

# Internationalisation of Kazakhstan's Higher Education at Home and Abroad



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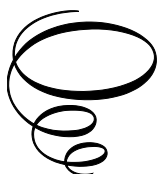
*Critical Explorations*

Edited by

Munyaradzi Hwami

and Tsediso Michael Makoelle

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Internationalisation of Kazakhstan's Higher Education at Home and Abroad:  
Critical Explorations

Edited by Munyaradzi Hwami and Tsediso Michael Makoelle

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## FOREWORD

MARTHA C. MERRILL, PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF HIGHER EDUCATION

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY, USA

This book, *Kazakhstan's Higher Education Internationalisation at Home and Abroad: Critical Explorations*, is an essential addition to the comparative and internationalisation education literature. First, the sources on the internationalisation of Kazakhstani higher education that are available in English previously have been scattered in various journals or chapters of books devoted to Central Asia. This is the first book in English devoted to all aspects of the subject. Second, Kazakhstan is unique among the fifteen former Soviet nations in having an evolving but national-level plan for internationalisation, including a state-sponsored international education program (Bolashak), a government-supported English-medium-of-instruction university with multiple international partners (Nazarbayev University), independent accreditation, and incentives for state institutions to increase their autonomy (Hartley et al. 2016). Third, this book is unique because, rather than simply reporting on the developments since independence, the authors take a critical lens, and rather than following a formula for analyzing internationalisation, the authors write with their voices and perspectives. Fourth, the authors, all with solid connections to Kazakhstan, include both established academics and newer voices, graduate students and young professionals who have started their careers in the independence era, so a variety of outlooks are heard.

The critical perspective and the diversity of Kazakhstan-centric voices are critical in analyzing internationalisation in Kazakhstani higher education for three reasons. First, the internationalisation of higher education in Kazakhstan, while undoubtedly producing many positive results, has been very much a top-down project, driven by government initiatives such as the Bolashak program, the creation of Nazarbayev University, and the push to join the Bologna Process. The top-down nature of internationalisation in turn, has had four effects that the chapters in this book address. First, the processes and priorities were complex for educators and other actors to criticize, as choices had been made by those in power. This book reverses

that and offers a critical perspective. Second, alternatives to the choices made at the top rarely could be presented. Third, the funding of some initiatives meant that support for others was lacking. Fourth, the top-down government-to-institutions paradigm was replicated within many institutions, with the voices of the rector and others in the leadership team being the predominant ones heard. These effects are counteracted by the diversity of voices heard in this volume.

A second reason why the emphasis on Kazakhstan-centric voices in this work is important is that internationalisation in Kazakhstan to date has been largely isomorphic, that is, drawing on models developed elsewhere. Nazarbayev University, despite its undeniable excellence in many fields, has curricula, policies, and procedures largely influenced by foreign examples. University programs that gain foreign accreditation can skip Kazakhstani accreditation (Merrill 2020). The Bologna Process also has meant a focus on ideas and issues imported from Europe and developed in that context. It is important now for those who know Kazakhstan well to offer their own critiques on the past and perspectives for the future.

A third reason why new voices are needed is that internationalisation of higher education in Kazakhstan, for all its 21st-century rhetoric, has maintained one very Soviet-era focus: the idea that higher education is for economic development and workforce training. While these are important goals for a new nation that is establishing its own self-sufficiency, both higher education in general and internationalisation specifically can have many other purposes, as suggested by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the substantial literature on higher education and civic engagement.

*Kazakhstan's Higher Education Internationalisation at Home and Abroad: Critical Explorations* is an important, insightful, and necessary book for readers hoping to understand not only contemporary Kazakhstan but also the plusses and minuses of various mechanisms of change in higher education systems.



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## PREFACE

MUNYARADZI HWAMI  
AND TSEDISO MICHAEL MAKOELE

The notion of internationalisation of education has become a hotly contested topic in post-Soviet Countries. Kazakhstan, becoming independent from the Soviet Union in 1991, embarked on critical education reforms, including those in higher education. The purpose of educational reforms was to prepare Kazakhstani citizens for a more globalised and competitive economy, as espoused in all the strategic goals set out by the first president of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr Nursultan Nazarbayev.

