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**THE APPLICABILITY OF THE POLICY
TRANSFER FRAMEWORK TO
UNDERSTANDING HIGHER EDUCATION
REFORMS IN KAZAKHSTAN:
THE CASE OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
List of Abbreviations	vii
Abstract	viii
Acknowledgements	xi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Research aims and questions	3
Policy transfer as a theoretical framework	4
Contribution to the academic literature	6
Structure of thesis	7
CHAPTER 2: Policy Transfer	10
The policy transfer framework	10
Policy convergence and policy diffusion	14
Policy learning vs lesson-drawing	16
Dolowitz's model of policy transfer	19
1. Why policy transfer?	21
2. Actors and policy networks	27
3. What is transferred?	32
4. From where are lessons drawn?	34
5. Degrees of transfer	35
6. Sources of information for policy transfer	37
7. Policy failure and 'non-transfers'	38
8. The policy-making process	40
9. Constraints on transfer	43
Path dependency	44

The existing research on policy transfer in post-Soviet countries.....	47
Evans's approaches to studying policy transfer	50
Multi-level approach	51
Process-centred approach.....	53
Ideational approach or knowledge transfer	54
Conclusion	54
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	57
Research design	57
Methods	61
Sampling	65
Pre-established questions or topic guide	66
Access and cost issues	70
Ethical issues	73
Data collection process.....	74
Participation in the Ministerial Conference.....	77
Transcribing process	79
Coding process.....	79
Documentary analysis	81
Data analysis	82
Chapter 4: The Bologna Process.....	85
Background.....	86
Principles of the Bologna Process	89
Participating countries and organisations	90
How does the Bologna Process work?	92
1. Ministerial Conferences	94

2. The Communiqué.....	95
3. The Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG).....	96
4. The BFUG Board and Presidency	97
5. Working Groups.....	99
6. The BFUG Secretariat	100
7. Peer-learning or knowledge-sharing	101
The Bologna Process in Different Countries	102
Conclusion	109
Chapter 5: The Higher Education system in Kazakhstan	112
Soviet education.....	113
1991: Problem recognition and the transition period ..	116
1992 -1996: The search for ideas	122
1997-2001: The identification of actors	131
2002-2006: Policy learning	138
2007: Decision process and external pressure	151
2008-2009: Pre-accession transfer period.....	154
2010: Accession Transfer.....	162
2010-2011: Post-accession transfer	164
2012 to present: Adaptation	167
Conclusion	177
Chapter 6: Thematic analysis	178
1. Agenda setting	178
European level	181
National level	182
Institutional level.....	185
Actors	188

2. Formulation	192
European level	192
National level	195
Institutional level	200
3. Implementation.....	201
European level	202
National level	205
Institutional level	211
4. Evaluation	213
National and institutional levels	214
The role of individuals	219
European and national levels.....	221
Success or failure	224
5. Adaptation.....	230
Conclusion	232
Chapter 7: Conclusion	233
Bibliography	248
Appendix A: Interview sample table	274
Appendix B: Topic Guide	276
Appendix C: Top-down codes.....	280
Appendix D: Signatory countries of the Bologna Declaration 1999	284
Appendix E: Key events and documents.....	285

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Different terms from the literature review	26
Table 2 'An ideal type of policy transfer cycle'	42
Table 3 Comparison of epistemic community, advocacy coalition and policy network frameworks	52
Table 4 Organisations and number of interviewees	71
Table 5 Examples of sub-codes	81
Table 6 Participants of the Bologna Process	91
Table 7 Types of HEIs in Kazakhstan	172

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Horizontal policy transfer	12
Figure 2 Policy transfer as a dependent or independent variable.....	20
Figure 3 From lesson-drawing to coercive transfer.....	21
Figure 4 Coding process: a bottom-up approach	82
Figure 5 Role of the Ministerial Conference	93
Figure 6 BFUG Activity	96

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BFUG - Bologna Follow Up Group
BFUG Board - The Board of the Bologna Follow-up Group
CA – Central Asia
CIS - Commonwealth of Independent States
CHEPS - Center for Higher Education Policy Studies
CRUE - Confederation of European Union Rectors’
Conferences
EHEA - European Higher Education Area
ENU - Eurasian National University
EU – European Union
EUA - European University Association
EURASHE – European Association of Institutions in Higher
Education
IAC - Information Analytic Centre
HE - Higher Education
HEI – Higher Education Institution
INCHER - International Centre for Higher Education
Research
JSC - Joint Stock Company
KazNU - Kazakh National University
MoE - Ministry of Education
MoES – Ministry of Education and Science
NGOs - nongovernmental organizations
NU – Nazarbayev University
TarSU - Taraz State University

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines higher education reforms in Kazakhstan from 1991 to 2016, and uses the policy transfer framework to analyse the case of the Bologna Process in this developing post-communist country. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, newly independent Kazakhstan aimed to shift from a resource-based economy to an industrial innovation-based economy. Modeled on Western countries' training to develop its professionals and competitive experts, Kazakhstan aimed to reform its education system to increase the quality and competitiveness of its higher education, and to enhance the recognition of local research and faculties. In order to integrate into the international educational space, and to connect with the education systems of the USA and Europe, Kazakhstan initiated its entrance into the Bologna Process which is an intergovernmental policy for the development of higher education in Europe.

Policy transfer is used as an explanatory theory. It is a useful theoretical approach to understand post-communist countries in transition because it provides a critical analytical tool with which to understand significant changes of direction. The policy transfer was used to explain why Kazakhstan signed the Bologna Process. This research used 41 semi-structured interviews with international and national actors engaged in the Bologna Process to understand the relationship between European, national and institutional levels.

The broad notion of policy transfer accommodates various tools for conducting empirical research, including the policy cycle, multi-level, ideational and process-centred approaches. By applying a theoretical framework that was so far predominantly

used in Western countries, this thesis contributed to the academic literature on post-communist countries.

This thesis considered four different, but connected concepts: policy learning, international policy transfer, lesson-drawing and path dependency. This research argues that the policy transfer process in higher education mainly occurs through learning. Not only reforms or policy were transferred, but policy ideas and knowledge were transferred too. Lesson-drawing and lesson learning occurred in the example of countries where higher education and science are advanced and well-developed, such as the USA and some European countries. In changing its education system and becoming integrated into the European Higher Education Area, Kazakhstan used lesson-drawing, policy learning and international policy processes.

International policy transfer provides a model which is applicable to post-communist countries with different political, ideological, economic, social and cultural backgrounds. Many transfers involve a combination of voluntary and coercive elements. Policy makers sought 'new' knowledge and policy ideas from other systems that were compatible with their ideological and cultural perspectives. In Kazakhstan, the transfer was voluntary, and could be characterised as lesson-drawing. At the same time, the country faced a need to change its social and economic situation due to the collapse of the country. All of these changes drove policy makers to engage in policy transfer in order to cope with external pressures such as globalisation and international integration.

Bottom-up initiatives were launched where universities persuaded the Ministry of Education to adopt decisions at the national level. This thesis argues that national and institutional levels were equally involved in the process of decision-making in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan inherited the Soviet system of higher education. Historically and culturally, the country is not associated with Western Europe, and both history and culture have to be taken into account in the process of policy transfer. This research argues that path dependency is one of the dimensions of policy transfer, and that historical paths of a country should be considered before transferring policy from abroad. Understanding of path dependency should guide evaluation of all possible constraints that might limit the policy transfer process from the West to developing countries. This thesis developed the concept of policy transfer by considering path dependency as a key factor in explaining policy reform, making an original and distinctive contribution to the knowledge of policy making and, more broadly, academic literature, in Kazakhstan and internationally.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the higher education reforms in Kazakhstan following the collapse of the Soviet Union. It uses the policy transfer framework to analyse the influence of the Bologna Process, an intergovernmental policy for the development of higher education in Europe.

Upon gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Kazakhstan sought to transform its resource-based economy to one based on industrial innovation. The lack of industrial production caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the breakdown of the command economy stimulated a need to retain qualified labour. The need for trained professionals pushed higher education onto the national agenda after which a decision was reached to send people to Western countries to undergo educational training so that the country would gain professional and competitive experts. Kazakhstan aimed to reform its education system in order to increase the quality and competitiveness of its higher education and to enhance the recognition of its researchers, faculty members and their work. In order to integrate into the international educational space, Kazakhstan searched for ideas and learned from the education systems of developed countries such as the United States and some nations in Europe.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, Kazakhstan embarked on a period of market reforms. It used its oil revenues to reform its economy along the lines of a market economy and to restructure the country's inherited Soviet educational system (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010, p.51). Kazakhstan was recognised as a market economy by the European Union (EU) and the USA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010, p.11). Integration into the European educational space became one of the key directions of

Kazakhstan's external policy. The President's Strategy (2012) announced Kazakhstan's intention to become one of the top 50 competitive countries in the world, which led to an increased focus on the role of higher education. As part of the national strategy to restructure the country's higher education system, Kazakhstan became the first Central Asian country to sign the Bologna Declaration in 2010.

