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Towards Critical Global Education for Development with a Kazakh Human Face

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Abstract: *The purpose of this article is to propose critical development (global) education for Kazakhstan. The article observes and sympathizes with the version of state capitalism unfolding in the country. To this end an analysis of Kazakhstan's development trajectory is done. The drive towards economic development that is aimed at enabling Kazakhstan to be in the top 50 competitive countries of the world is discussed as well as the associated higher education role and policy. Utilizing seminal national documents on education and the country's development policy framework, the article augments and extends the conceptualization of the role of (higher) education advocating for inclusive development that addresses the developmental issues of all Kazakhs including the marginalized. The utilized documents portray an emphasis on neoliberal economic development that seem to subordinate other aspects of development and hence the call for a development with a human face. It is concluded and recommended that higher education should consider development that goes beyond economic growth and promote one that leads to the expansion of people's freedoms to live long, healthy, and creative lives.*

Keywords: *critical global education; development education; Kazakhstan; economic development; development with a human face; democratizing development.*

1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to expand on the critical role of education especially higher education in the development agenda of Kazakhstan. The main argument presented here is that inclusive and people-oriented development should be considered and not just economic development. In their quest to achieve development and reach the standards of living observed in Western Europe, North America, and Japan, many countries around the world have adopted and, in certain circumstances, coerced to adopt Euro-American neoliberal economic policies (Ball, 2012; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). This has led to the observation that modern development entails the adoption of neoliberal principles and in other words the world is witnessing the globalization of neoliberalism (Bruff & Tansel, 2019; Connell, 2013). Since Kazakhstan attained independence from the former Soviet Union in 1991 (Nazarbayev, 2010, 2012a; Parmenter et al., 2017; Yakavets, 2014), a clear development and modernization agenda to catch up with the Western countries has been put in place.

An extensive scholarship has been invested in theorizing the phenomenon of development, but it is still an enigmatic and unachievable feat for many countries outside the Western region of the world (Black, 2007; Elakhe, 2014; Dossa, 2007; McMichael, 2010). Like many other countries coming out of foreign or colonial domination, post-colonial (Cummimgs, 2012; Nazarbayev, 2012a; Kudaibergenova, 2016; Tlostanova, 2012; Zino, 2016) or post-Soviet/socialist (Heyneman, 2010; Tlostanova, 2012; Silova, 2011) Kazakhstan desires to develop and become an independent but

competitive member of the international or global community culminating in membership to the club of 50 most competitive countries in the world (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2010). Furthermore, as observed in other countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, the developed Western countries are considered partners and models to emulate, resulting at times in the copying and pasting syndrome that has brought deleterious consequences to many countries as witnessed in the Majority World where economic structural adjustment programs were adopted (Ball, 2012; Todaro & Smith, 2015).

However, there are so many other promising success stories of economic development explaining the rationale behind the global deployment or globalization of economic planning models from the industrialized world. Kazakhstan's education system, particularly higher education institutions, such as universities, have been given an important mandate by the government for the country to achieve its development targets by 2050. Higher education is expected to train competent and competitive professionals for all sectors of the economy in the integration of science and industry (Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2010). It is further stated as part of Kazakhstan 2050 Strategy that the achievement of a high level of higher education quality that meets the demands of the labor market, the objectives of industrial-innovative development of the country and conforming to the world's best practice in education are central to educational policy (Jonbekova, 2019). This human capital role is to be enhanced by having Kazakhstan's higher education 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). What one reads from these official documents is that the main targets of Kazakhstan's education policy include economic development, global competitiveness, and becoming a developed member of the international community. This observation is corroborated by Nazarbayev Graduate School of

Education (NUGSE)'s (2014) diagnosis which concluded that Kazakhstan views higher education as a major investment in human capital and a key driver of economic growth and one of the stated aims of higher education is "to meet the labor market needs of a rapidly changing, increasingly knowledge-based, technology-intensive economy" (p. 4).

While the role of higher education, and all levels of education, for that matter, in a nation's development is well established (Marginson, 2016; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010), the issue is what kind of education is required for a country such as Kazakhstan to achieve its development targets. In other words, an education for the development of Kazakhstan has to be envisioned, an education that is responsive to Kazakhstan's multiple faceted needs and interests, and not just neoliberal economic development. This is referred to as education for development (also referred to as development education) or critical global education (Andreotti, 2006, 2010; Liddy, 2013). Critical global education considers the possibilities of a critical dialectical approach which engages and exposes various contradictions unleashed by the economic development paradigm inherent in neoliberal globalization (Kapoor, 2014), including the imbrication of economic development in the continued exercise of neocolonialism and hegemony that others refer to as coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000). This entails interrogating the universal conception of development by engaging pluri-versal conceptions (and what lies in-between), as is often forwarded by anti-colonial and/or capitalist movements (Kapoor, 2011, 2013) in different time-space and onto-epistemic locations (Zibechi, 2005; Meyer & Alvarado, 2010; Zibechi & Ramon, 2012). Today's development philosophy and prescriptions are predicated upon the logic of endless capitalist accumulation (Berliniski, 2008; Madeley, 2008; Polanyi, 2001; Toussaint, 2006), which on many occasions is marginalizing and excluding the urban poor, the displaced and dispossessed rural populations, and other vulnerable groups in