In order to achieve economic prosperity, Kazakhstan had to embark on the transformation of higher education, which included, among others, the adoption of the Bologna process, which set out to ensure that Kazakhstani higher education conformed with the European standards and, as a result, meet the standards of international practice in higher education. Adopting the Bologna process in 2010 ensured that Kazakhstan revised its qualification framework, and the content of higher education programmes were to meet 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills. The establishment of Nazarbayev University (NU) served as a springboard for transformation in higher education. NU was to become a hub for transforming and testing international practice for the Kazakhstani higher education landscape.

Since adopting the Bologna process, several changes have been witnessed, i.e., a concerted effort to ensure institutional autonomy and shared governance. The role of university boards of governance was to be strengthened. Nazarbayev University was declared by law a research university and thus assumed the status of a leading research institution at the forefront of research and innovation. There have been efforts to cascade good research practices to other higher education institutions, including but not limited to publications in top research journals and ethics in research. Nazarbayev University partnered with top international universities such as the University of Pennsylvania, Cambridge, and Duke. Since then, Nazarbayev University has become the number one research university in Central Asia

and the highest-ranked university in Kazakhstan, according to Times Higher Education Global University Rankings.

Therefore, the idea of this book came amidst the continuous process of reforms and changes in higher education. As an international faculty at Nazarbayev University, Dr Munyaradzi Hwami, a scholar of internationalisation of higher education and an experienced researcher in contexts of decolonising and transforming education systems, thought it was essential to take stock of the developments of the internationalisation of higher education in Kazakhstan, i.e. to unpack the understanding of internationalisation of education, its unfolding process, impact on the Kazakhstani higher education landscape, achievements, opportunities, threats and challenges as the process of internationalisation continues. Although Prof Tsedisio Makoelle's field of expertise is more on equity and inclusion as well as educational leadership, having been in Kazakhstani education for nearly nine years and part of many educational platforms, his invaluable contribution to this volume brings a wealth of knowledge and significant insights about Kazakhstan education in general. Therefore, the two editors make a formidable team to deconstruct and re-construct the process of internationalisation of higher education in Kazakhstan. To achieve this goal, the two editors brought together a team of chapter contributors who are active researchers in Kazakhstan's higher education field. They are active researchers who have conducted research in various fields of higher education. Therefore, their in-depth understanding of the Kazakhstani higher education landscape may only enrich debates and strengthen the arguments and discussions to illuminate the process of internationalisation of higher education in Kazakhstan.

The editors and chapter contributors aim to comprehensively account for the internationalisation of higher education in Kazakhstan through empirical and analytic discussions. The discussions in this volume are a mix of evidence-based studies, and analytic discussions of literatures shared parallel to the authors' lived experiences. As a result, this volume assumes a theory-and-practice approach to analysing the internationalisation of higher education as a phenomenon in Kazakhstan.

Furthermore, this book makes valuable contributions to theoretical knowledge practice and provides insights for policymakers to consider in shaping the internationalisation of higher education going forward. Higher education students, researchers, scholars and policymakers will find this volume significant. While the editors and chapter contributors are fully aware of the metabletic nature of the Kazakhstani higher education

landscape, we believe this book will form the basis to enrich further research and discussions about the internationalisation of higher education in Kazakhstan.

## ENDORSEMENTS

**Dr Aida**, Dean of Nazarbayev Graduate School of Education, Kazakhstan

This comprehensive work provides a profound exploration of internationalisation in Kazakhstan's higher education sector. The book serves as an introduction to the topic, establishing a fundamental understanding of the trends, meanings, and theories associated with internationalisation in Kazakhstan. Furthermore, it delves into the historical development and significance of internationalisation in Kazakh higher education. The authors shed light on Kazakhstan's strategies for global engagement and their contribution to the broader internationalisation effort. They also examine the progress in higher education within Kazakhstan, including the implementation of inclusive education policies. Additionally, the book offers a unique perspective by investigating the experiences of graduate students at English-medium instruction (EMI) universities in Kazakhstan, providing insights into their challenges and opportunities. Addressing various aspects of internationalization, each chapter makes a substantial contribution to the broader conversation about higher education in Kazakhstan. "Kazakhstan's Higher Education Internationalisation at Home and Abroad: Critical Explorations" is a recommended read for those seeking a deeper understanding of this vital field within Kazakhstan. It stands as an invaluable resource for both academic and practical insights, with the potential to become a seminal work in international education.