Kazakhstan sought to dilute its Soviet legacy and to develop its education system by achieving international standards and becoming more globally competitive. Therefore, the country aimed to become part of the European or American systems, or an OECD member. The main attention of post-Soviet countries focused on radical measures to create conditions for the development of a state language, culture and traditions of their own country and not following the Soviet era in which Russian was the state language. This was a historic moment and the challenge for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) when new textbooks and new subjects in the state language were introduced in schools and universities. A new ideology and history of the country had to be reviewed (Naribayev, 2013, p.339).

The Bologna Process is an initiative of European countries that affects the higher education sector within and outside of Europe. It was initiated in 1999 by the Bologna Declaration which was signed by the officials responsible for higher education from 29 European countries. The main goal of the Bologna Process is to ensure the effective implementation of its prescribed reforms in higher education. Originally, it focused mainly on European university traditions, European values and European culture.

The Bologna Process strives to make different educational systems comparable (Fejes, 2008b, p.36). To that end, the

Bologna Process has as its main mission the creation of a convergence of the existing systems of higher education within Europe. The Bologna Process is based on freedoms, such as the freedom of choice of where to study and to work and the freedom to transfer from one higher education institution (HEI) to another within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) (Fejes, 2008b, p.32). The six main objectives established by the Bologna Declaration (1999) are as follows (Benelux Bologna Secretariat, n.d.(e)):

- adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees;
- adoption of a system based on two main cycles;
- establishment of a system of credits;
- promotion of mobility;
- promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance;
- promotion of the European dimension in higher education.

The Kazakhstani government had been working on joining the Bologna Process before the formal signing of the Declaration (Zakirova et al., 2009, p.33; the decree of the President of Kazakhstan, 2004). Official state documents outline the strategy for reforming the higher education system according to European standards (Ministry of Education, 2009a). On March 11, 2010, Kazakhstan joined the European education system by signing the Bologna Declaration (Ministry of Education, 2011, pp.48-56).

Research aims and questions

The aims of the research are to examine and understand the principles, structures and procedures of the Bologna Process; to explain why Kazakhstan as a non-European country signed the Bologna Declaration; to explain the influence of the Bologna Process on higher education reforms in Kazakhstan; and to apply the international policy transfer framework to a post-communist transition country.

The research questions are as follows:

- How does the Bologna Process work and who is involved in the policy-making process?
- Why did Kazakhstan sign the Bologna Declaration?
- How has the higher education policy changed in Kazakhstan since the adoption of the Bologna Process?
- To what extent is international policy transfer applicable in understanding the adoption of the Bologna Process in Kazakhstan?

Policy transfer as a theoretical framework

This research concentrates on why and how policy transfer has occurred in one specific transition country - Kazakhstan. The concept of international policy transfer is particularly suitable for analysing the influence of the Bologna Process on higher education reforms in Kazakhstan, while most studies concentrate on policy transfer between or within countries. In contrast to policy transfer, which suggests a direct exchange process between exporting and importing countries, international policy transfer transcends bilateral exchange between countries and entails transnational transfer networks (Stone, 2004, pp.546, 549; Stone, 2012, pp.490-491). Consequently, instead of bilateral horizontal transfers between countries, international policy transfers occur vertically between countries, international or transnational organisations and non-state actors (Stone, 2004, p.549). The influence of non-state and international or transnational organisations is important. Hence, international policy transfer is a complex process that occurs in a multilateral environment.

International policy transfer focuses on cross-national transfer processes that occur when countries learn directly from each other as a result of interactions within the membership of one international organisation (Carroll, 2013, p.107). These transfers usually involve international organisations, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) and national

governments. There are four stages of transfer to any organisations: pre-accession, accession, post-accession and routine transfer (Carroll, 2013, pp.107-108). Pre-accession transfer is when a country decides to join an organisation before a formal invitation is given and negotiations commence. The period for the decision-making process varies in length. The second stage is accession when the formal invitation to accession has been received and the accession process has begun. The accession stage occurs when a country has not formally signed an existing treaty, agreement or declaration, but nevertheless accepts the provisions and requirements to which other countries have already agreed. Post-accession transfer refers to the period during which agreements have been reached and a candidate country starts to adapt or change national policies in agreed directions (Carroll, 2013, p.108). Kazakhstan is in this third stage of transfer now. Routine transfer, which is the fourth stage, will not be explored within this study because it lacks relevance. After signing the Bologna Declaration in 2010, almost all reforms in Kazakhstan's higher education sector have been designed to implement the Bologna principles.

This thesis focuses on policy transfer, with a particular emphasis upon the international policy transfer approach (Carroll, 2013, pp.107-108; Evans, 2004, p.27; Stone, 2004, p.549). The current research provides a combination of three approaches of policy transfer: the multi-level approach; the ideational approach; and the process-centred approach. The details of each will be discussed in Chapter 2. Focusing on international policy transfer permits the research to explore lesson-drawing as an example of voluntary transfer within the process-centred approach and the policy learning process within the ideational approach to studying policy transfer. The combination of these three approaches is appropriate to this

study because, firstly, a multi-level approach provides various lenses through which to view and explore the issues involved in policy transfer. Secondly, this hybrid approach provides an explanation for the relationship between the supranational/international level (the Bologna Process is an intergovernmental policy process), the national level (Kazakhstan), and the subnational level, entailing interaction between the country and its internal actors (local level/institutional level; universities). Thirdly, the multi-level approach was used in combination with other two approaches of policy transfer. The research applied a process-centred approach by focusing on the explanation as to why policy transfer had occurred within the higher education system in Kazakhstan, why the Bologna Process has been adopted by the Kazakhstani government, and which actors were directly or indirectly involved in the decision making. By using the ideational approach, this thesis has identified how policy makers and HEIs have been influenced by external pressures such as integration processes, globalisation and internationalisation.

Contribution to the academic literature

The available literature provides examples based on existing research on the processes of policy transfer in different sectors of the economy in developing countries. To date, there have been few studies on policy transfer in the post-Soviet states: Ukraine (Ivanova & Evans, 2004, pp.95-112), Georgia (Common, 2013, pp.13-29), Kyrgyzstan (Street, 2004, pp.113-127), Estonia and Latvia (Savi & Randma-Liiv, 2013, p.74). These case studies will be discussed in Chapter 2. This research fills a gap within the policy transfer literature on higher education by analysing the effects of the Bologna Process in Kazakhstan. The contribution of this study is to the field of public policy and higher education in particular.

A wide range of literature has focused on policy transfer and specific forms thereof, such as policy learning and lesson-drawing. Literature on policy transfer has until now not focused on the notion of path dependency. This thesis argues that path dependency is present within the process of policy transfer. Path dependency should be considered as one of the dimensions of policy transfer theory. Path dependency calls for the historical paths of a country to be considered before transferring any policy from abroad. An evaluation of potential constraints that might limit the policy transfer process from the West to developing countries should be considered in connection with path dependency. This thesis developed the concept of policy transfer by considering path dependency as a key factor in explaining policy reform. Thus, in this thesis path dependency is considered as a critical dimension of policy transfer which makes an original and distinctive contribution to the knowledge of policy making and to academic literature in Kazakhstan and beyond.

Structure of thesis

This thesis comprises seven chapters. **Chapter 1** is an introduction that provides a general explanation of the background to the issues that will be addressed throughout the thesis. It sets forth the aims, research questions, structure and contribution of the research.

Chapter 2 examines the concept of policy transfer. The first part provides a general overview of the policy transfer framework. The second part discusses the model of policy transfer that was developed by Dolowitz (2000b). The third part introduces the concept of path dependency and explains how it matters to the current study. The fourth part demonstrates examples based on existing research on the processes of policy transfer in different sectors of the economy in transition countries (Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, and Georgia).

The last part explores the different approaches to the study of policy transfer introduced by Evans (2004). This chapter justifies the applicability of the policy transfer framework and international policy transfer approach to post-communist transition countries by presenting the adoption of the Bologna Process and its influence upon higher education reforms in Kazakhstan.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design and methods utilised in this thesis. It discusses the sampling process, the development of the topic guide, the data collection process including pilot interview, transcribing, coding, and analysis processes. It also considers access and cost issues, ethics, participation in a ministerial conference and a personal reflection on the fieldwork.