societies that include children and women, leading to many scholars concluding that if not carefully planned, the drive towards economic development as is being witnessed in many non-Western countries, such as Kazakhstan, can be a possible cause of impoverishment, marginalization, exclusion, and underdevelopment (Ellwood, 2010; Madeley, 2008).

The version of economic development being deployed in the non-Western countries has to be critiqued and monitored so that it functions to better the living conditions of all people. To that end, critical global education scholarship and pedagogy in Kazakhstan cannot afford to remain apolitical (hegemonic) and ahistorical and impervious to the historical and political-economic and sociocultural/educational links between hegemony and the development project (Heron, 2007; Wilson, 2012), or the processes of globalization unfolding in modern times. Recognizing the powerful market forces driving the ideology of economic development also referred to as neoliberal globalization, Kazakhstan's education should continually improve and work to adapt to changing circumstances, including sensitivity to calls for

… radical democratization in terms of the potential range of relevant source(s) of knowledge(s), experience(s), analyses, and teleological/political possibilities that development education has strenuously avoided, ignored or remained suspiciously oblivious of, to date … (Kapoor, 2014, p. 203)

Having made these critical observations, to achieve the article's aim, an examination of Kazakhstan's development trajectory will be done considerate of the fact that capitalist (economic) development has generally failed in regions outside the West (Bello, 2009; Mishra, 2014, 2017). This will be followed by a consideration of the country's higher education policies in line with the country's development plans. A discussion of contemporary critical perspectives on development, views that can be categorized as

sustainable, inclusive, or people driven, responsive development beyond economic or market statistics will also be done. The term development with a Kazakh human face will be provocatively utilized as an intentional construct to promote a development paradigm that is responsive to specific Kazakhstani aspirations and/or contemporary concerns. The concept of development with a human face is widely used by those who criticize the lack of improvements in the lives of some sections of modern society despite their governments pronouncing economic growth figures. It is about the human dimension and the specific circumstances of individuals and communities mentioned as being at the center of development but end up peripheralized by the same, and it combines development theories with the very diverse realities that people face on the ground. Theory driven, top-down, one-size-fits-all policy making, too often fails to bring lasting benefits.

It is a call for a development trajectory informed by Kazakhstan culture, historicity, human and natural resources as well as ecological interests, post-Soviet considerations. Kazakhstan's education policy, as contained in annual ministry of Education and Science reports, Vision 2030, and 2050, as well as other policy documents, are also examined to expound on its emphasis on economic development, a positive response to national policies. The remainder of the paper is a proposition for education about, for and as development, based on specific examples from across Kazakhstan, of aspects that Kazakhstan higher education for development needs to be informed by as well as promote, for a national development agenda that is holistic and not only concerned with satiating the infinite interests of the neoliberal global market.

2. Neoliberal Conceptions of Development

To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery, we pledge our

best efforts to help them help themselves … If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it can never serve the few who are rich. (Beschloss, 2003, p. 222).

When the then US President John F. Kennedy made that seminal speech in the 1960s as he launched the United Nations' Decade of Development, there was a general agreement that it was right to help the developing countries of the world to get out of poverty, diseases, inequalities and many other scourges modern humanity have to endure. Development, as a process, implies change for the better, in the individual's circumstances as in society's (Black, 2007). "There is a degree of optimism implicit in the word development" (Perkins et al., 2013, p. 11). Development implies more than an increase in per capita incomes and involves in addition, improvements in health and education and major structural changes, such as industrialization and urbanization (Todaro & Smith, 2015; Mielants. 2007; Perkins et al., 2013).