**Dr Dip Kapoor**, Professor, Faculty of Education, University of Alberta, Alberta, Canada

This timely collection is a pertinent and much-needed addition to the still emergent literature on the reform, development and impact of the process of internationalisation of higher education in post-Soviet Central Asia and Kazakhstan in particular, after the adoption of the Bologna process in 2010 in this region. Paying specific attention to the establishment of Nazarbayev University, an internationally recognised top-ranked research institution in Central Asia and Kazakhstan and primary conduit for internationalisation of higher education, inter/nationally experienced professors of International Higher Education Transformation, Decolonization, Equity and Inclusion, Dr. Munyaradzi Hwami and Dr. Tsediso Makoelle edit a revealing and

necessary collection on educational and social change in post-Soviet higher education. Bringing together a pertinent group of early career and experienced faculty and graduate insiders who are local-national-international experts, the chapters engage in critical explorations of a process of internationalisation of higher education being designed to prepare Kazakh citizens for a more globalised and competitive economy, including related contradictions on de-Russification, Westernisation and Neo/Colonialism, Englishisation and Linguicide/Epistemicide.

—Dip Kapoor Professor, Social Justice Dr. & International Studies in Education Faculty of Education, University of Alberta, Canada

**Dr Isak Frumin**, Professor at Constructor University Bremen, Germany

Kazakhstan's higher education has taken innovative strides towards internationalisation, offering a unique look at how a once-closed system can join the global stage. This book provides a straightforward and engaging exploration of those efforts, making it a valuable read for anyone interested in the globalisation of higher education.

—Isak Frumin, Constructor University Bremen, Germany

**Dr David Geoffrey Smith**, Professor Emeritus, University of Alberta, Canada

At a time when the international community is significantly dividing and polarizing, and conflicts over the shape and form of the future global community are increasing, this book will occupy an important place in global higher education polity and practice. It utilises the positive Kazakhstani quest for internationalisation of higher education as a base for deepening our understanding of what internationalisation entails in practice, how it unfolds, and what the implications might be for the future. This is a beautifully rich text that both broadens our theoretical appreciation of "internationalisation" and its complexities, as well as it supplies wonderfully fruitful studies of internationalisation 'on the ground', so to speak. I congratulate the Editors and Contributors: We should all be grateful for what they have achieved in this highly relevant and important work."

—David Geoffrey Smith Ph.D.  
Professor Emeritus in Globalization Studies in Education  
University of Alberta, Canada

## ABOUT THE EDITORS



**Dr Munyaradzi Hwami** is a Zimbabwean Canadian educator and an Associate Professor at Nazarbayev University's Graduate School of Education. Previously, he had a tenure track position at Great Zimbabwe University in Zimbabwe. Munyaradzi also served as an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta in Canada. In 2019, he became an Associate Professor at Nazarbayev University's Graduate School of Education. His research experience and interests are in international higher education and development, anti-Black racism and social justice education, anti/hegemonic perspectives and education, and political sociology of education. Munyaradzi has published several journal articles and book chapters on Zimbabwe, Kazakhstan, and Canada.



**Prof Tsediso Michael Makoelle** is a full professor and Vice Dean for Research at Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Education and a recipient of the prestigious Nelson Mandela Scholarship to the United Kingdom (UK). He is currently a visiting research fellow at the International Laboratory of Social Integration Research of the National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia.

He holds several educational qualifications, which include the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Inclusive Education from the University of Manchester, UK and a Doctor of Education (DEd) in Education Management and Leadership from the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Prof. Makoelle's teaching and research experience spans just over 30 years, focusing on secondary and higher education. At the beginning of his career, Prof. Makoelle started his pedagogical work as a high school teacher and then head of department, vice principal and principal in several secondary schools in the Education Department of the Republic of South Africa. He has notably worked as a lecturer and senior lecturer at Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Cape Town and the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. Prof. Makoelle has occupied several academic and research leadership roles, i.e., Director of Doctoral Studies, General Director for Research and lately, the Vice Dean for Research.