Chapter 4 examines the Bologna Process and explains how it is implemented within the higher education sector. Firstly, the chapter briefly describes the background of the Bologna Process; secondly, it introduces the aims, principles and members of the Process; thirdly, it explains how the Bologna Process operates including its procedures; and finally, it uses case studies to explain how the process is implemented.

Chapter 5 discusses the educational reforms from 1991 until the present day. Firstly, it discusses Kazakhstan's education system during the Soviet Union; secondly, it evaluates reforms after the collapse of the Soviet Union; thirdly, it identifies the main actions of policy makers in the decision to join the Bologna Process; and finally, it concludes that the development of the higher education system and its improvement were the main priorities of Kazakhstan.

Chapter 6 examines the five stages in a policy cycle along with international policy transfer theory. The stages were taken from the 'policy cycle' approach developed by Dolowitz (2000b,

p.34) and 'an ideal type of policy transfer cycle' that was developed by Evans and Barakat (2012, p.547). The five stages are: agenda setting, formulation, implementation, evaluation and adaptation. The aim of the chapter is to combine primary research data with the literature review in order to construct a thematic analysis. Each stage of the policy cycle consists of sub-themes, which are taken from a combination of multi-level, ideational and process-centred approaches to studying policy transfer in order to understand the effects of policy transfer through joining various levels of analysis.

Chapter 7 specifically addresses the research questions. International policy transfer provides a model which is applicable to post-communist countries with different political, ideological, economic, social and cultural backgrounds. Policy transfer helped to show that many transfers involve a combination of voluntary and coercive elements (Hulme, 2000, p.79). One type of policy transfer is 'voluntary but necessary', and this is applicable in Kazakhstan. Policy transfer depends on variables such as time and history. In considering policy transfer, it is important to take into account the national peculiarities and reforms which lead to the adaptation process. This research argues that the policy transfer process in higher education occurred through learning. Lessons were drawn and learned-from countries where higher education and science were advanced and well-developed, such as the USA and some European countries. This thesis concludes that the broad 'umbrella' concept of policy transfer is considered as its strength because it allows for the exploring of different terms within theory development, and including additional dimensions such as path dependency. Therefore, this research concludes that path dependency should be considered as one of the dimensions of policy transfer.

CHAPTER 2: POLICY TRANSFER

The main purpose of this chapter is to explain the concept of policy transfer, particularly international policy transfer, and its relevance to the current research by exploring Dolowitz's (2000b) model of policy transfer and Evans's (2004) approaches to studying policy transfer. By reviewing a wide range of literature on policy transfer, Dolowitz's model (2000b) and Evans's (2004) approaches were found to be particularly useful in understanding and explaining the nature and different aspects of the policy transfer process. This chapter examines the concept of policy transfer and is divided into five main parts. The first part provides a general overview of the policy transfer framework. The second part discusses the model of policy transfer that was developed by Dolowitz (2000b). The third part introduces the concept of path dependency and explains its relevance to the current study. The fourth part demonstrates examples based on existing research on the processes of policy transfer in different sectors of the economy in the developing and transition countries of Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, and Georgia. The last part explores the different approaches to the study of policy transfer that were introduced by Evans (2004). Overall, this chapter justifies the applicability of the policy transfer framework and international policy transfer approach to post-communist transition countries by presenting the adoption of the Bologna Process and its influence upon higher education reforms in Kazakhstan.

The policy transfer framework

Policy transfer is a theory of policy development, which as a field of study originated in the United States. It has attempted to explain the spread and transfer of policies within a federal

system (Stone, 2004, p.546). Policy transfers occur between different territorial levels such as countries, regions, cities, and provinces. The discussion of policy puts a government at the centre of the analysis. Governments consider foreign countries as sources of new solutions, policy ideas, reforms or legislation. Policy makers, by analysing a specific policy or practice, make decisions as to whether or not it is worthy of being borrowed from other countries. 'Foreign' models in the development of national programmes, policies, institutions, and structures are used by almost all governments. It could be asked if policy is something that happens only in a government (Colebatch, 2009, pp.3-4). Indeed, it is a term that is associated with a government more than with business firms or non-governmental organisations. This chapter will illustrate that actors other than governments can be associated with policy transfer.

Exporter and importer countries are common terms related to the policy transfer process. Page defines the country that the policy is being taken from as the "exporter", and the country imitating those policies and practices as the "importer" (2000, p.2).

Policy transfer is a process when information or knowledge related to the development of policy strategies implemented in the exporting country, or sector that is faced with a problem that is similar to the importing country or another sector within one country. Page and Mark-Lawson (2007 as cited in Duncan, 2009, p.453) argued:

"... policy transfer is not a straightforward process. It does not imply a simple movement of a set of policies from one place to another with no (or limited) change of state, as the policy can be clearly recognised as an import from another jurisdiction".

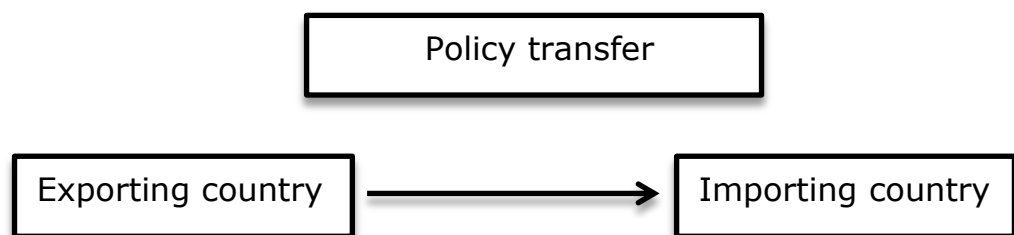
Policy transfer is a multi-faceted and complex concept, which cannot be categorised into one specific discipline

(Rapple, 2012, p.4). Colebatch claimed that the activity of governments consists of a wide range of 'adjectival policy' such as health policy, regional policy, environmental policy, educational policy, and so on (2009, p.4). Policy transfer is an interdisciplinary approach (Evans, 2009, p.243). Evans provides a definition of policy transfer by introducing the example of the transfer between sectors (e.g. education or health) within one political system:

"... policy transfer is a theory of policy development that seeks to make sense of a process or set of processes in which knowledge about institutions, policies or delivery systems at one sector or level of governance is used in the development of institutions, policies or delivery systems at another sector or level of governance" (1999, p.30).

Studies on policy transfer mainly concentrate on transfers of policies or programmes between or within countries. On the one hand, policy transfer suggests a direct exchange process between exporting and importing countries (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Horizontal policy transfer



On the other hand, there exists international policy transfer which is more than a simple bilateral exchange between countries, rather it also concerns transnational transfer networks (Stone, 2004, pp.546, 549; Stone, 2012, pp.490-491). Instead of bilateral horizontal transfers between countries, international policy transfers occur vertically between countries, international or transnational organisations and non-state actors (Stone,

2004, p.549). In this regard, international policy transfer is a more complex process than a simple bilateral relationship between countries that occurs in a multilateral environment.

Originally, Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) identified policy transfer as a concept to explain the multiple processes both within and between various political contexts (Benson & Jordan, 2011, p.367). Dolowitz and Marsh wrote (1996, p.344):

“... a policy transfer, emulation and lesson drawing all related to a process in which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions etc. in one time and/or place is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements and institutions in another time and/or place”.

The term policy transfer is an ‘umbrella’ notion that encompasses various terms and forms that have been mentioned in a wide range of literature. For example, convergence (Bennett, 1991), diffusion (Marsh & Sharman, 2009), lesson-drawing (Rose, 1993; 2005; Robertson 1991) and policy learning (Stone, 1999) are all captured within the term. The Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) definition suggests that concepts such as policy diffusion, policy convergence, policy learning and lesson-drawing make up the different dimensions of policy transfer. The authors did not separate such terms from the concept of policy transfer.

According to Evans and Davies, “what is commonly viewed as a strength can be also identified as a weakness” (1999, p.361). Policy transfer was used as a generic concept which certain scholars have considered as a weakness in operationalising the concept (Evans & Davies, 1999, p.363). Benson and Jordan support the work of Evans and Davies by claiming that the Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) definition was “a landmark in the development of the concept” (2011, p.367; 2012, p.334) which “invites scholars to criticise and develop it” (Evans & Davies, 1999, p.364).

Dolowitz and Marsh (2000), in their later work, developed the concept by considering policy transfer between different political systems. They claimed that:

“... policy transfer is the process by which knowledge about policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in one political system (past or present) is used in the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions and ideas in another political system” (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, p.5).