Industrialization and urbanization signify economic growth, but many countries have witnessed economic growth without development for many sections of the population (Best, 2018; Lindsey & Teles, 2017). For development to occur, modernization and/or development scholars remind us that a country must develop a mature and sophisticated economy, usually measured by gross domestic product (GDP) and/or average income per resident (Aslund & Djankov, 2017; Black, 2007). Modern values must emerge that the apostles of development consider to be prerequisites for the emergence of capitalist accumulation or the technological innovations, seen as fundamentals for development (Mielants, 2007; Todaro & Smith, 2015). It has further been mentioned that it was because of the existence of these conditions that led Europe on an unavoidable path of dominance over the rest of the world in subsequent centuries. Aslund and Djankov failed to hide their admiration of the EU countries in this eulogy:

Europe is a wonderful continent. International surveys recognize that Europeans enjoy the highest quality of life in the world. European society also benefits from great equality in income, excellent healthcare and basic education, good infrastructure, and eminent rule of law. The UN Human Development Index 2015 ranks 26 of the 28 EU countries among the top 50 countries in the world. (2017, p. 1)

Developed countries, such as those that make up the EU, have advanced technological infrastructure, and have diverse industrial and service sectors. Their citizens typically enjoy access to quality health care, and higher education alluded to above. To Best, development;

…involves coordinated organizational changes in each of three domains: the business model, production capabilities, and skill formation. The three domains are not separable and additive components of growth, but mutually interdependent sub-systems of a single developmental process. None of the three elements of the capability triad can contribute to growth independently of mutual adjustment processes involving all three elements. (2018, p. 3)

The fact that skill formation is mentioned in what Best (2000) constructed and termed Capability Triad shows the importance of education, especially higher education. The importance of skill formation in development is further considered by Perkins et al. (2013, p. 11) who concluded that for modern economic growth to happen the key element has been "the application of science to problems of economic production, which in turn has led to industrialization, urbanization, and even explosive growth." This again is positioning higher education at the center of all attempts by countries to develop.

The dominant perspective of development is, therefore, an exposition of how progress can be achieved by humankind. It also

acknowledges that Europe is an example to emulate because it is already there! To develop implies higher levels of urbanization and industrialization, and this is accompanied by complete eradication of societal explanations that are not evidence-based, non-scientific. The dominant neoliberal view of development is compelling because it is driven by science and evidence. The life being enjoyed by citizens and residents of the EU is a perfect example of what economic development can bring to humanity.

It is critical to mention that the dominant version of development is capitalist (Berliniski, 2008; Best, 2018). Capitalism is identified within the dominant paradigm of development as the real progress, as having replaced decadent non-productive systems while installing modernity (Mielants, 2007). Some indigenous and rural villagers in some parts of the world, as well as some government systems, are seen from this perspectives as enemies of development (Abdi & Guo, 2008; Bello, 2009; Ellwood, 2010; Blaser, Feit & McRae, 2004), monsters of the free market (McNally, 2012) and they are stumbling blocks that "obstruct the route to progress with their regulations and prohibitions which are detrimental to the increasing wealth of nations within a free market" (Stabel, 2004, p. 188). The Soviet system that Kazakhstan is gradually emerging from, is therefore seen as past and anti-development, and the rationale for economic development along the path of well-established Western democracies is evident. This is corroborated by Hegel, who took development to be the crux of the West's identity. He conceived the modern West as the epitome of development, a masterful civilization, and as such, the model for mankind… "the future is liberal for all, via conquest and development" (Hegel, 1956, p. 54). These values of economic development have become global and hence the idea of neoliberal globalization.

3. Kazakhstan's Economic Development Policy

The main tenet of Kazakhstan's development trajectory has been the transition from Soviet style command economics toward a market economy, a neoliberal economy (Sordi, 2017). Most pronounced policies are geared towards the creation of a competitive capitalist economy, including policies being adopted in higher education. In his 2017 Presidential Message to the Nation, the then president, Nazarbayev, concentrated on the economic aspects of modernization that included digitalization, 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 wider social and identity innovation (Seisembayeva, 2017). This, he stated, 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 as well as strongly focused on knowledge and evolutionary development. Another key element of the modernization programme was the adoption of a Latin script for the Kazakh language alphabet (Higgins, 2018; Sordi, 2017).

Kazakhstan is trying to balance its international development policies considering its Soviet past, e.g. continued close relationships with Russia, as the nearest geographical neighbor and strategically to get help with the eradication of nuclear weapons. However, China is also invited and has become a key trading partner and investor in the energy industry (Sordi, 2017). This is seen as weakening Russia's influence in Kazakhstan. With the UK, EU, and US, the many agreements Kazakhstan has entered into, help the country move away from the Soviet system and the adoption of English and the alignment of the education system to European

standards, further positioning Kazakhstan as Eurasian, though its European geographic connections are very weak.