He has written and published over 90 papers, including books on inclusive education and educational leadership, management, governance and administration for both national and international audiences and readership.



Prof. Makoelle has supervised over 10 PhDs and many Masters students. He is a member of several international research bodies. He reviews grants and funding applications for the South African National Research Foundation (NRF). He has reviewed papers for several international Scopus and Web of Science journals and evaluated research theses for several universities in South Africa and abroad. He has also reviewed postgraduate courses and programmes for many universities and serves on the editorial boards of several international journals. He has collaborated with US, UK, Europe, and African universities. He is passionate about inclusive education, with his main research interest being in the conceptualisation and operationalisation of inclusive pedagogy within disadvantaged South African classroom contexts and beyond. He has devoted his research work within the framework of Participatory Action Research, informed by notions of the critical, reflective practitioner and transformative epistemologies.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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**Dr Michelle Bedeker** is an assistant professor and the academic program director for the MA in Multilingual Education at Nazarbayev University. She holds a PhD degree in language and literacy studies, a Master's Degree in Education (Applied Linguistics/Language Education), a Bachelor of Education (Postgraduate) in Curriculum, Pedagogy, and School Leadership, and a Bachelor in Education degree from the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. She received various scholarships from Pearson International and Erasmus Mundus to study abroad at Tromsø University in Norway and Uppsala University in Sweden. She uses a global south and a critical postcolonial lens to counter global-local binaries in multilingual classroom contexts. She is specifically interested in how policy borrowing from the West creates global pedagogical contact zones that result in local/global entanglement, which often silences or ignores teachers' funds of knowledge and epistemologies in multilingual education and pedagogy.

**Saltanat Imanmalikova** holds a Master of Sciences in Educational Leadership from Nazarbayev University. Her research interests are in higher education, particularly internationalising it. She is passionate about understanding the different elements of internationalisation and its benefits and drawbacks.

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focusing on examining the underlying paradigms of existing approaches, transition to new curricular models, and its influence on teachers' agency and institutional structures. She has experience working on several international projects, such as examining internal student mobility and funding reform in Kazakhstan. In parallel to her research work, she has taught English for 12 years at different levels of the educational system: an international school, the faculty of International Affairs of Eurasian National University, and a British Council preparatory course for Bolashak scholarship recipients.

**Assylzhan Dilzhanova** is a 2<sup>nd</sup>-year Master's student at the Graduate School of Education at Nazarbayev University. Her research interest is investigating factors that positively influence Kazakhstan's EMI (English as a Medium of Instruction) practice. Deepening into this study area began with an exciting interest in internationalisation, precisely how this process occurs and how international trends apply in Kazakhstan.

**Saltanat Zarykbay** is a senior lecturer at the School of Natural and Social Sciences, Kazakh British Technical University, in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Her research interests include English as the medium of instruction, academic writing in English in EMI contexts, academic reading technologies, and secondary writing research with culturally and linguistically diverse students.

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**Dr Dilrabo Jonbekova** is an Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Education at Nazarbayev University in Kazakhstan. Her research focuses on the interplay between education and labour markets. Within this area, she focuses on the transition of graduates from university to the job market

and potential socio-economic inequalities in the employability of graduates. She is also interested in international education and development. Her current research projects focus on the employability of international education graduates, the contribution of international education graduates to their home country, university-industry partnerships, and innovation in higher education within post-Soviet countries. Dilrabo serves on the international advisory board for the Journal of Comparative and International Higher Education. She is also an international British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE) Executive Committee member.

**Aidana Akhmedova** is a Suleyman Demirel University graduate with a BA in International Relations and an MSc in Educational Leadership from Nazarbayev University. She is a chief expert in the International Relations Office at SDU University and is responsible for academic mobility programs for students and staff. Her research expertise lies in international programs in higher education sectors.

