proficient in all three languages is still quite low (22.3%) (Egemen Qazaqstan, 2018). On the whole, such a multilingual approach to education can not only be viewed as "an attempt to locate post-Soviet Kazakhstan as an inclusive, multi-ethnic, civic nation", but also as the Kazakhstani state's cautious approach to the linguistic basis of its hegemonic project.

Nevertheless, it can be stated that the linguistic policies undertaken by the Kazakhstani state in the post-Soviet period are gradually bringing changes to the linguistic context in which HE is taking place. Currently, there is a stable trend towards an increasing number of students opting for the Kazakh-medium HE instead of the Russian language, while in the earlier periods of independence, there was a greater percentage of students getting HE in the Russian language as compared to Kazakh (Ahn, 2018). Although there is "a small, but growing number of enrollees in English-medium HEIs (2.6%)" (MoES, 2015), the pledge "to increase" the proficiency in the third language" (Mikhailova, 2020) has been the most problematic, as Kazakhstan still has "very low proficiency" in English (EF English Proficiency Index, 2021). However, as "Kazakhstan's essential goal in HE remains to achieve

global competitiveness”, considerable efforts have been devoted to English language education at Kazakhstani HEIs (Bayetova, 2022). For instance, the State Program on Education and Science Development for 2016-2019 called for “the shift to the teaching in English with the development of educational programs, textbooks, and teaching materials in English for HEIs”. Although the majority of Kazakhstani HEIs are bilingual and operate mainly in Kazakh and Russian languages, the annual scholarships are granted by the Kazakhstani state “to the preparatory department in higher education institutions to improve the level of English language training” (Tussupbekova, 2018, p.37). Furthermore, the Kazakhstani state’s determination to support English language education is also evident in “the bulk of state funding going to schools and universities, such as Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools and Nazarbayev University, where all disciplines are taught in English” (Bayetova, 2022). So, on the one hand, the Kazakhstani state actively promotes multilingualism by adopting the program on the trinity of languages (Nazarbayev, 2017), on the other hand, there are a lot of state initiatives explicitly advocating the strengthening of the Kazakh language in all spheres of use (Dave, 2013) and yet the 2011’s policy on research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs implicitly privileges the reliance on English language as a medium of research publications. However, as academic journals are registered in the bibliometric databases like Web of Science, Scopus, or PubMed that are biased towards the English language, “the increasing role of the English language and the dominant role of English-medium journals published in the West” in Kazakhstani academia should be specifically emphasised (Kuzhabekova, 2017, p.122). This can be contrasted to Soviet academic publishing, which “existed in parallel and largely in isolation from the global academic publication market due to ideological control” (Akopov, 1989). Although around “1578 academic journals operated in the former Soviet Union” (ibid.), there existed a rigid hierarchy in the sphere of Soviet academic publishing, as the “academic journals were assigned ranks, which determined the level of government funding that they received and their significance for the Soviet economy and science” (Kuzhabekova, 2017, p.123). For instance, the local scholarly journals published in Kazakh SSR generally had lower prestige and less impact than the Russian-medium journals, which were “issued by the top institutions, such as central branches of the Academy of Sciences and key universities, most of which were located in Moscow” (Kuzhabekova, 2017, p.123). This led to an established Soviet practice, when “the lower quality articles were published within the other states of the republic, while higher quality articles were published in Russian SFSR” (ibid.). These Soviet publishing practices definitely affected the intellectuals of Soviet Kazakhstan and their ideational powers within Soviet academia.

Although the English language, being officially recognised by the Kazakhstani state as a language of “successful integration into the global economy” (Pavlenko, 2008, p.22), is an important part of its

post-Soviet hegemonic project, especially its 'knowledge-based economy' building part, the 2011's policy on research productivity cannot be without repercussions on the use of Kazakh and Russian as languages of scholarship and academic research. Thus, looking at the linguistic implications of this policy on research productivity opens up an interesting perspective for examining the knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs, which are taking place within the broader context of a revival of the Kazakh language as part of heightened national consciousness, increasing demand for English as part of Kazakhstan's developmental goals, and the lingering importance of Russian as a part of Soviet legacy.

Conclusion of the section

Since gaining independence, Kazakhstan has not only been struggling to adjust to the market economy (economic project) and build democratic institutions (political project), but also underwent a major cultural and ideational shift, and has been actively engaged in the construction of a new identity (identity-building project). However, it is important to note that the Soviet approach to identity and language issues found some continuity in the way the Kazakhstani state has been trying to manage its multi-ethnic and multi-lingual population in the post-Soviet period. On the one hand, similar to the Soviet state, the Kazakhstani state tried to incorporate its highly diverse population into the post-Soviet hegemonic project by embracing inter-ethnic peace and tolerance. On the other hand, similar to the Soviet state that tried to ensure the 'unity' of the Soviet population through 'uniformity' (e.g. Russification policies) (Jankiewicz et al, 2020), the Kazakhstani state has also been emphasising the 'Kazakhness' as "the most important paradigm of nation-building policies" (Lee & Bozymbekova, 2021). For example, the Kazakh language has been promoted "as the most important factor for strengthening national unity" in post-Soviet Kazakhstan (Aksholakova & Ismailova, 2013). Thus, it can be stated that the Kazakhstani state "has not developed a new identity policy and still relies on the Soviet approach", as the "attempts to build a civic identity on top of ethnic identification resembles the infamous project of creating the Soviet people" (Burkhanov, 2017, p.14).

In this regard, Bourdieu can be especially helpful in shedding light on the fact that Kazakh, Russian, and English language skills can have different symbolic powers in Kazakhstan since each of them carries a certain symbolic value within an existing symbolic order. As the Kazakhstani policy on research productivity is implicitly privileging the English language, as a preferred linguistic medium of academic research and publications, it can greatly affect the possibilities of Kazakhstani faculty members, having a different set of linguistic capital, and corresponding symbolic powers to take part

in the knowledge production process at Kazakhstani HEIs. So, it is important to get insight into the ways the Kazakhstani faculty members are managing their symbolic powers in order to better understand how the symbolic order at Kazakhstani HEIs is maintained and reproduced. Examining such aspects promises a more nuanced view of the complex and contradictory practices of knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs. All in all, looking at the structure of symbolic order at Kazakhstani HEIs and the dynamics of symbolic powers of Russian, Kazakh, and English languages is important, as it can shed light on the post-Soviet system of intellectuals in Kazakhstan, especially, their capacity to “sustain, modify and alter modes of thinking and behaviour of the masses” (Gramsci, 1994, p. 14).

Table 6. Enabling and constraining conditions for educational dimension	Enabling conditions:	Constraining conditions:
<u>1. Economic</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Privatisation and commercialisation of HEIs helped to supplement the low levels of public funding with tuition fees; 2. Massification of higher learning lead to expansion of tertiary educational attainment (greater supply of trained, skilled human capital for national (and global) economy); 3. Promotion of research and innovation can become key to knowledge-based economic growth (e.g. focus on university-based research); 4. Further diversification of the research funding of Kazakhstani HEIs (non-state income sources like industry/public sector); 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Opening of private HEIs and introduction of tuition fees rendered the HE less accessible for some Kazakhstanis (e.g. unaffordable tuition fees); 2. Combination of fee-based and merit-based admission to HE lead to exclusion of less financially better-off and less academically-gifted students; 3. Uneven development of Kazakhstani HEIs’ research capacities, if the current financing patterns continue (NU & Bolashak vs. other HEIs); 4. The low levels of state investments in R&D can hinder the stable development of university-based research;

<p><u>2. Political</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The centralised HE governance allowed the Kazakhstani state to streamline the major education reforms (e.g. privatisation, commercialisation, internationalisation of HE) after the fall of Soviet Union. 2. Further implementation of greater institutional autonomy and academic freedom is needed for the development of university-based research in Kazakhstan; 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With the Ministry having control over a significant portion of institutional operations, the HEIs have limited capacity to decide autonomously on their governance and organisational matters; 2. Highly prescriptive, top-down-imposed policies on research productive can intervene with fuller involvement of Kazakhstani HEIs' research producing function;
<p><u>3. Socio-cultural</u></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Kazakhstani HE to reflect the inclusiveness of Kazakhstani identity in order to hold its diverse population congruent with the post-Soviet hegemonic project (e.g. through education programs, curriculum); 2. The principles of Kazakhstani HE to help to safeguards the right of Kazakhstani citizens "to use their native language, freely choose the communication, upbringing, education and creative work" (Law on Languages, 1997, Article 6) (e.g. vis language of instruction, linguistic medium of research) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The HE policies valorising certain language (e.g. singling out the English, Kazakh, Russian language) can undermine the Kazakhstani HEIs role as site for inclusive identity construction and nation-building; 2. The goal of improving its HEIs' international standing and global competitiveness (e.g. global university rankings and performance indicators) can interfere with their role as 'local' public good providers (e.g. training local specialists; local knowledge production);

To conclude, amidst broader economic, political, and socio-cultural transformations that we have discussed in Chapter 3, the Kazakhstani HE system has also been undergoing major reforms. The implications of these economic, political, and socio-cultural changes for the HE system can also have either enabling or containing effects on the stability of Kazakhstan's post-Soviet social compromise

underpinning the current ruling regime (Table 6 above). Firstly, Kazakhstan's departure from the centrally planned economy and transition to a market economy brought about an exciting new direction for the HE sector to move with the establishment of private HEIs, restructuring of state-owned HEIs, and introduction of tuition fees. Although the market-driven expansion of HE in post-Soviet Kazakhstan has been beneficial for the hegemony and social compromise underpinning it, the Kazakhstani state is currently highly interested in increasing its HEIs' research productivity and fuelling their innovative activity to set off knowledge-based economic growth. Secondly, as Kazakhstan has been undergoing a transition from being a communist state governed by a single party towards the establishment of a democratic state, there have also been moves towards the implementation of greater institutional autonomy and shared governance at Kazakhstani HEIs. However, in line with the stagnation in the realisation of 'democratisation' project, the nature of decentralisation reforms in Kazakhstan has been rather limited, which is not only potentially detrimental to the fuller evolvment of Kazakhstani HEIs' research-producing function, but might also jeopardise the realisation of 'knowledge-based economy' project. Thirdly, as the Kazakhstani state has been in the process of searching for and constructing a post-Soviet Kazakhstani nationhood, it is also necessary to consider the Kazakhstani HEI's prominent role in the development of cultural values and ideological infrastructure of a new Kazakhstan. So, the Kazakhstani HEIs have been caught between several competing goals: the promotion of education in the native Kazakh language, which has become an important element emblematic of Kazakhstan's national independence and ethnic revival (1); the adherence to a non-discriminatory language policy line towards the Russian-medium education to ensure the broad-based legitimacy of a new Kazakhstani state (2); and increasing demand for the English as part of Kazakhstan's integration into global knowledge production systems (3). All in all, Kazakhstan's HE reforms have been an integral part of the 'post-Soviet' transition from the hegemonic project of 'communism' to the hegemonic project of 'neoliberalism'. All in all, Kazakhstan's HE reforms have been an integral part of the 'post-Soviet' transition from the hegemonic project of 'communism' to the hegemonic project of 'neoliberalism'.

Chapter V

Research Methodology and Design

1. Meta-theoretical Foundations of Proposed Research

In this chapter, I will discuss the methodology and the key methods I used in my empirical research. I will start by drawing on Critical Realism and will outline how its ontological and epistemological presuppositions inform my research.

Table 7. CR's Ontology and Epistemology	
<u>Paradigm</u>	Transformative paradigm
<u>Meta-theory</u>	Critical Realism
<u>Ontology</u> (<i>What is reality? What is the structure of reality?</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reality is “open-ended with multiple mechanisms co-determining events, overlapping, reinforcing or counteracting one another”; - Reality includes the “real structures or mechanisms, actual things or events, and empirical observations or experiences”; <p style="text-align: right;">(Belfrage & Hauf, 2017, p.254)</p>
<u>Epistemology</u> (<i>What can I know? How do I know?</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Knowledge about that reality; all meaning it acquires for us, is socially constructed and thus historically contingent”; - Knowledge is derived by “uncovering generative mechanisms, often veiled from perception, capable of causing observable phenomenon”; <p style="text-align: right;">(Belfrage & Hauf, 2017, p.254)</p>

1.1. The CR's Ontology and Epistemology

Throughout my thesis, I draw on critical realism (CR), which is “an evolving and rich current of meta-theoretical thought” (Belfrage & Hauf, 2017, p.254). The CR attempts to breach the fissure between positivism and interpretivism. So, with the “key premises of CR being ontological realism and epistemology relativism” (Raduescu & Vesey, 2009, p.1), it can be “positioned as an alternative” to the positivist and interpretivist meta-theoretical perspectives, which is capable of “incorporating the most convincing features of both traditions” (Belfrage & Hauf, 2017, p.254) in order to “provide new approaches to developing knowledge” (Wynn & Williams, 2012, p.787). Table 7 above sums up the ontological and epistemological presuppositions of CR.

The CR meta-theory entails a certain set of ontological and epistemological assumptions, which guide the researcher’s decisions and the overall research process. The CR ontology holds that reality is

“constituted of institutional and social structures that have been historically shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic-racial and gender factors” (Nelson & Prillelensky, 2010). So, from the CR perspective, the reality can be best described as “open-ended with multiple mechanisms co-determining events, overlapping, reinforcing or counteracting one another” (Belfrage & Hauf, 2017, p.254). Hence, the CR (together with theories by Gramsci, Foucault, and Bourdieu) is helpful in looking at the current organisation of knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs, especially in terms of its linguistic medium, as a result of the complex interplay of factors operating at global level, the policy arrangement within the national context of Kazakhstan and the institutional fabric of Kazakhstani HE system. Thus, the chief aim that was driving my methodological choices has been the need to unveil these institutional and social structures.

Although the CR asserts that “there is a world existing independently of our knowledge of it” (Sayer, 2000, p. 2), at the same time, it acknowledges that our subjective interpretations of reality affect the way we perceive and experience objective reality. So, it can be stated that from the CR perspective, there is “a single reality, but multiple interpretations” of it (Fleetwood, 2013). Thus, while there exists an objective reality of post-Soviet Kazakhstan and its HE system, the institutional setting of a specific university with its organisation of knowledge production in terms of its linguistic medium, the faculty members’ (and also mine as a researcher) subjective interpretations of this reality condition the possibilities for them to make sense of the existing situation and act within it. This has implications for the data collection and data analysis processes, which have to be conducive to moving beyond the subjective perceptions and interpretations of reality (while acknowledging the importance of subjective representations of reality) to peer into the objective structures and conditions.

So, the epistemological framework of CR asserts that “all knowledge about reality, all meaning it acquires for us, is socially constructed and thus historically contingent” (Belfrage & Hauf, 2017, p.254). Hence, it is important to differentiate between the “unchanging structures and mechanisms that generate phenomena” and “changing knowledge as produced in the social activity of science” (Bhaskar, 1975, p.25). In such a way, the CR is “neither entirely positivist by virtue of seeking to assert facts nor are they completely relativist in holding that all accounts must be equally valid” (Edgley, 2013, pp.321-322). Thus, the CR approach is helpful not only for recognising the social, political, and cultural situatedness of knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs, but also to realise the fallible, provisional, socially constructed, and historically contingent nature of knowledge that is produced by the CR-informed research project, which includes both the discursively meditated accounts of reality offered by the participants of research and the researcher’s

theory-guided interpretation and analysis of them. This epistemological standpoint of CR needs to be considered, when both collecting and analysing the data, by drawing on a reflective perspective that seeks to question one's own and other's assumptions.

From the CR perspective, knowledge is derived by “uncovering generative mechanisms, often veiled from perception, but capable of causing observable phenomena” (Belfrage & Hauf, 2017, p.254). Hence, the chief aim of CR research is arriving at knowledge by focusing on causal mechanisms (Danermark et al, 2001, p.49) that can be achieved by reliance on “stratified ontology”, which offers more possibilities to explore the causal relations than “positivism and interpretivism with their flat ontologies, which operate only in the empirical domain” (Radulescu & Vesey, 2009, p.1). Overall, the CR is a highly promising meta-theoretical approach, which “offers an important contribution to knowledge because it places emphasis on arenas of influence that may not be empirically observable” (Edgley, 2013, pp.316-317). Thus, the CR holds promise for my research on post-Soviet Kazakhstani HE by assisting in identifying the 'generative mechanisms' behind knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs. Particularly, in light of the growing preference for English as a linguistic medium of research publications, understanding how they work, under what conditions they are activated, and how they impact knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs is of great importance.

2. Methodology

2.1. Methodological Nuances in CR Research: Investigation of Cause-and-Effect Relationship

Bhaskar himself did not recommend any specific methodology (and theory), as the CR principles can be best viewed as “guidelines for social science research and starting points for the evaluation of already established methods” (Danermark et al., 2001, p.73). Thus, it can be stated that the CR is consistent with a variety of methodologies, and “the particular choices should depend on the nature of the object of study and what one wants to learn about it” (Sayer, 2000, p.19).

As the CR is not restricted to or associated with any particular methodology, my choice was based on the case study, which can be defined as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994, p.13). My preference for case study methodology can be explained by the fact that it not only enables “thoughtful in-depth research with the objective of understanding why things are as they are” (Easton, 2010, p.119), but it also “allows one to peer into the box of causality” (Gerring, 2004, p.45). In this regard, I want to bring to attention the role of history and underline the importance of historical appraisal undertaken in Chapter 3. A historical

perspective, drawing on a broad range of existing studies and abductive/retroductive analysis, allowed me to determine some broader patterns of development (e.g., in Kazakhstan's post-Soviet nation-building; in the post-Soviet reform of its HE system) that helped to identify the underlying causalities of the case under study.

Firstly, the “capacity to explore issues in context” is what characterises the case study “as a distinctive methodological approach” (Bach & Kessler, 2014, p.168). The focus on “contextual conditions involved in a particular setting” enables one to pinpoint the processes by which events are generated and develop context-specific causal explanations (Wynn & Williams, 2012, p.789). So, my case study research by incorporating the broader context of Kazakhstan's post-Soviet nation-building, in general (as I have outlined in the chapter of Historical Overview), and the post-Soviet transformation of Kazakhstani HE, in particular (as I have outlined in the chapter of Zooming In), allowed me to delineate the causal powers operating and affecting the knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs. Secondly, another advantage of case study research is its flexibility and iterativeness, which allows “a continuous moving back and forth between the diverse stages of the research project” (Verschuren, 2003, p.132). That is an incredibly helpful feature when using the analytical device of retroduction, which is “likely to occur in an iterative manner during data collection and analysis” (Wynn & Williams, 2012, p.800). For example, alternating between different stages of research (e.g. historical analysis, policy analysis, collection of interview data, and analysis of interview data) during the recursive process of re-constructing the interconnection between Kazakhstan's post-Soviet nation-building with its hegemonic projects and the reformation of Kazakhstani HE system has been a useful way to analyse the constitutive factors that make the current mode of knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs possible.

Thirdly, the instrumentality of case study research in providing insight into a theory, facilitating a better understanding, and further refinement of it should be also underlined. Ridder (2017) stated that though the case study research designs have “various strengths on a theory continuum”, they have immense potential to “lead to the identification of patterns and relationships, creating, extending, or testing a theory”. So, by looking at the case of post-Soviet Kazakhstan and its HE reform, I was able to develop and refine my theoretical framework. Conflating Gramsci, Foucault, and Bourdieu's concepts across multiple dimensions (economic, political, and socio-cultural) and levels (national, institutional, and individual), not only generated a more accurate and more detailed account of causal mechanisms but also unveiled some limitations and weaknesses of these theoretical concepts in case of Kazakhstan. Thus, extending the chosen theoretical constructs to a new context (e.g., the non-

liberal democratic context of post-Soviet Kazakhstan) and identifying their potential contextual boundaries have been the main theory-contributing aspects of my case-study research.

All in all, the case study, which allows to explore the issues in context (1), to rely on a flexible, iterative research process (2) and to provide some insight into a theory (3), can be a suitable methodology to explore the knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs in the context of Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet nation-building (1), to rely on retroductive analysis (2) and to provide for a more context-dependent use of my chosen theoretical concepts.

2.2. Design of Case Study Research

Table 8. The case study typology	
Case Study	To explore the causal relations;
- Explanatory Case Study	To generate multiple potential explanations; To arrive at explanation of the phenomenon in question;
- Single Case Study	To focus on one unit of analysis; To inquire into specific instance driven by intrinsic interest;
- Embedded Case Study	To incorporate the case context; To generate the context-specific knowledge;

The table above summarises the key aspects of the proposed case study research design that I will be discussing in more detail below.

Explanatory Case Study

As the chief goal of CR-informed research is providing an “explanation of the mechanisms that generate a certain event” (Wynn & Williams, 2012, p.804), the capacity of an ‘explanatory’ case study to produce “multiple potential explanations” that are capable of describing “a set of mechanisms”, which “if it were to exist and act in the postulated way would account for the phenomenon in question” (Bhaskar, 1975, p.12), needs to be highlighted. So, my research can be described as an explanatory case study, as it seeks to explain the nature of Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet transformation, including its HE reform, in order to better understand the current knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs (e.g., How Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet transition (economic, political, socio-cultural) unfolded? How did Kazakhstan’s HE reforms (marketisation, language policies, internationalisation) develop in the post-Soviet period? Why does it result in changes (research function, publication requirement,

preference of English at university) in knowledge production?). Hence, this explanatory case study was not merely aimed at explaining the growing preference for English, as a linguistic medium of research publications, and its effect on faculty members' involvement in knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs, but also wanted to gain a deeper understanding of Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transformation and HE reform to better grasp the changes in knowledge production processes and the emergent role of universities in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

A Single Case Study

As the unit of analysis forms a core component of case study research, it is important to rely on case study design (e.g., single vs. multiple case study design) that will enable me to examine the knowledge-production in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan comprehensively. So, the current research can be defined as a single case study that incorporates only one unit of analysis - the case of Kazakhstan. On the one hand, my reliance on the single-case design is justified by an intrinsic interest in Kazakhstan's post-Soviet national-building, with my study enquiring into specific instance of Kazakhstani HE reform, and being aimed at highlighting circumstances and consequences of 2011's policy on research productivity. On the other hand, the single-case design can sometimes be instrumental in exploring some broader generalities. The "representative or typical case" (Yin, 2003, p.48) is a vivid example of a certain set of cases that can be of wider significance because while focusing in-depth on a single case, it can offer informative insights into the nature of cases in that particular category. For example, exploring the case of Kazakhstan, its national-building and HE reform can potentially provide some valuable insight into other post-Soviet states like Uzbekistan (also an authoritarian regime), Azerbaijan (also a rentier state), and Belarus (also a highly Russified post-Soviet republic). Nevertheless, the chief goal of this case study was to provide a nuanced, in-depth view of the Kazakhstani case by explaining comprehensively the knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs.

Being a "small-N study" (Tsoukas, 2009, p.285), the case study research is instrumental in "investigating a small sample but a multitude of variables" (Wikfeldt, 2016, p.2). However, the external validity, with which generalisability is associated, is considered to be the case study research's (both single and multiple) Achilles heel, while the single case design is frequently criticised for attempts to "make truth claims based on such seemingly limited data" (Easton, 2010, p.118). With "the case inference being all too often considered synonymous with statistical inference" (Wikfeldt, 2016, p.3), many have pointed to "the dominance of epistemologically positivistic underpinnings of most academic research" (Easton, 2010, p.118). However, as most of the qualitative types of research

have to struggle with low statistical representativeness, and since “the goal of most qualitative studies is not to generalise but rather to provide a rich, contextualised understanding” (Polit & Beck, 2010, p.1451), the positivist approach of the extent to which one can legitimately extrapolate from a particular case and come up with a general insight should be dismissed in a case study research. Although the single case design, on which I am relying, allows the replication of findings to see if they are likely to produce similar or contrasting results, it might not always be plausible to make extrapolations beyond a certain unique instance, since the causal explanations can only be limited to a concrete context studied (e.g. the post-Soviet context). Hence, it can be stated that extrapolating from the Kazakhstani case and making generalisations about the causal explanations beyond the case context is not a priority in the proposed research.

Embedded Case Study

The case study research can be either holistic or embedded. The current research is an embedded one. Although it is important to delineate the case as a discrete unit of analysis, which has its unique set of characteristics and is governed by its own host of factors, Yin (2003) stated that “every type of design will include the desire to analyse contextual conditions in relation to the case”, as “boundaries between the case and the context are not likely to be sharp” (p.534). So, despite the need for a certain boundedness, the case study can rarely be regarded as research of clearly- delineated instances, especially as the boundaries of the units of analysis can be transient and hard to define. Instead, the case can rather be viewed as an integral part of some larger whole (e.g. Kazakhstan as a part of the post-Soviet space, the Kazakhstani HE reform as a part of Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet nation-building, the Kazakhstani policy on research productivity as a part of Kazakhstani HE reform, the publication requirement at certain HEI as part of Kazakhstani national policy on research productivity etc.), which necessitates the generation of context-specific insights.

Moreover, exploration of the case context in current research is conditioned by its CR nature, as the CR “views context or situational influences as crucial to an understanding of processes and emergent outcomes” (Kessler & Bach, 2014). This can be explained by the fact that “causality in CR is closely related to the context, and the causal mechanisms cannot be fully studied being extracted from the overall setting and broader structures it is embedded in” (Archer, 1995). So, the causal mechanisms potentially giving rise to a host of enabling and constraining conditions within the knowledge-production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs are embedded and operate in an evolving, dynamic context of Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet transition. Thus, the role of Kazakhstani national (Kazakhstan’s post-

Soviet nation-building) and HE (post-Soviet reform of Kazakhstani HE system) contexts, from which the phenomena of knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs cannot be arbitrarily separated, should not be disregarded in the CR-informed research. Therefore, for this research, which approaches the knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs as entangled in a net of causal mechanisms arising from underlying structures, the choice of a relatively bounded (limited to Kazakstan), yet context-dependent (enclosed in the broader Soviet and post-Soviet context) case design is highly appropriate.

2.3. Data Collection

The case study, as with any research endeavor, entails the identification of appropriate and rigorous methods of data collection. Although the case study research is “essentially eclectic with respect to the kinds of data that might be collected” (Yin, 1989 p.18), and “a researcher using a case study design can apply a variety of methodologies and rely on a variety of sources to investigate a research problem” (Labaree, 2009), the CR-informed research needs to target the type of data that can help to achieve the CR goal of identifying and explaining the underlying causal mechanisms. So, for the purposes of this study, I relied on two qualitative techniques to gather data: discourse analysis and interview. Hence, it can be stated that my study was based on a methodological triangulation of two data collection techniques. In the following sections, I will first briefly discuss my decision to triangulate the discourse analysis of policy documents and interviews with faculty members, before elaborating in depth on each of the data collection techniques.

Triangulation

My decision to triangulate the discourse analysis with interviews can be explained by my motivation to increase the validity of my study. The triangulation of discourse analysis and interview not only combined the multiple sources of information (e.g., policy documents and interview responses) but also helped to ensure that different forms (e.g. primary and secondary data) and different segments (e.g. the state, the faculty members at HEIs) of data are collected (Flick, 1992, p.194). Hence, it can provide data wide and rich enough to add breadth and depth to my case study. But most importantly, the use of different data sources, that complement each other, can establish a more assured basis for the retroductive reasoning. As the empirical level can be viewed as a more concrete embodiment or specific exemplification of underlying structures and broader tendencies within the real domain, the richness and versatility of empirical data offer more possibilities for the identification of common patterns and analysis of causal mechanisms.

The discourse analysis and interviews can well complement each other as methods of data collection, each adding a new dimension for understanding the causal mechanisms underlying the knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs. On the one hand, the discourse analysis can reflect the official stance of authorities, in regard to Kazakhstan's higher education and science, as formally laid down in the policy documents. On the other hand, the interviews with faculty members can generate important insights into the key knowledge producers' perception of and attitude to the organisation and regulation of research production at Kazakhstani HEIs, especially in terms of its linguistic medium.

So, complementing the discourse analysis with interviews can be a useful strategy to capture insights about the interaction between national and institutional/individual levels, as the Kazakhstani policies on research productivity adopted at the national level are passed down and implemented at the Kazakhstani HEIs by faculty members. Hence, the interviews with faculty members can help to corroborate the discourse analysis of secondary data such as policy documents with livelier, rich, and textured information on "human affairs or behavioural events" (Yin, 2008, p.441) taking place in the natural setting of the university and as described by its key actors. However, as the state policies set the legal parameters for what the Kazakhstani faculty members can and cannot do, and that govern the research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs, the discourse analysis of policy documents issued by the Kazakhstani state should also be viewed as an important steppingstone for the interviews with faculty members.

Overall, relying on both discourse analysis and interviews can increase the construct validity of research evidence, as multiple data collection techniques can help to ensure "the multiple sources of evidence converging on the same facts or findings" (Yin, 2003, p.101). But how to proceed with carrying out discourse analysis and conducting interviews in order to go beyond the empirical level and extend the limits of the interpretative framework?

Critical Discourse Analysis

In this section, I will elaborate on the method of discourse analysis, which I employed to examine the policy documents issued by the Kazakhstani state on higher education and science. In particular, I will rely on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is "a type of discourse analysis research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in social and political contexts" (Van Dijk, 2015). Since the CDA calls to "attend not only to what is produced but how it is produced and to the history and contexts that

surround its production” (Irving & English, 2008, p.108), the analysis of Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet nation-building and HE reform (Chapters 3 and 4), which offered the overview of economic, political, socio-cultural contexts, provides the solid basis on which I can base my CDA of policy documents.

At the national level, the Kazakhstani government’s overall stance on education and science is reflected in a set of key policy documents. So, my study primarily employed the CDA of policy documents (Table 9) as a means for discerning the state’s goals and priorities in regard to research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs. The documents chosen for the analysis can be defined as the ‘official ’discourse in terms of its style, which is “the formal style of official, public forms of political text and talk”. In particular, I will be looking at the ‘policy ’discourse, which “creates orientation and meaning which constitute the policy”. Moreover, the focus is on the ‘written’, not the ‘oral ’form of policy discourse. Although there exists a range of oral discourses that can take the form of official speeches or policy statements, written, textual documents can be viewed as a more fixed and stable form of policy discourse that can be more easily referred to.

Table 9. The CDA of Policy Documents		
<u>Style of discourse:</u>	Official discourse	“The formal style of official, public forms of political text and talk”
<u>Type of discourse:</u>	Policy discourse	“Discourses that create orientation and meaning which constitute the policy”
<u>Form of discourse:</u>	Written discourse	“The form of discourse that is drafted and formulated in a written form”

In particular, two key policy documents, the Law “On Education” (2007) and the Law “On Science” (2011), were selected for CDA as a source of the Kazakhstani state’s disposition on research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs. The Law “On Education” (2007), which is currently the key policy document regulating Kazakhstani education, allowed me to get a general understanding of the basic principles of the state policy in the education field. Next, it was also important to take a look at the Law “On Science” (2011), which, as part of the legal framework for science and innovation, helps to get some background information on the organisation of science and research in Kazakhstan and generate a better understanding of state policy in the field of science.

However, it should be stated that the CDA of policy documents alone cannot guarantee an exhaustive understanding of the knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs, and needs to be complemented by interviews, which are a major source of evidence on actual events, human

interactions, and behaviour patterns associated with the research production at Kazakhstani HEIs. Since the policy regulations, such as the publishing retirement of 2011, are reliant on faculty members implementing and abiding by them, it is highly important to incorporate their opinions and perceptions.

Interviews

In the following paragraphs, I will discuss the design of interviews, which play a vital other source of information for my study. The interview can be viewed as an appropriate data collection method for CR research, as Bhaskar (1998) asserted that “the actor’s accounts form the indispensable starting point of social inquiry” (as cited in Smith & Elger 2014). The interview is not only well-suited for the collection of detailed “accounts of lived experience” (Schultze & Avital, 2011, p.1), but it also helps to account for the centrality of human agency and allows exploring the reflexivity of human agents (Smith & Elger, 2014). So, from the CR perspective, individuals should not be considered as mere passive subjects at the whim of structural forces but can be viewed as active participants, who both shape and are being shaped by the social structures. Hence, I relied on the CR interviewing technique, which is different from the positivist and constructionist approaches to interview. It is unique in the way it “recognises the significance of meaning construction and communication among human actors”, but also considers that “social action takes place in the context of pre-existing social relations and structures, which have both constraining and facilitating implications for such action” (Smith & Elger, 2014, p.111). Thus, when conducting interviews with the faculty members it was important to not only access their detailed accounts of experience, attitudes, and rationales for action in regard to research production, especially its linguistic medium, but also to better understand the conditions, constraints, and resources within which they act at a given university.

So, in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Table 10) were conducted with 20 faculty members from 10 different Kazakhstani HEIs. On the one hand, the in-depthness of interviews helped to ensure the richness of data and generate a wealth of information on “the facts of a matter as well as opinions about events” (Smith & Elger, 2014, p.111). In the case of my research, I was particularly interested in thoroughly exploring, with the help of interviews, how the Kazakhstani faculty members think and feel about the research production at Kazakhstani universities, especially in terms of its linguistic medium, and why they hold certain opinions. On the other hand, the semi-structuredness of interviews helped me to maintain a balance between “pursuing a consistent line of inquiry” and leading the interview in the form of “guided conversations” (Yin, 2003, p.108). It made interviews flow in a

smoother and more natural way, so that they took the form of “a fluid interactive process” (Smith & Elger, 2014, p.111), while also allowing to ask the probes and follow-up questions in order to guide the conversation in the right direction. Moreover, as in the course of an interview, unusual themes can be unearthed or unexpected information can be voiced, which were not included in the initial questionnaire, the semi-structuredness of the interview helped me to accommodate that kinds of detours. All in all, both in-depthness (aimed at collecting detailed, exhaustive information) and semi-structuredness (focused on freedom and flexibility to explore additional themes) of interviews, with the help of its discovery-oriented approach, allowed to increase the chances of discovering the enabling and constraining conditions during interview conversations.

Table 10. The interview typology	
<u>In-depth interview</u>	I relied on in-depth interviews to generate a more detailed information, which can result in richer and more vivid data, and help to get a holistic view of the issue.
<u>Semi-structured interview</u>	Interviews were guided, but not be limited by the preliminary set of questions. The interview questionnaire was viewed as a guide, since some flexibility was needed to tailor the initial interview questions, if necessary, by adapting them to the particular case, to raise the unexpected issues missed in the initial questionnaire and be ready for any unanticipated situations that could have occurred during an interview. Where relevant, I asked follow-up questions to gather as much relevant detail as possible, and to explore some interesting themes deeper. I also asked interviewees to give some specific examples from their experience. If an interviewee gave noticeably short answers, I prompted them to give more detail.
<u>Face-to-face interview/ via audio call</u>	First half of my interviews were conducted face-to-face. However, as the outbreak of Covid-19 and strict quarantine measures in Kazakhstan had been precluding me from conducting the face-to-face interviews with faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs, I had to adapt my research and data collection procedures to new realities. For example, online interviews made possible via through ICT-based tools became an excellent option that made data collection possible given the new circumstances. So, interviews via phone or WhatsApp call were conducted due to inaccessibility of interviewees during pandemic.

Nevertheless, an interview is a formal research instrument (Yin, 2003, p.109), and reliance on carefully developed research tools (e.g. interview questions, interview schedule, interviewer note template) can not only increase the reliability of the study but also ensure more planned and structured nature of interviews when clearly defined types of information are looked for. Hence, the interview questionnaire along with other instruments was necessary to ensure that conversations were in line with the overall research agenda. In line with CR’s stratified ontology, which emphasises a complex

and layered character of social reality, it is important to understand how an interview can be instrumental in moving beyond the empirical level, and mobilise it as a tool for grasping the causal mechanisms within the real domain. The CR does admit that “our knowledge of reality is a result of social conditioning and thus cannot be understood independently of the social actors involved in the knowledge derivation process” (Dobson, 2009, p.806). Hence, interviews were indispensable to understanding the perceptions of faculty members at Kazakhstani universities, discovering the multiple perspectives they hold, and examining their interpretations of social reality. However, since the “real objects are subject to value-laden observation” (Dobson, 2009, p.806), one can view the interviewee’s account as “representing different facets of a complex and multi-layered social reality”, but “which can never carry total awareness of the entire set of structural conditions which prompt an action, nor the full set of consequences of that action” (Smith & Elger, 2015, p.120). So, it is important to keep in mind that “actors may not have a complete and undistorted view of reality” (Wynn & Williams, 2012, p.800), while the “social structures can become ingrained into the very fabric of our consciousness acting at a subliminal level to affect the way we speak, move and act” (Houston, 2001, p.855). Hence, as any interview data is basically the interviewee’s understanding of the situation, I, as a researcher, had to be open to the possibility of biased perception or conflicting accounts (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p.16), which can point to the fact that “knowledge of deep structure contradicts outward appearance” (Houston, 2001, pp.854-855). However, though the interviews are viewed as “verbal reports only”, which are “subject to the common problems of bias, poor recall, and poor or inaccurate articulation” (Yin, 2003, p.92), they can still greatly help to get a better sense of the actual state of affairs with the research production at Kazakhstani universities. Moreover, I had to be aware of the way not only the participants’ but also my personal beliefs and perceptions might influence the way interview data is collected. Therefore, there was a need for “a reflexive approach” (Attia & Edge, 2016 p.33) to ensure a more constructive exchange between me, as a researcher, and the faculty members, as my interviewees. All in all, in an effort to identify the underlying causal mechanisms, it was necessary to employ the interview not only to get a sense of what is unique and specific about each interview but also to identify what is more common and profound about it, to understand the extent to which it is possible to legitimately extrapolate from it and come up with general insights about Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet nation-building and HE reform.