Internationally, Kazakhstan has promoted its position as a reliable global ally and partner, and has branded itself as a successful country, with a dynamic economy and attractive environment for foreign investments (Starr, Engvall & Cornell, 2016). These are some of the established hallmarks of successful and competitive modern economies. Kazakhstan has also, as part of its modernization and global player positioning, entered into military partnership with NATO, signed an agreement with the EU aimed at increasing the flow of trade, services, and investments (Engvall & Cornell, 2015). Kazakhstan was admitted into the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in 2014 and this development represented an acknowledgment of Kazakhstan's status as a respected international partner country among Asian as well as European countries (Abdulova, 2014). The long-standing goal of accession to the WTO was realized in July 2015 when it became the organization's 162nd member (WTO, 2015). Kazakhstan had a successful bid to become a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council and announced plans to become a member of the OECD (Kazinform, 2018). As can be seen, the distinguishing characteristic of Kazakhstan's external policy has been the development of partnerships, regionally and internationally, reaching out as broadly as possible. All these domestic and foreign policy thrusts impact higher education and are reflected in the higher education policy frameworks.

4. Development with a Kazakh Human Face: Critical Conceptions

Fine and Saad Filho, in their treatise on neoliberalism, described it as a class offensive against the workers and the poor led by the state on behalf of capital in general and finance in particular. The attack is justified by recourse to neoliberal ideas and carried out

through so-called economic 'adjustment,' especially in developing but increasingly in developed countries in crisis (2017, p. 686). Along the same line of thinking, Jessop (2019, p. 2) posited that neoliberalization is better read as a series of projects that seek to advance neoliberal purposes by exploiting emerging crises, which are "sometimes deliberately provoked, creating opportunities for profit through predatory means, resort to force and domination, and unusual deals with political authority."

These views are corroborated by a strong and growing critical school of thought that considers development as a Euro-American project intended to dominate the non-Western world (Black, 2007; Blaut, 2014; Madeley, 2008; Shiva, 2005). Dossa quipped that "development is a bad idea. It was conceived as a theory of Western development and Western supremacy globally" (2007, p. 887). This view sees development as hegemonic, racist, and colonial (Anievas & Nicancioglu, 2017; Hobson, 2004; Nandy, 2004) and its mandate being to extend Western ideological influence in order to maintain the dominance of Western Europe and North America over the world. From this perspective development is an idea being utilized by the rich and powerful countries to obtain human and natural resources from all over the world for their economic development. According to Kothari, "the poor are poor because of development" (1993, p. 170).

These critics of economic development are against the version of development that is led by the market and is guided by profit with no regard to the living conditions of men and women on the street. The post-Soviet era is a period of and about self-determination, independence and economic growth for Kazakhstan. It is as envisioned in postcolonialism and hence the critique utilized in this paper is grounded in postcolonial sensibilities. The post-colonial critic dominates the anti-globalization paradigms and its bone of contention with the free-market led development, with the Euro-

centric development thesis, neoliberal globalization (Anievas & Nisancioglu, 2017) is well captured by Andreotti. Postcolonialism's "main preoccupation is the epistemic violence of colonialism and the interrogation of European cultural supremacy in the subjugation of different peoples and knowledges (2010, p. 238).

Despite these very critical perceptions towards development, all countries of the world are working to attain development and aspire to reach the levels of development as enjoyed in the European Union zone, North America and Japan. Kazakhstan's economic development plans are well articulated in various documents including Kazakhstan 2030, Kazakhstan 2050, and State Program for Industrial Innovative Development of Kazakhstan for 2015-2019 among other documents (Aitzhanova et al., 2014; Kerimkulova, CohenMiller & Shamatov, 2017; Eurasian Development Bank, 2017; Pomfret, 2014; Kudaibergenova, 2016; Nazarbayev, 2010; Sordi, 2017; Star, Engvall & Cornell, 2016). Bissenova (2012) described Kazakhstan 2030 as a "phenomenon of collective aspiration for collective improvement and as something promising by the government, namely, future enhancement and development of citizens' lives (p. 440).

Kazakhstan 2030 spells out a vision and plan for the country's modernization and digitalization as means to achieve economic growth. The vision is that Kazakhstan would join the top 30 developed countries by 2050 and in the process the vision of Kazakhstan 2050 reflected; an ambition to join the ranks of the top 30 developed countries not only in terms of per capita income, but also in terms of a wider range of social, environmental, and institutional achieve¬ments: a highly educated, gainfully employed, healthy, and secure population; an efficient, sustainable, and diversified energy sector; a green economy with clean air and water, resilient to the risks of climate change; a balanced, efficient, and decentralized urban and egional economy; a diversified modern knowledge-based economy; a country open to and integrated with

its neighbors and the world; and above all effective, inclusive, transparent, and accountable economic and political institutional systems (Linn, 2014, p. 284).