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**Madina Kubekova** holds a Master of Science in Educational Leadership (Higher education) from the Graduate School of Education at Nazarbayev University and a Master of Pedagogical Science in foreign languages from Kazakh National Pedagogical University. Her expertise is in Higher Education research, emphasising policy analysis related to the Internationalization of Higher Education and outcomes from Higher Education. She is highly interested in the competencies that university graduates in Kazakhstan must possess to contribute to a country's workforce and economic development.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the Graduate School of Education (GSE) and its leadership for supporting and providing a conducive research environment critical for the success of this book project. Our sincere gratitude goes to the student participants, our peers and colleagues in internationalisation research for their contributions to the discourse on internationalisation and their critical views captured in the book.



# CHAPTER 1

## INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN KAZAKHSTAN: TRENDS, MEANINGS AND THEORIES

### MUNYARADZI HWAMI

Kazakhstan is one of the countries that presents an excellent example of the internationalisation of higher education in the non-Western world. Almost all the features of contemporary internationalisation can be observed. Internationalisation at home (Leask 2016), cross-border internationalisation (Knight 2012), partnerships, international branch campuses, inbound internationalisation (for students, faculty, and researchers) (Jones 2016), internationalising the curriculum (Leask 2020), and adopting English as a medium of instruction (Prilipko 2017; Wilkinson and Gabriëls 2021) are key internationalisation initiatives observed in Kazakhstan. The role of internationalisation of higher education in developing the post-Soviet republic is pronounced in many government documents and policies (OECD 2018). Kazakhstan aims to develop and become an independent but competitive member of the international or global community, culminating in membership to the club of the 50 most competitive countries in the world (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2010). Furthermore, the developed Western countries and institutions are considered partners and models to emulate. Consequently, Kazakhstan's higher education is integrated into the European higher education system (Ministry for Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2010; Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2007).

The political and historical contexts must be considered to understand the internationalisation of higher education in Kazakhstan. In his 2017 Presidential Message to the Nation, the then president, Nazarbayev, emphasised modernisation's economic aspects, including digitalisation, foreign investments, trade and human capital (Nazarbayev 2017). In another

significant policy presentation, *Course Towards the Future: Modernisation of Kazakhstan's Identity*, the president outlined his vision of a process of broader social and identity innovation (Seisembayeva 2017). He stated that this was necessary to maintain the country's political and economic competitive position. The presentation called for the citizens of Kazakhstan to be more culturally open, proficient in computer use and foreign languages, pragmatic, patriotic, open-minded, and firmly focused on knowledge and evolutionary development. Another key element of the modernisation programme was adopting a Latin script for the Kazakh language alphabet (Higgins 2018; Sordi 2017). In all these policy initiatives, it can be observed that Kazakhstan is trying to balance its development policies considering its Soviet past, e.g., continued close relationships with Russia, as the nearest geographical neighbour, and China, a key trading partner and investor in the energy industry (Sordi 2017), and the West as a modernisation partner. This book presents internationalisation initiatives from a Central Asian and Western perspective, a departure from extant literature dominated by Western accounts. The book further raises questions about current internationalisation policies and practices borrowed and adopted from the West. The theoretical and empirical studies from academics in this book contribute to research knowledge, literature on internationalisation and theories.

## **Internationalisation Trends in Kazakhstan**

Kazakhstan is not an exception to the internationalisation initiatives observed globally. Several internationalisation policy programs are underway, including the flagship Bolashak scholarship programme. This state policy was initiated in 1993 to promote internationalisation abroad by training future leaders in business, public policy, science, engineering, medicine, and other vital fields (Nazarbayev 2006). At its inception, it covered all study-related undergraduate and graduate degree costs. The *Washington Times* called it the "best scholarship programme in the world" (Burton 2016). Most recipients study in Western English universities, a trend observed in all major non-West student-supplying economies, for example, China and India.