2.4. Data Sampling

Next, there was also a practical issue of identifying the appropriate interviewees, who can “inform the research questions and enhance understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Sargeant, 2013,

p.1). Moreover, a careful selection of appropriate interviewees is highly important in CR-informed research to achieve the CR objective of identifying and explaining the causal mechanisms. So, there was a need to put a lot of thought into the selection of interviewees to ensure that they would be potentially illuminating the real domain. But what constitutes an appropriate selection? Which approach to the selection will further the CR goal of exploring the causal mechanisms?

In my opinion, the rationale driving the choice of interviewees should be strategic and systematic for the proposed research to generate relevant insight into knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs. Hence, the sampling strategy of my CR research consisted of two consequent steps: firstly, the selection of Kazakhstani universities, and secondly, the selection of faculty members from these selected Kazakhstani universities.

In the case of Kazakhstani universities, the sampling strategy employed can be described as a combination of two purposeful sampling techniques: theoretical and maximum variation. So, firstly, my study was based on the logic of the theoretical sampling technique, which can be described as a process of adjusting selection to focus on “incidents, slices of life, time periods, or people on the basis of their potential manifestation or representation of important theoretical construct” (Patton, 2002, p.238).

So, based on the theoretical sampling technique, the set of HEIs, which are recognised and licensed as ‘university’ by the Kazakhstani state, were my primary pool. Although the Kazakhstani HEIs greatly range by the type of their licensing, I was looking only at the category of ‘university’, but not the ones that are classified as ‘academy’ or ‘institute’. The specific focus on this category can be explained by the fact that the Kazakhstani HEIs licensed as ‘university’ are mandated by the Law On Education (2007) “to carry out pure and applied research”, and also “to use the outcome of pure and applied studies for generating, and in the transfer of, new knowledge”. Moreover, the specific focus on the category of Kazakhstani HEIs licensed as ‘university’ was important not only because they are research-intensive, but because they are also larger in scope by being specialised in a wider range of fields. So, while the Kazakhstani HEIs that are licensed as ‘academy’ or designated as ‘institute’ are narrower in scope by being limited to “implementing educational programs of HE in one or two groups of specialties”, the Kazakhstani HEIs licensed as ‘university’ offer “educational training programs of higher education in three and more groups of specialties”. It was incredibly important for my study to incorporate the Kazakhstani HEIs specialised both in social science and humanities subjects and in STEM disciplines.

While focusing on Kazakhstani HEIs that have a shared feature of being licensed as ‘university’ was the first step that helped to generate a primary pool of universities, the ‘maximum variation’ served as a basis for the second sampling strategy that further refined my sample. As the chief aim of this sampling technique is “the achievement of maximum variance along relevant dimensions”, my objective was also choosing the Kazakhstani universities “that are guaranteed to be different along some notable dimensions” (Herron & Quinn, 2014, p.2). So, I drew upon the Kazakhstani universities sharing as many key features as possible, in particular, the ones that illuminate the full range of variation on Kazakhstani universities: the status (national university, research university, and university), the type of ownership (public, private) and the date of establishment (before 1991 or after 1991). This helped me to focus on universities, which together captured the diversity of the Kazakhstani HE field and represented the diversity of universities in Kazakhstan.

Based on their status, the Kazakhstani universities can be ‘national research university’, ‘research university’, and ‘university’ (Ahn et al, 2018, p. 210). Although all three types of these universities are envisioned by the Kazakhstani state to uplift research productivity by generating and transferring “new knowledge” and becoming “a scientific and methodological centre” (Ahn et al, 2018, pp.208-210), only nine of Kazakhstani HEIs were awarded the special status of ‘national research university’ (Law on Education, Article 10). I was able to collect data from four of these ‘national research universities’: Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, and Kazakh National Technical University named after K.I. Satpaev, Kazakh National Pedagogical University named after Abay. Moreover, it was also interesting to include in the selection the Kazakhstani universities, which do not have a “national university” status but are nonetheless actively engaged in research production (e.g. Nazarbayev University, which has the privileged status of “autonomous research university” or Astana IT University, which is also envisioned to integrate “research and educational process in the field of ICT”). These universities are a vivid example of a highly internationalised research university, which employs a considerable number of international faculty (O’Hara, 2013, p.107) and design programs in partnership with foreign partners (Lee & Kuzhabekova, 2018, p.371), and is primarily aimed at offering a Western-style, English-medium education (Stetar & Kurakbayev, 2010). Thus, though it can be difficult to judge how much interview data is likely to be sufficient and manageable for a doctoral study, the resource and time constraints of field work, in particular, and the Ph.D. program, in general, placed some limits on the scale of my research study, and I was able to generate data from 10 different Kazakhstani universities (Table 11).

Table 11. The list of selected universities				
#	Name:	Location:	Size:	Specialization:
1	Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University	Almaty, Kazakhstan	Total faculty: 1994	Humanities and Social sciences (field of pedagogy, teaching methods and learning technologies)
2	Al-Farabi Kazakh National University	Almaty, Kazakhstan	Total faculty: 4047	Multi-disciplinary
3	Satbayev Kazakh National Technical University	Almaty, Kazakhstan	Total faculty: 1281	Science and technology (metallurgy, mining, oil, geology and construction)
4	Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages	Almaty, Kazakhstan	Total faculty: 601	Humanities and Social sciences (foreign language teaching, translation, philology)
5	Narxoz University	Almaty, Kazakhstan	Total faculty: 405	Humanities and Social sciences (economics, business, finance, and law)
6	University of International Business	Almaty, Kazakhstan	Total faculty: 299	Humanities and Social sciences (business, economy, management, marketing, tourism)
7	L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University	Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan	Total faculty: 3,350	Multi-disciplinary
8	Nur-Mubarak Egyptian University of Islam Culture	Almaty, Kazakhstan	Total faculty: 120	Humanities and Social sciences (Islamic studies)
9	Nazarbayev University	Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan	Total faculty: 1859	Multi-disciplinary
10	Astana IT University	Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan	Total faculty: 50	Science and technology (IT-technologies, digital economy)

Next, as one of the most significant departures from the Soviet HE was the adoption of the Law on Higher Education (1993) permitting private universities to operate in Kazakhstan, I incorporated this important dimension (type of ownership) into my research. So, to illuminate the full range of variation in Kazakhstani universities, I was looking at public, private, and mixed ownership (JSC) universities

in Kazakhstan (Table 12).

Table 12. The selected universities' type of ownership		
#	<u>Name:</u>	<u>Type of ownership:</u>
1	Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University	public
2	Al-Farabi Kazakh National University	public
3	Satbayev Kazakh National Technical University	public
4	Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages	JSC
5	Narxoz University	private
6	University of International Business	private
7	L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University	public
8	Nur-Mubarak Egyptian University of Islam Culture	private
9	Nazarbayev University	JSC
10	Astana IT University	JSC

Another important factor to consider was the university's date of establishment. Since the transition of Kazakhstani universities from the Soviet model of teaching institution towards a modern research university has been an important contextual factor for my research, it was necessary to look at both: the universities founded during the Soviet times (in the period from 1928 to 1991), and the ones established after Kazakhstan's independence (in the period from 1991 until our days) (Table 13). On the one hand, a set of traditional, Soviet-style universities had long existed before the dissolution of the USSR, which has witnessed the processes of post-Soviet transition and nation-building and also shares a similar historical trajectory, in particular, the gradual evolvement from the Soviet-style teaching institution into a modern research university. On the other hand, the newly established, modern Kazakhstani universities in terms of their unique trajectories of development, research capacities, and linguistic competencies of their faculty members offered a novel and rather under-researched perspective to the topic of research production at HEIs.

Table 13. The selected universities' date of establishment

#	Name:	Year established:	Soviet vs.Modern
1	Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University	1928	Soviet/long-established
2	Al-Farabi Kazakh National University	1934	Soviet/long-established
3	Satbayev Kazakh National Technical University	1934	Soviet/long-established
4	Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages	1941	Soviet/long-established
5	Narxoz University	1963	Soviet/long-established
6	University of International Business	1992	Modern/newly-established
7	L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University	1996	Modern/newly-established
8	Nur-Mubarak Egyptian University of Islam Culture	2001	Modern/newly-established
9	Nazarbayev University	2010	Modern/newly-established
10	Astana IT University	2019	Modern/newly-established

Not only the findings generated from the single category of Kazakhstani HEIs ('university') can corroborate each other, but they also provide a more legitimate ground for the discussion and analysis of their capacities for research production. So, by drawing upon Kazakhstani HEIs from the category of 'university', I was basing my research study on the possibility that there could be some major similarities in the way these HEIs are dealing with their new-found role of research entity and the newly-acquired function to produce research in post-Soviet. Thus, focusing on a single set of Kazakhstani HEIs that have a certain shared feature on a profound level helped me to better account for the common patterns and regularities. On the flip side, despite this convergence by the 'university' status, they still vary in their relative size, areas of specialisation, type of ownership, research capacities, and historical background, which certainly have implications for the organisation and regulation of research production processes at university. So, aiming at the maximum variance along

some important dimensions (status, type of ownership, date of establishment) allowed me to account for the possibility of different normative practices and diverging preferences in regard to organisation of research production at these universities. Hence, in this way, my study, as CR-informed research, tried not only to account for the influence of specific situational factors and local conditions observed or experienced at a given university (the empirical domain) but also to locate some common patterns and regularities (in the actual domain that can point to the potential causal mechanisms within the real domain).

So, when the selected universities not only have certain commonalities on a profound level but also some differences on a more surface level, it can greatly help to get a sense of causal mechanisms. If certain causations hold true in all of these universities, it can point to the existence of some underlying similarities within the real domain. Hence, looking for such underlying commonalities can possibly be one of the ways of extending analysis beyond the unique expressions on the empirical level, and expanding our present state of understanding into the real domain. Therefore, the use of this combination of sampling techniques can add value to a CR analysis by providing us with insight into deeper layers of reality in the search for generative mechanisms, and a better understanding of the ways in which selected cases are being influenced by these common causal mechanisms.

Once the sample of Kazakhstani universities was determined, I undertook the second step of my sampling strategy, which was the selection of faculty members from the above-discussed set of ten universities. In the case of this second sampling stage, a combination of “purposeful (criterion)” sampling (Patton, 2002, p.238) and “snowball (chain)” sampling techniques were employed. On the one hand, the chief selection criteria for the interviewees were to be employed full-time as a faculty member at one of the selected universities. On the other hand, once the initial pool of faculty members was being recruited, I asked them to refer me to other potential interview participants who could be “information-rich cases” (Suri, 2011, p.69).

Although the sampling strategy at the second stage was simpler and more straightforward (full-time faculty member at selected universities + snowball sampling), the triangulation of data sources was also attempted to achieve “differentiated patterns of respondent expertise” (Smith & Elger, 2015, p.120). So, the interviews were conducted with a wide range of faculty members, differing in terms of their faculty position, academic qualification, research experience, etc. I interviewed both, those faculty members who are highly active in research with the ongoing project(s), and those who are not engaged in research activities, in order to better understand which factors facilitate or hinder their

involvement in research production processes. Hence, the interview participants ranged from emerging, young scientists to established scientists. Moreover, it is important to emphasise that interviews were conducted not only with the local faculty members (citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan) but also with the international faculty members (foreign expatriates) employed at Kazakhstani universities to better highlight the internationalisation component at Kazakhstani universities. Other than that, the interviews encompassed all genders, adults aged over 18, and representatives of any ethnic background (Table 14).

Table 14. The list of interview participants

Gender	Academic degree	Academic rank	Subject/discipline	Type of university	Career stage	Nationality
Female	PhD- US	Assistant Professor	Social sciences- Education	JSC/elite/ newly-established research university	mid-career	International
Male	PhD- US	Professor	Engineering- Robotics	JSC/elite/newly-established research university	mid-career	International
Female	PhD- US	Assistant Professor	Natural sciences- Biology	JSC/elite/newly-established research university	mid-career	Kazakhstani
Male	PhD- US	Assistant Professor	Social sciences- Education	JSC/elite/newly-established research university	mid-career	Kazakhstani
Female	PhD- UK	Lecturer	Social sciences- Education	JSC/elite/newly-established research university	early-career	Kazakhstani
Female	Candidate of Sciences- Soviet Union	Associate Professor	Humanities- Philology	Public/national/n ewly-established, research university	later-career	Kazakhstani

Male	PhD-Kazakhstan	Lecturer	Social sciences-Political science	Private, newly-established business school	later-career	Kazakhstani
Male	PhD-Turkey	Docent	Social sciences-Religious studies	Private, newly-established Islamic studies university	early-career	Kazakhstani
Female	PhD-Kazakhstan	Senior lecturer	Social sciences-Religious studies	Public/national/Soviet/long-established research university	early-career	Kazakhstani
Male	Doctor of Sciences - Soviet Union	Professor	Social sciences-Political science	Public/national/Soviet/long-established research university	later-career	Kazakhstani
Female	Candidate of Sciences-Soviet Union	Senior lecturer	Social sciences-Pedagogical Sciences	JSC, Soviet/long-established linguistic university	later-career	Kazakhstani
Female	PhD-Kazakhstan	Docent	Social sciences-Political science	Public/national/Soviet/long-established research university	mid-career	Kazakhstani
Female	Doctor of Sciences-Soviet Union	Professor	Social sciences-Pedagogical Sciences	Public/Soviet/long-established national university	later-career	Kazakhstani
Male	PhD-Kazakhstan	Associate Professor	Engineering-IT	Public/National/Soviet/long-established research university	mid-career	Kazakhstani

Table 14. The list of interview participants

Gender	Academic degree	Academic rank	Subject/discipline	Type of university	Career stage	Nationality
Female	PhD-Kazakhstan	Associate Professor	Social sciences-Sociology	Private, Soviet/long-established university	mid-career	Kazakhstani
Male	Candidate of Sciences-Soviet Union	Docent	IT-Computer Science	JSC, newly established university	mid-career	Kazakhstani
Female	Candidate of Sciences-Soviet Union	Docent	Social sciences-Pedagogical Sciences	Public/national, Soviet/long-established university	later-career	Kazakhstani
Male	Candidate of Sciences-Soviet Union	Docent	IT-telecommunications	Public/national/newly-established research university	later-career	Kazakhstani
Male	PhD-Kazakhstan	Associate Professor	Engineering-IT	Public/National/Soviet/long-established research university	mid-career	Kazakhstani
Male	PhD-Kazakhstan	Associate Professor	Engineering-IT	Public/National/Soviet/long-established research university	mid-career	Kazakhstani

Concerning the locale of my research study, all interview participants were drawn from the selected universities located in Astana and Almaty. As I was targeting the Kazakh, Russian, and English language-speaking faculty members, the interviews were administered in Russian, Kazakh, or English languages. All in all, 20 interviews with faculty members conducted at 10 different Kazakhstani universities offered me an adequate insight into the nature of research production at Kazakhstani universities and helped me to get a better understanding of their opinions and perspectives on being

involved in research production processes at university, including any institutional support they are receiving or perceived challenges they are facing in producing research (Table 15).

Table 15. The interview details		
Who?	Faculty members	I was interested in examining the Kazakhstani faculty members' involvement in knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs. I included both the local Kazakhstani faculty members, who are non-native English speaking scholars, and the expatriate faculty members, who might be native English speaking scholars, into my sample. All of the faculty members were employed full-time or part-time at one of the selected Kazakhstani universities.
Where?	Nur-Sultan and Almaty, Kazakhstan	All of the selected universities are located in Nur-Sultan and Almaty, which are two largest cities in Kazakhstan, and where the major HEIs have been concentrated. The exact setting of interviews varied before the pandemic, some being undertaken, where possible, at interviewee's workplace, others taking place in a public place (e.g. coffeeshop). After outbreak of pandemic the interviews were conducted via audio call. All in all, I tried to ensure an open and convenient atmosphere, and do my best to develop a rapport and gain trust of my interviewees.
When?	From January, 2020 to January, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the access and planning the interviews at selected universities (December, 2019); • Entering the field for data collection (January, 2020); • Conducting interviews and collecting the case study evidence (January, 2020-January, 2021); • The outbreak of Covid-19 and strict quarantine measures in Kazakhstan had been precluding me from conducting the face-to-face interviews as planned, and caused a considerable delay in the data collection procedures.
How many?	• 20 interviews	Conducting interviews and collecting the case study evidence until reaching the saturation and arriving at possible explanations ("generative mechanisms");
How long?	30~ 60 minutes	I informed the interviewees about the approximate length of an interview (30-40 minutes) in order to give them a better sense of time that will be required for an interview. However, there were interviews that lasted longer, while some were shorter.
What language?	Kazakh, Russian, English languages	Although the original questions were formulated in English, they were also translated into Kazakh and Russian languages, as some interviews were conducted in either Kazakh or Russian languages, as preferred by interviewees.

2.5. Data analysis

Moving forward, a new question arises, as to how the generated data needs to be analysed to derive an explanation for the phenomenon of interest. First of all, it should be noted that I founded my research on purely 'qualitative' data: both the CDA (policy discourses) and interviews (interview narrative) generated a qualitative type of data. However, most of qualitative studies usually follow

the “inductive reasoning processes to interpret the meanings that can be derived from data” (Thorne, 2000, p.68). Moreover, as the epistemological relativism of CR means that any “knowledge is conditioned by our prior social and historical knowledge and experience” (Radulescu & Vessey, 2009, p.1), this also presupposes the interpretive forms of analysis. So, it is important to realise that “any explanations are necessarily fundamentally interpretivist in character”, especially, taking into account the issue of “double hermeneutic” in social science research (Easton, 2010, p.124). Then, should my gathered data be simply analysed in the interpretive mode? As the “causal powers do not have to be actual or manifest to be real: they can be deep and hidden from view” (Vincent & Wapshott, 2014, p.159), the CR opposes the view that “studying the content and ways of expressing talk is enough in itself to provide an explanation” to a phenomenon of interest (Easton, 2010, p.124). Moreover, “by confining hypotheses to the world of observed phenomena” on the empirical level, one might fall into “danger of succumbing to a narrow behavioural ‘particularism’ where analysis of underlying causes is simply disregarded” (Houston, 2001, p.854). Thus, since the chief goal built into the CR research is moving beyond the empirical level and uncovering the causal mechanisms within the real domain, it was necessary to rely on data analysis strategies that are instrumental to reach that objective.

First of all, the existing theories and concepts are instrumental to “constructing a model of potential mechanisms”, which can be “capable of explaining a set of observable patterns” (Roberts, 2014, p.5). Hence, the reliance on a theoretical framework (discussed in Chapter 2) was indispensable in guiding me through my search for a better understanding of which, how, and under what conditions the generative mechanisms operate at Kazakhstani universities. My theoretical framework, which combines a set of conceptual tools by Gramsci, Foucault, and Bourdieu, offered me a broader and more intricate picture of the interplay between power, knowledge, and language, as “by seeing the same data through the different theoretical lenses employed by different researchers can understanding of some of the features of the real world occur” (Easton, 2007, p.123). However, though the existing theories and concepts were highly helpful in getting a mediated approach to the real domain and the underlying causal mechanism operating there, the identification and explanation of causal mechanisms necessitated the additional data analysis strategy.

So, secondly, the CR research resorts to the retroductive approach, which also holds the promise of explaining occurrences on an empirical level by identifying the causal mechanisms within the real domain that are capable of producing them. Hence, in addition to the reliance on the theoretical framework, I employed the retroduction throughout my data analysis process (Table 16), which is an analytical device aimed at “establishing the contextual conditions that give rise to the particular mechanisms we are observing” (Vincent & Wapshott, 2014, p.150). Unlike the deductive approach,

which relies on a “structured or predetermined framework” to analyse the data (Burnard et al., 2008, p. 429), retrodution is an iterative process. The retroductive inference includes such steps as the development of “a priori hypotheses about the underlying mechanisms”, testing of “hypotheses formulated to provide adequate explanations of the phenomena under scrutiny”, formulation of “a new hypothesis if required”, and identification of “oppressive mechanisms” (Houston, 2001, p.851). Thus, the retroductive analysis is not a linear process, and its stages do not necessarily occur in sequence.

Table 16. The steps of retrodution

#	Steps of retrodution:	
1.	Developing a priori hypotheses	I started with a hypothesis that had a greater focus on the potential causal mechanisms operating at global level (e.g. the hegemony of English language and the neoliberal publishing regime within global academia);
2.	Interviews with the faculty members	The interviews helped me to re-focus my hypothesis to the national level, and pay a greater attention to the nature of Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet transition, and its influence on HE reforms, including the research and publishing productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs;
3.	CDA of policy documents	The policy analysis allowed me to better understand the Kazakhstani state’s official stance on science and research at Kazakhstani HEIs, and juxtapose it with the actual norms and practices at Kazakhstani HEIs derived through the interviews with faculty members;
4.	Enfolding the literature (theoretical, media, historical etc.)	Revising and refining the theoretical framework and exploring Kazakhstan’s national-building and HE reforms in the post-Soviet period allowed me to further modify my hypothesis in order to arrive at more plausible explanations;
5.	Refining the hypothesis	The reformulated hypothesis views Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet transition as a passive revolution driven by the nomenklatura ruling elite, while the current state policy on science and research can be conceptualised as part of Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet hegemonic project;

The iterative analysis of my collected evidence was conducted by going back and forth between the primary research questions, potential hypothesis, data on observable phenomena, theoretical framework, and possible explanations (Barnett et al, 2016). Constantly linking the collected data (interviews and policy discourse) to the proposed theoretical framework and my initial research assumptions helped me to gradually modify the research hypothesis, refine the theoretical framework, and, if necessary, provide rival explanations. So, it can be stated that after “considerations of alternative explanations”, “the most complete and logically compelling explanation” was identified

(Mills, Durepos & Wiebe, 2010, p.370). However, there was also a need to attend carefully to any misalignment between the different sources and forms of data (interviews vs. policy discourse, state vs. faculty members), as it prompted the inquiry into reasons for the data contradiction. Moreover, the continuous enfolding of literature was also a necessary step during data analysis to keep comparing the observable patterns of knowledge production at Kazakhstani universities and the emergent explanations with the extant literature on Kazakhstan's post-Soviet nation-building and HE reform (Eisenhardt, 1989). Thus, I was analysing the data in cycles until the theoretical saturation was reached and plausible explanations were derived (Saunders et al, 2017, p.1895). Overall, in line with the retroductive approach, it was critical to maintaining the overall flexibility in research design and adaptiveness in data analysis processes to ensure the possibilities to refine the proposed hypothesis and modify the initial research assumptions before reaching saturation and arriving at more established explanations for the studied phenomenon.

Next, I will elaborate on the specifics of interview data and the policy discourse analysis process. In the case of interview data, the CR stresses the centrality of human agency and encourages to be attentive to explanations and conceptions of the situation given by the interviewees themselves, and refrain from looking at data in an overly deterministic way (Coghlan & Brydon-Miller, 2014, p.2). The analysis of interview data in CR-informed research needs to be aimed at uncovering the causal mechanisms within the real domain. So, as the target is descriptions of causal powers that are "experienced by people as external forces that enable or constrain how they act" (Porter et al, 2017, p.3), the data analysis had to be aimed at recurring accounts of enabling or inhibiting factors that are empowering or hindering the faculty members and their research production activities on an empirical level. Thus, interview data highlighting these enabling or inhibiting conditions were potentially the most illuminating of causal mechanisms within the real domain. However, focusing solely on the subjective meanings of faculty members can result in "upward conflation" (Archer, 2000, p.21), when "social processes become reduced to subjective systems of meaning", as it would be wrong to think that "social structures are entirely determined by the social constructions of the actors they contain" (Smith & Elger, 2015, p.149). Thus, the CDA of policy discourse provided me with the opportunity to develop a better understanding of the legal and regulatory structures, and how they are affecting the faculty members' involvement in knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs. So, while appreciating the understanding of the institutional and organisational context of Kazakhstani universities provided by faculty members, it was also important to critically evaluate the provided interpretations against other competing accounts, such as the results of CDA and the proposed theoretical framework, to be able to capture the underlying causal mechanisms.

Although there currently exists a wide variety of CDA branches (e.g., Fairclough's dialectical-relational, Wodak's discourse-historical, van Leeuwen's and Kress's multimodal, Duisburg Group and Oldenburg approaches etc.), in case of my policy discourse analysis, I was relying on CDA as defined by Reisigl (2013, pp.8-9) and Wodak (2009, p.2). So, the CDA in the proposed study did not entail the examination of "sentence grammar" or "formal linguistic features", but extended the analysis "beyond the sentence-level" (Reisigl, 2013, p.3) by concentrating on "larger units than isolated words and sentences", which potentially allowed me to explore the "social, cultural, situative contexts of language use" (Wodak & Mayer, 2015, p.2). Hence, through the CDA of policy documents, I wanted to see if there are certain discursive structures consistently reoccurring in the Kazakhstani policies on higher education and science.

As the CR research is aimed at identifying and explaining the generative mechanisms, it was important to refocus the CDA of policy discourse to an actual rather than empirical domain with the help of a historical account (e.g., Chapter 3). On the one hand, it was extremely important to look at broader causal structures that are affecting the policy instruments by focusing on "what makes it happen, what produces, generates, creates or determines it" (Sayer, 1992, p.104). On the other hand, it was also necessary to view the policy discourse "as a causal mechanism", which has the potential of "influencing extra-discursive practice", as there exists a "dialectic relation" between the discourse and extra-discursive practices (Banta, 2012, p.396). Hence, it was crucial to pay attention to both, the broader causal mechanisms (e.g. arising from economic, political, and socio-cultural contexts of post-Soviet Kazakhstan) that produce the policy instrument, and the causal powers that policy discourse might acquire by generating certain outcomes when analysing policy documents. This step of data analysis enabled me to better understand the subtle differences between the formal policies and informal norms, as the CDA allows to capture the formal regulatory context within which the research at Kazakhstani HEIs is officially produced, while the interviews with faculty members help to discern the informal normative practices in regards to research production that were being developed at Kazakhstani HEIs. Overall, since there are no "definitive criteria to judge the truth of a particular version", the CR-informed research eventually rests on the capacity of an enquirer, gathering and analysing the data, to discern among a set of possible accounts (Easton, 2010, p.123).

2.6. Ethics

From the ethical point of view, two concurrent aspects of the proposed research need to be separately discussed, as the CDA and interviews necessitated a different set of ethical considerations.

On the one hand, as the CDA involves a substantial degree of interpretation, it was necessary to take measures to guarantee transparency and reflexivity in the processes of discourse analysis. Moreover, reflexivity was crucial given the interpretive character of CDA and the central role of the researcher in that process. This entails a level of self-awareness, and continuous reflection on one's assumptions and predispositions to ensure more objective and impartial analysis of data. Thirdly, the discourse analysis had to be carried out with due respect to authors (e.g. policymakers, scholars, journalists, etc.) and institutions (e.g. state, NGO, IGO, etc.) responsible for producing the selected articles and documents, set of values behind it, their aspirations and intentions, as the goal was to critically analyse them, but not to disparage or belittle them.

On the other hand, the proposed CR study involved interviews with faculty members, which meant that certain steps needed to be taken to ensure confidentiality and data protection. Although the faculty members are not categorised as a vulnerable population, since all of them are over the age of 18 years old, all relevant ethical principles and precautions had to be considered to exclude any risks, discomforts, and inconveniences. Firstly, I aimed to obtain informed consent from all participants of the research at the beginning of each interview. Next, as the research participants have a right to know the purpose of the study they are taking part in, I informed them about the nature of my research and made the research objectives clear. So, it was very important to make sure that participants were provided with sufficient information to make an informed choice. Furthermore, I assured interviewees that participation in this research study is voluntary, and they are free to refuse to respond to any of the questions they are reluctant to answer and reserve the right to stop the interview and withdraw from the research at any point. Another major ethical point was to ensure participants that their participation in this study was confidential. The confidentiality of participants was guaranteed by all information provided by interviewees being available only to the principal researcher and stored securely in a password-protected computer. The fact that none of the personal information will be disclosed to the public, and any trace of their identity will be removed, so that it will be impossible to attribute it back to the interviewee, was communicated to all research participants. Next, as it was necessary to record the conversation to be able to refer to the interviews during the data analysis process (e.g. audio recording of interviews helped to clarify any gaps and provided the exact verbatim quotations), it was crucial to get interviewees' prior consent for audio recording. Then, I also informed the interviewees about the approximate length of an interview to give them a sense of the time that

will be required. I believe it was important to make it clear so that respondents could decide themselves whether they have enough free time to devote it for the interview or not. Finally, the contact information of the principal researcher was included in the informed consent so participants have an opportunity to contact for any further inquiries (See Appendix 8 “Sample of the Letter to Participants and the Consent Form”).

In this chapter, I discussed the methodology and the key methods I used in my empirical research. I started by drawing on Critical Realism, and its ontological and epistemological presuppositions that informed my research. The CR is a highly promising meta-theoretical approach, which holds promise for my research on post-Soviet Kazakhstani HE by assisting in identifying the 'generative mechanisms' behind knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs. As the CR is not restricted to or associated with any particular methodology, my choice was based on the case study, which was found to be the most suitable methodology to explore the knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs in contexts of Kazakhstan's post-Soviet nation-building. My reliance on the single-case design was justified by an intrinsic interest in Kazakhstan's post-Soviet national-building, with my study enquiring into specific instance of Kazakhstani HE reform and being aimed at highlighting circumstances and consequences of 2011's policy on research productivity. For the purposes of this study, I relied on two qualitative techniques to gather data: critical discourse analysis (CDA) and interviews, which complemented each other as methods of data collection. On the one hand, the discourse analysis of policy documents reflects the official stance of authorities as formally laid down in policy documents regarding Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition and HE reform. On the other hand, the interviews with faculty members generated important insights into key actors' perceptions of and attitudes to the organisation and regulation of research production, especially, in terms of its linguistic medium at Kazakhstani HEIs. Next, the pool of appropriate interviewees, who can help to generate relevant insight into knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs, had to be selected. So, the sampling strategy of my CR research consisted of two consequent steps: firstly, the selection of Kazakhstani universities (a combination of theoretical and maximum variation sampling techniques), and secondly, the selection of faculty members from these selected Kazakhstani universities (a combination of purposeful and snowball sampling techniques). Finally, to analyse the generated data, I employed the retroductive approach, which is an iterative process that takes place in cycles until the theoretical saturation is reached and the plausible explanations are derived.

Chapter VI
The Kazakhstani HE
governance

In chapters 3 and 4, I was able to identify the fundamental changes and continuities that occurred as a result of Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition. Keeping these changes and continuities in mind, I would like to turn my attention in this chapter to the parallel existence of two governance models in the current Kazakhstani HE system due to the constellation of a unique set of post-Soviet changes and continuities. Described by the respondents as *"a hybrid"*, *"at the crossroads"*, *"half Western, half Soviet"*, and *"a mix of Soviet and Western"*, such co-habitation of two models within the Kazakhstani HE system, though ridden by some tension and certain contradictions, will be the central theme of this findings chapter. On the one hand, with the greater reliance on market instruments and gradual move towards decentralisation, the rise of a new conception of HE governance in post-Soviet Kazakhstan should be underlined. So, the broader changes at the national (chapter 3) and at the HE level (chapter 4) led to the emergence of incentive-driven, performance-based policy instruments in the Kazakhstani HE system. However, on the other hand, the persistence of the remnants of central planning also deserves attention, as it contributes to the preservation and continuation of the elements of the Soviet 'state-centered' HE governance model, which interferes with the operation of new policy instruments. So, notwithstanding the marketisation and decentralisation efforts, it was found that the lasting legacy of the Soviet HE management style remains deeply entrenched in the post-Soviet Kazakhstani HE system. Hence, based on the findings, it can be concluded that we currently observe the coexistence of two HE management models in the Kazakhstani HE system: the gradual reliance on market instruments and principles of decentralised governance, and the persistence of a state-centered, top-down approach. Thus, in this chapter, I intend to show how my overall line of reasoning developed, as I analysed 2011's policy on research productivity, which is not only fundamental to Kazakhstan's economic project of attaining a knowledge-based economy but also part of the wider effort of the Kazakhstani government to transform the Kazakhstani HE system with implications for its governance strategies (A brief discussion of the policy context of 2011's publishing requirement is provided in Appendix 8).

While Gramsci's theory of hegemony sheds light on the larger ideational transformation in post-Soviet Kazakhstan by connecting the economic, political, and socio-cultural dimensions, Foucault focuses on the subject-constituting effects of hegemony by accounting for the role of subjectivity and internalisation. Thus, in this chapter, I will make use of Foucault's concepts of 'governmentality' and 'discipline', which will lead us to a better understanding of the complex workings of power in modern societies, especially given the entanglement of two governance models with different power modalities in the Kazakhstani HE system.

1. The performance-based HE governance

Let me begin unpacking my findings about the Kazakhstani HE governance model by first expounding the evolution of governance from the Foucauldian perspective. According to Foucault's genealogy of power, there exist three different forms of power: 'sovereign power', 'disciplinary power', and 'governmentality', which "emerged in different historical phases of modernity" (Larsson et al. 2001). The sovereign power, as the earliest and crudest form that coincided with "the rise of the modern European state" (Larsson et al. 2001), relied on "punishment as theatrical ritual of public torture" for "members of society to witness the absolute power of sovereign and therein learn to obey" (Young, 2019). However, with the advent of "early capitalism" in the 19th century, the disciplinary modalities of power rose to prominence (Larsson et al. 2001), which aimed to catch the individuals "in a system of constraints and privations, obligations and prohibitions" (Young, 2019). Finally, the technologies of 'governmentality', as the most recent instruments of power, emerged during "modern liberalism" (Larsson et al. 2001), and can be defined in a broad way as the "conduct of conduct" (Foucault, 1982). So, unlike the disciplinary modes of governance, which still relied on coercion as an instrument of control and regulation, governmentality is based primarily on the manufacturing of consent. Thus, with the advent of governmentality, the power aims "to manage and no longer to control" the population (Foucault, 2007, p. 353). In the context of this thesis, I am particularly interested in neoliberal governmentality, which is based on "the discursive power of economic rationalities to produce subjects who govern themselves according to the market logics of competition, entrepreneurship, and audit" (Larner, 2000).

As outlined in Chapter 3, the political and economic conditions that once framed the Kazakhstani state have drastically changed with the fall of the Soviet Union. So, it is reasonable to think that the transition to democracy and a free-market economy implies a shift in the governance strategies used by the post-Soviet Kazakhstani state, and hence, also modifications in the HE governance. I argue that with the greater reliance on market instruments and gradual move towards decentralisation, the HE governance in Kazakhstan increasingly takes the form of technologies of neoliberal governmentality. Thus, I will first start by probing this assumption and analysing 2011's publishing policy as part of the technologies of neoliberal governmentality that increasingly govern the faculty members and their research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs.

This raises two questions. Firstly, how can we be certain that the publishing policy of 2011 operates as a technology of neoliberal governmentality? In this regard, I will rely on the notion of 'enabling' and 'constraining' conditions. So, I assume that there are certain characteristic traits, the underlying

neoliberal values of 'competition' and 'choice', which can serve as an indication that 2011's publishing requirement has been designed to operate as a technology of neoliberal governmentality. However, only by examining the enabling and constraining conditions, which can either facilitate or hinder the realisation of these underlying neoliberal values of 'competition' and 'choice' as part of 2011's publishing requirement can we determine whether or not this publishing policy operates as a technology of neoliberal governmentality.

Secondly, another question that naturally arises is how 2011's publishing requirement, if it is a technology of neoliberal governmentality, shapes and structures the Kazakhstani faculty members and their publishing practices. I will be employing Foucault's concept of 'subjectification' to better understand what kind of subjectivities are being constructed (or constrained) at Kazakhstani HEIs with the help of 2011's publishing policy. As the faculty members assume their assigned subject position through their self-consciousness as faculty members, the role of Kazakhstani faculty members themselves in the process of them being subjectified should be emphasised. So, in its very essence, 2011's publishing policy, if it is a technology of neoliberal governmentality, should ultimately resort to the self-interest (1) and rationality (2) of individuals, as "neoliberalism postulates a specific vision of human nature" - homo economicus (Wrenn & Waller, 2014).