Thus, policy transfer as a concept was introduced to explain the multiple processes both within and between various political contexts. Transfer can take place within countries and across countries. Policy transfer is a supranational, cross-national or cross-sectorial process. The policy transfer process entails finding solutions to a problem in public policy; searching for new ideas and knowledge; and transferring knowledge, information, policies, programmes, institutions, political instruments, ideologies, and ideas. Dolowitz and Marsh (1996) defined policy transfer as a broad concept, which includes terms like convergence, diffusion, coercion and the voluntaristic activity of lesson-drawing (Stone, 1999, p.52). The current research supports the view of Evans that all of these terms are interdependent, and that all are considered as different forms of policy transfer (Evans, 2004, p.4). Therefore, in this thesis the broad ‘umbrella’ concept of policy transfer is considered as its strength.

Policy convergence and policy diffusion

Policy convergence and policy diffusion are the forms of policy transfer. Policy convergence refers to the process of increasing the similarity of the policy adopted by two or more countries or administrative systems over time (Nutley et al., 2013, p.31). Policy convergence is defined by Bennett (1991)

through a fourfold framework process. The first process is emulation, when politicians copy action taken somewhere else; the second process is elite networking, when convergence results from transnational policy communities; the third process is harmonisation when convergence takes place through international regimes; and the final process is penetration when actions are taken by external actors in pursuit of their own interests (Bennett, 1991, p.215; Nutley et al., 2013, p.32). Bennett concludes that policy convergence should not represent an absence of state autonomy (1991, p.215). Policy convergence can be considered as the need to find a solution for similar economic, social, or political challenges of another country stemming from the spread of ideas. The spread of ideas occurs as a result of policy diffusion.

Policy diffusion refers to the process through which policy choices in one country affect those made in another country (Marsh & Sharman, 2009, pp.270-271). Diffusion theory involves the following elements:

- “(1) a person, group, or organisation that serves as the emitter or transmitter;
- (2) a person, group, or organisation that is the adopter;
- (3) the item that is diffused, such as material goods, information and skills;
- and (4) a channel of diffusion that may consist of persons or media that link the transmitter and the adopter” (McAdam & Rucht, 1993, p.59).

The advantage of diffusion theory is that it provides an explanation about how new ideas and practices are spreading (McAdam & Rucht, 1993, p.59). The policy transfer literature calls the nature of policy diffusion into question. There are debates among scholars as to whether policy diffusion is a type of policy transfer or the policy diffusion process leads to policy transfer. The main distinction between these two concepts is that

policy transfer explores the causes of singular processes within bilateral policy exchange between countries (Knill, 2005, p.4), while policy diffusion explores the processes among a large number of countries.

Policy learning vs lesson-drawing

The policy transfer framework is connected with the concepts of policy learning and lesson-drawing. Learning is part of policy transfer. What distinguishes these two modes is that lesson-drawing is practical, while policy learning is theoretical. Policy makers learn lessons from experience, which is considered practical (Rose, 1993, p. ix).

Learning occurs when politicians change their understanding of the policy process and adapt it by utilising new knowledge taken from past experience and old knowledge (Meseguer, 2005; 2009). There are two reasons why learning is a part of policy transfer. The first is that sufficient policy transfer requires substantial policy learning. The process of learning occurs prior to the process of policy transfer. This means that these two terms are dependent upon each other. Policy transfer is an outcome of learning, but this is not always the case (Stone, 2001, p.8). Policy learning could lead to policy transfer, but it could also produce other policy results, including a policy change or no outcome at all. Transfers of ideas or policies are strengthened by a deeper and prior process of learning. Different types of learning such as policy, social, rational and bounded learning could have implications for the policy transfer process.

The second reason for learning being a part of policy transfer is that policy learning and the policy transfer processes take place between actors such as individuals, organisations and networks (Freeman, 2008, p.375). The main idea behind these two processes is the spread of policy ideas, knowledge and the transfer of practice (Stone, 2001, p.13). The role of knowledge

actors (non-state), such as experts, academics or intellectuals, is very important because, in most cases, their knowledge is incorporated with the knowledge of officials into the analysis of policy transfer (Stone, 2000, p.47). Therefore, policy transfer and policy learning are based on an exchange between actors and it is both a social and collective process (Knoepfel & Kissling-Näf, 1998, p.346).

Ettelt, Mays and Nolte argue that encouraging policy makers to learn from elsewhere is ambitious (2012, p.492). The authors define 'learning' as the process of gaining new knowledge and changing old knowledge. In terms of policy making, learning from abroad brings challenges and questions about whether such 'learning' is possible.

The concept of social learning is used by Hall (1993). Hall theorised social learning as a three-level change that influences the mechanisms, techniques and instruments of policy making (Hall, 1993, p.278). By referring to the first-order change, Hall made claims about the detailed setting of the instruments of policy making (1993, pp.280-281). The second-order change refers to techniques and policy instruments that are applied in order to achieve policy goals. The third-order change is the main goal itself that guides policy in a specific field. This system of ideas requires not only the policy goals and the applied instruments to achieve the goals, but the nature of the issues also needs to be addressed (Evans, 2009, p.252). Therefore, the role of ideas is a key element in order to identify how policy learning takes place.

There are two competing theoretical approaches of learning: rational and bounded (Meseguer, 2005, pp.73, 78; Meseguer, 2009, pp.17-18). The rational approach means learning by enhancing knowledge through observing the experiences of others in order to gain a better understanding of

a particular phenomenon (Meseguer, 2005, p.73). In the rational learning framework, policy makers have some prior beliefs about results (Meseguer, 2009, p.18). Bounded learning occurs due to the lack of adaptation of a policy to the specific conditions and features of the importing country (Meseguer, 2005, p.76). In the bounded learning approach, Meseguer claimed that policy makers do not need to have analytical skills (2009, p.18). For both rational and bounded types of learning, the gathering of information is important.

Rose (1993, 2005) introduced lesson-drawing as a process similar to policy transfer. The central focus of the lesson-drawing analysis is on how policies operate in the exporting country, how the policy could be applied and implemented in the importing country, and what changes or reforms are needed to transfer between them (Page, 2000, p.2). Rose's (2005) study contributes to the literature on lesson-drawing or voluntary policy transfer. He highlighted some important problems such as the absence of prescriptions on how to solve public policy problems and the unwillingness of academics to engage with practice, which would help practitioners to set the public policy agenda and to create a practical guide to learning. The intent of Rose (2005) here is to formulate guidance on lesson-drawing in practice versus the formulation of theory.

According to Rose, the lesson-drawing process is about conflicting interests, values and aims which means that this process cannot be politically neutral (1993, p.22). Robertson (1991, p.56) supports these assertions and analysed why and how policy lessons are drawn into political conflict. Even when a programme is perceived as a success in one country, opponents can attack the proposed policy while proponents defend the claim that the policy or the programme could be imported from another country (Robertson, 1991, pp.60-61). The success of the

lesson-drawing process depends greatly on political support, in particular, from the political coalition that adopted and implemented the policy from elsewhere (Robertson, 1991, p.69).

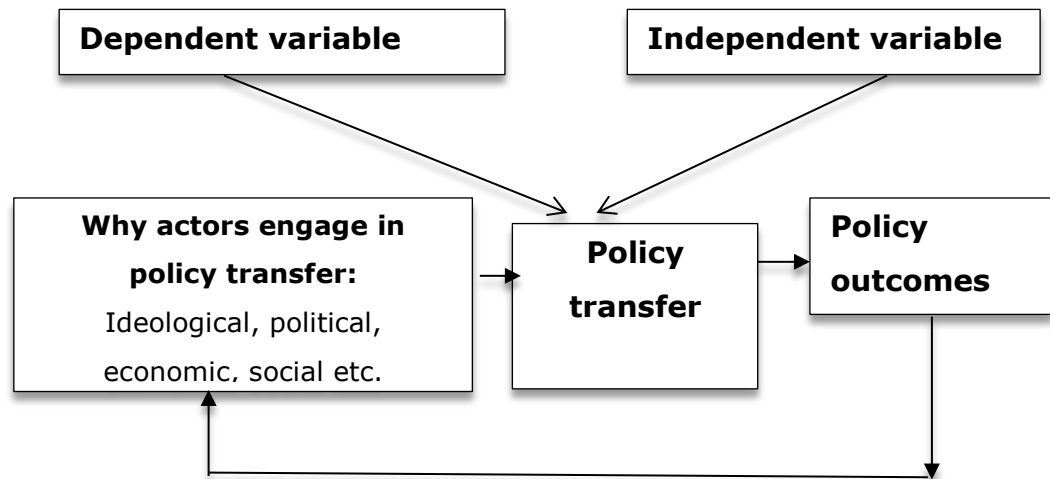
The lesson-drawing approach is useful for practitioners involved in policy transfer. Knowledge of programme design is essential. To understand the differences between countries in terms of policy transfer or lesson-drawing with respect to a policy or programme, a policy maker must be aware of all the details of the design of the policy in the exporter country. Ideally, a policy maker knows the circumstances and conditions of the operation of the relevant policies in the exporter country and the impact the relevant imported policy has upon the existing features in the importer country (Page, 2000, pp.9, 12).