As an upper middle - income country (IMF, 2019; Star, Engvall & Cornell, 2016) endowed with a lot of resources (Jonbekova, 2019), Kazakhstan should be able to achieve its development targets. Kazakhstan's development policies show that although opening up the country to foreign multinationals and other private entities for investment, the state is still heavily involved, a Kazakhstan version of state capitalism. State capitalism could ensure that no one is left behind because recent evidence of free market-led development clearly shows that it brings about inequality as the trickle-down principle appears to be failing the majority. Real development for Kazakhstan should build a united, patriotic, and proud people who value their language and culture (Nazarbayev, 2010), some of the ideals and aspirations of the post-Soviet period. That version of development should consider the economy as a social system, going beyond simple free-market economics. This can also be referred to as a moral economy (Block, 2006; Sayer, 2016; Gotz, 2015; Elakhe, 2014; Carrier, 2018) where it is not permissible for the majority to live in poverty while a few one percent are enjoying the lifestyle of the rich. It is an economy where basic human rights, including education and health, are enshrined and respected. Furthermore, this envisaged moral economy is sensitive to the environment and the ecological nature of life (Madeley, 2008; Paul, 2016). A moral economy is, therefore, aware of sustainable development but goes further to be inclusive of different knowledges, belief systems and cultures and thus further demonstrating the beauty of Kazakhstan's multi-ethnicism.

A moral economy challenges the rhetoric of market fundamentalism (Blaut, 2014; Block, 2006; Toussaint, 2006) and considers people first. A moral economy is "an economy or a part

of one in which moral, economic activity predominates" (Carrier, 2018: 30). On the other hand, "neoliberalism is associated with an amoral economy" (Jessop, 2019, p. 2). It is this kind of development that is referred to as development with a Kazakhstani human face (Jolly, 2012) an inclusive version of development and not one determined by the dictatorship of the free market and its statistics. It is a version of development that does not discriminate between rural and urban.

5. An Anatomy of Kazakhstan's Higher Education for Development

Reading Radical Renewal of Global Society by Kazakhstan's first President, Nazarbayev (2010), is an introduction to a critical appreciation of the challenges faced by the modern nation-states, the post-Soviet states. Higher education in Kazakhstan, as is the case elsewhere, had to respond and evolve along with the whole country. The economic development thrust of the government and the development of healthy global partnership with almost all regions of the world, are also observed in the changes that are taking place in higher education. All policy introductions seem to be aligned to the fundamental idea that Kazakhstan is going through transitions. As a result, a key element of Kazakhstan's post-Soviet education policy is the opening of the education system to international practice and standards, in the same way the domestic and foreign policies of the country are promoting international engagement and competitiveness. The internationalization of higher education is therefore being promoted in line with the country's development trajectory (Ahn, Dixon & Chekmareva, 2018). Some local universities are taking a very international character in the form of teaching in English. According to MoES (2014, 2015), there continues to be a shift in student enrolment from Russian to Kazakh-medium as well as a growing number of enrollments in English-medium.

The setting up of Nazarbayev University, a world-class higher education structure that works in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Cambridge (Koch, 2014), is another enormous effort at internationalization as well as at opening higher education to international standards. The country's universities are also hosting international students with over 10, 000 foreign citizens studying in Kazakhstan, making Kazakhstan the second most popular destination to study in Central Asia, behind Russia. Other figures show an increase in the share of international students. In 2017, the number of international students in Kazakhstan universities was 13,898 or 2.8%. Compared to 2016, the number of international students increased only by 8.3% (MoES, 2018, p. 118).

Equally important has been the adoption of English as a language of instruction (Ahn, Dixon & Chekmareva, 2017; Sordi, 2017), the proposed adoption of the Latin Alphabet, and the introduction of Nazarbayev International Schools (MoES, 2010). The introduction of private universities can also be seen as the adoption of an international trend being driven by neoliberal policy frameworks. Another development to note has been the internationalization of higher education through faculty and student mobility through programs like Erasmus Mundus (see https://www.inform.kz/en/eu-supports-education-more-than-30-kazakh-students-gained-erasmus-scholarships-in-2019_a3561080). This has meant that higher education institutions are required to adopt the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) and provide Diploma Supplements in order to facilitate mobility. Again, in 1998, Kazakhstan signed an agreement between Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia, allowing for degree equivalence recognition, thereby increasing opportunities for student and graduate mobility between the four countries (Poletaev & Rakisheva, 2011). Furthermore, Kazakhstan joined the European education system, the Bologna Declaration in 2010 (Kazinform,

2010), which has resulted in the country adopting European international standards, notably the assessment regimes. Students are taking part in the OECD Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (MoES, 2018). All these internationalization policies in higher education encourage quality, competitiveness as Kazakhstan's education becomes comparable to international standards.

The other policy and version of internationalization involves sending students to foreign countries to study with more than 20 000 Kazakhstani citizens having gone abroad to study (MoES, 2018). The Bolashak International Scholarship of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan is another program that supports students who want to study abroad (Sagintayeva & Jumakulov, 2015). A Bolashaker is a participant of the state-sponsored study-abroad program Bolashak (Kazakh for future) (Sordi, 2018: 1). Bolashak scholars have graduated from top universities around the world, including Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Columbia, Duke, Georgetown, among many others. Bolashak is the only program where the state directly and generously supports foreign education for its young citizens.