The second notable internationalisation strategy was the establishment of Nazarbayev University (NU) in 2010 with a dual mission: to integrate science, education, and industry, to support the country's development and to advance international best practices (Koch 2014). NU uses a model of strategic foreign partnerships with institutions such as Duke University,



University College London, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Wisconsin (NU 2023). It is also the only autonomous institution exempted from implementing state curricula and processes affecting other local universities. It is well-equipped with high-quality infrastructure where about 70% comprises international faculty from Western universities (Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2011; NU 2023). Partnerships with foreign universities included course licensing agreements, consultation and advice, and services in the form of specified deliverables based on contracts with limited terms. Ownership of the university remained wholly in the hands of Kazakhstan's government.

Also, Kazakhstan has implemented Trilingual Education, stipulating Kazakh as the official state language, Russian as the language for interethnic communication, and English as a means of global integration (Prilipko 2017). Since then, the availability of English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in universities has significantly risen, with both full and partial EMI courses accounting for 13.4% and 10.2% among postgraduates and undergraduates. Furthermore, the number of universities in Kazakhstan offering EMI degrees increased to 42 out of 125 tertiary institutions in 2018 (Goodman and Karabassova 2018). The shift to EMI in Kazakhstani universities necessitates students with Russian and Kazakh as their mother tongues (L1) to exhibit competence in English language skills and academic discourses and practices.

All these policies also promote the movement of academics (students and faculty, and in some instances, professional administrative staff) from other countries to Kazakhstan. A growing number of African students prefer Central Asia (Kazakhstan) as a destination for graduate studies. Another growing trend is the establishment of international branch campuses in Kazakhstan. In doing so, Kazakhstan mainly focuses on the top 200 global-ranking universities that can offer the best academic practice and knowledge. The expectation is for foreign universities to help the country's regional economies grow (Imangali 2023; Nurmaganbetova 2023). The government of Kazakhstan has pronounced the intention to establish the country as the regional academic hub (Imangali 2023), but the trend started long back. The plan is to open 12 branches of foreign universities by 2029 (Lem 2023).

## **Theoretical Understandings**

The internationalisation of higher education is explained and interpreted from different perspectives, unmasking its complexity. Strong supporters and critics of the process exist.

## Hyper-internationalisation

Like Held et al. 's (1999) hyperglobalists, some view internationalisation as the best form of higher education in an increasingly interconnected world. As an epistemological response to globalisation, or specifically neoliberal globalisation (Spring 2015), the pro-development and modernity aspects of internationalisation are highlighted. This school of thought focuses on the internationalisation policy dynamics and conditions of economic competitiveness and nation-states integration into the world community of nations. Through internationalisation, higher education is tasked with the production of graduates with intercultural competence (Deardorff 2015; Van de Vijver and Leung 2009), also referred to as global competence (Roy et al. 2019), global consciousness (Stevic and Brown 2016), and global mindedness (Varela and Gaitlin-Watts 2014). "Intercultural competence refers to an individual's ability to cope with life in another culture" (Roy et al. 2019, 1634), and in the context of the modern globalised world, intercultural competence is critical in many areas, including personal and professional. Universities have adopted internationalisation to help students acquire intercultural competence, with both home and abroad forms of internationalisation dominating higher education practice (Colaiacono et al. 2022; Ngai et al. 2020). Researchers such as Winslade (2016) and Onorati et al. (2017), for example, found that student involvement in an internationalised curriculum positively influenced their intercultural competence as measured by cultural awareness and the use of culturally appropriate work practices. Thus, the importance of internationalisation initiatives in Kazakhstan and elsewhere is justified.

Other proponents of internationalisation emphasise the individual and national benefits accrued from participating in the process. Such expressions view internationalisation as furthering the third mission of higher education and contributing to communities' social and cultural well-being (Jones et al. 2021; Mulvey 2022). They argue that critiques of internationalisation "tend to overlook and underplay the potential of internationalisation to contribute to distributive justice" (Mulvey 2022, 4). As such, the potential positive impact of higher education capacity development on civil society, democratisation, female empowerment, or population health is generally not acknowledged. Internationalisation is, therefore, also viewed as an attempt at rectifying injustice resulting from misrecognition, maldistribution, and misrepresentation of non-Westerners (Fraser 2009). Such an approach acknowledges the agency of individuals, institutions, and nation-states in the non-West/Global South and how actors in these regions have contributed to internationalisation and the development paradigm.