Let us examine the publishing policy for 2011 in more detail. So, the prominent role of the incentive in the context of 2011's publishing policy immediately draws attention. As one of the faculty members noted:

"Incentive is one of the best ways to get some results. So, if you say, 'okay, you're going to get promoted, if you publish', then there's going to be a number of people that are going to say, 'okay, that it's important, this is how I'm going to rise, I need to learn how to write in English, I need to try to do a really rigorous research'. So, there's a lot of motivation and it could be a driver for actually improving things" (Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, biology, KZ).

So, the interviewees emphasised the power of incentives, which can be highly effective in motivating the faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs. Hence, 2011's publishing requirement can be viewed as an example of a performance-based policy instrument, which is framed in the form of an incentive to facilitate research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs. If a faculty member wants to get a promotion and become an Associated Professor (or a Professor) [*an incentive*], he/she needs to have at least 2 (or 3 in case of Professorship) non-zero impact-factor publications [*a desired level of performance*]. In addition to a promotion sanctioned by the state, a monetary value can be assigned to the desired level of performance. For example, Faculty members are also compensated (e.g., pay rise or premium) by the university where they work for a non-zero impact-factor publication.

Thus, many respondents claimed that the faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs see the promotion and conferment of academic titles of associate or Professor as a direct incentive to publish in non-zero impact-factor journals. This development was evident in the words of the following respondents:

“You see that, uh, among our colleagues, that they publish for the sake of promotion, it's about the number of papers that are published per year...for increasing the research output, and getting the promotion” (Elite RU, male, foreign PhD, Assistant professor, mid-career, education, KZ).

Therefore, the role of a direct incentive in rendering this publishing requirement attractive to the Kazakhstani faculty members should not be underestimated. Next, I assume that 2011's publishing requirement, as a technology of neoliberal governmentality, aims to introduce 'competition' and 'choice' into the Kazakhstani HE system. Thus, the facilitation of market competition and provision of choice (opportunity to exercise a choice) are two key neoliberal ideas that have underpinned the 2011's publishing policy, which I want to discuss in detail along with the self-interested and rational nature of individuals implied by this policy instrument.

1. *Market competition and self-interest*

The fact that the notion of governmentality is “intimately connected to liberalism or, in today's specific form, neoliberalism”, while the technologies of neoliberal governmentality have been “developed in the advanced liberal societies” should be clarified (Joseph, 2010). As the neoliberal state is characterised by the economy in which the government ideally plays a small role (Gertz & Kharas, 2019), the competition and self-interested nature of individuals become two important driving forces that together form the so-called 'invisible hand of a market' regulating economic activity (Manokha, 2015). Thus, within neoliberalism, competition is seen as one of the defining features of human relations, while self-interest is regarded as one of the key characteristics of human nature.

Firstly, it can be argued that 2011's publishing policy tries to facilitate competition in the Kazakhstani HE system by attempting “to harness the advantages of market mechanisms, particularly the incentives stemming from competitive pressure” (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003). One respondent noted how 2011's publishing requirement has been instigating 'fierce race' among the faculty members:

“Faculty members are ready to publish in order to get a promotion, to receive a title of professor. And it seems to me that there is a fierce race for the impact factor publications because of that” (Public, National RU, male, local PhD, Associate Prof, mid-career, IT, KZ).

The 'competition' is one of the key organising concepts of neoliberal economic thought (Hearn, 2021), as neoliberalism advocates the unleashing of competition in all spheres of economy and society, including the field of education. In a similar vein, according to Foucault (2008), one of the chief conditions of neoliberal governmentality is "the rule of the market", which means that the role of a government should largely be limited to ensuring that "competitive mechanisms can play a regulatory role at every moment and every point in society" (p. 145). So, if governmentality is about 'the conduct of conduct', then competition can be created and fostered by the state, along with the incentives that stimulate the participants to compete, to effectively govern the population. Thus, the competition for academic ranks of Associated Professor and Professor, as a motivating factor that steers the actions of Kazakhstani faculty members in the desired direction (e.g. getting them to publish in non-zero impact-factor journals), can be regarded as one of the important elements underlying the 2011's publishing policy as an instrument of neoliberal governmentality.

In the case of the 2011 publishing policy, the competition that underpins it promises to have two major effects: (1) improved research performance and productivity and (2) the legitimisation of new rules for the conferment of academic ranks. So, the competition behind 2011's publishing policy aims to shape and guide the publishing practices of faculty members and to ensure that the faculty members accept the Kazakhstani state's new rules for the conferment of academic ranks as legitimate.

Firstly, the tool of competition is primarily introduced with the larger purpose of stimulating the higher quantity (2 articles for Associate Professor, 3 articles for Professor) of higher quality (in Q1-Q3 journals for Associate Professor, in Q1-Q2 for Professor) publications to improve the overall publishing productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs (Scientific Publications, 2022). So, this policy envisions that the Kazakhstani faculty members, driven by the motivation to out-compete their colleagues and get the promotion, will be eager to publish in non-zero impact-factor journals. Hence, 2011's publishing requirement directly encourages competition among the Kazakhstani faculty members (to actively publish and climb the academic ladder faster than one's colleagues), and indirectly reinforces the competition among the Kazakhstani HEIs (to boost the publishing activity among its faculty and improve the university's ranking position in comparison to other HEIs). As a result, this publishing requirement, fuelled by competition, should lead to greater research productivity in the form of non-zero impact-factor publications at each HEI, which consequently will lift the overall research productivity of the Kazakhstani HE system.

Secondly, encouraging competitiveness among faculty members through 2011's publishing policy also helps to solve the 'allocation problem'. How to allocate the academic ranks of associate professor and professor at Kazakhstani HEIs? Who gets the professorship at the Kazakhstani HEIs? The attempts to change the rules and procedures for the conferment of academic ranks (e.g., during the Soviet period, the number of international publications was not the key factor in the conferment of academic ranks) can be accompanied by some resistance on the part of the academic community. So, the legitimisation issues need to be effectively managed in the process of implementing the new rules and procedures for the conferment of academic ranks to manufacture the necessary consent. This is even more true for the faculty members, as securing the consent of a 'system of intellectuals' can help to ensure that the new rules for conferment of academic ranks are accepted "as legitimate and relevant" and become part of "hegemonic forms of consciousness" (Hartmann, 2015). As the underlying assumption is that there are only a limited number of vacant professorships available at a given Kazakhstani university, and only the highest performing candidates who meet the performance standards are appointed, the competition underlying 2011's publishing requirement not only encourages faculty members to compete for a professorship but also legitimises the current rules for conferring academic ranks. The concepts of 'equality of opportunity' (e.g., every faculty member can compete for a professorship and has the same chance of receiving the academic rank) and 'meritocracy' (the conferment of academic ranks is solely based on the ability of a faculty member to actively publish in non-zero impact-factor journals) are employed to consolidate the idea that the competitive laws of a market equally apply to all to produce 'fair' results for the Kazakhstani HE system. Thus, as 2011's policy sets the parameters for the conferment of academic ranks, it can argue that competition plays an important role as a justifying mechanism, which helps to organise and regulate the allocation of academic ranks in the HE domain of post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

Next, it is important to consider the enabling (or constraining) conditions at the Kazakhstani HE system that have permitted (or hindered) the emergence and operation of 2011's publishing policy as a technology of neoliberal governmentality, which shapes and guides the conduct of faculty members through the facilitation of market competition. Firstly, as the quotes below vividly demonstrate, it should be noted that the market-driven economic reforms (privatisation and commercialisation of Kazakhstani HE discussed in Chapter 4) have been actively affecting the environment in which the Kazakhstani HEIs operate and faculty members work. One faculty member from the public university reported in this respect:

“And it turns out that nowadays university is run like a business: it may not be profitable for it to spend money on the maintenance of some departments and corresponding faculty, if there is no such demand among students, in the job market. This is why the university is now a commercial enterprise, a source of knowledge production, provider of educational goods and services to students” (Public, National RU, male, local PhD, Associate Prof, mid-career, IT, KZ).

So, the accounts of respondents point to the fact that there has been a major shift in the very conception of HE in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, especially, with the introduction of private forms of ownership. Hence, contrary to the HE that used to be regarded as a public good during the Soviet times, the university has now been re-conceptualised by the respondents as a ‘business’, ‘commercial enterprise’, and ‘service provider’ that offers a private good.

With the shift in the conception of HE, the role of competition in the regulation of a newly formed HE market rose to prominence. As a result, the idea that the ‘invisible hand of the market’ would regulate the Kazakhstani HE system seems to gradually win acceptance: students would choose HEIs, HEIs would then compete for students, and in the long run, the competitive pressures of a market would force some HEIs to improve, and some to close, invigorating the Kazakhstani HE system in general. The new model of HE funding introduced by the Kazakhstani state can serve as a good illustration. So, the educational grants to pay for higher education at the expense of the state budget are now awarded directly to students (e.g., in accordance with the points students received at Unified National Testing) rather than to HEIs, to stimulate competition in the Kazakhstani HE field. As the examples provided by interview participants indicate, the new HE funding model indeed instigates competition for potential clients among the Kazakhstani HEIs. A faculty member commented on the competitive mechanisms for the allocation of state grants:

“Well, universities are highly interested in competing for students with state grants. Some Kazakhstani universities, for example, Suleiman Demirel University, attracts a lot of students, including the students with state scholarships, and these students brings a considerable amount of money to the university budget” (Public, National RU, male, local PhD, Associate Prof, mid-career, IT, KZ).

Next, since “ensuring the quality of higher education providers in the context of market competition” has become an important task (Anafinova, 2020), consequently, the performance indicators (to demonstrate one’s results) and international rankings (to enhance one’s reputation and visibility) have become major elements of an increasingly marketized Kazakhstani HE system, which serve as proxies for the performance of faculty members and the quality of HE. So, the active participation of Kazakhstani HEIs in international university rankings was emphasised by the interviewed faculty members. This is clearly demonstrated by the following quote:

"The Kazakhstani universities set themselves a lot of tasks in order to compete with other universities and become prestigious universities. For example, Kazakhstani universities are now working hard to enter the QS ranking" (Public, National RU, female, local PhD, Senior Lecturer, early-career, Religious studies, KZ).

Indeed, with the number of HEIs participating in global rankings sharply increasing, the fact that the Kazakhstani HE system is becoming increasingly preoccupied with international rankings should be underlined (e.g., in 2013, only 8 universities took part in global rankings; by 2022, this number increased to 16 (MoEs, 2023)). As a result, respondents emphasised the fact that faculty members can raise their university's profile by actively participating in research production because good research performance is one of the key factors that can propel the university higher up the league table. They described this link between 2011's publishing policy and the Kazakhstani HEIs' participation in global rankings in the following way:

"This requirement to publish in non-zero impact-factor journals, this is precisely due to the global rankings, we need to demonstrate that our faculty publishes in such and such journals, in Scopus, Web of Science etc." (Private U, female, local PhD, Associate Prof, mid-career, sociology, KZ).

So, as the Kazakhstani HEIs seek to boost their global ranking position, there can be no denying the centrality of research output in form publications, as the key performance indicator, to these efforts. Thus, the consolidation of rankings logic and the culture of performativity in the Kazakhstani HE system can be viewed as another important factor that allows the 2011's publishing requirement to function as the technology of neoliberal governmentality. With no performance indicators (e.g., research output measured by publication count), which help to measure the research productivity at Kazakhstani universities, and international rankings (e.g., QS World University Ranking), which help to reflect the comparative position of Kazakhstani universities in terms of research productivity, the realisation of 2011's publishing policy would have lost the topicality and visibility it needs to instigate the competition among faculty members and HEIs. Thus, this intensification of ranking logic and culture of performativity can indicate that the marketized Kazakhstani HE sector has become more conducive to regulation by the technologies of neoliberal governmentality.

All in all, it can be argued that the increasing marketization of Kazakhstani HE landscape is one of the major enabling conditions that facilitate the operation of 2011's publishing requirement as a technique of neoliberal governmentality, which is deployed to harness the market mechanisms of competition to boost the publishing productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs. Without the consolidation of

market forces in the Kazakhstani HE environment, the realisation of 2011's publishing requirement as a technology of neoliberal governmentality would not have been possible.

How has 2011's publishing requirement, as a technology of neoliberal governmentality, actually shaped and structured Kazakhstani faculty members and their publishing practices? So, what does it mean to be a faculty member in the increasingly marketized Kazakhstani HE system? The extension of the market to encompass the Kazakhstani HE spheres, which was previously exempt from the competitive pressures of a market, has been naturally accompanied by changes in the expectations about the behaviour and conduct of faculty members. In this regard, it can be argued that at the very core of a new academic subjectivity constructed at Kazakhstani HEIs lies the underlying 'neoliberal' assumption about human nature. As neoliberalism promotes the 'homo economicus' (self-interested and rational individual) as a model of the person, from the neoliberal perspective, a society is primarily conceived as being "comprised entirely and solely of self-interested, atomistic individuals seeking to forward their own agendas" (Gershon, 2011). Hence, within the frames of neoliberal governmentality, the Kazakhstani faculty members are also constructed as "self-interested" and are expected to "proceed in the service of this self-interest in atomistic, individualistic terms" (Wrenn & Waller, 2014). Thus, an important aspect of the neoliberal subjectivity is the keen interest of Kazakhstani faculty members, as self-interested utility-maximisers, in getting more of their research articles published in high-profile journals. One of the faculty members acknowledged this tendency in the following words:

"A scientist will always publish for himself, and he will look for ways to publish. He himself will try to publish in good journals. And he himself will seek access to these high impact-factor journals" (Public, national U, female, Soviet Doctor of Sciences, Professor, later-career, pedagogical sciences, KZ).

This neoliberal understanding of human nature as inherently self-interested can also help to better understand how the technologies of neoliberal governmentality actually get translated into individual agency. As discussed in Chapter 2, neoliberal governmentality is based on "techniques and strategies by which society is rendered governable" (Foucault, 2008, p.82). Since "government operates by educating desires, configuring habits, aspirations and beliefs" (Li, 2007, p.275), at the very heart of neoliberal technologies of governmentality is "arranging things so that people, following their own self-interest, will do as they ought" (Scott, 1995, p.202). So, if we are to describe the standard career path of a faculty member at Kazakhstani HEI as a step-by-step process, which starts with 1 publication in non-zero impact factor journal for awarding the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, then progresses to 2 publications for assignment of the academic title Associate Professor and 3 publications for the

assignment of the academic title of Professor, we can see how the publication activity has become deeply embedded as an integral part of career progression in Kazakhstani academia. One senior faculty member described her progress with non-zero impact factor publications to reach the position of an 'Associate Professor':

"To become a professor, you need to have at least two Scopus publications. I already have one, now I need to produce another one to reach the rank of an associate professor. So, the requirements are high, but the position is also very attractive" (Linguistic U, female, Soviet Candidate of Sciences, Senior Lecturer, later-career, Pedagogical sciences, KZ).

Thus, it can be argued that these rules and regulations on awarding academic titles are specifically designed around the expectation that Kazakhstani faculty members will be naturally interested in climbing the academic ladder, and thus, ultimately build on the image of a self-interested, career-driven scholar that thrives on competition.

In this regard, it should also be noted that such a neoliberal premise about human nature makes individualistic behaviour come across not only as natural but also as benevolent. It is believed that the self-interested behaviour of individual faculty members will be transformed into the benefit of all and bring about positive outcomes for the Kazakhstani HE system as a whole. So, the respondents argued that this publishing requirement by creating a stimulus for the Kazakhstani faculty members to publish a higher quality article, by pushing them to strive to get into well-respected international journals, elevates the overall standard of academic work at Kazakhstani HEIs. As one faculty member said:

"In this way we are at least trying to strive, so to speak, to higher standards ... And when our people want, when they try, then it will become a norm for the scientific work. This requirement will motivate them to improve and to work more thoroughly on their scientific articles. In this, yes, I see a certain positive impact. It could be a driver for actually improving, you know, the quality of publications in Kazakhstan" (Private Business School, male, local PhD, lecturer, mid-career, political sciences, KZ).

Thus, it can be argued that 2011's publishing policy has been framed and internalised as ultimately designed to "foster beneficial processes" (Li, 2007, p.275) in the Kazakhstani HE system, as to ensure the acceptance and internalisation of rules of expected conduct by individuals, the technologies of neoliberal governmentality are usually presented as inherently aimed "to secure the welfare of the population, the improvement of its condition, increase of its wealth" (Foucault, 1991, p.100). All in all, an incentive-driven and performance-based model of governance is generally gaining ground in the Kazakhstani HE, which can be viewed as one of the key characteristics of the new, driven by

competition, fuelled by self-interest, and legitimised by the meritocratic ethic HE system that the Kazakhstani state seeks to establish in the post-Soviet period.

B. The freedom of choice and responsibilities

Secondly, it is important to discuss the fact that 2011's publishing policy, as a technology of neoliberal governmentality, should leave the agents with the freedom to exercise choice. So, 2011's publishing policy by incorporating a performance-based reward (a promotion+financial remuneration) for compliance with the policy, but not sanctions (dismissal/demotion) for non-compliance, is based on the provision of freedom of choice to actors. Thus, a faculty member can choose to publish a non-zero impact-factor publication and get a promotion, or choose not to publish, for which they will not be punished. This can be explained by the fact that "because a reward system rewards people who perform the desired behaviour, it communicates that the behaviour is voluntary", unlike "a punishment system that punishes people who do not perform the desired behaviour", and thus "communicate that the behaviour is obligatory" (Mulder, 2008). So, as one faculty member put it:

"I can work without promotion for a long time and nobody's going to fire me. But if I want to get a higher position, a better pay, I need to, you know, take this step and get it published somehow, and it becomes a determining point" (Elite RU, male, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof. mid-career, education, KZ).

So, as the respondents reported, the faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs are normally not fired if they do not perform well in terms of 2011's publishing requirement (though it might also mean that they will not progress in academia and will not belong to the upper stratus of the system of intellectuals). In this regard, it is important to emphasise that the 'choice' is another important underlying principle of neoliberal thought, which holds that the exercise of choice is "the most highly prized value that both expresses and underwrites the essential human spirit of freedom", while it is the "free market" that "offers the optimal provision of choice" (Gent, 2018). So, in line with neoliberalism, the exercise of choice is "available when markets are deregulated and goods and services are privatised" (Gent, 2018). Hence, before the marketization of Kazakhstani HE, the possibilities for exercising choice for students and faculty had been far more limited, especially, given the Soviet centrally planned economy, which mandated the HEIs to train specialists to fill specific jobs and conduct research to solve concrete industrial and defense needs. Thus, the post-Soviet marketization of the Kazakhstani HE system not only allowed the students to make free consumer choices regarding their education (e.g., to choose the HEI, the speciality, the major, the course, the instructor etc.) but also opened up the opportunity for faculty members' career and research decision-

making (e.g. to choose the track (tenure vs non-tenure), the ratio of teaching and research load, the research interest, the research funding, the research design, etc.).

As the notion of 'freedom of choice' is "a major pillar of neoliberalism", it should be noted that the technologies of neoliberal governmentality "actively cultivate freedom (understood as the exercise of choice)" (Jaeger, 2010). Since "at the level of population, it is not possible to coerce individuals and regulate their actions in minute detail" (Li, 2007, p.275), the Foucauldian notion of governmentality "presupposes the freedom of those who are governed and defines it as their capacities to think and act" (Joseph, 2010). Hence, 2011's publishing policy, as a technology of neoliberal governmentality, tried to create conditions for the exercise of choice by the Kazakhstani faculty members: to publish in non-zero impact factor journals to get a promotion or not to publish; to publish 2 articles and become an Associate Professor, or to go further, publish 3 articles and get the academic rank of a Professor. In this way, the Kazakhstani state leaves the faculty members with the freedom to choose and manage their career and research pathways. The centrality of choice in neoliberal governmentality can be explained by the fact that the provision and exercise of choice can help to "mobilise societal self-regulation" (Jaeger, 2010). Thus, it can be argued that the possibility to exercise a choice is part of "consensual governance arrangements" (Penny, 2017), which helps to promote and consolidate the strategies of individual self-governing to allow the subjects to govern him or herself through the voluntary exercise of choice.

So, if neoliberal governmentality can be described as "a mode of government that relies on and exploits notions of individual freedom" (Friedrich & Shanks, 2023), then what kind of subjectivity does such self-governance underlying the 2011's publishing policy imply? It can be argued that within the framework of neoliberal governmentality, human beings are constructed as not only self-interested individuals but also as rational decision-makers. One of the respondents pointed to the fact that the Kazakhstani faculty members can be viewed as rational, responsible decision-makers, who quickly learn how to effectively navigate the academic terrain of Kazakhstani HEIs:

"I think, human beings are reasonable, responsible, self-guided. I mean, the academic people, um, will be able, you know, to quickly catch up with it, will be able to follow the rules, I think, everyone is doing whatever they can" (Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, lecturer, early-career, Education, KZ).

So, the Kazakhstani faculty members are envisioned not only to be free in their exercise of choice, but also to be rational in their decision-making, and responsible for their choice and its consequences. On the one hand, this alludes to the fact that the realisation of technologies of neoliberal governmentality, such as 2011's publishing policy, ultimately hinges on the responsibility and

rationality of faculty members following them at Kazakhstani HEIs. The implementation of this state policy on research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs would not be possible without faculty members who adhere to this publishing requirement as rational and responsible individuals. On the other hand, the Kazakhstani faculty members have also become burdened by the responsibility to rationally govern their career and research choices at Kazakhstani HEIs. For instance, it is now the responsibility of faculty members to go through all the stages of research production and timely prepare a publication (e.g., to secure grant funding, to conduct research, to publish the results, etc.), if they are to compete for the academic rank. Hence, with “self-responsibility and self-reliance” being “at the heart of the neoliberal understanding of how society functions and the role of individuals within it” (Manning, 2022), the Kazakhstani faculty members are increasingly made responsible for carrying the burden of the development of their own human capital to secure a promotion and career advancement at Kazakhstani HEIs (e.g. learning English, studying research methodology, improving their academic writing skills, etc). Thus, as “the choice discourses are often paired with the discourse of responsibility” (Nordgren, 2010), it is important to keep in mind that it is a form of discipline that involves the responsabilization of subjects. All in all, these neoliberal discourses of ‘freedom of choice’ are designed to construct desirable neoliberal subjects: rational individuals making ‘responsible’ choices in the marketplace of educational and publishing services.

Next, it is also important to underline that the freedom of choice behind the 2011’s publishing requirement is intricately linked to the notions of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Without academic freedom that allows the faculty members to freely pursue research inquiry (e.g., to choose the academic discipline, subject area, and methods), the genuine exercise of choice regarding 2011’s publishing policy would have not been possible. Furthermore, academic freedom is inextricably linked to institutional autonomy, as it is institutional autonomy that allows HEIs to provide academic freedom to faculty members. As Matei & Iwinska (2018) stated “academic freedom and university autonomy refer in essence to a single constitutive: certain freedom, or freedoms, for both the individuals within it and for the institution are needed to fulfill its core mission” - “the pursuit of, and the contribution to, the production of knowledge (through research and scholarship)”. Therefore, the role of decentralisation of the Kazakhstani HE system, which fosters the institutional autonomy of Kazakhstani HEIs, and by doing so promotes the values of academic freedom, as another one of the enabling conditions of 2011’s publishing requirement should be highlighted.

Hence, it is important to note that neoliberal governmentality, with its “de-centred conception of power” (Larner and Walters, 2002, p. 415), implies a certain degree of decentralisation. Firstly,

Foucault rejected “the idea of centralised political sovereignty exercised over a territory” and argued that “power is everywhere” and “comes from everywhere” (Foucault, 1998). So, in this sense, “the state should rather be viewed as decentred, without a unifying centre, resting upon networks of mobile power relations” (Viladsen, 2017). Hence, though the state is still “the main source of governmentality - or, at least, the main promoter of such techniques” (Joseph, 2010), with the sovereignty dissolved and decision-making delocalized, it is the HEIs that become the key sites for actually deploying the technologies of neoliberal governmentality at Kazakhstani HE system. Secondly, governmentality, as a “governance from a distance”, also means that the power is exercised by subjecting individuals to the techniques of self-conduct and self-discipline. So, since neoliberal governmentality “operates indirectly by shaping and fostering autonomous and responsible individuals” (Neumann & Sending, 2007), the self-regulation of the population becomes the centrepiece of this particular logic of governing. Thus, as Hindess (2005) stated, what distinguishes the neoliberal governmentality “from other approaches to the government of the state is its commitment to governing as far as possible through the promotion of certain kinds of free activity and the cultivation among the governed of suitable habits of self-regulation” (p.26). Therefore, it can be argued that the exercise of choice regarding 2011’s publishing policy necessitates the presence of certain decision-making powers in the hands of faculty members (e.g. to choose the subject, theory, methods, medium, and outlet of research publication), while the decentralisation of authority and devolving of power away from central control of government towards the greater institutional autonomy of Kazakhstani HEIs can provide more means for exercising such freedom of choices.

However, unlike the increasing marketization of Kazakhstani HE landscapes that had been steadily gaining ground in the post-Soviet period to reinforce the ethos of competition, the enabling capacity of decentralisation reforms for the exercise of freedom of choice at Kazakhstani HEIs has been rather restricted. This can be attributed to the limited success of decentralisation efforts in the Kazakhstani HE system. On the one hand, the Kazakhstani HE system did make some strides toward greater decentralisation in certain aspects, as, for example, “the organisation of the educational process”, “the selection and the appointment of teaching and administrative staff”, setting of “the number and order of admissions of fee-paying students” have been delegated to universities (Law on Education, 2007). So, it can be stated that Kazakhstani HEIs now have more control over the organisation of teaching, hiring, and admission processes than they did before. Hence, in line with the notion of neoliberal governmentality, along with the provision of more decision-making freedom, there has also taken place a corresponding responsabilization of Kazakhstani HEIs. The interview excerpt

below demonstrates that the ethos of self-regulation gradually gains a coin in the Kazakhstani HE system. As one international faculty member described it:

“It is all really about the way university manages itself, uses its resources to advance the organisation. And resources are people, resources is money, and the leadership. Some universities are becoming very much efficient in how smartly they use the resources that they have to achieve the most they can. They make their decisions rationally - target specific areas, trying to improve teaching and do research” (Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, Education, International).

However, though the autonomy of Kazakhstani universities has been gradually expanding, the decentralisation of certain institutional operations has not fully taken place (e.g., managerial autonomy such as the appointment of the heads of HEIs; academic autonomy such as the opening of new training programs; financial autonomy such as property rights, etc.) (Nurgaliyeva et al, 2018), and the strong state oversight through the Ministry of Education and Science is still present in the Kazakhstani HE system (OECD, 2017). One of the prime examples can be the actual implementation of 2011's publishing requirement, which has been viewed as a command or an imperative, rather than a voluntary choice, by the Kazakhstani faculty members. According to interview participants, the 2011's publishing requirement has been imposed on faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs. One faculty member described it in the following way:

“This policy is literally being enforced on us now. What kind of result you want, if it is being forced, nothing can be done by force!” (Public, National RU, local PhD, Associate Prof, mid-career, IT, KZ).

“I myself noticed a lot of shortcomings in our scientific environment, there are many negative aspects, but the biggest one now is this forcing of publications, which gives so much tension...” (Public, National RU, female, local PhD, Docent, mid-career, political sciences, KZ).

Furthermore, this pressure to publish not only leaves faculty members with little freedom to choose whether or not to publish but also appears to limit Kazakhstani faculty members' ability to choose the number of publications and outlets for them. The respondents noted that 2011's policy, which outlines the rules for the conferment of academic titles, not only stipulates the number of publications but also delineates the range of journals that can count towards the promotion:

“There are certain requirements, which are stipulated by the state, and among these are certain numbers of publications for getting a full professorship or associate. And it should be in the journals approved by the state. They give us a list of eligible journals as decided by the Ministry's committee. So, in order for me to receive the title of professor, my articles must be published in journals included in this list” (Public, National U, female, Soviet Candidate of Sciences, Docent, later-career, pedagogical sciences, KZ).

Hence, while academic freedom implies the right of scholars to freely choose the journal for publication, it can be argued that, in reality, the Kazakhstani faculty members' choice is confined to choosing from among a limited number of pre-defined and state-approved list of journals. The table below depicts the number and the types of academic publications that count towards the conferral of academic ranks of Associate Professor and Professor, as stipulated by the "Rules for Assigning Academic Ranks" (2011).

Table 17. The Rules for Assigning Academic Ranks			
<u>Academic Rank</u>	<u>In journals included in the Scopus or JSTOR</u>	<u>From the list recommended by the MoES's Committee for Quality Assurance</u>	<u>Total number of publications</u>
Associate Professor	At least 2 publications	>10 publications	14
Professor	At least 3 publications	>20 publications	28

This enforcement of 2011's publishing requirement, which leaves the Kazakhstani faculty members with little chance to exercise their freedom of choice, can primarily be explained by the fact that the Kazakhstani faculty members are pressured by the HEIs, which are themselves forced into deleterious competition by the state to comply with the 2011's publishing requirement to boost the overall productivity of Kazakhstani HE system. The quote below describes the lack of institutional autonomy in the Kazakhstani HE system, whereby the state can impose the 2011's publishing policy on HEIs:

"Um, in a way it's top down, I think, it tells us a lot about the level of autonomy, the lack of autonomy at our institutions, if you can, just across the board say that everyone now has to publish" (Elite RU, male, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, Education, KZ).

Other interviewed faculty members confirmed the same point about the state pressure on Kazakhstan HEIs:

"Now, under the state pressure, the publication requirement is being imposed on HEIs..." (Public, National RU, male, local PhD, Associate Prof, mid-career, IT, KZ)

"This publishing reform is being forced on HEIs by the state..." (Public, National RU, female, local PhD, Docent, mid-career, Political Sciences, KZ).

"The faculty members at Kazakhstani universities have been under the extreme pressure to publish" (Elite RU, male, foreign PhD, Professor, mid-career, Robotics, International).

Hence, with the pressure to publish trickling down from the top through the command chain (from the Ministry to HEIs to faculty members), publishing in non-zero-impact factor journals become less of a voluntary choice for the Kazakhstani faculty members (to publish or not to publish) than just a

vital necessity to survive in the Kazakhstani HE system. But what is important are the survival strategies that some Kazakhstani faculty members resort to to ride out these changes to the academic publishing policy. For instance, one of the interview participants framed it as a defense mechanism:

“And the system is pressuring people into like, you have to have this KPI, and it really makes people, um, unwillingly, do everything. But in order to defend themselves, they engage in unethical practices, like the predate journals, uh, consciously or unconsciously” (Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, Education, International).

Although the extensive marketization of the Kazakhstani HE system has considerably helped to facilitate the ethos of competition around 2011’s publishing policy, the limited nature of decentralisation reforms has been threatening the faculty members’ freedom to exercise the choice regarding 2011’s policy. Hence, it can be stated that the enabling capacity of decentralisation reforms for 2011’s publishing policy, as a technology of neoliberal governmentality, has been rather restricted. Without the appropriate level of institutional autonomy of Kazakhstani HEIs that ensures the academic freedom for faculty members to exercise their choice, the 2011’s publishing requirement soon becomes stripped of its specifically Foucauldian notion of neoliberal governmentality: with the de-centred conception of power at its heart, the neoliberal governmentality is based on ‘arm’s length’ governance and relies on the responsabilization and self-regulation of subjects. Although 2011’s publishing policy might still look like the instrument of neoliberal governmentality due to its emphasis on the logic of market competition and reliance on the self-interested nature of individuals, given the lack of institutional autonomy and academic freedom, it fails to achieve its aims of consensually governing the conduct of faculty members from a distance. As a result, different forms of unethical misconduct, in which the Kazakhstani faculty members are getting engaged, should be noted as one of the major unintended, side effects of this policy. A faculty member explained in greater detail the ‘game’ into which the academic publishing at Kazakhstani HEIs turned into:

“The problem is that it all turned into such a game now, a publication game, and some people know how to ‘hack’ it. Some people agree, you know, to put the names of their buddies on their papers, they agree to cite each other. So, there’s a lot of gaming going on in the system. And some people, who are smart enough, they can ‘hack’ the system in this terms” (Elite RU, male, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, Education, KZ).

Hence, it can be stated that this publishing requirement, as a neoliberal technology of governmentality, is giving rise to a whole range of unethical behaviour on the part of Kazakhstani faculty members, and the largest one is the “pay to publish” system and proliferation of predatory journals, which charge fees, but lack any quality checks (e.g., peer-review process). One faculty member reported in this respect:

“And yes, faculty members have been under pressure in local universities to publish, but, uh, this means they usually end up publishing in close to zero impact-factor journals, the predatory or junk journals” (Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, Education, International).

So, according to respondents, various forms of unethical misconduct, in which the Kazakhstani faculty members frequently get engaged because of the need to measure up to the expectation set by the publication requirement, include plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of research results, and authorship misconduct (e.g., 'guest' or 'ghost' authorship). As a result, we can see how the pressure to live up to the expectations set by the publishing policy of 2011 has pushed some Kazakhstani faculty members to try to outplay the publishing system and somehow avoid the publication requirement, yielding unexpected results. As the competition for academic ranks along with the incentives (promotion and financial remuneration associated with it) can fall short of properly aligning the faculty members towards the state goal (the goal is increasing the number of non-zero impact-factor publications, but not the proliferation of ethical misconduct), it is important to design the policy instruments that will be well-calibrated to pull the actors' behaviours and practices in the required direction (in our case, towards increasing not only the quantity of research publications produced at Kazakhstani HEIs but also their quality). Importantly, such inconsistencies between the intended and the actual result can “expose glitches between the programmes for government and the actual governing practices” (Joseph, 2010).

On the one hand, these unethical practices can be viewed as an indication of what happens if the faculty members react to incentives (e.g., promotion tied to the publication requirement) created by the neoliberal technology of governmentality without properly appropriating and internalising the values and norms it is associated with (e.g. ethos of fair competition, freedom of choice, self-governance). On the other hand, the proliferation of such unethical practices can also point to the existence of major structural constraints, which the Kazakhstani faculty members are trying to overcome by resorting (consciously or unconsciously) to any possible means, including such unscrupulous methods.

Firstly, the lack of resources (e.g., the lack of research funding, lack of scientific infrastructure), needed to conduct research and generate a publication, will inevitably affect the availability of choice for faculty members (e.g., to publish in non-zero impact factor journals or not). So, in relation to the 2011 publishing policy, an illusion of accessibility of choice can be created, whereas the lack of resources required to carry out research and produce a publication actually limits faculty members' ability to opt for following the requirement and publishing (e.g., a faculty member may be interested

in publishing in a non-zero impact-factor journal, but in practice being short of research funding, lacking access to scientific infrastructure). Secondly, it can be assumed that some of the Kazakhstani faculty members might not be sufficiently trained to possess the skills, knowledge, and competence necessary to meaningfully exercise the choice regarding 2011's publishing policy (e.g. lack of training in research methods, conventions of academic writing, English language will be discussed in more details in the next chapter).

As a result, it is important to note that “the discourse of choice masks that exercise of choice is often determined by power relations and inequality” (Gent, 2018). So, it can be argued that the exercise of choice regarding 2011's policy is not equally available to every single faculty member, with gains from the exercise of choice (e.g. academic rank and remuneration) largely benefitting those of faculty members who have sufficient knowledge, skills and resources to get published in non-zero impact-factor journals. Hence, the exercise of choice by the less competent, less resourced faculty members, who might be in need of additional support and assistance (e.g. additional training; translation, editing, and proofreading services), seems to be especially limited, which can lead to exclusion and segregation in academia (to be discussed in more details in the next chapter).

Overall, the fact that Kazakhstani faculty members are under pressure to publish and are looking for loopholes and workarounds in the policy requirement may be one of the major factors pointing to the certain failure of 2011's publishing policy, as a technology of neoliberal governmentality, in practise. The fact that the pressure to publish forces the Kazakhstani faculty members to look for ways to circumvent the publishing requirement means that there is actually a lack of choice when it comes to deciding whether to publish or not at Kazakhstani HEIs. So, there is a limited opportunity for choice-making to manage and regulate one's research and publishing decisions (directly, with the number and outlets for publication being already decided and set by the state; indirectly, due to the lack of resources and capacity to produce a publication). Therefore, the only option is to accept responsibility. Hence, I argue that the lack of chance to exercise a genuine choice means that the processes of self-regulation and responsiblization are not occurring at Kazakhstani HEIs. Instead of stimulation of the responsiblization and self-regulation of faculty members, we see the activation of the various forms of scientific delinquency at Kazakhstani HEIs. Thus, it can be argued that the efficiency of 2011's policy, as a technology of neoliberal governmentality, has been rather limited: it did succeed in creating a certain competition among the Kazakhstani HEIs and faculty members by appealing to self-interest of individuals (due to consolidation of rankings logic and culture of performativity in Kazakhstani HE system), but it rather failed to provide the freedom of choice to HEIs and faculty

members to enable the self-regulation and responsabilization that is required for such 'arms 'lengths ' governance techniques. Therefore, whether the technologies of neoliberal governmentality can really be deployed effectively in the absence of adequate levels of institutional autonomy and academic freedom at Kazakhstani HEIs, which makes the exercise of choice within the context of 2011's publishing policy meaningful and real, should be seriously questioned.