Assessing educational policies and reforms in Kazakhstan and other former Soviet Union republics, Heyneman (2010) observed that they have been packaged as the ideal type of the single model of excellence in higher education, aimed at catching up, not lagging behind other countries (Silova & Steiner-Khamsi 2008) as the desire to develop gathers infinite momentum. Again, most of the features of Kazakhstan's policies in education were taken from the Western world (Smolentseva, Huisman, & Froumin, 2018, p. 2), and privatization and marketization became visible in what Naidoo, Shankar, and Ekant (2011) termed the consumerist turn. Private higher education institutions were permitted and currently enroll

more students than the public ones (Azimbayova, 2017; MOES, 2018). All these policies, generally referred to as the internationalization of higher education, should be read in line with government's economic policy. As illustrated above, the education system has been opened to international or global standards and practices by sending students abroad as well as Westernizing or Europeanizing the system at home. The people of Kazakhstan are being exposed to international cultures and knowledge systems as could be expected in the contemporary world that is increasingly global and involves international partnerships and competition. University students are provided with generous loans to democratize access to higher education and develop the country's human capital base.

6. Critical Considerations of Education Relevant for Kazakhstan's Development

Development education is concerned with issues of human rights, dignity, self-reliance, and social justice in both developed and developing countries. It is concerned with the causes of underdevelopment and the promotion of an understanding of what is involved in development, of how different countries go about undertaking development, and of the reasons for and ways of achieving a new international economic and social order (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation and United Nations Information Committee, 1975).

Kazakhstan's educational policies are aimed at spearheading and anchoring the country's economic development and the creation of a modern developed society. While most of the policies are neoliberal, the strong hand of the state is still very much present in policymaking and ownership of education. The continued presence of the nation-state is a welcome relief to many who are skeptical about the magic of the market that has failed to deliver better lives

to many people in the Majority World (Jessop, 2019). For, without a state creating legal and ethical rules, market activity alone will "degenerate into a vulgar brawl between narrow class and personal interests that threaten both the political order and free competition" (Art, 2015, p. 2). Writing on state capitalism, Davis (2018) and Kurlantzik (2016), described it as the remaining threat to free-market civilization. The free market, as represented by TNCs, is for and about making more money (Carnoy, 2016), but governments and societies should be responsible for not only today but also for the next generations. This then is the role of development education also referred here as critical global education. Skinner, Blum, and Bourn (2013, p. 1) conceptualized education for development as an approach to learning "that questions dominant paradigms of development and inspires citizen- and community-driven change towards a world of greater social justice." It is no longer a discipline targeted at "audiences in the Global North" (Black, 1992, p. 1), "… with the goal of opening up hearts and minds, as well as the purses, to the problem of poverty in countries overseas" (Black, 1992, p. 102). It is:

Education as personal development, facilitating the development of critical thinking skills, analytical skills, emphatic capacity, and the ability to be an effective person who can take action to achieve desired development outcomes. It is education for local, national, and global development, encouraging learners in developing a sense that they can play a role in working for (or against) social justice and development issues. It is education about development, focused on social justice, human rights, poverty and inequality, and on development issues locally, nationally, and internationally (Tormey, 2003, p. 2).

Similarly, Irish Aid (2006) defined development education as;
... an educational process aimed at increasing awareness and understanding of the rapidly changing, interdependent, and unequal world in which we live... It seeks to engage people in

analysis, reflection, and action for local and global citizenship and participation... It is about supporting people in understanding and acting to transform the social, cultural, political, and economic structures which affect their lives at personal, community, national, and international levels.

Having viewed these meanings of critical global education, the tripartite concept of education about, for, and as development that has been effectively applied to environmental education (Fien, 1993; Liddy, 2013) will be applied in proposing critical global education for Kazakhstan. The three stances reflect how the purpose and aims of global education are envisioned, the form of content and knowledge, and the teaching and learning approaches used.