To sum up, policy transfer is a broad concept, which involves learning and lesson-drawing (Stone, 1999, p.52). Learning could be a mechanism of policy transfer. Therefore, in this thesis, policy learning and lesson-drawing are considered as parts of the policy transfer process.

Dolowitz's model of policy transfer

The Dolowitz model explains (1) why policy transfer has been chosen by policy makers; (2) who is involved in policy transfer; (3) what is transferred; (4) from where it was transferred; (5) degrees of transfer; (6) sources of information; (7) how transfer leads to policy failure; (8) how the policy stages link to the policy transfer; and (9) constraints on transfer (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.10). Following Dolowitz, this section consists of nine parts. In order to explain the policy transfer process or to explain policy outcomes, policy transfer could be treated as either a dependent or an independent variable. For example, if the researcher wants to use policy transfer to explain policy results, consequently s/he needs to explore what causes transfer.

Figure 2 Policy transfer as a dependent or independent variable



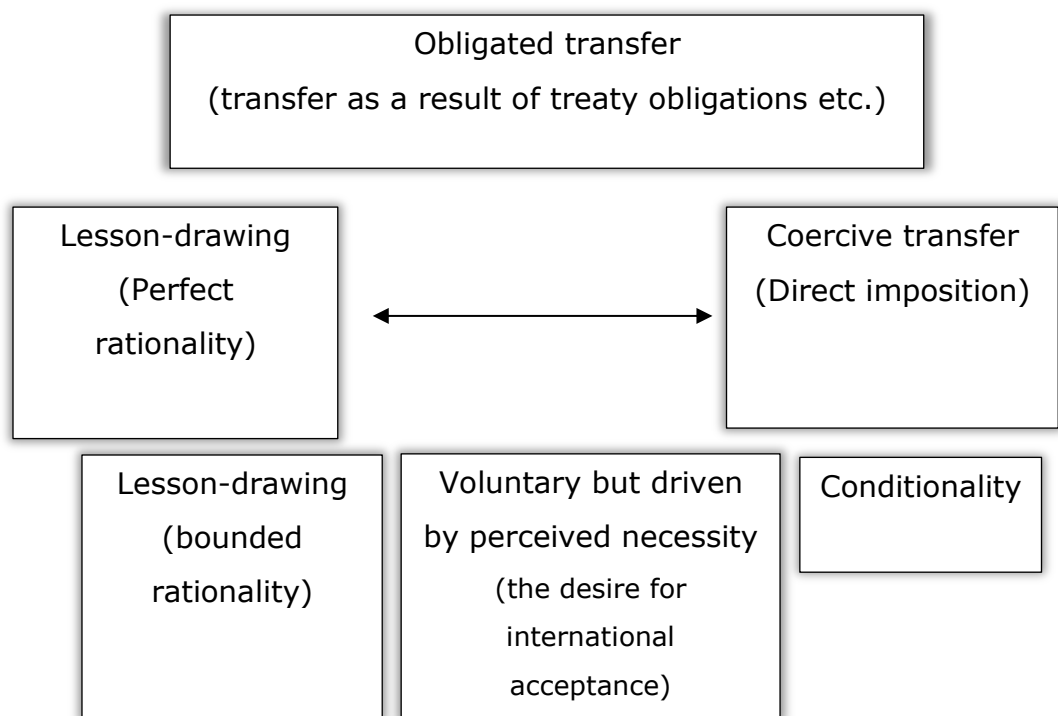
Source: Dolowitz, 2000b, p.11

If a government searches for a solution to an urgent 'problem' due to political or economic crises, or social disorder, there is a high possibility that there will be a transfer, because "the need for a solution is imperative" (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.9). Policy makers try to find a successful policy or programme in the hope that it will be implemented in a similar way in their own country. As part of the process, they have to take into account cross-national differences (Page, 2000, p.2). How lessons should be drawn from a cross-national perspective is a problematic issue (Page, 2000, p.9), because there is no specific guidance for every country. According to Wolman, policy transfer is better considered to be a part of a wider process as opposed to an independent process (1992, p.44). He claimed that similar policies can be adopted by different countries as a result of common social or economic processes, however, countries must decide independently on whether to adopt a similar policy or to imitate it.

1. Why policy transfer?

Dolowitz claimed that the researcher needs to discover what drives actors to engage in the policy transfer process (2000b, p.12). This information helps to explain why policy makers look to specific models and countries. It is crucial to distinguish between voluntary and coercive transfer (see Figure 3) as this can help to explain why actors turn to policy transfer and why it appears that countries implement policies that are inappropriate for a given situation.

Figure 3 From lesson-drawing to coercive transfer



Source: Dolowitz, 2000b, p.13.

Transfers can be voluntary or coercive (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, p.344; 2000, p.13-17). The voluntary/coercive framework was initially introduced in the policy transfer literature and is

based on Rose's classification of lesson-drawing as rational and voluntary (1991, p.9). Furthermore, this classification of policy transfer was developed by Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, 2000, 2012), who viewed policy transfer as a process in which the lines between the voluntary and the coercive were blurred. Holzinger and Knill argue that with indirect coercion and voluntary transfer, it was still unclear where voluntariness ends and where coercion begins; thus it is difficult to separate one from the other (2005, p.779).

Dolowitz classifies policy transfer as lesson-drawing and direct imposition transfer (2000b, p.10). Evans's research (2004, 2006, 2009a, 2009b, 2010, 2012) classifies policy transfer as voluntary transfer or lesson-drawing, negotiated transfer and direct coercion transfer. Voluntary transfer or lesson-drawing applies when policy makers deal with policy problems such as the dissatisfaction with an existing policy as a result of poor performance. The reason behind searching for a lesson or solution is political dissatisfaction with existing policy or performance. Dolowitz and Marsh claim that "only when routines stop providing solutions it is necessary to search for lessons" (1996, p.346). This approach allows policy makers to learn about reforms through a degree of interaction with other actors and to implement or transfer such reforms as part of the domestic policy-making process (Common, 1998, p.447). Voluntary transfer also refers to the decision when politicians put an issue on the agenda because another country has decided to adopt a particular programme or policy (Common, 1998, p.445). The adoption of programmes or policies examined with respect to developing or transition countries involves varying forms of coercion (Evans, 2010, p.8). In some cases, there is no freedom of choice, which leads to an obligated transfer or a voluntary transfer which is driven by perceived necessity.

Types of transfer such as perfect and limited (or bounded) rationality have been developed in further studies (Turgeon et al., 2008, p.4; James & Lodge, 2003, p.184). Perfect rationality occurs when policy makers have the necessary time and resources to complete the proper actions to resolve a problem, while limited or bounded rationality occurs when time and resources are limited and political and administrative constraints exist (Turgeon et al., 2008, p.4; James & Lodge, 2003, p.184).

In many cases, the policy transfer process involves voluntary and coercive elements simultaneously. There are cases when both elements are involved in policy transfer. With this in mind, the concept 'voluntary but constrained' has been defined by Carroll (2013). It refers to the accession process when the transfer is voluntary because no country is forced to take part or enter into an accession process with any organisation. Yet, the process becomes constrained because a candidate country has to satisfy requirements and criteria to obtain membership of a specific organisation (Carroll, 2013, p.123).

Another term, 'voluntary but necessary' policy transfer, was defined by Ivanova and Evans, and explains a condition where the necessity for policy transfer lies between indirect coercion and dissatisfaction (2004, pp.95, 97). This is common to transition countries, because of the desire to learn from other countries, coupled with the need and requirement for change. All existing policies in post-communist countries had to transform or contribute to a new policy system. Therefore, the need for policy transfer leads to borrowing, transforming and exporting new ideas and policies.