This brings us back to the fact that the notion of governmentality is closely connected to the liberal-democratic context. According to Joseph (2010), as the technologies of neoliberal governmentality have been "developed in the advanced liberal societies", "there will be limits to the workability of governmentality in other parts of the world where conditions of advanced liberalism do not apply". For a neoliberal governmentality to operate effectively, there needs to be present "the basis for policing and security in the Foucauldian sense of encouraging individualised self-regulation and responsabilization" (Joseph, 2010). Consequently, the importance of decentralisation reforms, which facilitate institutional autonomy and academic freedom at Kazakhstani HEIs, as one of the main enabling conditions should not be underestimated. This has to do with the fact that the self-regulation and responsabilization of Kazakhstani faculty members cannot become and remain a reality in the Kazakhstani HE system unless the Kazakhstani HEIs and faculty members enjoy institutional autonomy and academic freedom. Therefore, notwithstanding the Kazakhstani state's drive to neoliberal governmentality, with its HE marketization reforms that try to facilitate the ethos of competition and funnel the faculty members 'self-interested behaviour for the benefit of Kazakhstani science, the limited success of decentralisation reforms at Kazakhstani HE system can be one of the main reasons for the failure of attempts to effectively apply the neoliberal technologies of governmentality at Kazakhstani HEIs.

However, all these not only highlight the possibilities and limitations of technologies of neoliberal governmentality, which require the social base of advanced liberal-democratic capitalism but also point to the major importance of previous structures and conditions that can also account for the success or failure of technologies of neoliberal governmentality. So, I believe, it is not only about the mere absence of a liberal-democratic context conducive to self-regulation and responsabilization of the population but also the presence of certain pre-existing structural and institutional reforms that are setting precedent for a different set of governing techniques. Hence, in countries where the social base of advanced liberal democracy was initially absent, the existing social bases and institutional contexts can potentially interfere with the establishment of technologies of neoliberal governmentality. Thus, the post-Soviet Kazakhstan and its HE system are not a blank slate, where the

new 'market-based' governance model can be implemented from the ground up, but it has certain pre-existing social structures, that can interact with the newly introduced governing practices.

3. The legacy of the Soviet HE governance model

So, if the idea of power exercised over free and self-governing individuals cannot be fully applied to the context of the Kazakhstani HE system in its current state, then a reasonable question of 'what governing models are employed in non-liberal contexts if the neoliberal forms of governmentality can fail to effectively work there?' consequently arises. While the technologies of neoliberal governmentality aim to "build lasting social cohesion" by seeking to "govern states and populations with their active consent" (Larner, 2002), coercion is far more natural for non-liberal contexts that lack the consensual conditions conducive for self-regulation and responsabilization of population. Thus, it can be argued that "in such cases where governmentality fails, we are left with a different type of power relation" - "something more like a disciplinary power" (Joseph, 2010). Therefore, given the imposition of a new publishing order (more oriented to the global academic community and international publishing industry) at Kazakhstani HEIs, and the pressure to produce publications that 2011's policy generates among Kazakhstani faculty members, the actual practices of governing the research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs can be said to be closer to disciplinary forms of power. This tendency for coercive rather than consensual approach was very evident in the words of the following respondent:

"One of the attributes of a state is its right to coercion. Therefore, when the Kazakhstani state decided that science needs to be accelerated, it just started to force the HEIs to accept this publishing requirement" (Public, National RU, male, local PhD, Associate Prof, mid-career, IT, KZ).

It is widely believed that the disciplinary forms of power "no longer seem to be dominant in our society" but have been "complemented and possibly superseded by what Foucault terms governmentality" (Friedrich & Shanks, 2023). Nevertheless, as the discussion below will demonstrate, the disciplinary techniques are still alive and actively implemented in the Kazakhstani HE system. As it was noted earlier, the disciplinary forms of governance can be conceived as "concerned with imposing strict rules of behaviour" (Friedrich & Shanks, 2023), with its aim being "engendering docile, productive subjects" (Foucault, 1977). So, with 2011's policy leaving the faculty members under intense pressure to conform to publishing requirement and produce certain measurable results (2 non-zero impact factor publications for the title of Associated Professor, 3 for the title of Professor), it can be argued that this policy has been implemented as a tool to enforce

discipline. Although it may seem that with the fall of the Soviet Union, the discipline should no longer be the defining mode of governance at Kazakhstani HEIs, as the transition to a free-market economy and liberal democracy brought with it the consensual modes of power and more subtle techniques of governing, it can be stated that the disciplinary techniques have survived these broader economic and political changes. Thus, I argue that though 2011's publishing policy may have been presented and justified as a neoliberal technology of governmentality, its actual implementation and operation in practice are better understood through Foucault's concept of disciplinary power. The nuances of the actual implementation of 2011's publishing policy which seems to resemble the disciplinary forms of governance, will be discussed in more detail in this section.

But why does the Kazakhstani HE governance model still retain the features of disciplinary forms of control? I want to explain the propensity to disciplinary forms of power by the fact that HE management in Kazakhstan is conditioned by the institutional framework passed down from the Soviet period. So, it can be stated that post-Soviet Kazakhstan's HE management still exploits the organisational structures and practices, managerial rules, and norms, which were inherited from the Soviet period. In this regard, the fact that the Kazakhstani HE system "has pre-existing structures that are a legacy of its Soviet past", and "these structures were established under a system of planned, central control" should be especially emphasised (Hartley, 2016). Therefore, in the following paragraphs, I want to focus on the centrally planned character of the Soviet economy and its implications for the post-Soviet Kazakhstani HE governance, in particular, the propensity towards the disciplinary forms of control.

The Central Planning

As was already stated, the Soviet Union was characterised by a planned economy with the famous 'five-year plans' being one of its main determining features. These plans, prepared by the State Planning Committee (GosPlan), outlined the socioeconomic development of the Soviet Union for a specified period of 5 years. So, for over 70 years during which Kazakhstan was part of the Soviet Union, the Kazakhstani HEIs "played an integral part in the centrally planned command economy" (Jonbekova et al, 2020). The HEIs across the Soviet Union used to be "strongly linked to workforce production for different sectors of industry and the economy" (Jonbekova et al, 2020). Consequently, "the admission plans at higher education institutions were entirely based on the current Soviet five-year economic plan" (Matthews, 1982) with the "industry and ministries mandating the number of specialists needed in specific employment areas", and also "determining the manner in which

universities should prepare students for these specialties” (Jonbekova et al, 2020). In science too, the “Soviet planners aimed to align research with the strategic needs of defence, industry, and agriculture in a highly centralised system” (Chankseliani, 2022). Thus, the Kazakhstani HEIs, similar to all other Soviet entities, were bound to work within the parameters of the five-year plan during the Soviet times.

Although Kazakhstan has officially abandoned the planned economy and moved to a free-market economy with the fall of the Soviet Union, it can be argued that post-Soviet Kazakhstan still retains some features of the Soviet planned economy. A number of respondents argued that the Kazakhstani HEIs still remain state-oriented:

“Our universities still depend on the central institution to tell them what to do. And that’s very difficult to change. You know, it takes time to change this state-dependent mindset, to adapt the infrastructure, it also takes time, you know, to get prepared in terms of human capital” (Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, Lecturer, early-career, Education, KZ).

“They [universities] have been exposed to centralised system for so many years... They [universities] need some time and support to learn to become autonomous” (Elite RU, male, foreign PhD, Professor, mid-career, Robotics, International).

For example, the Kazakhstani state still has a say in the number and types of specialists to be prepared by Kazakhstani HEIs. The state educational order is formed by the Ministry of Education and Science every three years, which represents the volume of educational services financed by the Kazakhstani state during this period. And each year the Republican Commission produces a list of Kazakhstani universities where the state order will be placed by considering several factors (e.g., accreditation, graduate employability, quality of educational programs etc.) (MoES, 2020). Let’s take a look at the “State educational order for the training of personnel with higher and postgraduate education” (for AY 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024) (MoSHE, 2021). This document not only provides information on the distribution of state educational order but also represents a result of the state mechanisms for forecasting the need for qualified personnel in Kazakhstan. The table below depicts a part of the state educational order for the AY 2021-2022:

Table 18. The State Educational Order (for AY 2021-2022)	
<u>The specialisation</u>	<u>The number of state grants allocated</u>
Art & Humanities	1,615
Social Sciences, Mass Media & Journalism	960
Business, Management and Law	1,223
Natural Sciences, Math & Statistics	5,188
Information and Communication technologies	8,103
Engineering Sciences, Construction	17,580
Agriculture, Agrarian Sciences	1,973
Service Sector	2,200
Veterinary Sciences	875
Pedagogical Sciences	10,075

According to the Minister of Education, the state educational orders are formed on the basis of statistical data and calculations provided by the Bureau of National Statistics and Agency for Strategic Planning and Reforms, which take into account the socio-economic development of various Kazakhstani regions and the republic as a whole, and also by assessing the demand for human resources by various Kazakhstani industries (Aitmagambetov, 2018). As the ultimate goal of this national forecasting system, according to the Minister of Science and Higher Education, is "better coordination between the labour market and the Kazakhstani higher education" (Nurbek, 2023), it is possible to argue that, similar to Soviet central planning, the post-Soviet Kazakhstani state continues to coordinate the production of the workforce at Kazakhstani higher education institutions. Nevertheless, unlike the Soviet period, where the Soviet state, as a sole funder of HE, determined the whole volume of educational services, the post-Soviet Kazakhstani state, as a partial sponsor (e.g. in 2022, 64% of HE was financed by the state budget), can only dictate within the parameters of state grants its provides from the state budget (universities decide on the number of fee-paying students, only the number of scholarship-funded students is set by the state; e.g. for AY 2023-2024, 88.000 educational grants were allocated by the Kazakhstani state for studying at universities).

All in all, similar to the Soviet period, the governance in post-Soviet Kazakhstan is also characterised by state plans. So, as the following table shows, the state plans encompass all spheres and aspects of

Kazakhstani nation-building, with examples ranging from the general state plans to sectoral plans to very specific, program-based ones:

Table 19. The examples of state plans	
<u>Type</u>	<u>Examples</u>
General state plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “The Strategic Development Plan until 2025” - “Kazakhstan-2030 Strategy” - “The Plan of the Nation: 100 Concrete Steps” - “Kazakhstan-2050 Strategy”
Sectoral state plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “The State Program of Industrial-Innovative Development for 2020–2025” - “The State Program of Development of Health Care for 2020-2025” - “The State Program for Implementation of Language Policy for 2020-2025” - “The State Program for the Development of Tourism Industry for 2019-2025”
Specific state plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “Cultural Heritage” for 2004-2011, - Infrastructure Development “Nurly Zhol” for 2015-2019 - “Informational Kazakhstan” for 2013-2020 - “Digital Kazakhstan” for 2018-2022

In the education field too, the Kazakhstani government regularly adopts the state plans for primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels, as the table below demonstrates:

Table 20. The examples of state plans in education sphere	
<u>Level:</u>	<u>Examples:</u>
Pre-school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Children of Kazakhstan Program for 2007 – 2011” “Balapan Preschool Education Program for 2010-2014”
Primary/Secondary	“State Program of Education Development for 2005-2010”
Further education	“State Program of Technical and Vocational Education Development for 2008-2012”
Higher education	“Concept for the development of higher education and science 2023-2029”

In this regard, Foucault has great potential to shed light on how central planning can act as a disciplinary form of power that is intended to shape human conduct. According to Foucault (2007), the disciplinary forms of power are exercised “by regulating the organisation of space (architecture), of time (timetables) and people’s activity and behaviour (drills, posture, movement)”, and “it is enforced with the aid of complex systems of surveillance”. Firstly, the establishment of spatial and temporal order is a major aspect of disciplinary power, as “discipline works by coercing and arranging the individual’s movements and his experience of space and time” (Foucault, 2012). So, individuals

can be placed in certain times and places, controlled to ensure that their conduct is within the set spatial and temporal configurations, and punished if they violate these temporal and spatial boundaries (e.g., prisons, hospitals, schools, factories). Hence, organisation and management of time and space play an important role in the disciplinary mode of governance, as it is one of the ways to directly control individuals and their conduct.

Secondly, the notion of surveillance should also be highlighted, as “the model of disciplinary power suggests, the control is achieved by being constantly monitored” (Foucault, 2012). So, Foucault inspired by the *panopticon* relied on it as a metaphor to illustrate the surveillance tendencies of disciplinary societies, which are based on control through observing and monitoring individuals (McMullan, 2015). Hence, this panoptic model of surveillance, originally representing the organisation of discipline in prisons, has been extended to other areas of modern society, and can be useful to analyse the mechanisms of disciplinary power at use in the HE spheres. Thus, regarding 2011’s policy, I specifically want to focus on these two aspects of disciplinary power: ‘regulation of time ’and ‘surveillance’.

Regulating time

Firstly, I argue that central planning, which sets a certain timeframe for the implementation of the state plan, acts as a disciplinary form of power, as it aims to regulate time by establishing a certain temporal order. So, similar to other temporal devices (e.g., timetable, curfew), central planning is trying to control the conduct of individuals by confining them to particular temporal frames (e.g., 5-year plans). Thus, I argue that by organising and managing time via the central planning tools such as the “State educational order for the training of personnel with higher and postgraduate education” (set each 3 years, e.g. 2021-2024), the “State program for the development of education and science” (set each 10 years, e.g. 2011-2020) or the “Concept for the development of higher education and science” (e.g. set each 7 years, e.g. 2023-2029), the Kazakhstani state tries to ensure that the development of Kazakhstani HE is within the parameters of a state plan.

In relation to 2011’s publishing policy, the temporal frames for its implementation are set by the state plans such as the “State Program for the Development of Education and Science”, and the “Concept for the Development of Higher Education and Science”. For example, the “State Program for the Development of Education and Science for 2011-2020” (2010) set a target to reach a 2% increase by 2015, and a 5% increase by 2020, in the share of Kazakhstani faculty members who have published

their works in non-zero impact-factor journals. As a result, there has been a significant increase in the publication activity by Kazakhstani faculty members (MoES, 2018). So, as Minister Aimagambetov (2019) reported at the Government session discussing the completion of the ‘State Program for the Development of Education and Science for 2011-2020’, “the publication activity of domestic scientists in the prestigious journals increased 2.5 times in the period between 2011-2019”.

This resulted in even more ambitious targets that were set out in the successive state programs. For instance, as the new “State Program for the Development of Education and Science 2020-2025” was adopted in 2019, it established an even more demanding goal: the number of publications in top-ranking journals to increase by 88% from 2018’s indicator within the next implementation timeframe of 2020-2025. So, if the number of publications by Kazakhstani researchers was equal to 4,873 in 2018, then by 2025 it should reach ~ 9,161 publications. Furthermore, the ‘Concept for the Development of Higher Education and Science for 2023-2029 ’was adopted in accordance with the ‘State Program for the Development of Education and Science’. For instance, it establishes as a main target to improve the position of Kazakhstan in the InCites country ranking by Clarivate, which is calculated by counting the total number of publications in indexed scientific journals. Thus, for that end, increasing the number of articles by the Kazakhstani faculty members in high-ranking journals (e.g., Q1, Q2) is set as one of the key objectives for the Kazakhstani HEIs. The table below depicts the projected progress of Kazakhstan in the InCites country ranking by Clarivate:

Table 21. Kazakhstan’s projected progress in the InCites country ranking by Clarivate	
<u>Year</u>	<u>Kazakhstan’s Position</u>
2023	The 73rd place
2024	The 72nd place
2025	The 71st place
2026	The 70th place
2027	The 69th place
2028	The 67th place
2029	The 65th place

These state targets, in its turn, are synchronised by the individual development and strategic plans of Kazakhstani HEIs, as their task is to ensure the attainment of targets set by the state. The table below provides examples of official development plans of several Kazakhstani universities, which formally

set as their goal to further accelerate the publication activity among its faculty members. Thus, as these development programs of Kazakhstani HEIs, which in line with the state plan projects an increase in the publication activity, demonstrate, the logic of central planning, which entails certain centrally set targets to reach and the timeframe for its attainment, is still omnipresent in the Kazakhstani HE system.

Table 22. The examples of development plans: the projected increase in publication activity

<u>Name of a HEI</u>	<u>Document</u>	<u>Targets</u>
Satpayev University	<i>“Development Strategy of Satpayev Kazakh National University for 2022-2026”</i>	An increase in the number of publications in Q1, Q2 journals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - from 211 publications in 2021, - to 220 publications in 2022, - to 230 publications in 2023, - to 250 publications in 2024, - to 275 publications in 2025, - to 300 publications in 2030 is projected.
Kazakh National Women’s Teaching Training University	<i>“Development strategy of Kazakh National Women’s Teaching Training University for 2021 - 2025”</i>	The share of publications in journals indexed by Scopus and Web Science is projected to increase <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by 60% in 2023, - by 75% in 2024, - by 87,50% in 2025, - by 125% in 2026 (as calculated from the total number of publications by its faculty members in 2018).

Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages	<i>“Development Strategy of Kazakh Ablai Khan University of International Relations and World Languages for 2020-2025”</i>	The number of publications by its faculty members in scientific journals with impact factor indexed by Tomson Reuters and Scopus databases to reach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 52 in 2020, - 58 in 2021, - 60 in 2022, - 62 in 2023, - 75 in 2034, - 88 in 2025.
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Importantly, these target indicators and timeframes for its realisation (e.g., 88% increase in the number of publications by 2025; the 65th place in the InCites country ranking by 2029) are laying down a concrete temporal order for the Kazakhstani HEIs and its faculty members. So, the Kazakhstani HEIs and its faculty members must work towards the attainment of these target

indicators within the set timeframe. Consequently, it can be stated that the proper implementation of 2011’s policy, which tied the awarding of the academic title of PhD and the conferment of academic ranks Associated Professor, Professor to the publication activity, can greatly contribute to the attainment of these target indicators. By making sure that only those faculty members, who satisfy 2011’s publishing requirement, are promoted to the academic ranks of Associated Professor, Professor, and only those of PhD students, who have a required number of publications get awarded the PhD degrees, the Kazakhstani HEIs will be increasing the publishing activity and be working towards the attainment of aforementioned target indicators. Thus, it can be argued that the 2011’s publication requirement is being implemented within the context of the state plans such as ‘State Program for the Development of Education and Science ’and ‘Concept for the Development of Higher Education and Science’, which set tangible temporal configurations for the Kazakhstani HEIs and its faculty members.

Next, 2011’s publishing requirement should also be placed within the context of another set of target indicators, which aim to increase the number of researchers and the number of doctoral students in Kazakhstan. Firstly, section 6 of “Concept for the development of higher education and science for 2023 – 2029” includes the increase in the number of researchers (from 21, 782 in 2020) in Kazakhstan as one of its target indicators. The table below demonstrates the projected increase in the number of researchers in Kazakhstan, as set out by the “Concept for the Development of Higher Education and Science for 2023 – 2029”.

Table 23. The projected increase in the number of researchers		
<u>Year</u>	<u>The projected increase in percentage</u>	<u>The projected increase in numbers</u>
In 2023	By 3%	22, 435 researchers
In 2024	By 5%	22, 871 researchers
In 2025	By 7%	23, 307 researchers
In 2026	By 10%	23, 960 researchers
In 2027	By 15%	25, 049 researchers
In 2028	By 23%	26, 792 researchers
In 2029	By 30%	28, 317 researchers

However, as the following table shows, only about 35% of researchers in Kazakhstan had advanced scientific degrees in 2020, which according to the Minister of Science and Higher Education, “is a very low figure for the country” (Nurbek, 2023). Hence, the share of researchers with a scientific degree is projected to reach 40% by 2025, according to the “State Program for the Development of Education and Science 2020-2025”.

Table 24. The share of researchers with scientific degrees (2020)		
<u>Academic degree:</u>	<u>Number:</u>	<u>Percentage out of total number:</u>
Doctors of Science	1697 researchers	~7, 9 %
Candidates of Science	4165 researchers	~19, 2%
PhDs	1340 researchers	~6, 3%
Doctors by profile	293 researchers	~1, 4%

This task to elevate the academic qualifications of Kazakhstani researchers also found a reflection in the “State Educational Order for the Training of Personnel with Higher and Postgraduate Education”, according to which the State Educational Order for the Training of PhDs at Kazakhstani HEIs is planned to reach 5,000 by 2029. For comparison, in the academic 2022-2023, only 1,890 grants were allocated for the training of PhD doctors at Kazakhstani HEIs. Therefore, in line with the state plan, the Kazakhstani HEIs are also planning to increase the number of its doctoral students. The table below summarises the targeted increases, as set out by the development programs and strategies of several Kazakhstani HEIs.

Table 25. The examples of development plans: the projected increase in the number of doctoral students

<u>Name of a HEI</u>	<u>Document</u>	<u>Targets</u>
Satpayev University	<i>“Development Strategy of Satpayev Kazakh National University for 2022-2026”</i>	An increase in the number of PhD students from the total number of students - 10% by 2026; An increase in the number of faculty members with advanced degrees - from 46% to 56.1% by 2026;
L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University	<i>“Development strategy of Eurasian National University named after Gumilev for 2021 - 2025”</i>	-Ratio of students enrolled in master's programs (including MBA), PhD (including DBA) and postdoctoral studies to the number of students in undergraduate programs to reach 30:70;
Al-Farabi Kazakh National University	<i>“Development Program of Kazakh National University named after Al-Farabi for 2022-2026”</i>	The share of students in postgraduate education programs (master's, doctoral) from the total student population to reach 27%;
The National Pedagogical University named after Abay	<i>“Development Program of Kazakh National Pedagogical University named after Abay for 2019-2023”</i>	-The share of students in postgraduate education programs was equal to 15% in AY 2019-2020 (doctoral students - 4.1%; master’s students - 10.9%); -Increasing the share of master's and PhD students to 20% of the total number of students;

As obtaining the academic degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) and then being awarded the academic ranks of Associated Professor, Professor are some of the essential goals of any researcher, it can be argued that the attainment of these target indicators (e.g. increasing the number of researchers, doctoral students) are also closely linked to 2011’s publishing requirement. On the one hand, increasing the total number of researchers in Kazakhstan implies that there will be more faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs who will be potentially interested in getting promoted to the academic ranks of Associated Professor, and Professor. Consequently, in line with 2011’s publishing policy, this will lead to greater publication activity in Kazakhstan, which will be fuelled by the inflow of new researchers at Kazakhstani HEIs most likely interested in climbing the academic ladder. On the other hand, taking into account the fact that 2011’s publishing requirement also requires the Ph.D. students at Kazakhstani HEIs to have at least 1 publication in journals indexed by Web of Science or Scopus databases, it can be argued that increasing the total number of doctoral students at Kazakhstani HEIs will also help with the attainment of state plans to increase the publication activity. More doctoral

students at Kazakhstani HEIs means that there will be more publications produced by them to satisfy the 2011's publishing requirement and receive the PhD degree. In this way, most of the faculty members (those who want to get academic ranks of Associated, Professor) and all of the Ph.D. students at Kazakhstani HEIs (since one has to have at least 1 non-zero impact factor publication to successfully graduate from the Ph.D. program) will be contributing towards the attainment of state plan (e.g. the 88% increase in number of publications by 2025; the 65th place in the InCites country ranking by 2029).

As a consequence, these target indicators, aimed at increasing the publication activity (e.g. the 88% increase in the number of publications by 2025; the 65th place in the InCites country ranking e by 2029), on the one hand, and seeking to increase the number of researchers and doctoral students (e.g. the total number of researchers to reach ~ 28, 316 by 2029; the state educational order for training PhDs to reach 5,000 by 2029)), on the other hand, can be said to be setting the temporal frames for 2011's publishing requirement. Collectively, these three target indicators (increasing the publication activity, the number of researchers and doctoral students) combined with 2011's publication policy (conferment of academic ranks of Associated Professor, Professor and awarding of the academic degree of Ph.D. tied to the publication activity) can be viewed as an ensemble of policy instruments designed to improve the R&D capabilities of Kazakhstani HEIs and enhance the scientific potential of Kazakhstan in the post-Soviet period.

Surveillance

With the state plan defining the expected timeframe and required level of performance to be attained by entities, it is important to note that central planning is usually paired with some surveillance techniques. This can be explained, on the one hand, by the fact that "to plan the economy efficiently in theory requires planners to have accurate knowledge of the specific needs and resources of every entity" (Harrison, 2006). So, the activity of central planning can only be "made possible by accumulating masses of statistics about people" (Tyagi, 2023). On the other hand, the state plans also need to be "combined with some mechanism for monitoring of the regulated entities" to ensure compliance with and timely execution of state mandates (Hannaway & Woodroffe, 2003). Thus, in line with Foucault, central planning, as a disciplinary form of governance, not only entailed a regulation of time but also involved another important feature - surveillance.

The centrality of surveillance for the disciplinary forms of governance was emphasised by Foucault, who described the disciplinary society as “a society where one becomes a docile body due to the presence, or threat of, constant surveillance” (Grad, 2019). So, subjugating individuals to constant surveillance helps to discipline and organise the population. But most importantly, Foucault describes the condition of constant surveillance as aimed at creating a sense of being watched all the time. So, in line with the model of the panopticon, which “allows a watchman to observe occupants without the occupants knowing whether or not they are being watched”, this asymmetrical exposure helps to “create a power imbalance between those executing the surveillance, and those under surveillance” (Grad, 2019). Thus, the fact that the subjects are not sure whether they are being watched or not means that they, constantly aware of the threat of being watched, police themselves for fear of punishment.

As the disciplinary forms of governance such as central planning, tied to the achievement of certain targets within a set timeframe, necessitates a large amount of data for the purpose of surveillance (e.g. to monitor the implementation of a current plan, to set targets for the next plan), I want to focus on reporting as one of such means of surveillance. So, to ensure compliance with the state plan, the state planners have to monitor and control the accountable organisations and its staff via reporting requirements (e.g., Have they satisfied the performance standards set by the state? Have they attained adequate progress in the designated period?). With organisations reporting fulfilled targets and quotas, this data is subsequently used to guide further state plans and policies. Thus, as “the provision of knowledge about populations and their characteristics, and the gathering of this information is itself a practice of regulatory control” (Huxley, 2002), I argue that we can recognise the features of surveillance in the systematic and regular collection of a report data at Kazakhstani HEIs.

Reporting was one of the mechanisms of surveillance in the Soviet Union, which allowed the state to monitor the activities of enterprises, organisations, and institutions. With its forms ranging from statistical and financial, sectoral, and inter-sectoral, to union-republic and all-union, the reports were collected on annual, semi-annual, quarterly, monthly, and ten-day basis during the Soviet period. According to Foucauldian (1995) notion of 'hierarchical observation', the report data underwent several stages before reaching the Soviet top management. The managers submitted reports based on the work of workshops, teams, or sections that they supervised to their senior management; enterprises, organisations, and institutions then sent the summary reports to the superior entity (e.g. the relevant industry ministries and departments), while it was the Central Statistical Office that managed the collected reports for its subsequent presentation to governing bodies and planning organisations of Soviet government. Hence, a coherent system of reporting was developed in the

Soviet Union with a strict reporting period, unified and standardised order of data collection, processing, and presentation. Thus, reporting has been a part of Kazakhstani HEIs since the Soviet times, as a basis for drawing up state plans and as a tool for monitoring their implementation.

The fact that the Kazakhstani faculty members, apart from juggling their direct duties such as teaching, research, and service, are also expected to get engaged in bureaucratic work, including filling out reports, was highlighted by a number of respondents. As a result, the Kazakhstani faculty members often felt burdened by the onerous reporting requirements at Kazakhstani HEIs. The quotes below demonstrate the level of frustration that the Kazakhstani faculty members feel due to reporting requirement:

“They demand: give me this report, give me that report. A lot of unnecessary paperwork, which takes a lot of time, huge resources are wasted on it. It's not just my opinion, all faculty members think like that” (Public, National RU, male, Soviet Doctor of Sciences, Professor, later-career, Political Science, KZ).

“And what does the university management do? They sit in their offices and demand whether this paper is ready, whether that report is ready... We have a deeply entrenched culture of red tape” (Islamic S. U, male, foreign PhD, Docent, early-career, Islamic studies, KZ).

As the faculty members have been overwhelmed with bureaucratic paperwork, this precluded the faculty members from devoting more of their time to preparing for lectures and conducting research. This development was very evident in the words of the following respondents:

“And this means that the faculty members are not fulfilling their main task, they are just shuffling papers” (Islamic S. U, male, foreign PhD, Docent, early-career, Islamic studies, KZ).

“But the workload is full, you must do this, you must do that...our faculty is literally suffocating. Naturally, under such conditions, it is very difficult to be a good researcher, a good instructor...” (Public RU, female, Soviet Doctor of Sciences, Professor, later-career, Pedagogical Sciences, KZ).

Recently, the ICT's role in disciplinary governance has become more prominent, as the contemporary types of surveillance are increasingly relying on digital and electric data-driven technologies. So, the fact that the use of electronic registers and reports has become introduced and popularised at Kazakhstani HEIs to conduct data surveillance on students and faculty members was noted by the respondents:

“Now we have digitalisation at all universities, online portals are there, everything needs to be recorded online, faculty complain that this takes a huge amount of time...they fill it out at nights to record the exams, midterms, finals, in general, a lot of things in the portal... Most lectures now need to have a full text of a lecture uploaded on portal, well, it takes quite a lot of time. And if a person leads several disciplines, it generally takes a huge amount of time” (Public RU, male, Soviet Doctor of Sciences, Professor, later-career, Political science, KZ).

As the quote above demonstrates, in the Kazakhstani HE system, there now operates the “Unified Higher Education Management System”, which integrates the information systems of all Kazakhstani universities, thereby allowing them to maintain an up-to-date database. Thus, the processes of filling out applications for scientific grants, keeping a record of academic publications, maintaining the catalog of email addresses, submitting, and receiving reports have all been digitalised.

However, any form of reporting, no matter how progressive, is inescapably enmeshed in control and surveillance. So, because of mounting complaints about the onerous reporting requirements at Kazakhstani HEIs, this problem of excessive reporting has been acknowledged by state officials and attempted to be solved through legal measures. Hence, the documentation maintained in connection with control by the Ministry has been revised, and decisions were made to exclude many of them. For instance, the order “On approval of the List of documents required to be maintained by faculty of secondary, technical and vocational, post-secondary educational organisations” was issued in 2020, which established a clear list of documents to be filled out by the Kazakhstani faculty members, while all unnecessary documentations have been canceled. So, starting from AY 2020-2021, 11 forms of strict accountability (e.g., department work plans, commission minutes, working curricula, etc.) have been eliminated at Kazakhstani universities (MoES, 2020). Moreover, it is also important to note that for requiring excessive reporting from faculty members, the state authorities may now impose an administrative liability in the form of a fine (from 20 (~\$144) up to 120 (~\$867) monthly calculation indices). According to the Chairman of the Committee for Quality Assurance in Education and Science, violations still occur, and numerous facts of excessive reporting continue to be revealed (e.g. >1,100 complaints in 2021) (Kobenova, 2021). Nevertheless, according to the Vice-Minister of Education and Science, as a result of legal measures taken to relieve the faculty members from unnecessary reporting, the overall bureaucratic load of faculty members was reduced by 35% (Yergaliev, 2023).

In this chapter, I discussed the neoliberal governmentality and disciplinary mode of governance in relation to the implementation of 2011’s publishing requirement, which reveals much about the entanglement of these two forms of governance in current publishing policies and practices at Kazakhstani HEIs. So, the goal of this chapter was to highlight the parallel existence of these two modes of governance in the Kazakhstani HE system, and in this way contribute to a better understanding of the complex workings of power in modern societies, especially the transitional states like the post-Soviet Kazakhstan. The post-Soviet reforms have brought about significant restructuring to the Kazakhstani HE, which necessitated the emergence of novel techniques suitable for governing

an increasingly marketised and more decentralised HE landscape. As it was discussed in this chapter, the Kazakhstani state has been attempting to employ the technologies of neoliberal governmentality to reform and manage its post-Soviet HE system. We specifically looked at 2011's publishing policy, which, as a potential case of neoliberal governmentality, has not only been aimed at creating the new marketised and more decentralised spaces in the Kazakhstani HE system (e.g. universities driven by ranking logic and performance indicators, governed by institutional autonomy and academic freedom), but also fostering the new kinds of academic subjects (e.g. self-interested, rational, responsible, self-governing faculty members) by promoting the notions of market competition and freedom of choice. However, as we have demonstrated in this chapter, the attempts to employ such techniques of neoliberal governmentality at Kazakhstani HEIs have in practice produced some controversial outcomes (e.g. proliferation of ethical misconduct), especially, due to the lack of liberal-democratic context conducive to self-regulation and responsabilisation of population. This can be attributed to the limited nature of decentralisation reforms in the HE system, which can be said to be mirroring the problems the Kazakhstani state has been facing with the stagnation of its democratisation project. Hence, jumping on such 'new' governance solutions interfered with the long-established, deeply-entrenched governance traditions, since the Soviet period was characterised by its own 'art and rationality of government', which still works to shape the Kazakhstani HE system and its management. As a result, a certain discrepancy between the newly-adopted neoliberal rhetoric (e.g. calls for competitiveness, autonomy, accountability) and the actual, on-the-ground governance practices (e.g. centralised, top-down implementation, command-and-control management) can be noted. For example, the persistence of state-based planning in the Kazakhstani HE system, which regulates time by confining the attainment of target indicators to a certain timeframe and maintains a surveillance system through the reporting requirements, can be seen as an instance of what Foucault calls disciplinary governance. Thus, two HE governance models (the emerging performance-based, incentive-driven vs. the 'Soviet' state-centered), despite the tension and contradictions, currently co-exist in the Kazakhstani HE system, which was captured under the labels "*a hybrid*", "*at the crossroads*", "*half Western, half Soviet*", "*a mix of Soviet and Western*", according to my respondents. Although Foucault's genealogy of power implies the rise to prominence and decline of different governance regimes over the course of humanity's history (from sovereign to discipline to governmentality), this does not mean that the neoliberal governmentality totally replaced the disciplinary modalities of power in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan. Instead, it can be argued that the disciplinary forms of governance "infiltrated the others, sometimes undermining them, but serving as an intermediary between them, linking them together, extending them and above all making it possible to bring the effects of power to the most minute and distant elements" (Young, 2019). So, as

Foucault (2007) argued, “we should not see things as the replacement of a society of sovereignty by a society of discipline, and then of a society of discipline by a society, say, of government”, but in reality, “we have a triangle: sovereignty, discipline, and governmental management, which has a population as its main target and apparatuses of security as its essential mechanisms” (pp. 107–108). Thus, in line with Gramsci’s hegemony, which is about certain combination of coercion and consent, Foucault (1997) too believed that “governing people...is always a versatile equilibrium, with complementarity and conflicts between techniques” (p. 154). All in all, Foucault’s notions of governmentality and disciplinary power provide a highly useful framework to examine Kazakhstani publishing policies and practices through the lens of power.

Chapter VII

**The hierarchy of language
use at Kazakhstani
universities**

In the preceding chapter 6, I discussed 2011's publishing policy, as well as the associated rise of the new, market-based governance techniques to manage the post-Soviet HE system, which increasingly aspires to become more research-intensive and internationally competitive. Now, I want to pay specific focus on the language aspect of 2011's state policy on research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs. Since the non-zero impact-factor journals indexed by large databases like Scopus and Web of Science are mainly biased towards English-language publications (Kuzhabekova, 2017), this essentially means that this policy effectively requires the Kazakhstani faculty members to have a good command of English language, at the level that would allow them to secure a publication in such high-profile, international journals. In this regard, two major contradictions, produced by 2011's publishing policy, should be noted. On the one hand, there exists a major mismatch between the implied demand of 2011's policy in terms of the language of research publications and the Kazakhstani faculty members' actual linguistic competencies, which are characterised by the predominance of Kazakh and/or Russian language and the lack of English language in their linguistic arsenal. On the other hand, this publishing requirement, which has obviously been leading to a preference for English as a linguistic medium of research production at Kazakhstani HEIs, also seems to be in certain contradiction with Kazakhstan's post-Soviet initiatives on nation-building (e.g. Kazakhization policies and the status of Russian as a 'language of inter-ethnic communication'). These contradictory aspects of 2011's publishing policy need to be analysed in the context of the Kazakhstani state's efforts to mediate the social tensions (Kazakh/Russian vs. English language; organic vs. traditional intellectuals; local vs. global knowledge contribution) and maintain the social compromise between the ruling and ruled in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan. Thus, I assume that there is a possibility that this publishing requirement can further reinforce the hierarchies and aggravate the inequalities in the Kazakhstani HE system, especially the ones stemming from language barriers, with potentially far-reaching consequences for the broader social tensions and stability of social compromise underpinning Kazakhstan's post-Soviet hegemony.