7. Education About, For and As Development (Education with a Human Face)

According to Liddy (2013), education about development is learning about the developing world. It must be added that it is also about the developed world, and in other words, about the whole (global) world. Important facts and data on local and global inequalities, including the contradictions characterizing today's market-led development have to be introduced to learners. Education about development addresses economic development and poverty, hunger and ecological degradation (Seabrook, 2007; Ellwood, 2010; Shiva, 2005; Bello, 2009; Madeley, 2008), inequality and human rights, including indigenous and/or rural peoples issues, gender and maternal health (Breidlid, 2013; Dogget & Phelan, 2012; Unterhalter, 2012) among many other development agendas of modern times. These ills of today's society are ever present even in countries that are experiencing economic development. This pedagogical approach to local and global learning aims to develop a moral commitment to the concerns of the developing world and about global inequalities. Students are

introduced to different themes that increases their knowledge and critical understanding of local and global issues. With specific reference to Kazakhstan, this would entail learning not just about the need for economic development and catching up with the world's top 50 developed societies (Aitzhanova et al., 2014; Nazarbayev, 2010) but to equally consider local Kazakhstani social and environmental concerns, such as water pollution, Tengiz oilfield pollution, desiccation of the Aral sea and consequent impact (Hays, 2008), environmental and health problems related to nuclear testing that was done during the Soviet era (Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2018). Other problems inherited from the Soviet Union era are related to radioactive waste management and biological weapons testing that used to be carried out at Vozrozhdeniye Island (see world-nuclear.org\+\; Baracca, 2018; Dubrova, 2003). Desertification and overgrazing, forestry and fishing (Hays, 2008) require attention just as is given to eradication of poverty, inequality, and economic development. Discussions about disparities in urban and rural development, gender inequalities including equal work and remuneration, corruption, class inequalities as some sections of the country grow richer while the majority struggle with perennial inflation (OECD, 2018; Nugumanova et al., 2017; Stroniski, 2019). Human Rights Watch (2019) identifies freedom of the media, civil society, labor rights, rights of children with disabilities and treatment of asylum seekers and refugees as other issues that require attention if Kazakhstan is to be a member of the top 50 countries of the world. Kazakhstan's learners should engage and be aware of these issues, and this is the domain covered by education about development.

Liddy (2013) and Hicks (2006) noted that this kind of learning would not develop critical skills in students. Exposing Kazakhstan learners to these local development issues, if not carefully done, may leave them disappointed and possibly leading to doubts about their ability to bring about positive change. In other words, critical global education should address more than cognitive dimensions;

remaining in the cognitive learning dimension could engender pessimism, hopelessness, and cynicism rather than the engagement and empowerment necessary for addressing current and future challenges (Hicks, 2006). For example, how can development education address the issue of drinking water in Nur-Sultan (Astana)? Most, if not all, people use bottled water for domestic purposes. This raises the question of whether this is water for thirst or profit? The relevant authorities say there is nothing wrong with the water; it is in compliance with international and European standards (Lee, 2016). These are day to day issues and questions that critical global (development) education seeks to address, in case the whole population is being exploited by the market that is making a profit from drinking water. Further questions should be raised over the issue of using plastic water bottles. In a country already facing challenges of air and water pollution, there seems to be a not yet developed recycling culture. Students should be exposed to human rights issues at local and global levels to enable them to engage in local and national governance systems and not leave the debate to foreigners through non-governmental organizations. Without critical development education, these pertinent issues that determine the health and well-being of Kazakhstanis and their future could be overlooked in the global scramble to achieve economic development.

This brings about what is referred to as education for development. Education for development is about enhancing skills and capacity for societies and economies to develop. It represents a form of education for development, which builds on the knowledge provided by education about development to encourage action (Liddy, 2013). As already shown, this is critical education for development (Kapoor, 2014), also referred to as critical form of global education (Andreotti, 2006). At this level of engagement, learners are aware, motivated, and concerned about development issues. While the content is development centered, it could address

local development concerns as much as global development issues, as already illustrated above with reference to Kazakhstan. Advocacy and campaigning for environmental, political, social, and economic reforms are identified as mobilization for development resulting from these types of education. Other themes may include issues of inequalities among different sectors of the society. The introduction of the English language and access to an English education is a good topic that students can engage to examine who has access to this elite type of education. Students can also engage in discussions on what constitute democracy. Recent riots and demonstrations show that there is not a single perspective on Kazakhstan's development path (Human Rights Watch, 2019). It would be interesting for students to engage in what kind of democracy is suitable for their country. Learners may develop an interest in plastic pollution, bottled water, and the environment, forestry destruction because of dam or road construction projects, gender inequality, and homelessness, among other issues. Recent demonstrations against the presence of Chinese construction companies and their workers (Goble, 2019; Umarov, 2019) provide rich grounds to discuss the topic of foreign investment that is at the centre of government's economic policy. Out of these real and everyday Kazakh challenges, that are side effects of the project of economic development, learners can spearhead campaigns to remind the government, the corporate world, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders that other sectors are being left behind in the quest to achieve economic development. The emphasis within critical education for development is on generating an understanding of a rapidly changing and interdependent world and emphasizing the learners' role in that world. This should resonate well with the ideals and dreams of a new nation-state, a post-Soviet country that is striving to realize modern standards of living for its people.