Negotiated policy transfer or so-called obligated transfer occurs when powerful states, supranational organisations, and global financial institutions impose policy change by manipulation in order to secure their grants, loans and other investments that

are given to support developing countries (Evans, 2009, p.245). Indirect policy transfer is implemented in order to change policy because of a "fear of falling behind neighbouring countries" (Evans, 2009, p.245; Dolowitz, 2004, p.27). It happens when actors within one policy-making system recognise their system as falling behind its key contestants (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.14). If the policy transfer occurs because of fear of being left behind, the process will probably produce a poor analysis of borrowed policies (Dolowitz, 2004, p.27). The lack of time, when going through a complex process and conducting analyses can be problematic (Duncan, 2009, p.455). Policy makers look to their main competitors for lessons and according to Dolowitz in this case "the process is not purely voluntary" (2000b, p.14). Another factor leading to a mixed policy transfer is when actors believe that policy transfer will make "their system internationally recognised or acceptable" (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.14). For instance, Campbell argued (1997, p.5 as cited in Dolowitz, 2000b, p.14):

"... some [post-communist countries] sought to harmonize their tax structures with those of their West Europe neighbors in an effort to appear westernized and legitimate thereby increasing their chances of being accepted into various international organizations and accords".

Countries turn voluntarily to policy transfer when they see it as the best solution to a specific problem. In particular, if a solution to a problem has been defined by other countries, and a country does not adopt this best practice or solution, it may face pressure to follow the international community (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.14). For example, there was a case when Norway's political actors perceived that their workfare programmes were falling behind the international trend. At the time, European countries were looking instead at the American, and later the British, workfare programmes. Belgium adopted them voluntarily, while

Norway adopted the American/British-style workfare programmes with little need for the country and predicated solely on the international pressure "based upon the existing political and economic situations in the borrowing system" (Dolowitz, 2000b, pp.12-14).

By applying coercion, tactical or instrumental learning can occur. The learning process of policy makers is instrumental or tactical in response to outside pressures and influences, particularly within international relations. For instance, a developing country follows the 'best global practice' not because it was convinced of the wisdom of such a policy or strategy, but because of conditions on loans or other obligations (or the process of conditionality). Stone refers to these countries as client countries, in that they are forced to implement lessons which are not the result of the learning process (2001, p.12). Moreover, the outcome of these policies is not necessarily of a country's choosing, but an outcome due to the existence of imposed conditionality (Stone, 2001, p.12).

When constitutional, social or political changes are introduced without the willingness of a government and its people, direct coercive transfer occurs (Evans, 2010, p.8). This happens when "one government, political institution or political system forces other government to approve a programme, policy or institutional structure" (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.16). Supranational and international organisations can force governments to adopt a policy. Coercive transfer may involve the actions of international organisations such as the World Bank or the International Monetary Fund. In particular, poorer countries have been seen by donors as barely having a choice simply as some have been told "no reform, no money" (Peters, 1997, p.73 as cited in Stone, 2001, p.6). This is especially true when forms of transfer such as policies, reforms and programmes occur under

conditions set by non-states or international organisations as a result of international treaties and obligations (Benson & Jordan, 2011, p.371; James & Lodge, 2003, p.179). In order to clarify different terms given by different authors in the policy transfer literature, it was necessary to create the following table.

Table 1 Different terms from the literature review

Different terms developed by various authors	Why transfer?		
	Want to ←		Have to →
Names	1.Voluntary	2.Mixtures	3.Coercive
Dolowitz (2000b); Dolowitz & Marsh (1996)	Lesson-drawing	Lesson-drawing	Direct imposition
Turgeon et al. (2008); James & Lodge (2003)	Perfect rationality	Bounded or limited rationality	
Evans (2004)	Voluntary or lesson-drawing	Negotiated	Direct coercive
Dolowitz (2000b)		International pressures (image; consensus, perceptions)	
Evans (2009); Dolowitz (2004)		Indirect policy transfer	
Holzinger & Knill (2005)		Indirect coercion	
Ivanova & Evans, 2004		Voluntary but necessary	
Dolowitz (2000b)		Externalities	
Dolowitz (2000b)		Conditionality (loans, conditions)	

		attached to business activity)	
Dolowitz (2000b)		Obligations	
Carroll (2013)		Voluntary but constrained	

2. Actors and policy networks

The term 'actor' is used to indicate key individuals or a single person acting on his or her own initiative in the policy transfer process (Rose, 1993, pp.52-57). According to Dolowitz, there are nine categories of actor: elected officials; bureaucrats and civil servants; policy entrepreneurs and experts; consultants; political parties; pressure groups; think tanks; corporations; and non-governmental international organisations and institutions (2000b, pp.16-17). There are official actors within states, such as bureaucrats, politicians and government experts. Policy makers in most cases are responsible for the policy transfer process, particularly solving problems through a process of selecting viable solutions. The role of such official actors is dictated by the pressure of political schedules complicated by the need for a quick reply to any policy problem.

Actors involved in international policy transfer include international organisations, states and non-state actors (Stone, 2004, pp.545, 550). International organisations intend to help induct future member countries with both the norms and technical arrangements. International organisations provide a mechanism for spreading information and providing knowledge through publications, conferences, seminars and networks of official agents. For Stone, international organisations "advise transition countries on improving public governance at the central government level" (2004, p.553). The boundaries of the policy transfer concept are extending, particularly in the process

of international policy transfer through spreading information and ideas, and providing knowledge mainly because of the role of non-state actors and international organisations in the process (Benson & Jordan, 2011, p.370). The main strategy of many international organisations, such as the World Bank or the OECD, is knowledge sharing. Hence, an international organisation is not only an actor of coercive policy transfer, but also one of learning, providing transition countries with a transfer of norms and knowledge. Therefore, both coercive and voluntary types of transfer engage with international or transnational and non-state actors.

Non-state actors include interest groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), think tanks, consultant firms, research institutes, university centres, law firms, banks, scientific associations, professional societies and training institutes (Stone, 2004, pp.550, 556; Turgeon et al., 2008, p.5). The former World Bank Chief Economist Joseph Stiglitz said that “in developing countries, think tanks have proliferated and have become important actors to introduce and adapt new policy initiatives” (2000, taken from Stone, 2004, p.556). Many developing and transition countries have consulted with think tanks from which they have imported Western ideas. Think tanks are independent policy institutes and non-governmental organisations (Stone, 2000). On the other hand, the research that think tanks produce may be restricted in many cases as they rely upon external sources of funding and there may be inherent biases in their work based on who commissioned them to do the work. If they have links with governing parties, then their independence may be questionable. Another problem is that government officials could be given unreliable information by think tanks. Ettelt, Mays and Nolte (2012), by using the example of the Department of Health in the UK, argue that the

absorption of new knowledge from abroad, particularly by accessing, interpreting and applying information, contributes to learning from abroad. Even though government officials establish alliances with think tanks, the learning process could be limited because of uneven access to information (Stone, 2000, p.61; Ettelt et al., 2012).

Ladi (2005) developed her own typology of policy research institutes and the term of think tanks. She conducted a comprehensive analysis focusing on policy research institutes. Ladi argued that the key actors in policy transfer are policy research institutes (Ladi, 2005, p.2). One of the main constraints with respect to think tanks according to Ladi (2005) is that these organisations are dependent on political actors. As mentioned earlier, the issue of funding may have an impact on the independence of think tanks. The passing of new legislation, the creation of a new policy delivery agency, or changes among state officials may marginalise any think tank at any given time. Following such developments, think tanks can only create the conditions for policy transfer such as by providing consultations, information and assessing policy choices and lesson-drawing. This scenario arose when the Soviet Union collapsed and post-Soviet states moved towards market economies. International advisers and experts proposed "immediate consultations on democratic transition" to post-communist countries (Savi & Randma-Liiv, 2013, p.69).

According to Stone, "think tanks are policy entrepreneurs for transfer" (2000, p.66). Think tanks assist in exchanges between actors in numerous countries while at the same time providing the same consultations to various countries unrestricted by specific local conditions (Stone, 2004, p.556). In most cases, think tanks or policy entrepreneurs seek profits by playing a central role in the policy transfer process. In the UK,

the role of think tanks is essential as they have very close relations with their American colleagues (Dolowitz et al., 1999, p.728).

Epistemic communities, advocacy coalitions and other policy networks also play roles in the policy transfer process (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.22). There is some debate as to what constitutes epistemic communities. Stone (1999, 2000) identified the key role of think tanks and international organisations within 'epistemic communities'. Epistemic communities refer to "social and natural scientists and individuals from different disciplines with authoritative claims to policy relevant knowledge that reside in national, transnational and international organisations" (Evans, 2004, p.18; 2009, p.252). In other words, they are groups of people belonging to different fields of science, but who hold a common interest in politics and policy questions. A study by Haas (1992) with respect to the importance of 'epistemic communities', can be applied as a mechanism of understanding the movement of ideas in the international arena. Rose argues that learning happens via transnational epistemic communities, for example the OECD (1993, pp.68-69). The main mission of epistemic communities is to help in understanding the emergence of policy learning.