While in the previous chapter, I relied on theoretical instruments provided by Foucault to look at power dynamics and governance in the post-Soviet Kazakhstani HE system, now I will employ Bourdieu's conceptual tools to elaborate on the language aspect of 2011's state policy on research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs. So, with the help of Bourdieu's concepts of "symbolic capital", "symbolic value/power" and "symbolic order", I will try to get a better understanding of differing levels of value and meaning being placed on various languages at Kazakhstani HEIs and outline the socio-economic hierarchy of language use at Kazakhstani HEIs. Because language can be thought of as a 'symbolic capital' that confers 'symbolic power' on its holders (Bourdieu, 1992, pp.50-52), the

Kazakhstani HEI can be thought of as a language market where a struggle for the establishment of 'symbolic order' takes place and faculty members' academic career is dependent on having a certain linguistic capital. Thus, Bourdieu can be incredibly helpful in examining the implications that the Kazakhstani HE system's closer identification with the English language is having for the Kazakhstani HEIs, Kazakhstani faculty members, and the Kazakhstani science, more broadly.

The symbolic value of the English language at Kazakhstani HEIs

Let us take a closer look at what factors, in the opinion of my interviewees, are contributing to the enhancement of the symbolic value of the English language at Kazakhstani HEIs. If we are to unpack the symbolic value of the English language, two order of factors can be considered: global and local ones. First of all, a number of respondents noted the international primacy of the English language. One senior faculty member said:

"English is a world language. We have to learn English" (Public, national U, female, Soviet Doctor of Sciences, Professor, later-career, Pedagogical Sciences, KZ).

As the quote above demonstrates, the prioritisation of English as a preferable linguistic medium of research publications at Kazakhstani HEIs should be situated within the broader 'global' dominance of English. This dominance of English is not only an integral part of the phenomenon of globalisation, as it "reinforces the cultural and economic politics of globalisation" (Keleher, 2014, p.7), but the hegemony of English is also very central to neoliberal capitalism. As English is the language of international trade and global economic integration, a state that wants to compete economically needs to "invest" in English language proficiency of its human capital (Keleher, 2014, p.7). Moreover, the global neoliberal knowledge regime and set of related multilateral institutions maintain and reinforce English's hegemony, as "to participate in commerce and international politics, nations need English, the language of the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the International Monetary Fund, OPEC, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the European Union" (Keleher, 2014, p.10). As a result, English, as a language that has come to be associated with the aims of economic progress and global competitiveness, has become an essential component of Kazakhstan's aspirations to enter the ranks of developed countries. However, despite its capacity to "facilitate exchange, specifically the free trade of people, goods, and services", the global dominance of English can also "strengthen divides by excluding those who do not speak it" (Keleher, 2014, p.7), a point which will be further discussed in more depth. All in all, such a prominent position of the English language on a global level can be viewed as the first factor that

advances the symbolic value of English at Kazakhstani HEIs and can be placed within the broader context of the global hegemony of English.

Secondly, the status of English as a lingua franca of academic research was pointed out by a number of faculty members. The vast majority of respondents seemed to already accept it as a matter of course:

“You know, we have to accept the fact that English is already recognised as the language of science all over the world” (Newly-established public IT U, male, Soviet Candidate of Sciences, docent, later-career, IT, KZ).

So, the global dominance of English is further reinforced by the ‘lingua franca’ status of the English language in international academia, which is the second factor that adds to the symbolic value of English at Kazakhstani HEIs. This can be corroborated by the statement of the Kazakhstani Ministry of Education and Science, Erlan Sagadiev (2016), who also stated that “the priority of the English language in the scientific world is indisputable”. So, the hegemony of English language in academia can naturally be attributed to its prevalence (e.g. 1.5 billion English-speakers worldwide (Statista, 2022)), especially since the academic domain is “thoroughly dependent on cooperation across national borders and internationally negotiated standards, especially in science, where cutting edge research teams operate in several countries and recruit from anywhere in the world” (Mauranen, 2010). However, the entrenchment of English as a lingua franca of academia has also been heavily affected by the publishing industry. According to Hamel (2007), “articles written in English accounted for 80–85% of publications in the social sciences, 90% in the natural sciences, and as high as 95% in specific fields such as physics and mathematics” (as cited in O’Neil, 2017). And though “more than 9,000 peer-reviewed scholarly journals are being published in other languages” (e.g., French 3,500; German 2,700; Spanish 2,300; Chinese 1400), “most of these journals are excluded from prestigious journal indexes” (Curry & Lillis, 2018). Thus, it can be argued that the status of English as a lingua franca of academic research primarily has to do with the fact that English is also the global language of scholarly publishing.

So, as the Kazakhstani state views the integration into the global educational community and building of research capacity as key to its knowledge-based economic growth, great importance is accorded to the English language. This can be attributed to the fact that having the Kazakhstani HE system aligned with the global knowledge production systems and getting integrated into the global academic community with the help of the English language can provide the Kazakhstani state with access to research innovations, contribute to its economic growth and integration into the global economy.

Hence, Kazakhstan, being a state whose language is not English, but which is hoping to be “given a place in the global economy through English” (Pendergast, 2008, p.3), can be stated to increasingly becoming more oriented towards the international diffusion of knowledge. As a result, the Kazakhstani state has been focused on equipping the Kazakhstanis with transnational competencies such as English language abilities. For example, the Kazakhstani HE system has witnessed the emergence of English-medium programs, an increase in Kazakhstani students ’and faculty members ’ international mobility, development of partnerships and collaboration with overseas HEIs in the post-Soviet period. Thus, the prioritisation of English being undertaken by the Kazakhstani state can be viewed as part of the global hegemony of English, and its status as a lingua franca of academic research.

However, these two ‘global ’factors alone can not provide an exhaustive explanation of the currently high symbolic value of the English language at Kazakhstani HEIs. So, I also want to focus on the local constituents of this issue, such as the effect of 2011’s policy on the hierarchy of language use at Kazakhstani HEIs. As it was noted earlier, 2011’s “Rules for Awarding Academic Ranks” has introduced a requirement for faculty members to publish in journals with nonzero impact factor in order to qualify for promotion” (Kuzhabekova & Ruby, 2018, p.266). As “Kazakhstan demonstrated a major increase in the number of publications starting in 2012” (Adambekov, 2016), the 2011’s publication requirement was considered to be “the main reason for the dramatic increase in the number of publications from Kazakhstani researchers which occurred in 2012” (Adambekov at al. 2016). But notwithstanding such a positive effect on the overall volume of research produced in Kazakhstan, its impact on the linguistic medium of research production deserves a closer look. As the impact factor is “calculated from a number of publications and citations registered in bibliometric databases, such as Web of Science, Scopus or PubMed”, which are “generally biased toward English-language journals”, this results in the exclusion of Russian and Kazakh-medium journals, which are mostly “not included in these databases and do not have an impact factor” (Kuzhabekova, 2017, p.122).

Of course, this particular policy development is an integral part of the global dominance of English and has directly to do with its status as the lingua franca of academic research (e.g. English is key to Kazakhstani science becoming more visible on the global academic arena). So, the change in the publication policy at Kazakhstani HEIs, which has been amplifying the symbolic value of the English language, can be viewed as a reflection of these global developments. However, I want to emphasise the fact that 2011’s policy, which put the limelight on the non-zero impact factor publications, further intensified this superiority of the English language in the context of the Kazakhstani HE system. This

emphasis on non-zero impact factor publications can also be evident in the dramatic increase in the overall number of research articles indexed in Scopus by the Kazakhstani authors, which were equal to 818 scientific articles in 2012 but quickly reached 2,032 in 2014. Thus, the instrumentality or even indispensability of the English language for securing a non-zero impact factor publication is one of the key reasons for the high symbolic value of the English language at Kazakhstani HEIs. As one of the faculty members interviewed acknowledged:

“We all want our works published in peer-reviewed journals with high impact factor. Therefore, we need to know English” (Islamic S. U. male, foreign PhD, Docent, early-career, Islamic studies, KZ).

So, most crucially, it is the ability of Kazakhstani faculty members to publish in non-zero impact-factor journals with the assistance of their linguistic capital of the English language, which is the primary reason why the symbolic worth of English has reached a high degree in Kazakhstani HEIs. For example, the “Methodological Recommendations for Publishing a Scientific Article in Journals with Impact Factor” was prepared by the Kazakh National University of Al-Farabi as guidelines for its faculty members and Ph.D. students to publish a scientific article in international journals with an impact factor. In this document, a direct reference to 2011’s “Rules for Awarding Academic Ranks” is made, also stating that “we recommend faculty and students to give priority to English-language publications”, as “in order to increase the citation of their works, a scientist must, first of all, submit an article in English” (Smagulov & Isanova, 2015).

In this regard, I also want to refer to the change in regulations for attaining the academic degree of PhD (Doctor of Philosophy), which now stresses the non-zero impact factor publications. To add some context, it can be stated that Ph.D. training programs in line with the three-cycle degree structure (bachelor, master’s, doctorate) started to be offered by the Kazakhstani universities in 2010 when Kazakhstan became a signatory of the Bologna process. Prior to that doctoral training in Kazakhstan was offered in line with the Soviet system of doctoral education, which included two separate stages: the degree of ‘Candidate of Science’ and the degree of ‘Doctor of Science’. So, this shift from the Soviet to Bologna-style doctoral training in 2010 also led to the consequent change in the PhD degree requirements in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. According to the 2011’s policy “a candidate for a PhD degree in Kazakhstan must publish at least one document in a non-zero impact factor journal” to complete the academic requirements for the degree (Adambekov, 2016). This can be contrasted with the Soviet period, when “dissertations were more important than publications, the requirement for which was more of a formality” (Mironin, 2018 as cited in Kuzhabekova, 2020). This too alludes to the major

change in Kazakhstan's mode of knowledge production, which now highly prioritises the non-zero impact factor publications.

As a result, for many of the respondents, an English-language publication in a non-zero impact factor journal was equivalent of a better quality and higher scholarly impact. So, when participants shared their attitude towards academic publishing, the non-zero impact factor publications appeared to be a valuable asset for them.

“And, these non-zero impact-factor articles, they will be part of, you know, volumes that are listed in high quality databases like Scopus. So, these publications have a scholarly impact, basically, they are high quality” (Elite, Eng-medium RU, female, foreign PhD (US), Assistant Prof, mid-career, Biology, KZ).

Consequently, the academic article written in English language and published in the non-zero impact-factor journal was viewed as being of the highest symbolic value at Kazakhstani HEIs. The interview excerpts can be corroborated by the statement from above mentioned “Methodological Recommendations for Publishing a Scientific Article in Journals with Impact Factor” by the Kazakh National University: “If the results of the study were published in a journal with a high impact factor, then, accordingly, this study is relevant in the scientific community on a global scale and has a positive scientific resonance” (Smagulov & Isanova, 2015). This can also be confirmed by the fact that having publications (minimum 2, maximum 5) in Web of Science (non-zero impact factor according to Journal Citation Reports) or in Scopus (at least in 25th CiteScore Percentile) can ensure a faculty member (including assistant/associate professors, lecturers, and teaching assistants) undergoing a regular attestation with up to 25 point out of total 100 points (Kazakh National Medical University, 2021). Thus, the key factor that elevates the symbolic value of the English language at Kazakhstani HEIs is that it allows the faculty members possessing this symbolic capital to publish in non-zero impact factor journals. Therefore, as the Kazakhstani policy on research productivity assumes the primacy of the English language by effectively requiring the publication in English-medium journals, the current symbolic order at Kazakhstani HEIs can be said to be privileging the symbolic capital of English as a preferred linguistic medium of research publications.

Overall, it can be stated that two order of factors contribute to the high symbolic value of the linguistic capital of English at Kazakhstani HEIs. On the global level, it is the English language's global dominance (1) and status of 'lingua franca' in international academia (2), which contributes to its enhancement at Kazakhstani HEIs. On the local level, the importance of the English language was intensified by 2011's publishing policy that tied publishing in non-zero impact-factor journals to the

promotion to academic ranks of associated professor and professor at Kazakhstani HEIs. Overall, these factors illustrate the fact that the English language is currently occupying a dominant position within the current symbolic order of Kazakhstani HEIs, as it claims a superior status within the hierarchy of language use and the system of knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs. However, here comes the first contradiction that I want to highlight, which is the major mismatch between the implied demand of 2011's policy in terms of the language of research publications and the Kazakhstani faculty members' real level of English proficiency. Let me elaborate on this in more detail.

First of all, the faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs viewed the knowledge of the English language as a must, if one wants to get published in a non-zero impact factor journal. One faculty member explained this:

“Well, after all, the faculty should have a decent level of language proficiency, the one that allows them to publish in international, non-zero impact factor journals” (Newly-established public IT U, male. Soviet Candidate of Sciences, docent, later-career, IT, KZ).

As the quote above demonstrates, having a good command of the English language, at the level that will allow them to secure a publication in non-zero impact-factor journals, is already viewed as a necessary authentication of the validity and credibility of Kazakhstani faculty members. This can be supported by the fact that Kazakhstani HEIs are increasingly depending on international standardised tests of English language competency such as IELTS or TOEFL to assess faculty English proficiency. For example, the qualification requirements for the academic positions ranging from tutor and lecturer to associate and assistant professors at Kazakhstani International IT University (2020) include having an IELTS 6.0. Moreover, the rules and regulations for the attestation of faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs also include such provisions. For instance, at the National Medical University (2021), having an IELTS band score of 5.5 or TOEFL equal to 525 points is part of the comprehensive assessment of the faculty members (including deans, heads of department, professors, lecturers, and teaching assistants), which takes place at least once in 5 years. The same applies to the Kazakh National Agrarian Research University (2019), which also requires an IELTS or TOEFL certificate when conducting a regular attestation of its faculty members. So, when it comes to assessing the Kazakhstani faculty members, their linguistic capital of the English language currently plays an important role at Kazakhstani HEIs.

However, many respondents claimed that the majority of faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs lack a good knowledge of English. The following account illustrates the actual linguistic situation at Kazakhstani HEIs:

“Most Kazakhstani faculty members, they are proficient in Kazakh or Russian languages, and English typically will be an add-on, we have a minority of Kazakhstani faculty members, who are proficient in English” (Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, Education, International).

So, the predominance of Kazakh and/or Russian language in their linguistic arsenal and the poor knowledge of the English language on the part of the majority of Kazakhstani faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs has been highlighted by many of the interviewed respondents. A similar statement about the Kazakhstani faculty members' low level of English language was made by the Director of the Department of Higher and Postgraduate Education at the Ministry of Education and Science, Darkhan Ahmed-Zaki (2016), who argued that about 70% of 1,500 faculty members, who undertook the state-sponsored English language training, largely showed the Elementary and Beginner levels of English language, while only 30% demonstrated the Intermediate, Pre-Intermediate or Advanced levels. The fact that most of the faculty members at Kazakhstani universities demonstrate a low level of English language proficiency can also be corroborated by the fact that the Kazakhstani population in general has a low knowledge of the English language. For instance, Kazakhstan ranked 104th out of 113 countries covered by Education First (EF) rating in 2023.

However, at this point, it is important to underline the fact that this is especially the case among the elder faculty members, who belong to current 'traditional' intellectuals and can be considered as former 'organic' intellectuals of the Soviet period. A more senior faculty member described this foreign language deficiency in the following way:

“The previous generation did not learn multiple languages like the current generation... This is difficult for us, not knowing the English language... Young people know the English language well, so they can get involved in everything, and the older generation like us, the older faculty, we cannot get involved. Only through translators” (Linguistic U, female, Soviet Candidate of Sciences, Senior Lecturer, later-career, Pedagogical sciences, KZ).

Hence, it is important to keep in mind that the Kazakhstani state's promotion of English, “as a language of successful integration into the global economy” (Pavlenko, 2008, p.22), has been a recent phenomenon that characterises the post-Soviet period. So, the elder generation of intellectuals' English language deficiency can be attributed to the fact that English language had a limited symbolic power during the Soviet times, not only because “English was censored due to its association with capitalist countries” (Keleher, 2014, p.10), but also because there was little need for English in Soviet

academic community that existed “in isolation from the global academic publication market due to ideological control” (Kuzhabelova, 2017, p.123). So, there was little motivation for the Soviet intellectuals to learn English, which offered a limited symbolic power to its holders in the Soviet period, especially in comparison to the Russian language.

But it is not just the lack of proficiency in the English language, which is currently depreciating the symbolic power of Kazakhstani faculty members. The absence or lack of linguistic capital of the English language among the Kazakhstani faculty members generally goes hand in hand with the lack of knowledge and skills in research methods (1) and conventions of academic writing (2). So, notwithstanding the symbolic value of the English language due to its global dominance and status of ‘lingua franca’ in international academia, it is not just about the abundance of linguistic capital of the English language, but also the corresponding presence of the academic capital in form of the mastery of research methods and academic conventions of writing, which collectively produces the high symbolic value of English language at Kazakhstani HEIs. In my opinion, this can be explained by the fact that only in combination with the knowledge of research methods and academic conventions of writing the proficiency in the English language can produce a publication in non-zero impact factor journals.

Firstly, it can be stated that within the context of publishing requirement at Kazakhstani HEI, the faculty’s linguistic capital of the English language is closely related to the academic capital of research methodology knowledge. In this regard, the weak methodological basis of academic publications by the Kazakhstani faculty members was highlighted by some respondents, which was attributed to the general lack of understanding of the research methodology among the Kazakhstani faculty members. This is what one respondent said about the difficulties with methodology that the Kazakhstani faculty members faced:

“There is such issue as inability to build a scientific work, a lack of understanding what research methodology is... we have people who still cannot, let’s say, distinguish the object of their research. They cannot formulate a hypothesis, they cannot formulate research objectives, and accordingly they cannot get the right findings” (Private Business School, male, local PhD, lecturer, mid-career, political sciences, KZ).

This deficiency in the research methodology can primarily be explained by the weakness of training in research methodology at most Kazakhstani HEIs. Although one of the key competencies for the graduates of master’s and doctoral programs is “to be competent in the field of scientific research methodology”, and to demonstrate the “mastery of the skills and research methods used in one’s area

of study” (Academic Policy of Kazakh National Pedagogical University, 2021), “a poor quality of training in disciplinary theories and methods” at Kazakhstani universities was noted by Kuzhabekova (2020) in her study of doctoral education in Kazakhstan. She argued that “comprehensive methodological training is not available” for the Kazakhstani doctoral students, which can be attributed to the “lack of broad methodological knowledge among the supervising faculty” and “the poor quality of curriculum and teaching at the Ph.D. level”. However, recently a new regulation was introduced with the adoption of “Rules for conferring the academic degrees” in 2011, which now requires the doctoral dissertation to be conducted under the guidance of not only a local Kazakhstani supervisor but also an additional foreign supervisor (Article 5). According to Kuzhabekova (2020), this novelty can help “to ensure quality control by exposing a Ph.D. student to a foreign faculty, who can provide training in the modern methods and theories”, especially in cases when the local Kazakhstani supervisor is failing. Thus, it can be stated that the deficiencies of the Kazakhstani Ph.D. training (weak training in research methods) are now envisioned to be strengthened with the help of a global system of intellectuals (e.g., foreign supervisors).

Secondly, the low competence in the English language can not only be associated with the lack of knowledge of research methodology but can also be affiliated with the lack of knowledge of conventions of academic writing in the English language. A faculty member from an English-medium research university commented on the weak academic writing competencies of Kazakhstani faculty members:

“So, there is a lack of general understanding of how do I structure and write an empirical research paper” (Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, Education, International).

So, the inadequate proficiency in academic writing conventions in English among the Kazakhstani faculty members was highlighted by several respondents. Similar to research methods, the academic policies of Kazakhstani universities do include academic writing as one of the core competencies of post-graduate studies. According to the “State compulsory standards of higher and postgraduate education” (2022), these elements, as the basic disciplines, must be included in the structure of the educational program of doctoral studies. However, as the quote below demonstrates, it is necessary to note that this failure in academic writing on the part of Kazakhstani faculty members should primarily be attributed to the unfamiliarity of anglophone conventions of academic writing accepted at international English-language journals to them.

“When we talk about international publications, this is the English language, publications in those journals means that the researcher has to follow a completely different kind of writing tradition... that is difficult... well, because they are foreign for us” (Public, National RU, male, local PhD, Associate Prof, mid-career, IT, KZ).

For instance, according to Kaplan (1966), rhetoric is “not universal, but varies, from culture to culture” (p.2). So, while “the English language and its related thought patterns have evolved out of the Anglo-European cultural pattern” (p.3), the rhetorical traditions “other than those normally regarded as desirable in English do exist” (p.16), though they may not be “so well established, or perhaps only not so well known to speakers of English” (p.13). Hence, the existence of major cross-cultural divergences in the conventions of academic writing should be emphasised. For example, another faculty member explained in greater detail the dissimilarity between the so-called ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ conventions of writing:

“And, you know, the convention of writing is very different... Western vs. Eastern. They are completely different things. In the Western tradition, it is the responsibility of the writer to explain, whereas in the Eastern traditions, it is the responsibility of the reader to understand, and it's very different” (Elite, eng-medium RU, female, foreign PhD (UK), lecturer, early-career, Education, KZ).

So, the respondents pointed to the issue of mismatch and miscommunication, as the Kazakhstani faculty members can fail to meet the Western cultural expectations regarding the academic writing style and the way information should be presented when writing an academic publication for English-language journals. Thus, a reference to the Soviet tradition of academic writing, which had its own distinctive development path in such post-Soviet countries like Kazakhstan, and is more familiar to the Kazakhstani faculty members, was also made by respondents:

“Well, we have our own, Soviet tradition of writing scientific works... And we do not face the stylistic problems here...” (Public, National RU, male, local PhD, Associate Prof, mid-career, IT, KZ).

Although academic writing was “mainly viewed as a matter of individual practice and talent” in the Soviet Union (Korotkina, 2022), as there was “the lack of formal teaching of writing in higher education” (Glushko, 2022), the fact that there exist “differences between rhetorical traditions and publication practices in Russia and in the West” (Glushko, 2022) should still be underlined. Hence, this Soviet tradition of academic writing mentioned by a respondent is presumably based on conventions of the Russian language, which according to Kaplan (1966) greatly differs from the English language in terms of sentence structure and paragraph development. Moreover, stylistic differences also exist, such as “opaque writing” in Soviet academia, which is the result of the “Soviet-style of communication when the state had strict control over the dissemination of scientific knowledge, and thus professional communication was limited to an internal audience” (Korotkina, 2011). As a result, it can be assumed that the training in academic writing, which is provided at the

majority of Kazakhstani universities (where instruction is predominantly in Russian and Kazakh languages, the exception being the highly internationalised HEIs like NU or KIMEP, where the instruction is in English) are mainly based on the conventions of Russian and Kazakh languages, but are not specifically tailored for the academic writing in English. Hence, the stylistic issues in research publications written by the Kazakhstani faculty members in the English language can be traced to the fact that they tend to make use of the academic writing conventions and discourse patterns that are accepted in Russian and Kazakh languages, for which they were trained at Kazakhstani universities. Thus, it can be argued that the culture-specific differences in academia need to be accounted for, as it clearly disadvantages the faculty members from non-Western educational traditions like Kazakhstan, while also depreciating the value and usage of their local academic writing conventions and non-Western scientific traditions.

All in all, it can be argued that this publishing requirement, which underpins English's symbolic position, does not take into consideration the true composition of linguistic capital at Kazakhstani HEIs (predominantly Russian and Kazakh), and also does not consider the real level of methodological skills and academic writing competencies of the majority of Kazakhstani faculty members. As having knowledge of scientific research methods and the ability to format a publication in an acceptable academic style have become crucial components of the scholarly profession nowadays, the knowledge and skill gaps in these areas can not only depreciate the credibility of publications by Kazakhstani faculty members but also hinder their career development (as publications are directly linked to academic degrees and academic ranks). In particular, all these also point to the fact that the 'traditional' intellectuals, including both the elder, Soviet-trained faculty members, and the younger local-trained faculty members lacking the Western, English-medium education, are disadvantaged within the current symbolic order at Kazakhstani HEIs, a point which will be further discussed in more depth. But it is not just their lack of English language capital, but also their lack of knowledge of research methodology and how to write a paper in scientific journal style and format, that is weakening Kazakhstan's 'traditional' intellectuals' position within both the local and global academic community. On the whole, it can be stated that all these allude to the high symbolic value of the English language at Kazakhstani HEIs, as the Kazakhstani system of intellectuals and processes of knowledge production are getting integrated into the global system of intellectuals (e.g. academic publishing industry with its reviewers and editors) and increasingly adopting the global knowledge production practices (e.g. research methods based on the western scientific tradition; academic writing based on anglophone conventions). So, this also highlights how the difference between the Soviet and post-Soviet Kazakhstani HE is not restricted to what counts as

a preferred language, but it also entails a transformation of what counts as a valid research methodology and good writing style. However, these modification in the mode of knowledge production has major implications for the production and validation of knowledge and hence the ideational dimension of hegemony in post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

The implications for the Kazakh and Russian languages

Now that we have gained a better understanding of the 'superior' symbolic status of the English language, the question arises as to what this predominance might mean for the usage of local languages, in particular, Kazakh and Russian within the symbolic order at Kazakhstani HEIs. Hence, it is important to take a closer look at the consequences for the Kazakh and Russian languages, the academic publications in these languages, and the faculty members relying on these languages in their academic work at Kazakhstani HEIs.

On the one hand, it can be argued that 2011's publishing policy directly affects the symbolic value of Kazakh and Russian languages at Kazakhstani HEIs. Hence, the respondents were pointing to the fact that the state of affairs at Kazakhstani HEIs created by the publishing requirement is negatively affecting the local languages, as the superior symbolic status of English is being accompanied by the neglect of Kazakh and Russian languages at Kazakhstani HEIs. This development was very evident in the words of the following faculty member:

"Now the development of science in Russian and Kazakh languages is somewhat suppressed by this publishing requirement, you know... Because people now put all their energy into English" (Private Business School, male, local PhD, lecturer, mid-career, political sciences, KZ).

So, the respondents argued that there is little interest among the Kazakhstani faculty members to engage with the knowledge production in local languages at Kazakhstani HEIs, as it is not being acknowledged as a decent contribution to knowledge by the Kazakhstani state, which greatly contributes to the perceived lower prestige of publications written in local languages and published in local Kazakhstani journals. The interview extract below describes the faculty members' attitude to publishing in local languages:

"Faculty has a lot of incentives to ignore the publications in local journals because their accomplishments in local languages are not recognised anyway" (Elite RU, male, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, Education, KZ).

Indeed, the current incentive system at Kazakhstani HEIs, for the most part, heavily shaped by 2011's publishing policy, is not geared toward rewarding the Kazakhstani faculty members for publications

in local languages. For example, as it was noted earlier, the English-language publications in Web of Science (non-zero impact factor according to Journal Citation Reports) or in Scopus (at least in 25th CiteScore Percentile) are rewarded by up to 25 points (out of 100 possible) during attestations of faculty members at Kazakh National Medical University (2021), while publications in local journals were not even mentioned as criteria for evaluation in the attestation list. The quote below vividly illustrates the level of disinterest among the Kazakhstani faculty members, suggesting that publishing in local journals is not worth doing because it will not have any major effect on one's academic career:

“So, we can do a publication in local journals, but it will not count, right? If it doesn't really count, then why bother? The only thing that is going to count is a non-zero impact factor in English-language journals” (Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, lecturer, early-career, Education, KZ).

However, at this point, it is important to note that as the Kazakhstani state seems to realise the general lack of English language skills on the part of its faculty members, the MoES modified 2011's publishing requirement by introducing “a list of local (and Russian) journals”, which “are acceptable for publication to satisfy the requirement” (Kuzhabekova, 2017, pp.122-123). So, currently, there exists a range of Kazakhstani journals with non-zero impact factor, which are now included in this list approved by the Committee for Control in the Sphere of Education and Science. As these local journals accept publications in English, Russian, and Kazakh languages, this offered more publishing opportunities and options for the non-English speaking faculty at Kazakhstani HEIs. And the list of these approved Kazakhstani journals with non-zero impact factors is actively increasing. For example, in 2010, before the introduction of the publishing requirement, there were only 35 Kazakhstani journals with non-zero impact factors included in this Ministry's list. In 2019, this figure reached 141 (out of a total of 167 registered Kazakhstani journals, 141 had an impact factor higher than 0). These journals are part of the Kazakhstan citation base KazBC, which was formed by the National Center for State Scientific and Technical Expertise on the basis of the scientific publications of Kazakhstani authors since 1996. Overall, the fact that the publishing requirement has been slightly modified to include the local non-zero impact factor journals can indicate that the Kazakhstani state has been ready to make some concessions to better accommodate its system of intellectuals (especially, the segment of 'traditional' intellectuals who largely lack the English). However, while the Kazakhstani state made some positive changes to the "Rules for Assigning Academic Ranks" (2011) by requiring applicants to present publications in local journals in addition to international publications if they are on the list recommended by the Committee for Quality Assurance, these local publications do not appear to be accounted for during the attestation process at Kazakhstani universities themselves. Thus, as the publications in the English language still end up carrying more

weight than the works published in Russian or Kazakh languages, this indicates a lot about the relative symbolic powers of various linguistic capitals and their position within the symbolic hierarchy of language use at Kazakhstani HEIs.

Similarly, the symbolic powers of Kazakhstani faculty members who are heavily dependent on local languages but are not skilled in English, which mostly belong to 'traditional' intellectuals, are poor in comparison to 'organic' intellectuals at Kazakhstani HEIs. For example, the low symbolic powers of faculty with Kazakh and Russian language capitals can be evident in their inability to get into local Master's or Ph.D. programs due to the inadequacy of their English language capabilities. So, when faculty members shared their attitudes about postgraduate education opportunities, passing the English proficiency tests appeared to be a major obstacle for many of them. One of the faculty members explained:

“We now have to pass something called IELTS. It is required for admission to PhD or Master's even. A person entering a doctorate or master's degree must know the English language, they now say... This is a big barrier because passing IELTS is not an easy task for us, it will take a lot of time to prepare...” (Islamic S. U, male, foreign PhD, Docent, early-career, Islamic studies, KZ).

This is confirmed by the “Rules for Admission to Education in Educational Organisations Implementing Educational Programs of Higher and Postgraduate Education” (2018), which stipulate that in order to get admitted to the Masters 'or PhD programs at Kazakhstani HEIs, an applicant should provide a certificate confirming knowledge of a foreign language (e.g. IELTS Academic at least 5.5; TOEFL IBT at least 46 points; TOEFL PBT at least 453; TOEFL ITP - at least 460). However, in addition to a certificate of foreign language understanding, the state began requiring a certificate verifying knowledge of the state language (Kazakh) in 2022 (Article 4). As we would expect intellectuals at the top of Kazakhstan's intellectual system to require a Ph.D. degree (and, as a result, a Master's degree as a prerequisite to a Ph.D.) as a necessary but not sufficient condition for career advancement, the requirement of English, and, more recently, of Kazakh language proficiency, are critical points that provide insights into the strategic selectivity of the system of intellectuals in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. Thus, it can be argued that the current strategic selectivity in the Kazakhstani HE system is favouring the English and Kazakh-language-speaking faculty members, which, I assume, might mean a younger generation (who are more likely to know English) and ethnic Kazakhs (who are more likely to know Kazakh). The fact that proficiency in the Kazakh language has become a more prominent eligibility criterion in admission to post-graduate education (Master's and Ph.D.) indicates that strategic selectivity is also tilting toward ethnic Kazakhs (who are more likely to know Kazakh) or the fact that state is attempting to incentivise non-Kazakhs to learn the state language.

Thus, it can be stated that the conversion rate of English language capital (and also increasingly of Kazakh language capital) is the highest in the Kazakhstani HE system, as it can bestow its owner with admission to Master's/Ph.D. programs in addition to the conferral of academic ranks (associate and assistant professor) with an associated salary increase.

However, notwithstanding the consequences of 2011's publishing policy for the Kazakh and Russian languages, the academic publications in these languages, and the faculty members relying on these languages in their academic work at Kazakhstani HEIs, it is also important to take into account other factors, which in the opinion of my interviewees, are behind the relatively low symbolic value of Kazakh and Russian languages at Kazakhstani HEIs. So, apart from the repercussions of 2011's publishing policy, it is also necessary to look at the current symbolic order taking into perspective the impact of historical legacies on the way the symbolic order has become transformed with the collapse of the Soviet Union.

First of all, the long-standing symbolic dominance of Russian, which has its roots in the symbolic order of Soviet times, needs to be emphasised. As various components of Russian culture were actively implanted in Kazakhstan as part of Soviet socio-cultural policies, the Russian language became the main linguistic medium across all USSR republics, including Soviet Kazakhstan (Pavlenko, 2006). So, as many believed that the Russian language was key to upward socio-economic mobility (Pavlenko, 2006), it offered strong incentives to master it to achieve greater career success and gain a higher social position. Thus, it can be said that the symbolic order of the Soviet period established Russian language skills as a valued attribute for scholars and a preferred medium for knowledge production, not the least due to its high conversion rate.

As a result, it can be stated that the symbolic order of the Soviet period, which was historically based on the high symbolic value of the Russian language, also had an influence on Kazakhstani academic publishing. According to Kuzhabekova (2017), the currently poor scientific prestige of local Kazakhstani journals can be attributed to the ranking system that characterised the Soviet academic publishing industry, which resulted in a situation whereby "only a small number of journals in Soviet Kazakhstan were assigned the highest rank", and "generally had a lower impact than the Russian journals" (p.123). So, this perception of inferiority, which used to reflect the hierarchy within the Soviet system of intellectuals and knowledge production, continued into the post-Soviet period. But now, with Kazakhstan's integration into the global system of intellectuals, and the shift of the centre of knowledge production from Soviet 'Moscow' to the Western Anglophone countries, the

Kazakhstani journals are now perceived to be inferior to the Western English-language journals. However, as the gradual transition towards Western publishing practices (e.g. editing and peer-review) is taking place in Kazakhstan's academic publishing industry, it can be argued that the local journals are now trying to elevate their symbolic status and prestige by "being closer to what they believe is the superior Western ideal" (Kuzhabekova, 2017, p.131). Although the local Kazakhstani journals adopted different strategies in reaction to the state policy on impact-factor requirement (Kuzhabekova, 2017, p.126), many domestic journals now generally try to "conform to practices of Anglophone journals by requiring abstracts in English and expecting to see references to the predominantly Anglophone Western literature" (Kuzhabekova, 2017, p.132).

However, what I want to stress is the fact this publishing requirement, which has obviously been leading to a preference for English as a linguistic medium of research production at Kazakhstani HEIs, seems to be in certain contradiction with Kazakhstan's post-Soviet initiatives on nation-building. So, the respondents believed that 2011's publishing requirement is conflicting with the state policies on the Kazakh language, which are aimed at elevating its symbolic power by enhancing its attractiveness and competitiveness in the post-Soviet period. This is clearly demonstrated by the following quote:

"If we look at the state program, the big direction of the program has been supporting the Kazakh language and culture. You know, that alone, that policy context alone makes me wonder why they would say that Kazakh language publication is less valuable than English publication?" (Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, Education, International).

As the Kazakh language has been central to the processes of self-determination and identity formation in Kazakhstan, after the gaining of independence, linguistic nationalism was on the rise in Kazakhstan, and attempts have been undertaken to strengthen the status of the Kazakh language (Dave, 1996). With the "Law on Languages" (1997) proclaiming that "the duty of every citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan shall be the mastery of the state language" (Article 4), Kazakh was introduced as a mandatory language in schools, while the government communications have also been encouraged to be conducted in Kazakh. Thus, the usage of the Kazakh language has been actively promoted to enhance its symbolic power in the post-Soviet period.

Moreover, the publishing requirement is not only interfering with the Kazakh language policies but also seems to be affecting the position of the Russian language in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. For instance, one of the respondents claimed that the growing prominence of English can weaken the

position of the Russian language by acting as a counterweight to the long-established hegemony of the Russian language:

‘But, there is an advantage of this publishing requirement in English, it can benefit the Kazakh language from an unexpected side. It is customary for us that the language of communication is Russian...look, you and I, we are speaking Russian. The benefit of the English language is that it can save us from the intermediary role of Russian. The more we learn English, the more we can get rid of the hegemony of the Russian language’ (Newly-established public IT U, male, Soviet Candidate of Sciences, docent, later-career, IT, KZ).