## **Anti/Critical Internationalisation**

Critiques of internationalisation in higher education are against the separation of education and economic or political developments. For example, the concepts of development and globalisation both refer to descriptors of dynamics associated with the evolution of capitalism as a world system (Veltmeyer 2005). The idea of development that nation-states struggle to achieve is a way of subjecting the target population in developing countries to the dictates of capital (Sachs 1992). The idea of development was theoretically reconstructed to ensure that those countries in the process of liberating themselves from the yoke of colonial rule would pursue a capitalist development path (Veltmeyer 2005). As internationalisation is meant to achieve development, this line of thinking argues that internationalisation in higher education is the epistemological arm of neoliberal globalisation, the new imperialism (Harvey 2005). It is the continuation of colonialism (Mikander 2016).

Developing from this critical view of internationalisation is a variety of scholarship that emphasises different aspects but agrees on the neo(colonial) hegemonic nature of internationalisation. In this category are those who characterise internationalisation as Westernisation. For example, Guo et al.'s (2022) study established that Chinese international students, because of the unidirectional orientation of internationalisation between China and the developed Western world, perceive that the execution of internationalisation equals Westernization. The form of higher education internationalisation in Central Asia has that same unidirectional element, as seen by the student movement to Western universities, the growing number of Western/international university branch campuses, the growing number of Western-educated faculty, and partnerships with Western universities among many initiatives that fall under the internationalisation term. To Stein, these observations demonstrate that "Europeans (Westerners) are considered as the only viable knowledge creators and arbiters of legitimacy" (2017, S28). Studies consistently characterise internationalisation, led by the West, as modernisation and development. Reading through the articles on adopting the Bologna process, the resultant policy adoption is referred to as Europeanisation, aiding in transforming higher education in Central Asia and elsewhere. According to Yang (2002), internationalisation is often linked to Westernisation and modernisation. Student mobility from Central Asia to Western universities follows the established trend of developing countries sending students to First World universities. Studies show that faculty movement is the reverse of the international student pattern.

Another body of literature has defined internationalisation in higher education as Englishisation (Goodman and Montgomery 2020; Galloway and McKinley 2021; Wilkinson and Gabriëls 2021). This refers to the practices and policies of higher education institutions that emphasise using English in all curriculum activities. One of the key arguments in Phillipson's linguistic imperialism thesis was that the spread of English, much of which has occurred through its prominence in global language education, has served to undermine the rights of other languages and to marginalise the opportunities that should exist for widespread multilingual education, thus the idea of "English as a neocolonial language" (2008, 1). The rapid growth of universities using English is widely reported, illustrating the language as the mainstay of the most desirable form of higher education. English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) are recent appearances in language studies (Vitchenko 2017; Zenkova and Khamitova 2017). Referring to Guo et al.'s (2022) study, Chinese international students observed that knowledge of English leads to access to advanced knowledge in the West, but they also thought Englishisation equals the internationalisation ideology that promotes the superiority of Western knowledge. The literature corroborates the established view that in countries where English is not an official language, the use of it as a second language can be considered a clear indicator of the internationalisation of the academe (Rostan 2011).

The field of colonial studies is dominated by post-colonial writers who consider cultural and epistemological diversity as inseparable and reciprocal (Santos, 2008), and hence, "the denial of diversity is a constitutive and persistent feature of colonialism" (p. xxxiii). Bredlid (2013) argued that Western education is hegemonic. This follows that internationalisation, as currently practised, is dominated by Western knowledge and the English language, and in the process, is undermining non-Western knowledges and languages. As was observed by Chatterjee and Barber (2021), Central Asia is caught in various political and ideological waves across historical time and geopolitical space:

(Central) Asia's breaking free from overt colonial exploits, its nevertheless teleological journey toward the West for knowledge and modernity, and the West's deep-seated and longstanding ambivalence about (Central) Asia, its re-casting of colonial relations into forms of (Central) Asian development, and more recently, into the management of (Central) Asian economic challenges and opportunities while maintaining its own ideological supremacy. (233)