Policy-oriented learning occurs as a result of professional meetings or forums in which specific information is discussed between people of opposing belief systems (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993; Evans, 2004; 2009). Sabatier claims that policy-oriented learning occurs within an advocacy coalition (1993, pp.42-48). Professionalised forums help to explain how one coalition attempts to influence other policy actors to accept, or at least consider, their policy stance. Sabatier believes that professional forums admit participants on the basis of proficient training and technical competence, and a sharing of mutual

theoretical and empirical presuppositions, seeking to resolve a broad range of analytic arguments (Sabatier et al., 1993, p.53).

Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) introduced the notion of advocacy coalitions to explain policy change. Advocacy coalitions are composed of actors (e.g. elected officials, interest group leaders, researchers) who share a mutual belief system (basic values) and demonstrate coordinated activity over periods of time (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993, p.25). The Advocacy Coalition Framework uses the concepts of advocacy coalitions to describe policy change and learning through a period of time (a decade or longer). Belief systems of the advocacy coalitions are designed in a hierarchical fashion: deep core beliefs, then policy core or primary beliefs, and, finally, secondary beliefs (Albright, 2011, p.486). Albright concluded that policy core beliefs are shared inside a coalition and assist to continue its cohesiveness whereas secondary beliefs might contrast inside a coalition (Albright, 2011, p.486). Organisations and institutions that have a common set of beliefs about a policy problem or solution play a central role in policy learning through interaction (2011, p.506). Learning or, in Meseguer's words, a change in beliefs, occurs when new knowledge affects the core beliefs and ideas of policy makers (Stone, 1999, p.52; Meseguer, 2005, p.72). Policy learning affects core beliefs within the coalition by developing new arguments and strategies (Stone, 2001, p.9).

Gilardi paid attention to policy makers who learn selectively from the experience of others (2010, p.650). He found that not all decision makers learn equally. The main constraint is identifying who learns and from what. Even if all actors are given the same information, not all will reach the same conclusion. This is especially true if they have different prior beliefs (Gilardi, 2010, pp.652, 661). Furthermore, policy makers have different skills for learning. Some of them have

greater abilities to introduce policy lessons by improving policy whereas others might adopt lessons “for symbolic purposes or as a strategic device to secure political support” (Robertson, 1991, as cited in Stone, 2001, p.12).

3. What is transferred?

There are six categories of what can be transferred through the policy transfer process: policy goals, content and instruments; programmes; institutions; ideologies; ideas and attitudes; and negative lessons or failures (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.23). Each policy could have several programmes, whereas a programme is a complete course of action. In the policy transfer process, according to Dolowitz, policy makers will transfer a programme as opposed to an entire policy. When policy makers cannot transfer a whole policy or programme, they can transfer the goals, instruments and/or content of specific policies (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.23).

In the literature there is a distinction between ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ transfers that divides the above-mentioned six categories of what can be transferred. ‘Soft’ forms of transfers are ideas, concepts and attitudes. The spread of norms, beliefs and knowledge are ‘soft’ forms which are connected to learning or knowledge transfer. The ‘soft’ transfer illustrates how policy transfer concepts are combined with the learning process. ‘Hard’ forms of transfer are programmes and policies (Evans & Davies 1999, p.382; 2004, p.40). According to Stone, ‘hard’ transfers can also be defined as policy tools, structures and practices (Stone, 2004, p.546).

For Bennett (1991), the process of learning is the main independent variable for explaining why any given policy is adopted. His research focused on ‘hard’ forms of transfer such as policy goals and instruments. He conducted cross-national research based on the examples of the USA, Canada and the UK

by concentrating on the Freedom of Information Act of the United States. The main disadvantage of Bennett's work for this current study is that he only conducted empirical research on developed countries.

'Negative lessons' or failures are examples that countries prefer not to emulate but still take them into account (Rose, 1993, p.ix). For example, Lichfield (1991) wrote that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev said: "That model has failed which was brought about in our country. And I hope that this is a lesson not only for our people but for all people" (taken from Rose, 1993, p.ix). By drawing 'negative lessons', policy makers "unambiguously decide to leave aspects of a foreign policy out of the transferred model and deliberately implement a borrowed model differently" (Dolowitz, 2000b, pp.23-24).

Dussauge-Laguna (2013a, p.686; 2013b, p.167) introduced the new term 'contested policy transfer' in his study. A 'contested policy transfer' process, Dussauge-Laguna argues, is a policy transfer process that produces a policy result that is completely different from the 'original model' because of conflicts and negotiations among key policy-makers (2013a, p.686). For instance, he found that the Chilean Programme for Management Improvement having been transferred to the Mexican government led to a different outcome from the original model due to conflicts between the bureaucrats involved in the process. The policy transfer process that took place within the period of 2005-2010 between Chilean and Mexican governments ended with the creation of a completely different programme. Mexican officials decided to make improved modified Mexican version by linking central spending controls and efficiency measures related to the management of Mexican agencies (Dussauge-Laguna, 2012b, p.577). The programme was formally transferred but, in practice, the confrontation between two ministers affected policy

transfers by producing potentially 'contested' processes (Dussauge-Laguna, 2013a, p.693).

4. From where are lessons drawn?

Policy makers could look to three levels of governance when engaging in policy transfer: the international level; the national level; and the local level (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.24). Cross-national policy differences arise from the understanding of various political, cultural, administrative, social, and economic conditions. These variables play a crucial role in policy transfer among countries, especially in conjunction with geographical proximity and political similarity.

Evans introduced the so-called action-based approach for practitioners on how to transfer a policy (2009b, pp.260-263). The approach focuses on voluntary policy transfer which is based on three main dimensions. The first dimension is the interaction between the global, international and transnational levels (including countries and international organisations). The second dimension concerns the new notion of a 'policy transfer network' that has been introduced within these three dimensions and implies a meso-level (state and non-state interactions). The third dimension focuses on the interorganisational level interactions that occur between and within organisations (Evans, 2009b, p.261).

Within the international policy transfer approach, there are five levels of political governance which can be applied: transnational; international; national; regional; and local. International policy transfer takes place at, and between, any of these levels (Evans, 2004, p.27). The advantage here is the large number of cases (large-N of countries) that enable comparison or generalisability (Evans, 2004, p.14). In theory, 25 cross-national transfers can occur, and the chosen transfer pathway becomes the subject of empirical analysis.

The discursive approach concerns the ways in which policy makers are influenced by any external forces such as globalisation and Europeanisation (Evans, 2004, p.14; 2009, p.252; 2010, pp.14-16). Amid the process of globalisation, the power of political authority and bureaucrats is no longer wholly controlled within the boundaries of nation-states (Common, 1998, p.440). Evans supports this idea and argues that "government is no longer the expert" within the process of global governance (2009, p.257). Evans (2004, 2009) and Stone (2010) both define policy transfer at the global level, insofar as policy transfer is associated with the actions of international organisations, non-state actors and powerful states. This concept is common to the multi-level approach.

Policy transfer is inseparable from the study of globalisation (Rappleye, 2012, p.1; Common, 1998, p.440), Europeanisation and policy innovation (Benson & Jordan, 2011, p.366). Ladi argued that "policy transfer represents a mechanism of globalisation and Europeanisation, leading to convergence/divergence of institutions, policies and paradigms which provide further opportunities for policy transfer to occur" (Ladi, 2005, p.28). This view echoed those of a number of researchers including Common (1998). The processes of globalisation, integration and internationalisation are linked to 'softer' forms of transfer such as 'external pressure' or 'forces' that provide mechanisms for spreading information and knowledge through imitation and inspiration. All of these degrees of transfer will be discussed in the section below.

5. Degrees of transfer

Policy transfer involves the processes of copying, hybridisation and inspiration. The copying process occurs when the importing country adopts a policy or a programme without any modification. Emulation occurs when the importing country

accepts a programme or policy from abroad and provides the 'best standard' for designing a policy at home. Hybridisation, which is the most common type of transfer, combines different elements from different foreign programmes in accordance with national and cultural conditions (Evans, 2009, pp.245-246; James & Lodge, 2003, p.180). Inspiration is when policy makers use programmes from the exporter country as a tool or stimulus to create a new programme in their country (Rose, 1993, pp.30-31). The inspiration process occurs when fresh thinking about a problem helps to create a new idea (Evans, 2009, p.246). Singapore, South Korea and Malaysia are examples of development that could be considered as evidence of drawing inspiration from a nearby country, namely Japan, with its economic development.