On the one hand, this foregoing opinion that the prioritisation of English through the policy on research productivity has some potential to depreciate the symbolic value of the Russian language has to do with the fact that, unlike Russian, English is not the language of colonisers in the Kazakhstani context. On the other hand, it also alludes to concerns regarding the relative symbolic power of the Kazakh language in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. So, the usage of the Kazakh language still “faces the problem of low prestige” (Kuzio, 2002), which can largely be attributed to the Soviet legacy, “back when using Russian was favoured and speaking Kazakh was frowned upon” (Lillis, 2010). For instance, according to the national census of 2009, “74% of people can understand spoken Kazakh, just 62% can read and write it proficiently” (Lillis, 2010). This can be contrasted with the state of the Russian language “with 94% understanding it orally and 85% able to read and write it” (Lillis, 2010). So, given that ethnic Russians comprise less than a quarter of the overall population (e.g. 23.70% in 2009; 15.18% in 2023), it can be stated that the vast majority of the multi-ethnic Kazakhstani population is widely relying on the Russian language on daily basis. Moreover, the Russian language also retained its relatively strong position in academic publishing, as in the period from 1991 to 2013, most of the research publications in Kazakhstan were published in Russian language journals (Kuzhabekova, 2017, p.122). Thus, though the still-prominent status of Russian, positioned as an ‘official language’ and a ‘language of inter-ethnic communication’, can be viewed as a part of the Kazakhstani state’s policy intention to construct a more ‘inclusive’ post-Soviet Kazakhstani identity, it can be stated that the Russian language is still a valuable and widely-used linguistic capital in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

Thus, it can be stated that the rising demand for English combined with the lingering importance of Russian is inevitable resulting in the relative devaluation of Kazakh language skills, diminishing its symbolic value (and conversion rate to academic degrees, academic ranks, and higher salaries) in academic research circles, despite the efforts by Kazakhstani state to strengthening it as a state language (e.g. by setting it as eligibility criteria for admission to post-graduate programs). So, one

international faculty member dismissed the suggestion that we should worry about the fate of the Russian language:

“So, it is to the detriment of Kazakh language development. Especially, the Kazakh language because Russians have Russia, right? It's a big country, it is a big language. So, that language will be okay, but what's going to happen to Kazakh language?” (Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, Education, International).

So, the growing emphasis on English and the well-established position of Russian in academia is what alarms the respondents and raises their concerns regarding the status of the Kazakh language in science. In particular, the state of Kazakh language was found to be especially alarming to a number of respondents. As one international faculty member noted:

“I definitely believe that the Kazakh language is at risk. I mean, the science language” (Elite RU, male, foreign PhD, Prof, mid-career, Robotics, International).

Thus, respondents had some strong concerns regarding the impact of the symbolic dominance of English on science and scholarship in the Kazakh language, as they argued that such policy on research productivity is not without its repercussions on the use of Kazakh as a language of academic research.

All in all, it can be argued that the superior symbolic status and high conversion rate of the English language, not least because of 2011's publishing requirement, is among the key elements now diminishing the symbolic value of Kazakh and Russian languages at Kazakhstani HEIs. This in combination with the impact of historical legacies on the symbolic order of post-Soviet Kazakhstan, is having a major effect on the hierarchy of language use at Kazakhstani HEIs.

Implications for the system of intellectuals

So, having analysed the relative symbolic values of English, Kazakh, and Russian languages, it can be argued that the Kazakhstani faculty members are not competing on a level playing field. On the one hand, at the global level, the Kazakhstani faculty members, as non-anglophone speakers of English, are disadvantaged against the native speakers of English, in the field of academic publishing. One faculty member described the struggles of Kazakhstani faculty members in the following way:

“For Kazakh scientists, it's really, uh, it's kind of 'a sink or swim situation'. And, um, no matter, you know, how much energy a Kazakhstani faculty member is putting into learning English and how to write a publication in English, it's still very difficult to reach the level of native English speakers that drive and dominate the scientific world right now” (Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, Education, International).

On the other hand, at the national level, those of the Kazakhstani faculty members, who are largely reliant on Kazakh and Russian languages, also have to compete against their English-speaking colleagues, in pursuit of academic degrees and ranks at Kazakhstani HEIs. This point is clearly demonstrated by the following quote:

“You know, if some take it for granted, some just don't have the skill. So, uh, it's just incomparable, you know, the capacity for language of those who studied abroad, and the capacity for language of somebody who is learning and learning without much institutional support” (Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, Biology, KZ).

So, the linguistic aspect of the current publishing requirement is negatively affecting the Kazakhstani faculty members' opportunities for involvement in research by leading to the exclusion of those faculty members, who are largely reliant on Kazakh and Russian languages, but are not proficient in English, from the knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs. One of the interviewed faculty members explained the potential perils of current state policy on research productivity in the following way:

“I think, we are ourselves putting our researchers at big risk, you know, by making this publication in international journals as the main requirement...I mean, we are not being inclusive towards those people who don't speak or write in English, but who can think and write perfectly well and develop very solid ideas in their own languages” (Newly-established public IT U, male, Soviet Candidate of Sciences, docent, later-career, IT, KZ).

Thus, this publishing requirement and the conditions it is creating at Kazakhstani HEIs can potentially preclude a certain segment of Kazakhstani faculty members, especially 'traditional' intellectuals, from full and effective participation in knowledge production, as a certain combination of linguistic (English) and academic capitals (research methods and academic writing) is required for the full-fledged engagement in knowledge production. For example, one senior faculty member felt highly unsatisfied with her academic career, despite having 40 years of working experience at Kazakhstani HEIs, as the new publishing requirement is currently precluding her from getting promoted. This is what she said about it:

“In fact, in the last 10 years, the new publishing system has become very complicated. For example, I have 40 years of working experience, and can't even get a docent! I can't get a docent⁴ with 40 years of experience, can you believe?” (Linguistic U, female, Soviet Candidate of Sciences, Senior Lecturer, later-career, Pedagogical sciences, KZ).

Hence, the resulting structure of the Kazakhstani system of intellectuals can be described as one in which some faculty members (organic intellectuals) are more equipped to engage in knowledge production in line with the new requirements than others (traditional intellectuals). But most importantly, the respondents voiced concerns that the 'organic intellectuals', currently representing

an 'elite' intellectual centre of the Kazakhstani HE landscape, can dominate the HE system, academia and suppress the 'traditional intellectuals', as the organic intellectuals might seek to secure their intellectual hegemony in current system of intellectuals. One of the interviewed faculty members described such concerns in the following way:

"Because their education level is appropriate, their publication activity is higher, and they are far superior to local experts, they are more likely to be listened to than others. Such a situation can happen that this group of well-trained professors with foreign education, if the ministry creates such conditions, they will simply force out others, there simply won't be room for the rest, local professors. And that will be such a waste, as money, time and resources were devoted to them too" (Public, National RU, male, local PhD, Associate Prof, mid-career, IT, KZ).

The exclusion of a certain segment of Kazakhstani faculty members (e.g. Russian/Kazakh speaking, locally trained) from the knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs due to the lack of necessary linguistic (e.g. English) and academic (e.g. research methodology, academic wiring) capitals should not be neglected. The exclusion of 'traditional' intellectuals not only poses a serious problem to the further development of science in Kazakh and Russian languages at Kazakhstani HEIs, as was noted earlier but also means they are put at a disadvantageous position within the system of knowledge production that limits their possibility to endow the knowledge they developed "with hegemonic forms of consciousness", while the English-speaking 'organic' intellectuals are more favourably positioned to ensure that "the norms, values, and knowledge of the emerging class's ethical-political agenda become generalised" (Hartmann, 2015, p.93).

Overall, it can be argued that the access to knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs is not only becoming more competitive than ever due to publishing requirement that privileges the linguistic capital of English, but also increasingly stratified. This leads to stratification within the system of intellectuals (organic vs. traditional, young vs. elder, Western vs. Soviet). So, it can be stated that there are currently two separate sub-sectors existing alongside each other within the Kazakhstani academia with differing patterns of knowledge production (more oriented to global vs. local needs/interests), which accommodate different types of intellectuals (organic vs. traditional) with a differing set of linguistic capitals (English vs. Russian/Kazakh). As a result, it can be argued that the current 'traditional' intellectuals, particularly, the elder generation of faculty members are being disadvantaged within the current symbolic order at Kazakhstani HEIs, which is prioritising the English. On the one hand, this indicates that there has been a certain modification of the hierarchical order within the system of intellectuals, with the elder faculty members losing their primacy in academia to the younger generation due to the lack of knowledge of English. On the other hand, these

more recent linguistic trends in Kazakhstani academia vividly illustrate how the Kazakhstani intellectuals by publishing English-language articles in international journals are becoming part of a global system of intellectuals (who, as peer-reviewers and members of editorial boards, accept, review, and publish these articles).

However, these inequalities and hierarchies within the Kazakhstani HE system can build up broader social tensions and have major consequences for the stability of social compromise underpinning Kazakhstan's post-Soviet hegemony, especially, given the "function as mediator" that faculty members play (Hartmann, 2015, p. 94). If we are to focus on the role of HEI as an organisation of civil society and its capacity to make a contribution to the process of public deliberation and nation-building by either facilitating or hindering the possibilities for Kazakhstani faculty members to engage in knowledge production processes, then such dominance of English can mean that the Kazakhstani HEIs cannot be open and inclusive to all of its faculty members, and fails to ensure equal conditions for faculty members to take part in the knowledge production processes. Thus, the faculty members, who are not proficient in English, might not be able to take part in knowledge production processes, and become full-fledged knowledge producers at Kazakhstani HEIs, and therefore their knowledge can potentially not be included and represented in Kazakhstan's public policy and nation-building agenda. As through the means of knowledge production the faculty members are not only making their scholarly ideas reach the wider public but are also presenting and promoting the ideas, perceptions, and values of a certain segment of society, this disparity can lead to the knowledge of some social factions getting reinforced and reproduced in bodies of knowledge produced, their interests and needs being reflected in the public policy agenda, while other social groups are failing to have means to promote their social imaginaries and voice their needs and interests. This can greatly undermine the capacities of Kazakhstan HEIs to serve as a part of civil society, and most importantly, this can affect Kazakhstan's nation-building efforts by aggravating the social cohesion and political stability of such a diverse country. Therefore, allowing the Kazakhstani intellectuals to participate in developing societal thinking on some topic, which engages the broader public in educated debate on major questions, can help to maintain, and when needed modify and update the social compromise between the ruling and ruled in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan.

What is a contribution to knowledge?

Finally, the modification of knowledge production mode in post-Soviet Kazakhstan (now more oriented towards English-language publications in international journals) and the underlying tensions

within the Kazakhstani system of intellectuals (e.g. organic vs. traditional, young vs. elder, Western vs. Soviet etc.) brings us to an important question about the nature of the contribution to knowledge production: What really counts as contribution to knowledge in post-Soviet Kazakhstan? The English-language publication in an international journal (which is more favorable for organic intellectuals)? Or publication in Kazakh and/or Russian language in a local journal (which can be more manageable for traditional intellectuals)? So, my respondents raised some major questions regarding the acknowledgment of contribution to knowledge and complained about the current lack of a clear conception of what counts as knowledge in Kazakhstan. One of the participants explained in greater detail the need to seek answers to these pressing questions:

“What is, then, contribution actually? What currently counts as a knowledge? We recognise people for new models that is standard criteria, but should we recognise people for their contributions in local language? I would say these are important questions for the national HE system, they need to regulate this area, solve it” (Elite, eng-medium RU, male, foreign PhD (US), Assistant Prof, mid-career, social sciences-education, KZ).

Because there are various definitions of scholarly influence, it is critical to define two relevant ones for this study. On the one hand, there is a role that the global scale of an impact plays as a justification for publishing in English-language journals included in the Web of Science and Scopus. Exposure to a broader international audience through these journals can mean that the piece of knowledge produced and the potential benefit it brings can reach different corners of global academia and the world community. On the other hand, there can also be a focus on local impact, as the knowledge produced is more oriented towards its original context: to instigate the interest of the local research audience and to be relevant for the local society. One of the international faculty members from a highly internationalised, English-medium research university commented:

“We are producing knowledge about Kazakhstan to the world rather than to local people, who need it the most, you know, therefore I think, this is a huge, uh, problem for the society” (Elite RU, male, foreign PhD, Prof, mid-career, Robotics, International).

So, some respondents believed that the research produced by the Kazakhstani faculty members but published in English-medium, international journals, despite having a higher impact factor (and higher symbolic value and conversion rate), is of little benefit to the local Kazakhstani society and people. In a similar vein, according to Curry & Lillis (2018), “exporting research produced in local contexts for global, English-speaking audiences may hinder the development of local research cultures and societies more broadly”, and lead to “the loss of knowledge locally”. This can be explained by the fact that most local people cannot access and comprehend the research produced by the Kazakhstani faculty members, but published in international, English-language journals (e.g. due

to lack of proficiency in English; due to lack of access to academic databases etc.), while a publication in local language, despite having a lower impact factor (and lower symbolic value and conversion rate), can have a broader readership among the Kazakhstani people (e.g. it is published in accessible for many Kazakh or Russian language; there is less barriers to accessing the local journals etc.). This important distinction was also evident in the words of the following respondent:

“If we look at statistics, yes, it's literally a useless piece for broader international readership with an impact factor of zero. But this piece is written in language that is accessible to the local audience, that has actually contributed to at least 10-15 people learning something new and being able to use it” (Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, lecturer, early-career, Education, KZ).

Given the “loss of knowledge locally” due to the “taboo against ‘dual publishing ’of research” (Curry & Lillis, 2018), it can be argued that it is important to ensure that the contribution to knowledge made by publications in local languages is properly acknowledged, and the relevant recognition for faculty producing the local knowledge is established. Thus, what is ultimately at stake is the mode of knowledge production in post-Soviet Kazakhstan: one that is more outward-oriented, which can bring more symbolic value to the Kazakhstani state (e.g. in terms of better performance indicators, a higher position in the ranking, elevated international reputation, etc.) and some of Kazakhstani faculty members (e.g. prestige, promotion, better pay, etc.), but can potentially exclude a certain segment of faculty members (deficient in the English language) and side-line some local issues (if they are irrelevant, uninteresting as research agenda for international journals); or one that is more inward-oriented, which brings less symbolic value to Kazakhstani state on a global scale, but can help to meaningfully engage with local topics (e.g. pressing problems and needs of Kazakhstani society), encourage the development and promotion of local journals for Kazakhstani faculty members to contribute locally. Looking for the right balance between the two also should not be ruled out.

Overall, in this chapter, I looked specifically at the language aspect of 2011’s state policy on research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs, in particular, the implicit prioritisation of English as a linguistic medium of research publications. As discussed in the previous chapter, this publishing policy brought new pressures along with new incentives for the Kazakhstani faculty members to publish in journals with a non-zero impact factor in order to be eligible for promotion. In this chapter, it was found that the English language is currently occupying a dominant position within the current symbolic order of Kazakhstani HEIs, as it claims a superior status within the hierarchy of language use and the system of knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs. On the one hand, this can be attributed to its indisputable global dominance, as the English language has not only become a symbol of economic progress and development for post-Soviet Kazakhstan but also came to be viewed as a key to

Kazakhstani HEIs 'integration into the global educational community and building of their research capacity. On the other hand, the importance of the English language was greatly intensified by 2011's publishing policy that tied publishing in non-zero impact-factor journals to the promotion at Kazakhstani HEIs. So, the English language has become associated with the conferral of academic degree of PhD and promotion to academic ranks of associate professor and professor at Kazakhstani HEIs, as 2011's policy is effectively requiring the Kazakhstani faculty members to have a good command of the English language, at the level that would allow them to secure a publication in such high-profile, international journals. However, what is especially alarming is the fact that there exists a major mismatch between the implied demand of 2011's policy in terms of the language of research publications and the Kazakhstani faculty members 'real level of English proficiency. Moreover, as the linguistic capital of English goes hand in hand with the academic capitals of knowledge of research methods and conventions of academic writing, it is not just about the lack of English language capital, but also the corresponding lack of knowledge of research methodology and how to write a paper in scientific journal style and format, that is weakening Kazakhstani faculty members ' (especially traditional intellectuals') position within both the local and global academic community.

Next, it can be argued that the superior symbolic status and high conversion rate of the English language, not least because of 2011's publishing requirement, is among the key elements now diminishing the symbolic value of Kazakh and Russian languages at Kazakhstani HEIs. This in combination with the impact of historical legacies on the symbolic order of post-Soviet Kazakhstan is having a major effect on the hierarchy of language use at Kazakhstani HEIs. This is primarily evident in the lower importance of publications in local languages published in local journals when decisions on the conferral of academic degrees (Ph.D.) and promotion to academic ranks (assistant and associate professor) are made at Kazakhstani HEIs. However, what concerns me the most is the fact this publishing requirement, which has obviously been leading to a preference for English as a linguistic medium of research production at Kazakhstani HEIs, seems to be in certain contradiction with Kazakhstan's post-Soviet initiatives on nation-building. On the one hand, 2011's publishing requirement can be conflicting with the state policies on the Kazakh language, which are aimed at elevating its symbolic power by enhancing its attractiveness and competitiveness in the post-Soviet period. On the other hand, the growing prominence of English can weaken the status of the Russian language, which is positioned as an 'official language 'and a 'language of inter-ethnic communisation', and can be viewed as a part of the Kazakhstani state's policy intention to construct a more 'inclusive ' post-Soviet Kazakhstani identity. Hence, it can be argued that the Kazakhstani state has been caught between two objectives: the goal to be part of global academia through the reliance on the English

language, and the need to figure out a common ground for post-Soviet Kazakhstani identity by delicately balancing Kazakh and Russian through its language policy. Thus, this interplay between Kazakhstan's policies on research productivity and its post-Soviet project of identity-building should be explored in more depth from the language point of view.

All in all, the implications of this new symbolic order at Kazakhstani HEIs produced by 2011's publishing requirement can be evident among the ranks of Kazakhstani faculty members, which become increasingly characterised by inequalities (those who are proficient in English vs. those who are not). So, drawing on Gramscian terms, it can be argued that 'organic' intellectuals, as a more English-speaking, foreign-educated segment of Kazakhstani faculty members, increasingly representing an 'elite' intellectual centre of the Kazakhstani HE landscape, dominate the Kazakhstani academia, unlike so-called 'traditional' intellectuals, who as locally-educated faculty members largely reliant on Kazakh and Russian languages, seem to be excluded from full and effective participation in knowledge production. This results in the co-existence of two parallel sub-sectors in the post-Soviet Kazakhstani academia: one more oriented to global knowledge production, while the other more tuned into local needs. Thus, the prioritisation of English as a preferred linguistic medium of knowledge production by the Kazakhstani state, which is also a reflection of the global hegemony of English, leads to disparity in the possibilities of faculty members, having a different set of language skills, to take part in knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs, and make a 'decent' contribution to knowledge (currently a publication in non-zero impact factor journal). However, these inequalities and hierarchies within the Kazakhstani HE system can potentially build up broader social tensions and have major consequences for the stability of social compromise underpinning Kazakhstan's post-Soviet hegemony. Nevertheless, all these underlying tensions and contradictions (e.g. the mismatch between the implied demand of 2011's policy in terms of a language of research publications and the Kazakhstani faculty members' real level of English proficiency; the contradiction with Kazakhstan's post-Soviet initiatives on nation-building) point to the current lack of clear conception of what counts as a knowledge and what should be the acknowledgment of contribution to knowledge in Kazakhstan.

Chapter VIII

CONCLUSION

This Ph.D. thesis examined the post-Soviet nation-building of Kazakhstan through the prism of HE. Although the 2011's policy on research productivity served as a starting point for my research interest in Kazakhstani HEIs, the aim of the study was not only to examine the immediate consequences of this reform for Kazakhstan's academic research and its faculty members but also to capture the wider changes and broader processes underpinning an emerging post-Soviet Kazakhstan. To situate the change in research policy in this broader context and to understand key challenges, tensions, and contestations characterising the transformation, I drew on the theoretical concepts of Gramsci, Foucault, and Bourdieu.

Gramsci's notion of hegemony offers a holistic view of the transformation informed by a combination of coercion and consent that ensures the sustainability of a political regime in democratic but also authoritarian states. His account rejects an economistic explanation of state power and highlights a complex interplay between economic, political, and socio-cultural strategies that seek to legitimise post-Soviet reforms. I was particularly interested in exploring whether the post-Soviet nation-building of Kazakhstan has fully broken with the Soviet legacy, much in line with the official storyline, or whether there are important continuities. Accordingly, I first started by painting the broader picture of the transformation with a view to identifying changes as well as continuities. The Soviet Union entered into a major crisis in the 1980s that we can understand with Gramsci as an 'organic crisis'. This crisis was a combination of a major economic decline, a failing state apparatus, and an ideology that has lost legitimacy and paved the way for an emerging counter-hegemonic nationalism. However, this counter-hegemony had little of a 'war of maneuver', to use a Gramscian term, that is needed to transform the ideational dimension of hegemony in societies with a relevant civil society. On the contrary, the transformation of Kazakhstan was nomenklatura-driven, as the Soviet nomenklatura ruling elite managed to stay in power, as I showed by drawing on different historical studies. The one-party rule continued to prevail, particularly the extraction of natural resources remained in state ownership, though heavily dependent on foreign investment. However, the historical overview also highlights some important discontinuities, with different hegemonic projects competing to provide the matrix for the newly-independent Kazakhstan. Some economic sectors were privatised, including parts of the higher education sector, while the government seeks to balance multiculturalism and homogenisation (e.g., through *kazakhization*) as part of its nation-building efforts. Drawing on a key concept of Gramsci, I described the transformation as a 'passive revolution' framed by an economic project linked to a dual accumulation strategy, a specific organisational agenda for institution-building with the political project of democratisation at its center, while the one-party rule prevails,

and the ideological project of Kazakhization. Thus, the unique combination of changes from and continuities with the Soviet times is what actually characterises Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition.

A Gramscian perspective helped me to avoid a simplistic top-down notion of power and to pay attention to elements of consent building, the velvet glove covering the iron fist, as Gramsci put it famously (1971). On the one hand, the post-Soviet Kazakhstani state has devoted considerable effort to produce consent with the help of its ideological apparatus (e.g., the Kazakhization+multi-ethnic civic identity, the financial incentives to NGOs, a set of state-sponsored civic organisations, etc.). On the other hand, it has also been enforcing discipline through coercive measures when consensual means fail (e.g., through the restrictive regulatory framework and law enforcement means). Although the exercise of hegemony in authoritarian states like Kazakhstan, in its very essence, tilts more towards coercion rather than consensual means, a certain equilibrium between consent and coercion has been reached by striking a social compromise. Thus, the social compromise reached between the Kazakhstani ruling elite and the general Kazakhstani population can be described as one emphasising the commitment to economic prosperity (e.g., oil money that produced the rising prosperity), political stability (e.g., the power equilibrium reached among the members of the ruling elite) and inter-ethnic peace (e.g., peaceful coexistence of its multi-ethnic population). In return, there has been a general acceptance of limitations to individual rights on the part of the Kazakhstani population, as it was believed that individual freedoms could be waived in favour of internal political stability, inter-ethnic peace, and economic prosperity.

Against this broader background, I then explored continuities and changes in the sphere of higher education. Drawing on Gramsci, I have made his idea of systems of intellectuals fruitful for my studies. Gramsci assigns intellectuals a key role in establishing the ideational dimension of the power that underpins the hegemony of the ruling class. My study shows that Kazakhstan's HE reforms have been an integral part of the 'post-Soviet' transition from the hegemonic project of 'communism' to the hegemonic project of 'neoliberalism'. Firstly, the Academy of Sciences has lost the leading role that it used to have as an ideological apparatus during the Soviet time, while the Soviet HEIs were mainly the sites for the transfer and transmission of existing knowledge. Some of these HEIs rose to prominence to replace the Academy of Sciences as the key knowledge-producing entity of the post-Soviet Kazakhstani ideological apparatus. Secondly, during the Soviet times, the members of the Soviet Academy of Sciences (e.g., full members (academicians) and corresponding members) were the most prominent and influential representatives of the Soviet system of intellectuals, who were entitled with the responsibility to create new knowledge in the Soviet Union, while the faculty

members at Soviet HEIs were primarily disseminating the existing knowledge. However, now, with the diminishing prestige and status of the Kazakhstani Academy of Sciences, and the gradual transformation of the Kazakhstani HEIs into the main places of knowledge creation, the Kazakhstani faculty members have become the key 'knowledge-producing' intellectuals of post-Soviet Kazakhstan. Thirdly, in line with the above-stated changes in the ideological apparatus and the system of intellectuals, the corresponding changes happened in the aim and purpose of knowledge production. During the Soviet period, the main criteria for the evaluation of knowledge produced and the primary assessment tool for the knowledge producers (members of the Academy) was its 'practical use' for the industrialising economy of the Soviet Union (e.g., alignment with central economic planning: five-year plans). However, in the post-Soviet period, with the Kazakhstani state's re-orientation towards the post-industrial goal of attaining a knowledge-based economy, the main criteria for evaluation of the knowledge produced and primary assessment tool for the knowledge producers (faculty members at university) has become the publication in international journals.

However, my study also identified important continuities with the Soviet hegemonic project of 'communism'. One of the Soviet practices has been the separation of teaching and research functions, with the Soviet HEIs being engaged in teaching, while the Soviet Academy of Sciences was focused on research in the Soviet Union. It can be stated that this Soviet separation of teaching and research has precluded the Kazakhstani HEIs from fully embracing both teaching and research functions once they emerged as the key knowledge-producing and knowledge-transmitting entities of post-Soviet Kazakhstan. Another legacy of the Soviet period is the centralisation of decision-making in the HE system, which turned out to be resilient in the post-Soviet Kazakhstani HE governance. This 'command-and-control' style of HE governance inherited from the Soviet Union can have a negative effect on the post-Soviet Kazakhstani system of intellectuals, as similar to the Soviet intellectuals who worked in full conformity with the general line of the Communist Party and the program of the Council of Ministers, the faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs continue to function under rather 'highly-regulated' HE governance system.

In this broader context, I examined 2011's publishing requirement more closely. I studied this policy as such, but also its consequences for academics by conducting 20 in-depth interviews with the faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs. Foucault has been instrumental in developing a more nuanced understanding of this policy, as part of the fundamental changes and continuities that occurred as a result of Kazakhstan's post-Soviet transition. On the one hand, his notion of 'governmentality' lends itself well to identifying power relations where the state relies on arms-length governance. For

example, the Kazakhstani state tries to rely on new technologies of micro-management by fostering competition and creating incentives for academics to publish in journals with non-zero impact factor in order to qualify for the promotion. So, within this neoliberal policy context, the Kazakhstani faculty members have been subjectified as self-interested, rational decision-makers, for whom the publication output in international journals is the primary goal, as they are not only incentivised by the tenure requirements and promotion guidelines but also burdened by the responsibility to develop their own human capital in order to secure a promotion and career advancement at Kazakhstani HEIs. On the other hand, the actual regime of control and management that surrounds this publishing requirement at Kazakhstani HEIs resembles what Foucault calls disciplinary governance. So, with the state-based planning, which regulates time by confining the attainment of target indicators to a certain timeframe and maintains a surveillance system through the onerous reporting requirements, being a major element of the Kazakhstani HE system, the Soviet approach to HE governance still seems to be deeply-entrenched in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. Thus, this publishing requirement can be viewed as an indication of the coexistence of the new incentive-driven, performance-based policy instruments, on the one hand, and the preservation and continuation of the elements of the Soviet 'state-centered' HE governance model, on the other. Therefore, it can be stated that there are currently two HE governance models co-existing along each other within the current Kazakhstani HE system due to the constellation of a unique set of post-Soviet changes and continuities.

Next, by drawing on Bourdieu, I tried to better understand the hierarchy of language use at Kazakhstani HEIs, and get an insight into what meaning, value, and prestige the various linguistic mediums of research publication (English, Kazakh, and Russian) have within that symbolic order. So, looking more closely at the language aspect of 2011's state policy on research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs, it can be stated that the Kazakhstani state through this publishing requirement is imposing its definition of what is a desirable linguistic medium of research publications. So, while this policy renders the English language research publications valuable, it is at the same time marginalising the research production in Kazakh and/or Russian languages. However, it is not just about the abundance of linguistic capital of the English language but also the corresponding presence of academic capital in the form of the knowledge of research methods (1) and academic conventions of writing (2), which collectively produces the high symbolic value of English language at Kazakhstani HEIs. This can be explained by the fact that only in combination with the knowledge of research methods and academic conventions of writing the proficiency in the English language can produce a publication in non-zero impact factor journals. All these indicate that the English language is currently occupying a dominant position within the current symbolic order of Kazakhstani HEIs,

as it claims a superior status within the hierarchy of language use and the system of knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs.

However, such a policy on research productivity, which reinforces the superior symbolic status of the English language, has a major effect on the hierarchy of language use and the system of intellectuals at Kazakhstani HEIs. Hence, this publishing policy requirement, which consolidates the dominance of the English language within the symbolic order at Kazakhstan HEIs, is at the same time causing the depreciation in the symbolic value of Kazakh and Russian languages and the symbolic powers of Kazakh or Russian-speaking faculty members at Kazakhstan HEIs. As a result, it can be argued that the linguistic aspect of the current publishing policy requirement is negatively affecting the faculty members' opportunities for involvement in research by leading to the exclusion of faculty members who are largely reliant on Kazakh and Russian languages but are not proficient in English, from the knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs.

All in all, it can be argued that the access to knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs is not only becoming more competitive than ever due to this publishing requirement but also increasingly stratified. An excellent publication record is required to reach the top of the 'system of intellectuals', with important implications for academic career prospects, though only publications in journals with a high-impact factor count. As these journals tend to be in English and listed by Scopus and Web of Science that calculate the impact factor, the top intellectuals of Kazakhstan's system of intellectuals need to ensure their visibility in the global, anglophone-dominated system of intellectuals. This leads to stratification within the system of intellectuals (organic vs. traditional), as the current publishing policy requirement is giving rise to separation between the younger, 'Westernised' faculty members and more elder, 'Sovietised' faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs. So, the younger generation of Kazakhstani faculty members, especially the English-speaking, educated, and socialised in internationalised, Western-style educational institutions and/or abroad (organic intellectuals), are currently in a more favourable position in regard to the publishing requirement than the elderly faculty members, who are largely Russian and/or Kazakh language speaking, Soviet educated, and less experienced in academic research and academic publication strategies (traditional intellectuals).

Thus, the analysis of interview data also offered me an opportunity to see how the implementation of publishing requirement at Kazakhstani HEIs have been interacting (e.g., reinforcing or coming into conflict) with the various aspects of Kazakhstan's post-Soviet hegemonic project. Firstly, increasing

the research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs can be viewed as being indispensable for Kazakhstan's goal of creating a knowledge-based economy in order to diminish its vulnerability to oil price volatility and ultimately reduce its dependence on oil exports. However, the top-down imposition of publishing requirement by the Kazakhstani state has been threatening the institutional autonomy of Kazakhstani HEIs and the academic freedom of Kazakhstani faculty members. Hence, the implementation of 2011's policy on research productivity mirrors the problems the Kazakhstani state has been facing with the democratisation of its political system and decentralisation of its HE system. Thirdly, the implicit prioritisation of the English language, which has been accompanying this publishing requirement, seems to be in certain contradiction with the major post-Soviet initiatives on Kazakhization (e.g., the revival of the Kazakh language) and efforts on the management of ethnic diversity (e.g., trilingualism).

Therefore, all this also allowed me to understand how the 2011's state policy on research productivity has been affecting the Kazakhstani state's efforts to mediate the tensions and maintain the social compromise between the ruling and ruled in post-Soviet Kazakhstan. First of all, this publishing requirement produced and aggravated a number of tensions: not only between the English language vs. the local Kazakh/Russian languages but also between the organic (e.g., the younger, Western-educated generation of faculty members) vs. the traditional intellectuals (e.g., the elder, Soviet-educated generation of faculty members), between the local (more oriented to local needs, problems, interests - e.g., training local specialists) vs. global (more oriented to the requirements of global knowledge production systems - e.g., publishing for global academia) knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs. So, it can be argued that this publishing requirement has the potential to have major implications for the social compromise of post-Soviet Kazakhstan. In case the enhanced research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs (e.g., more research output in the form of English-language publications in non-zero impact-factor journals) allows Kazakhstan to attain its goal of creating a knowledge-based economy and diminish its dependence on oil revenue, this can help the Kazakhstani state to continue to fulfil its commitment to economic prosperity, though no longer with the help of oil money. However, the publishing requirement, especially in light of the tensions mentioned above, can potentially undermine the capacities of Kazakhstan HEIs to serve as a part of civil society and affect Kazakhstan's nation-building efforts in the long run by aggravating the political stability and inter-ethnic peace in such diverse country. Hence, the parts of social compromise promising political stability and inter-ethnic peace will also depend on the ability of the Kazakhstani state and HEIs to manage the tensions within the system of intellectuals produced by the publishing requirement. As the system of intellectuals "includes all social classes the ruling class wants to have as allies by way

of their intellectuals”, excluding the ‘traditional ’intellectuals from “accessing and producing knowledge which constitutes the ideational framework of hegemony” can erode the hegemonic base of post-Soviet Kazakhstan (Hartmann, 2015, p.94). Moreover, the publishing requirement tied to the conferral of academic degrees and promotion to academic ranks can also become a source of discontent, especially, “when the system falls short of its meritocratic promise”, causing people to feel despair and frustration (Robertson & Nestore, 2021, p.9). Thus, I assume that the success and effectiveness of the post-Soviet transformation and nation-building in such an ethnically diverse country like Kazakhstan is based not only on stable economic growth and political stability but also on the existence of a vibrant civil society, the plurality of views and shared medium of communication.

Table 26. The real, actual and empirical domains		
Real domain:	Structures (enable and constrain)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The post-Soviet geopolitical environment; - Conditions of global economic market (e.g. volatility of oil/gas prices); - Globalisation; - Internationalisation of HE; - Neoliberal HE environment; - Global publishing industry;
Actual domain:	Events/Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kazakhstani language polices (on status of Kazakh language Kazakh (state language), of Russian language (official language); trilingualism); - Kazakhstani policies on privatisation, commercialisation of Kazakhstani HE (e.g. opening of private HEIs and introduction of tuition fees); - Kazakhstani polices on internationalisation of Kazakhstani HE (e.g. joining Bologna process, Bolashak scholarship, Nazarbayev University etc.) - Kazakhstani policies on research productivity (e.g. 2011’s publishing requirement);
Empirical domain:	Observations/experiences	Interview with faculty members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - perceived opportunities, exclusions, inequalities, barriers for knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs;

All in all, Kazakhstan presents an interesting case of a post-Soviet transitional country that encounters challenges in the process of transition from communism and state socialism towards a democracy and market economy. So, this study equally hopes to make a contribution to the post-Soviet transition and transformation studies more broadly by highlighting the important insights we can gain by going

beyond a focus on economic and political transformation. It aimed to bring to the fore the complexity of the post-Soviet transition and transformation, especially its ideational dimension, by looking at the key role that Kazakhstani HEIs play in this context, not only as creators, curators, and disseminators of new knowledge but also as sites of contestations. As the current research is a CR-informed project, which is characterised by a stratified ontology, the Table 26 above summarises the key insights generated about the real (informed by the historical analysis), actual (informed by the policy analysis), and empirical domains (informed by the interviews).

However, the issue of transferability of theoretical concepts is one of the limitations of this study. Most of the well-known, widely used, contemporary theories are, to a large extent, products of Western thought. Hence, a researcher like myself, focusing on the case of a non-Western country like Kazakhstan, is limited in her choice of theoretical tools. This can be a reflection of the global dominance and hegemonic status of Western theories, the lack of theoretical formulations by non-Western scholars, and the acute need for non-Western voices to develop alternative theoretical thinking. However, it is not just about them being Western in their origin, but the fact that they were developed in a completely different historical context and derived from different socio-political experiences. Firstly, Gramsci's ideas are closely connected to their original context because, in his analysis of the structure of power in the bourgeois states, he was inspired by the events in Italy during Benito Mussolini. So, the Gramscian theoretical ideas were based on the European capitalist states, where the economy was under the dictatorship of the dominant class of 'bourgeoisie', while the state was aimed at providing a political, ideological, and cultural framework conducive to the accumulation of capital in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Secondly, Foucault's "governmentality" was also informed by the European liberal-democratic context, as he wanted to uncover the oppressiveness of modern liberal society, despite the disguise of representative democracy and individual rights. So, he pointed to the rise of the subtle, elusive techniques for the exercise of power. Thirdly, Bourdieu's concepts too were informed by the European liberal-democratic contexts, as were the product of the French political, social, and economic system within which it was formulated. So, Bourdieu aimed to study how the upper classes manage to maintain their privileged positions in modern neoliberal societies, which results in the reproduction of dominant socio-cultural structures. Thus, the original context of my chosen theories is very different from the Kazakhstani context, both during Soviet rule and in the post-Soviet period. Soviet Kazakhstan, as part of the USSR, was based on communism and state socialism, a socio-economic order very different from the liberal-democratic one. Moreover, in the post-Soviet period too, Kazakhstan's political and economic system, though in the process of transition towards democracy and market economy, has many distinctive features that make it

different from the European liberal-democratic states. As the conceptual tools I relied on are from the socio-historical contexts that are very different from Kazakhstan's socio-historical path as a Central Asian country with the Soviet past, I had to adapt these theoretical concepts to the Kazakhstani context. As it was discussed in the previous chapters, despite a number of divergences that the Kazakhstani case exhibits in comparison to the original conception of Gramsci, Foucault, and Bourdieu, these concepts are still highly instrumental in illustrating the post-Soviet Kazakhstan's nation-building. Thus, it can be argued that the use of any theoretical tool is context-dependent, and the social, political, and historical context in which they originated is an important element to factor in.