Lastly, Shahjahan and Edward's (2022) Whiteness as futurity framework can shed more light on the hegemonic tenets of internationalisation. The framework argues that "Whiteness as futurity orients nation-states', policy makers', institutions', and individuals' imaginaries." (2022, 748). One's vision of the good future disciplines and shapes the present. According to Christian, even in the absence of White bodies, social and institutional power structures continue the aims of Whiteness (Christian 2019). Thus, it is observed that institutions such as universities, in the modern era of internationalisation, pursue the goals of Whiteness even in the non-western world. Some equate Whiteness with Westernization or Eurocentrism (Kako 2019). Consequently, a future that is Western/White becomes the dream for many, culminating in the contemporary scramble for Western liberal education through internationalisation, "the superior and desirable educational future" (Shahjahan and Edward 2022, 750), provided by Western or Western-oriented institutions.

The Western university, particularly the English-speaking West, is generally considered a model for developing and transforming modern universities in the non-Western world (Xu 2023). Whiteness as the modern norm is an aspiration and a worthy investment, hence the massive investment in internationalisation programs. From this view, the motivation to participate in internationalisation is driven by the desire to live like the Westerners and acquire Western culture, which means being modern. Consequently, the internationalisation of Whiteness as practised in higher education is a construction of Kazakhstan's future "through three distinct pathways: (a) influencing future aspirations, (b) creating conditions that make it economically and culturally harmful not to invest or continue the investment in Whiteness, and (c) remaining malleable enough to disguise or superimpose itself by appearing flexible to local conditions" (Shahjahan and Edwards, 2022: 749). The pursuit of capitalist gain, safety, the English language and global mobility, all elements inherent in Kazakhstan's internationalisation, can be argued to be efforts to attain Whiteness.

The above explanations show the different views towards the internationalisation of higher education, from a development perspective that sees internationalisation as the imparting of modern required competencies for individual, national and international development to a critical perspective that observes a catch. Critiques observe internationalisation as a hegemonic instrument of the developed West.

## Organisation of the Book

The chapters in this book address the popular higher education phenomena of internationalisation with a specific focus on Kazakhstan. The book captures the views of Kazakhstani scholars and active participants in the internationalisation of higher education. The chapters in this book present a critical account of internationalisation from a non-Western perspective, with extant literature. The book collects theoretical and empirical studies from academics (professors and graduate students). Aliya Kuzhabekova's chapter deploys a nuanced historical developmental policy analysis to illustrate the development of internationalisation programs and policies in Kazakhstan. Kuzhabekova is a well-known Kazakhstani academic, currently a faculty member at the University of Calgary in Canada. The chapter presents the different internationalisation initiatives that the government of Kazakhstan has implemented. Aliya Kuzhabekova's chapter further raises questions about the top-down approach and the absence of clarity on what internationalisation entails. The critical issues of internationalisation of the curriculum, the potentiality of foreign colonialism in internationalisation, the role of Russia and China in westernising Kazakhstan and the war in Ukraine are addressed in this foregrounding chapter.

The following chapter is by Saltanat Imanmalikova, an alumnus of Nazarbayev University, where she obtained a master's degree in educational leadership. The chapter deals with the widespread internationalisation practice of studying abroad. The chapter locates the internationalisation of higher education within the processes of globalisation. Furthermore, different outbound academic mobility programs, including the flagship Bolashak scholarship program, are examined. Chapter 4 is by Munyaradzi Hwami and Assylzhan Dilzhanova. Hwami is a faculty member at Nazarbayev University, while Dilzhanova is a graduate student at the same institution. After examining cross-border internationalisation in Chapter 3, this chapter considers the local version of internationalisation, generally referred to as internationalisation at home. The chapter presents the different initiatives described as local internationalisation, including establishing Nazarbayev University. A critique of internationalisation at home is presented, expanding on some of the ideas presented in Chapter 2.

Tsediso Michael Makoelle brings in the aspect of inclusive education to the internationalisation of education in Kazakhstan in chapter 5. Tsediso is a professor of inclusive education at Nazarbayev University with extensive research and teaching experience in Southern Africa and Central Asia. The chapter contextualises the process of internationalisation of education with