Education as development focuses on the potential social and personal development of the student through engagement with local issues. An awareness of local issues of development leads to an

understanding of the global nature of modern societies as most of the challenges can be traced to a combination of domestic and outside developments (Kapoor, 2014). For example, currency fluctuations, inflation, trade deficits are all capable of leading to unemployment and failure by any government to fulfill its social welfare mandate. Critical global education has the potential to help students understand and appreciate that, in many cases, governments in developing countries are powerless and cannot control outside forces that bring about economic shocks. This type of development education centers on empowerment, participation, and expansion of human capacities, sharing some outcome characteristics with active citizenship (Liddy, 2013). As was observed by some postcolonialists, it is this critical global education that students should be exposed to if meaningful self-determination and national development are to be realized. An interesting theme to consider would be the role of foreign languages in Kazakhstan's development agenda. Comparative analysis could be done, considering how the adoption of the English language, a language that has become the linqua franca, is important for Kazakhstan considering that they are already using the Russian language. Critical global education could help Kazakhstan students develop an understanding of the role of a foreign language in a country's development.

To achieve these various forms of inclusive and holistic development, Andreotti (2006, 2010) argue for a development education that includes post-colonial theories and knowledge to highlight the global structures that maintain inequalities. Employing post-colonial and postmodern analyses in critical development education in the non-European/Western and post-Soviet countries exposes the historical background of most of the issues and challenges these nations are dealing with. This allows for local interpretations of development to be included and for the content to be driven by local development needs. It is an education process where learners engage in the constructive development of their

knowledge of global issues and concepts in relationship with their local settings. By utilizing these approaches in educational settings, learners' capacities for critical and analytical thinking are enhanced. Furthermore, it addresses the need for action to transform. However, these innovations may be seen in the personal and social arenas rather than directed at political change. In this sense, it offers educators the opportunity to shape change rather than adapt to it. From this perspective, a transformative, rather than a reformative, agenda of critical development education is required (Andreotti, 2010, p. 240).

8. Conclusion

I, for my part, am sure that by the year of 2030, Kazakhstan would have become a Central- Asian Snow Leopard and would serve a fine example to be followed by other developing countries. Tigers are not found in Kazakhstan, while the Snow Leopard inhabiting our mountains is but a stranger in the world community. Though a relation to the Tiger in the animal kingdom, Snow Leopard bears some substantial distinctions therefrom. It will be virtually a Kazakhstani Snow Leopard with inherent egalitarianism, sense of independence, intelligence, courage and nobleness, bravery, and cunning. It will never be the first to attack anyone, ever prone to avoiding direct clashes (Nazarbayev, 2012b).

These words from former President of Kazakhstan portray a strong belief in the country's potential and desire to develop as an independent nation but also a competitive and peaceful member of the international community. Reforms that have been introduced in higher education appear to be a direct response to this call. In terms of infrastructure, there is evidence that the country is undergoing massive transformation (Shayakhmetova, 2019). This is evidence of economic development as the 'Central-Asian snow leopard' is emerging as a strong nation. Of course, economic development is

important because it can anchor other areas of national development. The non-economic areas of development, though mentioned in government policy documents, they are not given due attention, as is economic development. This is the role that critical development education needs to take up, and this is the critical thesis being presented here.

Kazakhstan learners need to be proud of their culture and country and work to develop it in line with their local demands, though there is nothing wrong with borrowing and adopting positive policies from outside the country. The nature of the interdependence of the modern world cannot be missed by any critical education for development. From a post-colonial and/or post-Soviet perspective, the Kazakhstan learner, like the 'snow tiger,' should be taught to be vigilant. Critical development education, also at time referred to as critical global education must be situated in multi-perspectives, considerate of the transcultural and ethnic nature of this huge Central Asian country. This exposes the rationale of opening up the country's higher education system to international practices and programs.

Critical development education sensibilities dictate a conceptualization of education, knowledge, learning, reality, and identities as socially constructed (Andreotti, 2010), and hence education and/or any other policy cannot be borrowed from elsewhere in toto. Furthermore, this entails a rejection of a universal socio-economic paradigm; there is an alternative, contrary to Margaret Thatcher's (in)famous, there is no alternative proclamation (Berliniski, 2008). There is an alternative path to human development and economic growth that is unique to Kazakhstan with its unique development agenda that is informed by its history, culture, economic, environment, and other pertinent issues. As has been alluded to throughout this paper, education in Kazakhstan cannot be subordinate to the market. It should determine and inform

the economy. Critical global education should promote a development policy that promotes, the expansion of people's freedoms to live long, healthy and creative lives; to advance other goals they have reason to value; and to engage actively in shaping development equitably and sustainably on a shared planet. (UNDP, 2010, p. 3)

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