However, one can rightfully ask: how can these concepts offer a plausible contribution to the discussion of the Kazakhstani state that has been embedded in a socio-historical context that is radically different from his European liberal-democratic context? Can we assume their cross-cultural applicability or not? Can post-Soviet states like Kazakhstan fit the Western theoretical paradigm? Thus, putting to the test the Western theoretical concepts' capacity for transferability to contexts like Kazakhstani needs to be more thoroughly explored.

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Appendix 1.

Dividing practices and scientific classification

Three modes of objectification can be outlined “by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects”, such as the “dividing practices” (1), “scientific classification” (2) and “self-subjection” (3) (Foucault, 1982, p.777). Firstly, “dividing practices” is a mode of objectification by which “the subjects are objectified by a process of separating by a prearranged social and personal identity” (Pius, 2015, p. 37). As one of the “technologies for the manipulation of individuals into docile bodies”, the dividing practices can include “examination, testing, profiling, streaming and tracking” of individuals (Meadmore, 1993, p.60). Hence, it can be stated that the dividing practices have been at the very heart of modern states, which routinely “divide people into 'the mad', 'the poor' and 'the delinquent' and subsequently discipline them in institutions: asylums, hospitals, prisons, and schools” (Powell, 2015, p.20). For instance, the dividing practices can be observed in the faculty ranks of Kazakhstani HEIs (e.g. lecturer, senior lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor vs. teaching and research assistants; tenure vs. non-tenure track; full-time vs. part-time etc.), which can separate and create rift between various individuals employed at Kazakhstani HEIs. Further, in light of the recent publishing requirement, which is directly linked to the faculty promotion and compensation at Kazakhstani HEIs, these ‘dividing practices’ becomes particularly relevant as mechanisms for ‘spatially’ (e.g. allocation of workspace, including the private offices and open areas etc.) and ‘socially’ (e.g. exclusion from academic events those not holding professorships etc.) dividing the personnel and creating hierarchies at university.

The second mode of objectification is “scientific classification”, which is aimed at turning individuals into subjects by “defining the body as an object through the use of different means of classification” (Foucault, 1982,p.777). This form of objectification arises from “the modes of inquiry, which try to give themselves the status of sciences” (Foucault, 1982, p.777), as “through this privileged status certain scientific classifications have acted to specify social norms” (Madigan, 1992, p.267). So, the instruments of scientific classification try to normalise the society to be able to control it more thoroughly. Thus, these scientifically produced specifications (e.g., a gender/sexual binary, ethnic/racial identity), by classifying and categorising individuals, function as mechanisms of social control. For instance, faculty members can be classified by the salary scales, teaching hours, research outputs, number of obtained research grants, percentage of successful research funding applications, number of supervised research students and other performance objectives like administrative service (e.g. appointment of faculty to administrative positions as directors, chairs, deans etc.) and community engagement (e.g. volunteering, service-learning, community-based research etc). So, in line with Foucault’s (1982) notion of “documentation of lives”, the HEI management can evaluate any given faculty member based on their portfolio of teaching, research and service activities at Kazakhstani HEIs. Thus, the concept of “scientific classification” can shed light on the ways the Kazakhstani faculty members are constructed as objectified subjects by being controlled through various socially produced categorisations and specifications at Kazakhstani HEIs. All in all, Foucault’s notions of ‘dividing practices’ and ‘scientific classification’ can tell us a lot about the division of labour (e.g., teaching vs. research) and hierarchies within the system of intellectual (e.g., tenure vs. non-tenure), to use the Gramscian terms.

Appendix 2.

The “shock therapy” in post-Soviet Kazakhstan

First of all, “the ambitious dismantling of price controls began in January 1992 in Kazakhstan”, as the prices for consumer goods and services used to be set and controlled by the government during Soviet times (de Broek, 1997, p.195). The price liberalisation, as other neoliberal policy prescriptions, is founded on market economy principles, as it asserts that “states ought to abstain from intervening in the economy, and instead leave as much as possible up to individuals participating in free and self-regulating markets” (Thorsen, 2010). So, the Washington Consensus tried to reduce the role of state to a bare minimum, as the Kazakhstani state needed to withdraw from regulating the economic activities, and restrict itself to the task of ensuring stable macroeconomic framework to enable a successful policy reform. As the Kazakhstani government rapidly carried out the price liberalisation with “more than 80% of the prices decontrolled” (Larsson, 2010, p.17), “the failures to maintain tight monetary and credit policies fuelled inflation” (de Broek et al, 1997, p.196), which reached its peak of 2860% in 1992 (Zholaman & Muzaparova, n.d.). So, Kazakhstan “suffered a severe recession in the first half of the 1990s, as GDP fell by over two-fifths between 1991 and 1995” (Pomfret, 2005, p.861), which brought some negative effects on economic growth and consumer welfare (Svejnar, 2002, p.11). Many suffered a notable decline in the standard of living, but there were both “winners” and “losers” in this situation: while “rampant inflation led to millions of people losing their life saving”, “the wealthier groups performed better in adapting their asset holdings in a context of changing prices”. So, though the Kazakhstani government managed to tame the hyperinflation and move the “country's relative prices and overall price level closer to those in market economies” (de Broek et al, 1997, p.210), this process greatly exacerbated the economic inequality by hitting hard the “bottom income group” (such as pensioners and low-wage workers) (Novokmet et al, 2017, p.33).

Secondly, Kazakhstan embarked on enterprise reform with “21 000 state-owned enterprises employing 87% of the nation’s workforce” (OECD, 2017, p.132). The restructuring of state-owned enterprises was undertaken in order to facilitate the establishment of private sector and foster the proliferation of small and medium sized firms (Estrin et al. 2009). It was believed that privatisation can “increase efficiency, competition and the quality of production”, as the newly-established firms will “fill niches in demand and start to compete with existing state-owned enterprises and with imports” (Svejnar, 2002, p.6). So, “small companies were privatised through cash sales; medium-sized companies through Russian-style voucher programs; and large companies through direct trade sales” (OECD, 2017, p.132). Although the privatisation in Kazakhstan took place in several stages (Larsson, 2010, p.17), “the vague definition of the conditions for privatisation” resulted in nomenklatura privatisation characterised by widespread corruption and rampant rent-seeking behaviour (Saab & Kumar, 1997, p.188). With the former Soviet political and economic elites taking advantage of their positions to privatise the industries, the privatisation in Kazakhstan “was widely abused as an instrument of redistribution and concentration of economic and political power” (Vlácil, 1996, p.30). Not only “most enterprise shares were given almost free to managers-who sometimes misused the assets of their enterprise for their own interest” (Saab & Kumar, 1997, p.188), but also “due to information asymmetries and lack of an effective governance framework, the new private owners had incentive and opportunity to pursue rent-seeking and asset-stripping” (Hamm et al. 2012). Thus, as the privatisation had far-reaching consequences on the distribution of wealth in post-Soviet Kazakhstan, one can wonder whether it could have undertaken in a more balanced and egalitarian manner in order not to widen the gap between haves and have-nots.

Thirdly, as Kazakhstan abolished the state monopoly and liberalised trade, introducing the national currency and making it convertible was of major importance to facilitate both internal and external trade. However, Kazakhstan, as the majority of post-Soviet states, “suffered from cyclical currency

crises” (Dabrowski, 2016, p.302), as they were in the process of “abandoning the Soviet ruble”, “introducing national currencies” (ibid. p.307). In Kazakhstani case the monetary policy was further aggravated by “heavy specialisation of Kazakh export revenues in a single commodity – oil” (Frankel, 2005, p.1). Kazakhstan, as a country rich in natural resources, is heavily reliant on oil revenue and sensitive to external commodity price fluctuations, so that “a boom in the commodity leads to real appreciation of the currency” (ibid. p.5). Moreover, the trade liberalisation naturally led to the surge of FDI. The neoliberal reforms in transitional countries like Kazakhstan were reliant on foreign investment of capital, “as experienced management was in short supply within the country and domestic financing was virtually non-existent” to carry out an effective enterprise reform (Peck, 1999, p.474). Furthermore, FDI was also believed to “have positive spill-over effects such as spread of technical know-how” (Larsson, 2010, p.8). In this regard, Kazakhstan is considered to be “relatively successful among CIS countries in attracting foreign direct investment” as “from 1996 to 2000 FDI exceeded a billion dollars a year and since 2001 it has exceeded two billion dollars” (Pomfret, 2005, p.867). So, it is not surprising that seeking to attract more FDI, Kazakhstan “carried out a policy of ensuring macroeconomic environment stability” in order to enhance “the investment climate within the country” (Lee, 2010, p.86).

So, finally, as the rapid price liberalisation and mass privatisation are rather disruptive processes, the macroeconomic stabilisation program has to be undertaken by countries in transition, which will help to “create economic stability by controlling inflation and reducing government budget deficits” (Aslund et al, 1996, p.229). Hence, Kazakhstan started the implementation of its policy of macroeconomic stabilisation in 1994, which was based on the principles of monetarism, and emphasised the need to increase the interest rates, while decreasing the government spending (Woźniak, 2008). Although the relative success of Kazakhstani stabilisation program was initially noted (“the rates of inflation dropped very notably”, “the recession slowed down to give way to positive growth”, “the real GDP began to grow”), as Kazakhstan’s economy turned downward in 1998 (“the relapse of production decline”, “sharp deterioration of the balance of trade and payments”, “bad debt crisis”, “overall financial instability”), the concern was voiced that “the main reason for the precariousness of the 1996-1997 macroeconomic stabilisation in Kazakhstan and lack of adequate economic growth in the country is the wrongness and inefficiency of its current macroeconomic policy” (Zholaman & Muzaparova, pp.8-13). Thus, as the macroeconomic stabilisation program should be aimed at reducing the negative consequences of the rapid and radical neoliberal reforms, some called for “the need to review the nation’s basic policy directions and, in the first place, its program of stabilisation and attainment of sustainable economic growth” (ibid.). All in all, if we are to name one major theme that clearly emerges from this brief survey of Kazakhstan’s economic transition, that is concern about the lack of social equity in Kazakhstan.

Although the “shock therapy” reforms facilitated the establishment of market economy, it is important to note that some groundwork for the post-Soviet Kazakhstan’s the shift to capitalist mode of production was already laid during the late Soviet period by Gorbachev, as his policies of “Perestroika” attempted to liberalise the Soviet economy through introduction of a series of rather bold reforms in late 1980s. So, the initial steps toward adopting a free-market, decentralised economy with privately-owned means of production was taken by series of laws: the Law on Enterprises (1987) (Warren, 1996); the Law on Cooperatives (1988) (Frenkel, 1989); and the Law on Joint Ventures (1987)(Albin, 1989). As it was believed that adopting market elements can make the stagnating socialist economy of Soviet Union more efficient, these efforts sought to reconcile market forces with the central planning. However, Gorbachev’s reform efforts did not go far enough to effectuate qualitative changes, as these policies, which were “within the parameters of state-socialism” (Lane, 2013, p.161), did not really mean a break with the command economy. The fact that much of the command- administrative structure were left intact meant that the Soviet state tried to retain its

control over the means of production (e.g. price controls, inconvertibility of the ruble, exclusion of private property ownership, and the government monopoly over most means of production).

Moreover, it can be stated that some foundation for the establishment of capitalism was also set by the formation of “an informal economy” in Soviet Union. The shadow economy emerged in Soviet Union to compensate for the imperfections of command economy - it primarily served to make up for the acute shortages and inadequate planning in Soviet Union. As most of the consumer goods and services in Soviet Union were either in short supply or of poor quality, the informal sector was a place where the Soviet citizens could procure all kinds of goods and services: “facing the reality of a permanency of scarce goods and deficient services, the average Soviet citizen had to find ways to make a living” (Altman & Morrison, 2015). On the one hand, this led to the proliferation of extensive network of informal relations, favours and various forms of economic exchanges, which played a major part in the day-to-day working of Soviet organisations and became an essential element in the lives of Soviet citizens. On the other hand, the shadow economy in Soviet Union was also accompanied by the rise of “forms of economic activity not enshrined in economic and criminal law” (Ryvkina, 1998), as it became a sphere “where production and exchange often took place for direct private gain and just as often violated state law in some non-trivial respect” (Grossman, 1977). However, as the Soviet state cultivated toleration for the informal economic activities that were considered as non-threatening to the official economy, this also produced the “forms of administrative trade-offs that developed as a result of prohibited activities by the Soviet agencies”. Consequently, with the transition to market economy, such informal economic practices have also become an important attribute of the post-soviet Kazakhstani economy. All in all, it can be stated that, though during the Soviet period “the informal economy co-existed in symbiosis with the formal command economy”, it “blended into the officially created market economy” in the post-Soviet period.

Appendix 3.

Post-Soviet Kazakhstan's democratisation reforms

Any discussion of democratisation reforms should start by recognising a rather contested nature of the “democracy”. Hence, it is important to underline that the following discussion of democratisation in Kazakhstan will be based on a minimalist conception of democracy. Although the minimalist conception “refers to the formal and procedural aspects of democracy at a nation-state level, rather than to any substantive or social considerations or to the presence of democratic forms in entities”, “without the formal democratic procedures at the nation-state level a democracy cannot be said to exist”, as “minimal procedures of a democracy presuppose, despite their minimality, the development of a complex institutionalisation” (Valenzuela, 1990). Thus, Robert Dahl’s (1989) concept of “polyarchy”, which helps to outline the “procedural minimum of democracy” (Collier & Levitsky, 1997), will guide the following discussion.

Firstly, the establishment of a legislative organ is of primary importance in order to ensure that “the control over governmental decisions about policy constitutionally vested in elected officials” (Dahl, 1989). The Kazakhstani constitution underwent several changes since the independence, which affected the vested power of legislature in relations to other branches of the government. The initial Constitution of 1993 established Kazakhstan as a parliamentary democracy, while the new Constitution of 1995 greatly expanded the presidential powers signalling the shift to the presidential system (OECD, 2014, pp.63-65). Although some constitutional amendments were introduced in 2007, which brought the Kazakhstani government closer to the presidential-parliamentary form, it is widely held that “Kazakhstan remains a centralised state with the strong power of the President” (ibid.). With the executive branch holding most of the political power and maintaining a firm hand of control over other branches of government, Kazakhstan exhibits tendencies towards authoritarianism (Carey, 2005, p.91). So, it is not surprising that with such arrangement of power in Kazakhstani government, the role of legislature in the decision-making process was nominal, as the executive branch was capable of proceeding with “shock therapy” to enable Kazakhstan’s swift transition to a market economy. Thus, despite being declared as a democratic state in its constitution, it can be stated that Kazakhstan lacks a clear separation of power, and the systems of checks and balances to hold the executive accountable.

Secondly, “frequent, fair and free elections”, which create conditions for the “elected officials to be chosen and peacefully removed”, is another major feature of a democracy (Dahl, 1989). Firstly, the institution of democratic election is based on the principle of universal adult suffrage, which entails that “all adults have the right to vote in these elections” (Dahl, 1989). However, the legacy of the Soviet methods of mass mobilisation coupled with the overall weak political activism raises doubts regarding the democratic nature of Kazakhstani elections. So, despite the constitutional guarantee of the universal suffrage and high voter turn-out rates in Kazakhstani elections, some observers argue that non-competitive elections cannot result in a truly democratic outcome. Secondly, the right to run for public office can be viewed another fundamental feature of democratic elections (Dahl, 1989). However, the uneven playing field greatly undermines the competitiveness of Kazakhstani elections, as the opposition suffers from systematically unequal access to resources during campaign, not to mention the host of serious procedural irregularities that can affect the election outcome such as ballot rigging, ballot stuffing or proxy voting in Kazakhstan (OSCE, 2016). The institution of democratic elections can become obsolete, if the “political machine” is capable of maintaining its grip on power by widely mobilising its supporters and commanding enough votes to win elections, while keeping all potential competitors at bay (Gel’man, 2003). So, it can be stated that the electoral process in Kazakhstan is largely under the control of the ruling regime, which has been capable of “establishing

a kind of minimal winning coalition that gain enough resources for incumbent's victory, or, at least, for prevention of power shift by electoral means" (ibid).

Thirdly, the role of political parties in the process of establishing and strengthening of democracies is indispensable in order "to build and aggregate support among broad coalitions of citizens' organisations and interest groups", "to integrate multiple conflicting demands into coherent policy programs", "to select and train legislative candidates and political leaders", and "to provide voters with choices among governing teams and policies" (Norris, 2005, pp.3-4). So, it is not only about the potential candidates not being permitted in elections, but also about the lack of viable opposition parties to compete and the absence of genuine political choice. However, the ability of Kazakhstanis to "form and join autonomous associations including political associations, such as political parties and interest groups" (Dahl, 1989) is greatly hindered by the onerous registration requirement. For example, the Kazakhstani Law on Political Parties (2002) states that "a political party must have at least 40,000 members, with at least 600 members per branches in every oblast and cities of Astana and Almaty" (Article #10). The procedure of registration is also complicated by the fact that "officials have broad discretion to delay or deny party registration" (Freedom House, 2018). Moreover, the phenomenon of "party of power" can be viewed as another key factor limiting the proper development of a multi-party system in the post-Soviet countries like Kazakhstan. The "party of power" can be described as "an extension of the executive where the party is the actual group whose members wield power in and through the executive branch of government" (Isaacs, 2011). So, the dominant position of Nur Otan, which can be viewed as "the party of power" in Kazakhstan, problematises and hinders the development of political pluralism, as only pro-presidential parties and candidates get seats after the elections.

Next, the flourishing civil society with plurality of avenues for individuals to express themselves and engage with others is essential for the establishment of democracy (Heywood, 1994). The existence of active, free and engaged civil society hinges upon three major rights, which together enable individuals' effective participation in civil society. Firstly, the freedom of expression, "particularly political expression, including criticism of the officials, the conduct of the government, the prevailing political, economic, and social system, and the dominant ideology" (Dahl, 1989), plays a vital role in enabling public debate to hold the government accountable (Howie, 2017). However, individuals willing to exercise their right to freedom of expression can face government-imposed limitations in Kazakhstan, as "authorities are known to monitor social media, and users are regularly prosecuted on charges such as inciting social and ethnic hatred, insulting government officials, and promoting separatism or terrorism" (Freedom House, 2018). Next, the freedom of expression is closely connected to the freedom of information, which ensures the "access to alternative sources of information that are not monopolised by the government or any other single group" (Dahl, 1989). This requires "a free, uncensored and unhindered press in which the media can comment on public issues without censorship or restraint and can inform public opinion" (UN Human Rights Committee, 2011). However, the freedom of information is curtailed in Kazakhstan, as "most of the media sector is controlled by the state or government-friendly owners", and "the government has repeatedly harassed or shut down independent outlets" (Freedom House, 2018). Lastly, individuals have to exercise their right to freedom of assembly. However, the freedom of association is frequently violated in Kazakhstan due to strict regulation of civic activity by Kazakhstan state: "any potential public gathering requires permission from the local government administration 10 days in advance", while the "permits are routinely denied for antigovernment protests, and police frequently break up unsanctioned gatherings" (Freedom House, 2018). So, any civic activity that can "corrode authoritarianism by creating loci of power that can gradually develop into a source of political opposition" is feared in Kazakhstan (Landry, 2008). Moreover, Kazakhstan is currently lagging behind on core civil society freedoms, as it lacks free press, the freedom of assembly is also curtailed,

while the free speech is greatly limited, which seriously curtails the civic participation and undermines the development of civil society.

As “the minimal procedures of a democracy presuppose, despite their minimality, the development of a complex institutionalisation” (Valenzuela, 1990), the above mentioned indicators are not exhaustive conditions of democratisation process, but they can be viewed as the basic, minimal attributes of democracy. However, it can be stated that Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet adoption of democratic principles of governance seem to be rather formal and procedural, which demonstrates some basic attributes of democracy, but lacks the substance to make the democratic system actually work. Therefore, for Kazakhstan, with weak legislative oversight that fails to keep the executive branch accountable, elections not capable of truly reflecting the people’s choice, opposition parties that are banned or marginalised, and civil society held back by severely limited media and speech freedom, the authoritarianism represents the chief overarching challenge in the process of its political transition.

Appendix 4.

Kazakhstan's post-Soviet socio-cultural policy

First of all, it is important to note that this ideological focus on revival of Kazakh heritage can be viewed as being highly instrumental to “assert the titular nationality's legitimacy and hegemony over the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan” (Davenel, 2012). Especially, as the “Russian Question” in the Northern Kazakhstan, which to this day has a significant population of ethnic Russians (e.g. in Petropavlovsk ethnic Russians constitute 59.28%, in Pavlodar 41.11%, in Kostanay 41.88% of population), has always alarmed the Kazakhstani state due to separatist sentiments among ethnic Russian nationalists. So, the newly-established Kazakhstani state has been defined as the “ancient homeland” of Kazakhs (Kuzio, 2002) with the opening preamble of the Kazakhstani Constitution (1996) asserting: “We, the people of Kazakhstan, united by a common historic fate, creating a state on the indigenous Kazakh land, consider ourselves a peace-loving and civil society”. Thus, with help of ideology the Kazakhstani ruling elite sought to reaffirm its ethnic hegemony and pre-empt any intention of resistance to its hegemonic rule. Moreover, as the relevance and effectiveness of state's ideology is based, to some extent, on the existence of “universally shared meaning of history”, Kazakhstan, like a number of other Central Asian republics, put forward “a new historiography” that tried to legitimise the Kazakhstani state (Masanov, 2002). This re-analysis of Kazakh history, to create a viable and commonly accepted post-Soviet historiography, is based on “500-year tradition of statehood going back to the mid-15th century Kazakh Khanate” (Masanov, 2002). Although the Kazakhstani state has widely employed the Kazakh “symbols and myths” to strengthen this new historiography, some argued that “Kazakh people historically have never been united or constructed as a homogenous group” (Kolesova & Beisembayeva, 2017). Hence, the concerns were voiced that “traditional nomadism prevented meaningful engagement in a national project” for Kazakhs (Sauders, 2007). Although the Kazakhs had “a robust sense of self”, it is argued that “their cultural or ethnic identity” was primarily based on “family lineage (*shezhire*), clan affiliation, and their *zhuz* (horde), rather than a national identity” (ibid. p.243). Some asserted that “historical division was and still remains among the three main *zhuz*”, while these tribal and clan affiliations, to this day, play a strong part in self-identification of modern Kazakhs (Kolesova & Beisembayeva, 2017). Although “nationalism began to develop in the first two decades of the twentieth century” (Olcott, 1981), these “precursors for national mobilisation” were “short-circuited by the Sovietization”, as Kazakhs “possessed few of the tools to contest Russian-dominated policies for the creation of Kazakh identity”. All in all, as “there is a great deal of work done to construct imagined communities by claiming ideas, values and ways of doing things as one's own” (Anderson-Lewitt, 2016, p.39), it is understandable that the Kazakhstani state tried to strengthen and reinforce its ideology with help of historiographies and legitimacy discourses.

Secondly, the kazakhization process, which was chiefly aimed at “preserving the superiority of basic values and resources of the Kazakhs” (Karin & Chebotarev, 2002), was justified by the presumed need to redress the historical injustices that ethnic Kazakhs endured. So, Kazakhstan, similar to many other Central Asian states, was “institutionally-g geared to function as the state of and for the particular ethnocultural nation” (Dave, 2004). Such emphasis on the pre-eminence of Kazakhs, as a titular nation in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan, was explained as a “remedial political action” driven by the desire to compensate for “decades of dominance by foreign actors”, as Kazakhs were “subjected to Tsarist and Soviet rule and the hardships and repression that came with those periods”. For instance, some Kazakhs still “view Stalin's agricultural policies as a form of genocide”, which was undertaken regardless of the human cost to “free the land to be farmed by Russians who would be organised in a new collectivised form of agriculture” (Olcott, 2011). Indeed, the collectivisation process caused widespread famine that “killed off more than half of all Kazakh households, and more than eighty

percent of the livestock that served as foundation for the Kazakh economy” (ibid.). The purges of 1930s was also viewed as a “blood-bath”, as “countless families perished in their entirety leaving none to recall them today” because of Stalin’s repressions (Olcott, 2011). Moreover, due to Virgin Lands campaign, Kazakhstan “witnessed a massive influx of ethnic Russians and endured the concomitant Russification process in all aspects of life” (Chong, 2007, p.109). Thus, as a result, Kazakhstan become the only former Soviet republic, where the titular nation was a minority, and struggled to recapture its demographic potential (Kuzio, 2002). So, as Kazakhs saw themselves as a “threatened culture and language, which had been marginalised in their own historical homelands” (Dave, 2004), the active kazakhization of social, economic and political structures, and revival of the history, culture, and language of Kazakhs was viewed as attempts to rectify those consequences of the Soviet rule. Although the kazakhization “is not recognised on the official level; as a matter of fact, it is denied” (Karin & Chebotarev, 2002), the newly-acquired independence did provide Kazakhstani state with “a legal framework and an organisational tool for executing remedial political actions and erecting safe havens for their indigenous cultures and languages as well as redressing their historical injustices” (Chong, 2007, p.109). Thus, this process of ideological meaning-making in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan entailed “taking for granted of a particular social order, which serves some people’s interests [ethnic Kazakhs] more than others, as natural and legitimate” (Anderson-Lewitt, 2016, p.41-42). All in all, similar to the Soviet ideology, which used to be a comprehensive ideology organising main areas of life in Soviet Union, this Kazakh ethno-national hegemony also tried to acquire an all-embracing nature: “kazakhization can be understood to encompass state policy - in all spheres of public life - directed at the revival, strengthening, development, representation and domination of basic socio-cultural, ethno-demographic, economic, political, and legal values as well as resources of the Kazakhs” (Karin & Chebotarev, 2002).

On the other hand, the post-Soviet Kazakhstan was puzzled by the attempts to balance the state's definition by its titular ethnicity and the need to have due regard to its ethnic diversity. As it was discussed earlier, the multi-ethnic nature of modern Kazakhstan (there are more than 140 national and ethnic groups) was caused by the numerous waves of migrations and deportations that marked the Czarist and Soviet rule. So, this complex ethnic composition was creating some challenges for the construction and development of common identity in Kazakhstan. Despite Kazakhstani state’s interest in reviving the Kazakh history and strengthening the status of Kazakh language due to the heightening of ethnic consciousness following independence, “the move toward nationalism could create rifts between the ethnic Kazakhs and other ethnic groups”, and legitimising the Kazakhstani statehood solely on the basis of “Kazakh”-ness might potentially alienate numerous other ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan. Thus, Kazakhstan’s post-Soviet ideology was trying to forge a middle ground between the aim of preserving diversity of languages, traditions, and cultures of Kazakhstan, and goal of revival of culture, traditions, language and history of Kazakh people.

So, as Kazakhstan has been confronted with the challenge of balancing the ethnic (Kazakh) affiliation and ethnic diversity, the Kazakhstani state recognised the need for paying specific attention to the issue of inter-ethnic concord. A number of policy steps have been undertaken by the Kazakhstani state to further their goal of securing the inter-ethnic unity and embracing the multi-ethnic nature of Kazakhstan. First of all, the earlier mentioned Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan can be viewed as “one of Nazarbayev’s attempts to construct a unified nation through legitimisation of different ethnic and cultural groups” (Kolesova & Beisembayeva, 2017). Moreover, the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan adopted a constitutional amendment in 2007 to ensure that nine deputies in the Lower House of the Parliament were elected by the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan (The Law on the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan, 2008). Furthermore, the “Doctrine of National Unity” was adopted in 2009, which “forms a basis for the programs, legislative acts and other legal provisions”. Thus, these policies demonstrate that fostering the culture of unity and harmony between representatives of various ethnic groups has become one of the principles of the Kazakhstani state

policy (Kolesova & Beisembayeva, 2017). Nevertheless, it is necessary to underline that different “the political and social strategies” have been adopted by different non-titular communities in Kazakhstan “to manage their own place in post-Soviet Kazakhstan” ranging from the “massive emigration” to “adaptation to the new political regime” to “cultural mobilisation” (Davenel, 2012, p.18).

Moreover, Kazakhstan’s diversity was also widely employed for the positive national branding, as the Kazakhstani ruling elite has also been linking the essence and purpose of the post-Soviet hegemonic project to a broader national vision of Kazakhstani state as a harbour and guarantor of inter-ethnic and inter-religious peace in such multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-confessional nation. For example, though the Soviet socio-cultural legacy was frequently viewed as being “responsible for stubborn state-building dilemmas” that Kazakhstani state is currently facing, an effort was still made to convert the multi-ethnic Soviet legacy to new functions in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan. So, by making reference to Kazakhstan’s role as “People’s Friendship Lab” during the Soviet times, the Kazakhstani ruling elite was trying to underline the long-tradition of openness and tolerance in Kazakhstan (Kassymbekov, 2003, p.63). Hence, the hospitality of Kazakh people, who accommodated the ethnic groups, which found themselves in Kazakhstan through the Soviet-era forced deportations and settlement programs, and helped them to settle down, was frequently highlighted by the Kazakhstani ruling elite: “the huge potential for integration into Kazakh culture for every ethnic group of the country may be realised only through the open character of Kazakh culture itself” (Nazarbayev, 2010, p.103). Thus, in line with this ideological vision, the various ethnic groups were to be conceived as not only peacefully living together in Kazakhstan, but also as sharing the common past, having a single destiny. Moreover, the multi-ethnic content of Kazakhstani population is also reflected in the multiplicity of religions in the post-Soviet Kazakhstan, as with the fall of Soviet Union and lifting of religious ban, people have become more involved in spiritual life. So, the fact that Islam, Orthodox, Catholic Christianity, Judaism and numerous other religions (there are in total 46 faiths and confessions) peacefully coexist in Kazakhstan has always been highlighted. The Kazakhstani state was also active with its policy of “spiritual diplomacy” by building its country-image as a model of inter-religious harmony, and by promoting Kazakhstan as a platform for interfaith dialogue. Kazakhstan’s global interfaith initiative was promoted through a number of instruments such as the “Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions” (the 7th Congress will take place in September, 2022), which gathers senior religious and spiritual leaders and convenes every three years in the “Palace of Peace and Reconciliation” (as a symbol of Kazakhstan’s leading role in the inter-religious peace and tolerance), which was speciality-built for this purpose in Astana. Moreover, the broader ‘geopolitical’ approach has also been employed by the Kazakhstani ruling elite in the process of formation and promotion of its discourse on inter-ethnic, inter-confessional unity. The concept of ‘Eurasianism’ was widely utilised by the Kazakhstani state, as it was envisioned by President Nazarbayev to become “the flagship of his governance, the foundation of his national-building exercise” (Kolesova & Beisembayeva, 2017). Although some can point to the “highly illusive, contested, and debatable nature” of the concept Eurasianism (Kolesova & Beisembayeva, 2017), the Kazakhstani state was aimed at “developing their own version of Eurasianism” (there are also Russian, Turkish versions of Eurasianism), which is reflected in Kazakhstan’s domestic, regional and foreign policies. This brand of ‘Eurasianism’ is based on the view of Eurasia as “a unique region where all ethnic, cultural and religions groups live and co-exist peacefully through centuries of mutual trust, belief and understanding” (Golam, 2013), which can be useful to “construct peaceful and harmonious relations within 140 ethnic groups that resided in Kazakhstan, and also to help build cooperation with other countries” (Kolesova & Beisembayeva, 2017). Although the ‘Eurasianism’ over years has become a strong component of Kazakhstan’s search for its place in the world (as a “bridge between Asia and Europe”, as “heart of Eurasia” etc.) and internal part of its state-building exercise (as a “bastion of peace, stability and neutrality”), this state ideology crafted around the idea of “Eurasianism” was condemned as being “a hidden form of nationalism” (Laruelle, 2004).

Therefore, it can be stated that the kazakhization process has been “realised under the ideological and propagandistic guise of reviving the Kazakh people's language, culture and traditions, on the one hand; and adherence to the officially recognised principles of internationalism, friendship of peoples, and the building of a multinational state, on the other”(Karin & Chebotarev, 2002).

Although the Kazakhstani state is recognising its ethnic complexity through its policies, and preservation of the inter-ethnic harmony has been highly prioritised in the Kazakhstani state policy, “the ways and models for national consolidation, and also of the basis, structure and ways of integration of ethnic groups of Kazakhstan into a multi-ethnic nation” have been criticised on number of points (Kassymbekov, 2003, p.66). First of all, some are highly critical of the central role played by the Kazakhstani state in the process of inter-ethnic harmonisation by stating that Kazakhstan is “using in its national state policy the strategy of formation of people from above” (Davenel, 2012, pp.17-18). Although Kazakhstan is hailed for being “one of the few countries in the former Soviet Union who managed to avoid inter-ethnic violence and discord” (Bolat & Kurmangali, 2017), the active involvement of the Kazakhstani state “leaves no room for open political claims on behalf of national cultural associations” (Davenel, 2012, p.17). Moreover, some point to the nominal role played by the Assembly of the People and ethnocultural associations, which are failing to institutionalise interethnic relations and become a genuine mechanism for ethnic groups in Kazakhstan to openly voice their concerns, advance initiatives and protect their interests. So, concerns were voiced that these institutions were “created to mask the real situation with respect to the interethnic reality”, and “to create the appearance of a mechanism of normal coexistence of diverse ethnic groups” (Davenel, 2012). Next, some perceive Kazakhstan’s emphasis on the preservation of inter-ethnic concord not only as strategy for the prevention of potential interethnic conflicts, but also as “a brand image targeted at the international community” (Davenel, 2012, p.17) that can give clue to Kazakhstan’s “keen desire to present an attractive brand to the global marketplace” (Sauders, 2007, p.243). Furthermore, others argue that “macro-social structure of Kazakhstani model of national consolidation is composed of such components as authoritarianism, social integration through titular community dominance and archaic way of ethnic self-identification” (Kassymbekov, 2003, p.66). So, though the Kazakhstani state is aimed at ensuring the inter-ethnic unity and peaceful co-existence, the focus is still on Kazakh identity, as the Kazakh ethnicity is envisioned to become the “core of the unity and integration” in post-Soviet Kazakhstani (p. 258). Some even go further to argue that strategies and discourses currently adopted by the Kazakhstani state to manage the ethnic and cultural diversity can be viewed as “a violation of human and civil rights”, as they can possibly aggravate “the stifling and loss of traditions” for the non-titular communities, who fell victim to forced migration policies of the Soviet Union and had to take shelter in Soviet Kazakhstan (Karin & Chebotarev, 2002). All in all, it can be argued that Kazakhstani state has been struggling to define its new post-Soviet identity and was facing the ideological dilemma: “Kazakhstan is still in the process of developing a national identity” (Braun, 2000, p.110), while the ideological dilemmas point to “the gap between Kazakh identity (based primarily on ethnic origins) and Kazakhstani national identity (a form of civic nationalism loosely based on American, British, and Latin American models)”. Therefore, some see the need to turn towards “a more inclusive civic-based identity of Kazakhstanis, which will be more capable of reflecting “the multiethnic, multicultural reality of the country”, and that “will be capable of serving as a common foundation for all Kazakhstani citizens”.

Appendix 5.

The “organic crisis” that led to fall of Soviet Union

So, why did the Soviet Union collapse? Why did the hegemonic project of “communism” fail? Although the topic of Soviet collapse is widely contested, and there is a major debate over its causes, I want to highlight some main economic, political and social reasons behind the “organic crisis” in Soviet Union that resulted in the eventual failure of Soviet hegemonic project: the growing economic inefficiency, eroding repressive state apparatus, and emergence of independent public sphere. First of all, the inefficiency resulting from state ownership of the means of production and central planning led to economic crisis in Soviet Union by 1970s. Although the Soviet Union initially attained a rapid economic growth, as it evolved from a largely agrarian economy into a major industrial power by 1950s, with the strong focus on military-industrial complex, the economic growth gradually slowed down during Brezhnev’s tenure, which would later be coined as an “Era of Stagnation”. Despite multiple attempts to revive the Soviet command economy through introduction of limited market measures and decentralisation attempts (e.g. Kosygin’s reforms of 1965, 1973, 1979), these modest reforms within the socialist framework proved to be futile, with little lasting impact on economic performance, and the economic situation continued to deteriorate. So, the deep stagnation of the Soviet economy, even characterised by inability to feed the Soviet population (falling quality, quantity, and variety of offered consumer goods and services) without heavy dependence on oil exports and steady reliance on food imports, had become a stark reality by the time Gorbachev came to power in 1985. So, the drastic fall of oil prices in 1986 (from ~88\$ in 1980 to ~25\$ in 1985) reduced the Soviet income and provoked a severe budgetary crisis in Soviet economy, which was already under the major strain of prolonged War in Afghanistan since 1979. In spite of Gorbachev’s rather ambitious policy of economic re-structuring, “Perestroika”, the fact that much of the command-administrative structure were left intact meant that the Soviet nomenklatura elite were very reluctant to give up its control over the means of production. Thus, as the exhausted Soviet economy was struggling to provide the rising living standards, the Soviet ruling elite was not only seen as failing to maintain its social compromise, and keep up with its promise of better life to Soviet people, but also failing to effectively manage the economic means of production on behalf of Soviet people.

Secondly, it is important to emphasise that the grip of Soviet repressive apparatus was greatly released by Gorbachev’s policy of Glasnost’, which accompanied the economic re-structuring policy of Perestroika in 1980’s. This policy of ‘opening up’ meant that the previous ‘coercive’ means of brutal suppression of political dissidents (e.g. Stalin’s Great Purges) gave way to political relaxation and greater civic freedoms (e.g. freedoms of speech and press). So, the Glasnost’ not only took step towards intellectual pluralism and cultural liberalisation (e.g. reforming Soviet media, opening secret archives, reassessment of Soviet history, freeing political dissidents etc.), but it also resulted in open political contestation that unleashed waves of criticism against the Soviet state (e.g. the political rise of Boris Yeltsin as a major critic of Gorbachev’s regime). But, why did the Soviet state fail to repress the political discontent with coercive means, especially, given the fact that it used to effectively employ the repressive state apparatus to stamp out the dissidents before? And, perhaps even more importantly, why did the Soviet ruling elite allow the weakening of repressive apparatus in the first place? First of all, it is important to note that, by the time the policy of Glasnost’ was adopted in 1986, the Soviet ruling elite was left with less leeway to rely on arbitrary power and resort to coercive means of repressive state apparatus. So, despite the structural capacity for coercion and previous abuse of repressive power, the failure by Soviet state to maintain the social compromise caused a major crisis of legitimacy, making it difficult for the Soviet ruling elite to justify the coercion in such conditions. Hence, it can also be assumed relaxing repression and permitting greater freedom was viewed by the Soviet regime as a way to ease political discontent and lessen the degree of social tension in Soviet

Union. Given the deterioration of Soviet economy and stagnation of living standards, massive repression could cause greater discontent from below, as under such conditions the aggravated Soviet population might become even more emboldened to question the hegemonic rule of Communist Party. The Soviet citizens were now not only without improvements in living standards, but also without barriers to openly voice their critique, which left the Soviet state in a weakened position. Thus, Gorbachev's policy of Glasnost' can be viewed as a 'reconciliation' strategy, which by providing greater freedoms and opening up to political contestation was not only trying to offer the Soviet population prospects for change, but also to encourage their input and support in efforts to fix them.

Moreover, it can be argued that the Soviet ruling regime could mobilise the repressive state apparatus, but the lack of integrity among the Soviet nomenklatura elite, which was split on how to confront the Soviet problems, greatly disabled the Soviet repressive apparatus. So, Gorbachev, as a representative of more critical and open-minded generation, and leader of change-minded faction of ruling elite, viewed the Perestroika and Glasnost' as an attempt to address the lingering problems and recast the Soviet state, while the old guard of Soviet nomenklatura elite were alarmed by reforms and highly reluctant to effectuate such drastic changes. Moreover, as the failed August putsch of 1991 (when some members of the Soviet nomenklatura elite, who opposed Gorbachev's ambitious reform program, tried to overthrow him in a military coup) vividly demonstrated, not only there were major disagreements within the Communist Party, but the Soviet repressive state apparatus was of dubious loyalty to the Soviet nomenklatura elite (the initial participation, but eventual failure of military crackdown due to withdrawal of Soviet military because of diminishing regime legitimacy) (Lepingwell, 1992). Hence, it can be assumed that the Soviet repressive state apparatus faced conflicting political pressures, with Gorbachev seeking to find optimal compromise, the hard-line nomenklatura elite opposing Gorbachev's reforms, while Boris Yeltsin proposing a path towards democratisation and economic transformation. Thus, it can be stated that the inter-elite infightings negatively affected the Soviet state's ability to coordinate a coherent response to hegemonic crisis, and prevented the repressive state apparatus to timely react with policy reversal towards coercive means. Therefore, the major splits within the Soviet ruling elite over the application of repressive apparatus and methods for maintaining coercive control greatly destabilised the Soviet repressive apparatus.

Thirdly, the emergence of independent public sphere, where the counter-hegemonic processes started to gain hold, can be said to be another reason behind the eventual failure of the Soviet hegemonic project. With Gorbachev's policy of Glasnost', the civic activism started to actively rise in the USSR. So, this important period has laid the foundations of an independent public sphere by allowing the rise of civic activism "outside of the formal channels of the political and social structure" and the emergence of social organisations previously not "registered with the state" or not "sponsored by the Communist Party". As a consequence, in 1986-1988, the unprecedented level of independent social activity has taken place, as around 30,000 informal groups, with an extensive range of goals encompassing "environmental, cultural, historical, nationalist, political, and social concerns", being formed in Soviet Union. As a consequence, by the time of dissolution of USSR, there has been some basics of an independent civil society in the Soviet Union. Moreover, Gorbachev's policy of Glasnost' has not only contributed to the emergence of independent public sphere in Soviet Union, but also offered the chance for the emergent social groups and movements to seek their goals in a widened public domain. As Glasnost' permitted criticism and allowed the Soviet citizens to discuss publicly the problems, this opened a possibility for political contenders to challenge the ideological power base of Soviet nomenklatura elite. Furthermore, as "the resistance of the subalterns can gain a hearing in the ideological state-apparatuses by exploiting the contradictions that exist there" (Althusser, 2001), the fundamental contradiction that led to the failure of Soviet ideological apparatus needs to be highlighted. I believe, the nature of this contradiction lies in the diametrical opposition between the Marxist-Leninist ideology, characterised by the communist ideal of workers' state and classless

society, and the inverted reality of a Soviet Union, which produced an authoritarian party-state and hierarchical society dominated by the Soviet nomenklatura class. So, Gorbachev's attempts to introduce a piecemeal market reforms and elements of democratisation, not only further aggravated this contradiction by exacerbating the problems rather than resolving them, but the destabilisation prompted by his reforms were also exploited by his political rivals (e.g. Boris Yeltsin, as anti-establishment figure and advocate of democratisation, highly criticised the slow-pace of Gorbachev's reforms). However, for the Soviet ideological apparatus to weaken and bring about the collapse of Soviet Union, there had to be a sustained and widespread perception that the ruling regime and Communist party no longer represent the interests of Soviet people. So, it can be stated that there was an exhaustion of communist ideology, as the Soviet Union was far from "the socialist ideal which envisions a radically democratic polity, a highly and productive and rationally managed economy and an egalitarian social order". Hence, "belief in the inherent superiority of the socialist system to deliver public and commodity goods in greater abundance and quality once the contradictions of capitalism had been overcome was no longer credible" (Sakwa, 2013). Thus, the communist ideal ("the market would vanish along with commodity relations, the state would wither away, and so would money, wages, the disparity between mental and physical labour; there would be no scarcity") was in deep decay, as the Soviet citizens no longer bought into the idea of building communist society, and there was no sign that the Soviet society is in process of transition towards it. Moreover, the Soviet citizens were not anymore willing to suffer deprivation and hardships to sponsor the communist endeavours and extension of Soviet influence abroad through financial aid and military assistance. Finally, it is important to note that the "destruction of the ideological apparatuses has its precondition in the destruction of the State repressive apparatus which maintains it" (Poulantzas, 1972), as "the ideological state-apparatuses reproduce the relations of production under the shield of the repressive state-apparatuses" (Althusser, 1995). Therefore, the erosion of Soviet repressive apparatus, which could have been used by the Soviet nomenklatura elite as a deterrent and ever present threat of repression, has become the beginning of the end, which culminated in the weakening and fall of Soviet ideological apparatus by 1991. All in all, it can be stated that Gorbachev's course of policy action led to weakening of the Soviet ruling elite's monopolistic control over all spheres of Soviet life, and resulted in the eventual disintegration of the system.

Next, as the internal discontent has been growing in Soviet Union in response to economic decline, failing repressive apparatus and weakening communist ideology, the rise of nationalism across constituent republics has also started to exert a tremendous force on Soviet state. So, Gorbachev's policy of Glasnost' not only allowed the political dissidents to mobilise and challenge the Soviet regime, but also created an environment where the secession threats from across Soviet Union actively grew. As the subordinated national groups growingly perceived themselves as a nation, it can be said that the counter-hegemonic nationalism has been rising at this time in the constituent republics of Soviet Union. I believe, these nationalistic sentiments can be viewed as a counter-hegemony creating a contradictory consciousness among the Soviet citizens, and capable of challenging the Soviet hegemony and overcoming the ruling communist ideology. So, the subordinated national groups started to increasingly disassociate themselves from the dominant Soviet identity, from the Russian ideological and cultural hegemony of the Soviet state, with which they had been routinely identified in the past. Hence, it can be stated that "whereas Russian nationalism was long considered the linchpin of Soviet power, sustaining the Soviet regime since the 1930s and mobilising critical support within Soviet society for Soviet political domination throughout eastern Europe and Eurasia, for the most part Russian nationalism failed to come to the defence of either communism or the Soviet empire in the late 1980s" (Beissinger, 2009). And so, as the Soviet constituent republics one after the other started to announce their sovereignty vis-à-vis the Soviet government, the Soviet Union finally had to be disbanded by signing the Belovezh Accords on the 8th of December, 1991. Although the Kazakhstan was the last Soviet constituent republic to formally leave the Soviet Union (on the 16th of December, 1991), as the members of local nomenklatura elite

were interested in its survival, the ethnic unrest has long been growing among population of Kazakh Soviet republic. For example, the violently suppressed “Zheltoksan” protests of 1986, which took place in reaction to Gorbachev's removal of Dinmukhamed Kunayev (an ethnic Kazakh), who served as the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan for more than twenty years, and appointment of Gennady Kolbin (an ethnic Russian), who was widely viewed as an outsider. The majority of Kazakhs perceived such move of the Communist Party’s central apparatus as an attempt to exclude the ethnic Kazakhs from ruling political and economic institutions of their state, and to preserve and extend the Russians’ hegemony as a dominant ethnic group. However, with Kazakhstan gaining its independence in 1991, the local Communist Party elites, which survived the fall of Soviet Union, were poised to assume a leadership role, having convinced many that they have a worthwhile plan for transforming the Kazakhstani society: they stressed the establishment of Kazakhstan as a homeland of ethnic Kazakhs and revival of Kazakh culture and language as the dominant value system. Thus, the growing commitment of Soviet citizens to self-organisation within the widened public sphere coupled with the rising national aspirations of subordinated ethnic groups and weakening Soviet ideological and cultural dominance across Soviet Union that that might have carried so much significance in undermining the legitimacy and authority of the Communist Party, and leading to failure of the Soviet hegemony in Kazakhstan. Although the dissolution of Soviet Union in 1991 has been a complex event that was caused by a number of factors, the growing ethnic unrest in its various constituent republics can be pinpointed as one of the possible causes, among others, of the failure of Soviet hegemonic project.

So, it can be stated that the Soviet state was confronted with the “organic crisis”, which encompassed the political, economic and socio-cultural contradictions, and eventually led to the downfall of Soviet hegemonic project. First of all, as no ruling elite can permanently control the economic means of production, political system of governance and social order without a viable social compromise reached with the masses, the economic inefficiency resulting from the state ownership and central planning, which led to the failure of Soviet state to maintain its social compromise, needs to be highlighted. This was coupled with the incipient social activism and the weakening of repressive apparatus, which together became a catalyst for dormant political discontent and secessionist sentiments that awakened in Soviet Union. Finally, the crippling ideological apparatus led to Soviet state’s loss of its monopolistic control over major spheres of Soviet life, and resulted in the eventual disintegration of the system. So, as the “holy trinity” of Soviet state’s power, the growing economy that fuelled the Soviet people’s hopes for improved welfare, the strong repressive state apparatus that kept a tight grip of control over the Soviet population, and the ideological state apparatus that provided the Soviet citizens with meaning, started to crumble, the legitimacy of the Soviet hegemonic project also started to erode. Despite the attempts to overcome the crisis, through policies of Glasnost’ and Perestroika, the Soviet nomenklatura elite failed to recreate the basis of its legitimacy as a viable regime.

Appendix 6.

How the Bolshevik Revolution was won?

First of all, it is important to start with the Bolshevik Revolution, in order to understand the establishment of communism as a result of the success of Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and creation of Soviet Union in 1922. So, how the Bolsheviks were able to garner the public support and organise the revolution? A multitude of explanations of the success of Bolshevik revolution, ranging from “disunity” and “heterogeneity” to “militancy” and “grievances” of a working class in Tsarist Russia, which contributed to the rapid creation and quick spread of a revolutionary momentum in 1917, was expressed. So, this paradox was widely discussed by scholars, as “in England, where Marx anticipated the outbreak of the first socialist revolution, the working class proved to be reformist in its political impulses”, while “in Russia, whose backwardness was supposed to delay the transcendence of capitalism, the working class proved to be the most revolutionary” (Burawoy, 1985) .

So, Gramsci can be particularly helpful to explain how the Soviet Union was established and why the Bolshevik revolution was successful. Firstly, Gramsci, as a contemporary of that historic events, was embedded in the context of the Bolshevik revolutionary struggle, and actively observed the revolution unfolding in Russia. Secondly, Gramsci, as a leader and founder of the Italian Communist Party, was greatly inspired by this idea of building new society in accordance with the principles of communism. Moreover, he was also interested in the Bolshevik revolution intellectually, as this was a major topic of academic enquiry for Gramsci, as his ideas “revolved around the key question as to why attempts to provoke working class revolution in the West had failed”. He was aimed at addressing the “theoretical flaw in orthodox Marxist analysis which predicted that revolution and the transition to socialism would occur in the most advanced capitalist societies” (Pass, 2015). Thus, Gramsci cannot be removed from the success and challenges of Bolshevik revolution, as these events were a major stage in his personal, political and intellectual development.

According to Gramsci, the unexpected success of the Bolshevik Revolution in industrially underdeveloped Russia can be explained by the weakness of civil society in pre-Revolutionary Tsarist Russia. On the one hand, there was present a strong repressive apparatus of the state in Tsarist Russia, based on such coercive institutions like army, police, Cossacks etc, on which the hegemony of Tsar and the ruling class rested. On the other hand, there was no strong civil society, due to largely illiterate population of Tsarist Russia, which was not participating meaningfully in civil society. The ideological apparatus of the Tsarist state mainly rested on the Orthodox Church and Orthodox Christianity. This relative weakness of a civil society in the Tsarist Russia before the Bolshevik Revolution should be specifically emphasised, and can be contrasted to the well-established civil institutions of the West. Gramsci argued that the institutions of civil society were not well-developed in Tsarist Russia: “In Russia the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relation between State and civil society, and when the State trembled, a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks”. So, a strong civil society was present in the West, including churches, trade unions, mass media, political parties and various voluntary organisations, which needed to be convinced and co-opted into the revolutionary ideas, while the control over the means of economic production and the repressive apparatus of a state was taken over more easily in the absence of a strong civil society in Tsarist Russia.

Moreover, the stark difference between the pre-revolutionary Tsarist Russia, which was a feudal monarchy, and the Western European countries, which were mostly bourgeois capitalist states, needs to be taken into account. According to Gramsci, “in the West the political superstructures created by

the development of capitalism and by mass society made every possible revolutionary strategy slower and more complex” (Liguori, 2008, p.77). So, in the West the economic hegemony of the bourgeoisie classes was also coupled with their cultural dominance within the civil society, which led the majority of population to accept and share their values and interests. Such cultural hegemony in the civil society helped to resist the proletarian uprisings and violent overthrow of the power, unlike the Russian case, where the lack of cultural hegemony of the Tsarist regime, and stronger reliance to the coercive powers of the state, made the general public more receptive to the Revolutionary ideas of Bolshevik Party and helped to create the momentum for October Revolution in 1917. Thus, the Bolsheviks were able to take power in a war of manoeuvre, “where everything is condensed into one front and one moment of struggle, and there is a single strategic breach in the “enemy’s defence” which, once made, enables the new forces to rush in and obtain a definitive (strategic) victory” (Hall, 1996, p. 426-427). That is believed to largely explains the success of Bolshevik Revolution in Tsarist Russia and absence of successful communist revolutions in the West, as the working class revolution could not succeed in capitalist countries of the West precisely because of the nature of bourgeois hegemony and its domination of the ideological apparatuses.

All in all, Gramsci can greatly explain the success of the Bolshevik revolution by reference to the weakness of pre-revolutionary civil society in Tsarist Russia, as he devoted much thought to understanding the reasons behind the absence of successful working class revolutions in the capitalist countries of the West.

Appendix 7.

The Soviet nomenklatura

It is important to note that, in class terms, there was a major shift in productive relations with the establishment of Soviet Union. The pre-revolutionary Russian Empire was ruled by landowning aristocratic class, who enjoyed the dominant position, as they “furnished the upper-echelons of the bureaucracy and army” (McKean, 1977). The peasants used to be tied to this class of land-owning gentry under an exploitive arrangement known as “serfdom”, which was “a form of feudalism in which landless peasants were forced to serve the land-owning nobility”. Despite the abolishment of serfdom in 1861, there remained a vast mass of impoverished and aggravated peasantry, which became a major revolutionary force that helped to fuel the October revolution. However, in order for peasantry, which according to Marxism was regarded as belonging to a class of petty bourgeoisie, to be integrated into the Soviet state, the collectivization, “consolidation of individual peasant households into collective farms called kolkhozes”, and dekulakization, “liquidation of the Kulaks as a class”, had to be undertaken. This was believed to help free poor peasants (indigent and middle peasants) from the economic servitude of kulaks (more prosperous peasants), who were regarded as capitalists, and class enemies of socialism (Zenzinov, 1925). In similar vein, the establishment of Soviet Union brought about major transformation to economic relations and forms of property in traditional Kazakh society, which was also characterised by social stratification and class formation. With “rich cattle owners giving livestock to poor nomads for pasture”, the cattle can be said to be “the main factor of production” and “ground for feudal relationships” in the nomadic society of Kazakhs. However, as the Soviet state waged an ideological war against capitalism and bourgeoisie class, the mass repressions against the class of “bai” (analogous with kulaks - the Kazakh term for person owning many livestock) took place in Kazakhstan. In line with the dekulakization policy, any Kazakh who appeared to be better off financially than others were dispossessed of their livestock and property “for the formation of the material resources of collective farms” (Kozlov, 2014), and the policy of collectivisation was also undertaken, which entailed forced sedentarization of Kazakhs into collective farms (Cameron, 2018). All in all, the chief aim of these Soviet policies of de-kulakization and collectivisation was transformation of traditional nomadic society through elimination of private property, creation of the class of proletariat, transferring the means of production to collective form of ownership.

However, contrary to dominant belief that the Soviet Union was a classless society, it can be stated that a social stratification did exist in Soviet state. Although “the official Soviet answer is that there are two classes, workers and peasants, and a stratum of the intelligentsia” (Nove, 1975, p.624), there was also a dominant class in Soviet Union. The Soviet nomenklatura elite can be regarded as the closest equivalent of “a latent ascendant class” in Soviet Union (Lane, 2013). Of course, it can be argued that the Soviet nomenklatura elite should not be labelled as a “class”, as it does not neatly fit the Marxist understanding of a social class (e.g. the class consciousness, the ownership of private property, the opposition to other classes etc.). So, various other concepts were offered as more appropriate to designate the Soviet nomenklatura, such as the “ruling stratum”, the “power elite”, the “caste” etc. However, “in a country in which ownership of the means of production is vested in the state”, it is the “senior officialdom”, which “constitutes the nearest equivalent to a ruling or dominant class or stratum” (Nove, 1983, p.299). So, if in a capitalist state the class of capitalists exercise their power by virtue of the fact of ownership of the means of production, in the Soviet Union the nomenklatura elite exercised their power by virtue of control over the means of production. As the means of production in Soviet Union were state-owned, it can be argued that the Soviet nomenklatura elite, who fully controlled the Soviet state, were the ones who, as a collectivity, actually owned the means of production in Soviet Union. Although the individual members of the Soviet nomenklatura

elite did not personally own the Soviet means of production, but their ownership was rather a collective one, everything was nonetheless in hands of a small faction of the high-echelon party members. Hence, despite the Soviet Constitution stated that everything belonged to Soviet people (“The land, its natural deposits, waters, forests, mills, factories, mines, rail, water and air transport, banks, post, telegraph and telephones, large state-organized agricultural enterprises (state farms, machine and tractor stations and the like) as well as municipal enterprises and the bulk of the dwelling houses in the cities and industrial localities, are state property, that is, belong to the whole people” (Constitution of USSR, 1936, Article 6)), it can be argued that “the so-called social ownership was a disguise for real ownership by the political bureaucracy”, and the Soviet nomenklatura elite operated the Soviet economy as a dominant class (Djilas, 1957).

Moreover, it can be argued that the Communist Party’s monopoly over the Soviet means of production created conditions for exploitation of the Soviet workers by the Soviet nomenklatura elite through the extraction and appropriation of the surplus value that they produced. And this “collective appropriation of surplus” (Lefort, 1971) can be regarded as exploitative, as “the bureaucracy enjoys ‘surplus revenue’, which is unjustified by its productive contribution to society and determined by the position of any given individual in the bureaucratic pyramid” (Nove, 1975, p.626). The Soviet Union claimed to embrace the socialist principle of “to each according to his contribution”. Although some portion of this surplus value appropriated by the Soviet nomenklatura elite were directed to “benefit ordinary citizens, in their capacity as pensioners, patients, students, scientists, etc.”, the members of nomenklatura elite, as could also “divert it for its own use”, including “a larger income in material goods and privileges than society should normally grant for such functions” (Nove, 1975, p.627). So, the nomenklatura elite “appropriated an amount equal to the notional excess of what they earn (and receive in the form of ‘perks’) over what they ought to have received, an excess which control over the means of production enables them to acquire” (Nove, 1975, p.627). Thus, the membership in this Soviet ruling class of nomenklatura endowed the person not only with the material goods and economic privileges, but, more importantly, with the “exclusive right” to “distribute the national income, to set wages, direct economic development and dispose of nationalised and other property” (Djilas, 1957). As any hegemonic project, to be successful, needs be backed by a viable economic accumulation strategy, the Soviet nomenklatura elite relied on their own economic accumulation strategy disguised under the label of “socialist mode of production”. Due official prohibition of private ownership of productive means and private profit-making in Soviet Union, this accumulation strategy was primarily based on collective control by exercised by the Soviet nomenklatura elite over the economic means of production. So, such full control, under the cover of “central planning”, provided the privileged minority of nomenklatura elite with the exclusive right to redistribute and divert any surplus revenue at their own discretion, including both the societal needs (to make some concession to the dominated masses) and for personal enrichment. All in all, it can be stated that there was a relation of domination and exploitation between the Soviet nomenklatura elite and the Soviet workers due to “the effective possession of the productive apparatus by the bureaucracy, which is in full charge of it, while the proletariat is fully dispossessed” (Castoriadis, 1973).

Appendix 8.

Kazakhstan's integration into the Tsarist Russia and Soviet Union

The Soviet Union was a communist state that replaced the rule of monarchic state of Russian Empire on the territory of modern-day Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan used to be a part of the Governor-Generalship of the Steppe under the Russian Empire in period between 1882-1918. Kazakhstan's integration into the political realm of Tsarist Russia can be traced back to the 17th century, when the Kazakh Khanate was under the constant attack of Dzungar Khanate, as part of a prolonged "Kazakh-Dzungar Wars" (1643–1756). In order to obtain the Russian assistance against the Dzungars, Abulhair Khan, one of the khans of the Lesser Horde, took an oath of allegiance to the Russian crown in 1731. Although Abulhair Khan's intent had been to form a temporary alliance with Russia against the Dzungar Khanate, as he viewed the Russian to be the lesser of two evils, the Russians gained permanent control of the Lesser Horde as a result of his decision, and later expanded their control to the Middle Horde in 1798, the Great Horde in 1820s, to gradually encompass the whole territory of Kazakh Khanate.

With the fall of Tsarist Russia, Kazakhstan got integrated into Soviet Union. Despite the attempts to get sovereignty, a short-lived state of "Alash Autonomy" (1917-1920) was dismantled by the Soviets, while its leadership, the "Alash Party", was banned by the Bolsheviks. As a result, the communism was established on the territory of modern-day Kazakhstan, and it became a constituent Soviet republic. It was first called Kyrgyz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (1920), then it was renamed into Kazak Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (1925), and finally became Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic (1936-1991). The USSR was formally "a federal union" of fifteen national republics with the Soviet Constitution stating that "the sovereign rights of Union Republics shall be safeguarded by the USSR" (Article 81). So, the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic had its own delineated territory, own capital in Almaty, and was ruled by its own Communist Party of the Kazakh SSR. However, in fact, the constituent Soviet republics had little autonomy, and the Soviet Union was a highly centralised state controlled from Moscow.

Appendix 9.

The policy context of 2011's publishing requirement

First of all, it can be argued that 2011's publishing requirement is part of the policy strategy envisioned to help the Kazakhstani state with its economic project of attaining the knowledge-based economy. This goal to build the knowledge-based economy in order to lessen its dependence on oil revenue (e.g. accounts for 50% of budget revenue) and mitigate its vulnerability to oil price swings has been gradually gaining momentum in Kazakhstan. So, the "global economic downturn of 2008-2009", which "demonstrated that the economy of Kazakhstan is vulnerable to commodity price fluctuation" (Utegenova, 2010), led to the first surge in policy initiatives actively advocating the diversification of economy and attainment of knowledge-based economic growth. For instance, the "Strategic Development Plan 2020" was announced in early 2010. It was primarily "aimed at overcoming the global economic crisis" and hence, outlined the "measures for the post-crisis development of the country" (Utegenova, 2010). In particular, the policy focus on human capital development can be noted, as the Strategic Development Plan 2020 calls for "developing human capital to increase competitiveness as a basis for obtaining substantial economic growth" (ibid.). Thus, it can be stated that Kazakhstan saw a sharp rise in the number of policies that prioritised the science and innovation in period after 2010, including the "State Programme on Accelerated Industrial and Innovation Development for 2010-2014" (2010), Law "On Science" (2011), Law "On government support for industrial and innovation activities" (2012), "National concept on innovation development until 2020" (2013).

The second crisis, when "the currency (KZT) has depreciated by 20% in the first and 60% in the second stage due to oil prices falling sharply in 2014" (Azretbergenova & Syzdykova, 2020), further exposed the limitations of commodity-based economic development in Kazakhstan and strengthened aspirations for knowledge-based economic development. So, the National Plan "100 Concrete Steps" was launched in 2015, as a direct response to the new economic crisis. The plan announced major institutional reforms, which were intended to serve as the anti-crisis measures. But most importantly, "development of innovative clusters as the foundation of knowledge-based economy", which will house "research centres and laboratories for joint research projects and development activities as well as their further commercialisation", was set forth in this National Plan (2015).

Although there already were a number of policies in place, promoting the innovative activity in Kazakhstan, the innovative development was accentuated even further with the crisis of 2014. A series of policy documents that aimed to provide a legislative framework for the innovative development, including the Law "On commercialisation of the outcomes of scientific and technical activities" (2015), the Law "Protection of Intellectual Property Rights" (2015) and Law "On commercial code of the Republic of Kazakhstan" (2016), followed shortly afterwards. Thus, it can be argued that the promotion of innovation and R&D, to launch the knowledge-based economic growth, was brought to the fore of Kazakhstani state policy after the crisis of 2009 and 2014. As a result, it is critical to recognise the significance of knowledge-based economic development acquiring new policy impetus with each new crisis. This, in my opinion, can be attributed to the instability of post-Soviet hegemony, as the crisis directly threatened the post-Soviet social compromise, which was partially based (along with political stability and inter-ethnic peace) on the promise of economic prosperity and well-being for the Kazakhstani people.

As the importance of human resource potential for attainment of knowledge-based economy is undeniable, the special place in Kazakhstan's innovative development plan is given to universities and university-based research. For example, the "State Program of Industrial and Innovative Development" (2015) entrusted the selected Kazakhstani universities with the task of preparing

“postgraduate researchers, capable of bringing research and technology innovations to industry” by “creating new postgraduate research programs linked to local industry, created in collaboration with international partners” (Jumakulov et al, 2019). The “State Programme for Education Development 2011–2020” also tried to stimulate the innovative capacity of universities by setting objectives such as “modernising infrastructure”, “raising the scientific potential of academic staff”, “strengthening the translation of basic research into applicable product” (Yembergenova et al, 2020). Thus, it can be stated that, in search for ways to attain the knowledge-based economic growth, the Kazakhstani state has increasingly turned to the innovative potential of universities.

As the Kazakhstani state set priorities on building the universities’ research capacities, the 2011’s “Rules for conferring academic ranks” deserves a special attention. By trying to create an incentive for the Kazakhstani faculty members to publish in non-zero impact factor journals in order to qualify for promotion (e.g., assistant professor, associate professor, professor), this policy aims to boost the research productivity at Kazakhstani HEIs.

Appendix 10.

The codes assigned to the interview participants

Table 27. The codes assigned to interview participants							
Gender	Academic degree	Academic rank	Subject/discipline	Type of university	Career stage	Nationality	Assigned code
Female	Foreign PhD-US	Assistant Professor	Social sciences-Education	JSC/elite/newly-established research university	mid-career	International	Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, Education, International
Male	Foreign PhD-US	Professor	Engineering-Robotics	JSC/elite/newly-established research university	mid-career	International	Elite RU, male, foreign PhD, Prof, mid-career, Robotics, International
Female	Foreign PhD-US	Assistant Professor	Natural sciences-biology	JSC/elite/newly-established research university	mid-career	Kazakhstani	Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, Biology, KZ
Male	Foreign PhD-US	Assistant Professor	Social sciences-Education	JSC/elite/newly-established research university	mid-career	Kazakhstani	Elite RU, male, foreign PhD, Assistant Prof, mid-career, Education, KZ
Female	Foreign PhD-UK	Lecturer	Social sciences-Education	JSC/elite/newly-established research university	early-career	Kazakhstani	Elite RU, female, foreign PhD, lecturer, early-career, Education, KZ
Female	Soviet Candidate of Sciences	Associate Professor	Humanities - Philology	public/national/newly-established research university	later-career	Kazakhstani	Public, National RU, female, Soviet Candidate of Sciences, Associated Prof, later-career, Philology, KZ
Male	Local PhD	Lecturer	Social sciences-Political science	Private/newly-established Business School	mid-career	Kazakhstani	Private Business School, male, local PhD, lecturer, mid-career, Political Sciences, KZ

Table 27. The codes assigned to interview participants

Gender	Academic degree	Academic rank	Subject/discipline	Type of university	Career stage	Nationality	Assigned code
Male	Foreign PhD-Turkey	Docent	Social sciences-Islamic studies	Private/newly-established Islamic Studies university	early-career	Kazakhstani	Islamic S. U, male, foreign PhD, Docent, early-career, Islamic studies, KZ
Female	Local PhD	Senior lecturer	Social sciences-Religious studies	Public/National/research university	early-career	Kazakhstani	Public, National RU, female, local PhD, Senior Lecturer, early-career, Religious studies, KZ.
Male	Soviet Doctor of Sciences	Professor	Social sciences-Political science	Public/National/Soviet, long-established research university	later-career	Kazakhstani	Public, National RU, male, Soviet Doctor of Sciences, Professor, later-career, Political Science, KZ
Female	Soviet Candidate of Sciences	Senior lecturer	Social sciences-Pedagogical Sciences	JSC/Soviet, long-established linguistic university	later-career	Kazakhstani	Linguistic U, female, Soviet Candidate of Sciences, Senior Lecturer, later-career, Pedagogical sciences, KZ
Female	Local PhD	Docent	Social sciences-Political science	Public/National/Soviet, long-established research university	mid-career	Kazakhstani	Public, National RU, female, local PhD, Docent, mid-career, Political Science, KZ
Female	Soviet Doctor of Sciences	Professor	Social sciences-Pedagogical sciences	Public/national/Soviet, long-established university	later-career	Kazakhstani	Public, national U, female, Soviet Doctor of Sciences, Professor, later-career, Pedagogical Sciences, KZ.

Table 27. The codes assigned to interview participants

Gender	Academic degree	Academic rank	Subject/discipline	Type of university	Career stage	Nationality	Assigned code
Male	Local PhD	Associate Professor	Engineering -IT	Public/National/Soviet-long-established research university	mid-career	Kazakhstani	Public, National RU, male, local PhD, Associate Prof, mid-career, IT, KZ
Female	Local PhD	Associate Professor	Social sciences-Sociology	Private/Soviet, long-established university	mid-career	Kazakhstani	Private U, female, local PhD, Associate Prof, mid-career, Sociology, KZ.
Male	Soviet Candidate of Sciences	Docent	IT-Computer Science	JSC/newly-established university	later-career	Kazakhstani	Newly-established public IT U, male, Soviet Candidate of Sciences, docent, later-career, IT, KZ
Female	Soviet Candidate of Sciences	Docent	Social sciences-pedagogical sciences	Public/national/Soviet, long-established university	later-career	Kazakhstani	Public, National U, female, Soviet Candidate of Sciences, Docent, later-career, pedagogical sciences, KZ
Male	Soviet Candidate of Sciences	Docent	IT-telecommunications	Public/national/newly-established research university	later-career	Kazakhstani	Public, National RU, male, Soviet Candidate of Sciences, Docent, later-career, IT, KZ
Male	Local PhD	Associate Professor	Engineering -IT	Public/National/Soviet, long-established research university	mid-career	Kazakhstani	Public, National RU, male, local PhD, Associate Prof, mid-career, IT, KZ.
Male	Local PhD	Associate Professor	Engineering -IT	Public/National/Soviet, long-established research university	mid-career	Kazakhstani	Public, National RU, male, local PhD, Associate Prof, mid-career, IT, KZ.

Appendix 11 (Sample of the Letter to Participants and the Consent Form)

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**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

Faculty of Education

Project Title: The role of Kazakhstani HEIs, as knowledge-producing entities, in Kazakhstan's post-Soviet nation-building.

Dear _____,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in interview. Your responses will feed into my PhD project on knowledge production at Kazakhstani HEIs, which involves interviews with research management administrators and faculty members at Kazakhstani HEIs. We would like to confirm what the participation in this project involves (see below) and ask for your consent to incorporate your data into my PhD project.

What does this project involve?

The aim of research is to better understand how the linguistic requirements can affect the knowledge production processes, while focusing on Kazakhstani HEIs, which underwent a shift away from the Soviet model of teaching institution towards a research university, can provide an interesting transitional context for examining the Kazakhstani HEIs' role, as core knowledge production sites, in Kazakhstan's post-Soviet nation-building.

For this project, we are interviewing key stakeholders, who play an important role in knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs. We have asked you to participate because we would like to understand your perspective, as a research management administrator/a faculty member, as well as learn more about your own personal experience of being involved in the knowledge production processes at Kazakhstani HEIs.

With your permission, we would like to record this interview for the sake of accuracy. The voice recorder will be used only to record what is being said during interview. The voice recorder will be turned on at the beginning of interview and turned off after the completion of interview. The audio recordings of interviews will be transcribed, and assist me during the data analysis stage.

Participation in the project is confidential. This means that in subsequent use of the recorded material, your name and other organizational or personal details that can identify you will not be shared or published. We may use quotations from this interview in future publications, but all data will be anonymized (i.e. any personal information will be removed).

All data will be stored securely in password-protected computers and in a locked room, and only my supervisor and I will be allowed to review the recorded data. We will keep the collected data for 5 years; it will then be confidentially destroyed. If you have any questions about how your personal information will be used, please contact the principal researcher Aikerim Kargazhanova [Email address and mobile number redacted].

Participation in the project is also voluntary. We truly appreciate your interest and commitment to our project. However, if you determine you do not want to take part any more, you are free to withdraw your participation at any time and without giving a reason. After withdrawal, all data already collected will be destroyed. In such a case, they can contact Aikerim Kargazhanova [Email address and mobile number redacted], and she will delete the recordings immediately.

With your permission, I will use the recordings and transcripts only for research purposes. The findings (in anonymized form) will be reported to academic and professional audiences at conferences, and the research can be written up as a journal article.

Are you happy to proceed?

If yes, please complete the attached consent form and return it to me by handing me a signed copy before the interview.

Thank you for your participation in this research project.

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**UNIVERSITY OF
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Faculty of Education

Participant Consent Form

Project Title: The role of Kazakhstani HEIs, as knowledge-producing entities, in Kazakhstan's post-Soviet nation-building

I, the undersigned, have read and understood the participant information sheet about the study and have had the opportunity to ask questions and get satisfactory answers about the study. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study without any consequences at any point of the research. I also understand who will have access to information provided and what will happen to the data at the end of the study. I am aware that this study has been reviewed by and received ethics clearance through the University of Cambridge Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee. If need be, I can find out more about this research study by contacting the researcher Aikerim Kargazhanova [Email address redacted] or her supervisor at the department Dr. Eva Barbara Hartmann [Email address redacted].

Fully informed of my rights, I agree to participate in the study, carried out by Aikerim Kargazhanova, a full-time PhD student at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

----- For Researcher's Use Only -----

Name of researcher: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____