These degrees of transfer were discussed in Rose's analysis of lesson-drawing. He identified five types of learning including direct copying, adaptation, creating a hybrid, synthesis and inspiration (Rose, 1993, pp.30-31). The processes of copying, hybridisation and inspiration were described in similar ways by Rose and other experts in the policy transfer process such as Evans (2009) and James and Lodge (2003). The only difference between these experts and Rose's typology of learning concerns the synthesis and adaptation processes. Synthesis is about combining similar elements of programmes in different places in order to create a new programme (James & Lodge, 2003, p.180). Adaptation is the process by which policies are subject to appropriate modifications (Rose, 1993, p.30). The issue of different types of learning was more fully developed by Dolowitz and Marsh (1996, p.351). Rose updated these processes in his later study by including photocopying, disciplined inspiration and selective imitation, which are other ways of lesson-drawing (2005, p.81). Photocopying is the process of producing the same

copy of a programme from elsewhere by changing only names, dates and places (Rose, 2005, p.81). Disciplined inspiration occurs when senior policy makers, after returning from a trip abroad, are inspired and try to create an innovative programme based on foreign examples (Rose, 2005, p.84). Lastly, selective imitation is when learning focuses on attractive parts of a programme but not on other essential and difficult parts which consequently bring costs (Rose, 2005, pp. 81, 84).

6. Sources of information for policy transfer

Policy transfer became popular among countries in recent years due to the market, communication and technological improvements. Globalisation processes have facilitated policy transfer as obtaining information about other systems has become easier and cheaper (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.9). There are different sources of information such as physical meetings, reports, and studies available through media and the internet (Dolowitz, 2000b, pp. 29-32). Essentially, these are sources of learning or gaining new knowledge rather than sources of proof that the policy transfer has occurred (Evans & Davies, 1999, p.381). The primary sources that could illustrate the existence of policy transfer are "official references to media reports, studies commissioned by the government, government records and personal interviews" (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.32). Dolowitz claimed that the main evidence that a transfer has occurred is the written record of official government statements (2000b, p.32). In order to demonstrate policy transfer, Evans and Davies claim that the literature cannot provide full information about techniques of how the transfer has occurred. In other words, it cannot prove and validate the process of policy transfer (1999, p.381).

7. Policy failure and 'non-transfers'

The relationship between the process and the outcome of the transfer leads to policy 'failure' or 'success'. Sufficient policy transfer means that the transfer does not lead to an inappropriate transfer or policy failure. The case of a policy failure motivates politicians to create new or alternative ideas on the agenda. To support this argument, Hall contends that "politicians will have particularly strong incentives to seek out and embrace ideas that challenge the policies of their opponents" (Hall, 1990, p.73 as cited in Stone, 2001, p.10).

When poor, constrained or uncritical analysis of borrowed policies occurs, failed policy transfers can be defined. This occurs when the final outcome of a policy is an inappropriate or uninformed transfer (Evans, 2009, p.263; 2004, pp.41, 211). An inappropriate transfer occurs when there is inadequate attention to social, economic, political and ideological or cultural differences between importing and exporting countries. Uninformed transfer occurs when the importing country has insufficient information about the policy and how it operates in the exporting country. Incomplete transfer occurs when key elements of a policy that made it successful in the exporting country have not been transferred to the importing country (James & Lodge, 2003, p.188).

There is a type of an incomplete transfer when the transfer is in-process or ongoing. This occurs when the transfer has not been fully implemented, often due to a lack of time. According to Dussauge-Laguna (2012b), the need for policy transfers to take time or temporal factors require to be taken into account. Dussauge-Laguna (2012b) conducted research on cross-national policy transfer in Chile and Mexico regarding the Programme for Management Improvement and illustrated how time-oriented

research is important. All cross-national transfers take considerable time which must be borne in mind.

Generally, the time dimension is recognised in the policy process. According to Colebatch:

"... the process does not begin with a detached 'policy-maker' articulating a new policy and inscribing it on a blank sheet, but that it is part of a continuing game in which a regular cast of participants recognize and respond to policy questions. The game is not fixed-new players seek to be recognized and there is continuity as well as change, and policy initiatives have to take their place in this ongoing process, leading Sabatier (1986) to suggest that the timeframe for the implementation of a new policy should be ten or twenty years" (2009, p.53).

Evans and Davies (1999) were highly critical of the policy transfer framework, arguing that all policy reform involves some learning transfer. Transfer is more effective when appropriate learning has taken place beforehand. For example, according to Ivanova and Evans, "transition states are vulnerable to inappropriate forms of policy transfer", which can take place because of a lack of local knowledge among foreign consultants (2004, p.98). According to Stone, "90 per cent of work is implemented by foreign experts" and as a result, local researchers and official agents have less potential for learning (2004, p.551). Learning helps to make the transfer successful rather than inappropriate, uninformed or incomplete.

According to Evans and Davies (1999), there are two types of 'non-transfers'. They claim that two main potential dimensions have to be taken into account. The first dimension is when the elements of an idea or a programme are borrowed from domestic antecedents in which past experience may contribute to the presence of path dependency, or when a new policy is created. The latter process is described in the literature as policy innovation (Evans & Davies, 1999, p. 382; 2004, p.40; James & Lodge, 2003, p.190). The second dimension occurs

when an original idea or programme, or even some parts of an idea or programme, from abroad are rejected or filtered out by the actors involved in the policy transfer (Evans, 2004, p.40). Consequently, a detailed comparison of domestic and original settings is essential.

8. The policy-making process

The policy process is characterised by a sequence of stages. It begins by developing a goal then moving to an action before finally reaching a solution (Colebatch, 2009, p.48). These stages are presented as a cycle, signifying that there is an evolution from one stage to the other. The policy process is seen as a number of sequential stages (Colebatch, 2009, pp.47-48). According to Colebatch there are five stages (2009, pp.47-48). The first stage is a determination of objectives. This occurs when officials determine the goals they wish to achieve. The second stage begins when officials select the policy direction from a range of options in order to achieve the goals set out. The relative costs and benefits should be taken into account within these actions. The implementation of the chosen actions is the third stage, and the fourth stage is the evaluation. The results of the implementation of the decision can and should be evaluated. To consider the efficiency of the implementation, results should be addressed during the fourth stage. The last stage is related to modifying the policy, when the policy is corrected in light of the evaluation process (Colebatch, 2009, pp.47-48).

Policy transfer can enhance the understanding of the policy-making process by engaging the 'policy cycle' approach (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.34). The policy transfer process could be a mixture of Colebatch's five stages (2009, pp.47-48) and Hogwood and Gunn's (1984) nine stages of the policy-making cycle. Hogwood and Gunn's (1984) classification included the following stages: 'agenda setting'; 'issue filtration' or 'deciding

how to decide'; 'issue definition'; 'forecasting'; 'setting objectives'; 'option analysis'; 'policy implementation, monitoring and control'; 'evaluation and review'; and 'policy maintenance, succession and termination' (as cited in Dolowitz, 2000b, p.35). Parsons (1995 p.77), Bridgman and Davies (2000, p.27) indicated almost the same stages of the policy cycle as Colebatch (2009 pp.47-48). Their stages were classified as: 'definition of a problem'; 'identification of alternative responses'; 'evaluation of options'; 'decision making'; and 'implementation' (as cited in Colebatch, 2009, p.5).

The works of Rose (1993) and Bennett (1991) are essential with regard to the lesson-drawing approach and its stages. Rose (1993) divided the lesson-drawing process into four stages which are similar to the policy cycle process. The first stage entails searching for sources of lessons. The second stage involves developing a model of how the policy works in the exported model. The third stage consists of creating a lesson by analysing what could be removed or added from the exporting country's experience to produce the desired outcome in the importing country. The final stage is a prospective evaluation which involves the identification of the necessary adaptations in order to implement the transfer policy or programme successfully (Rose, 1993, p.20).

The voluntary process of policy transfer can be divided into three stages: pre-decision learning; decision process; and post-decision learning (Evans, 2009b, pp.262-263; Evans & Barakat, 2012, p.547). The stage of pre-decision learning involves problem recognition, the search for ideas, the identification of actors and the establishment of a policy transfer network. The second stage is about agenda-setting and decision-making. The final stage focuses on implementation and evaluation (see Table 2).

Table 2 'An ideal type of policy transfer cycle'

The pre-decision processes		
Problem recognition <i>economic crisis</i> <i>globalisation</i> <i>modernisation</i> <i>policy failure</i> <i>electoral change</i> <i>conflict</i> <i>legitimation</i>	Search for ideas and contact with potential agents of transfer <i>regime</i> <i>international</i> <i>transnational</i> <i>national</i> <i>regional</i> <i>local</i> <i>cross-sectoral</i>	The emergence of an information feeder network
Decision processes		
Cognition and reception and the emergence of a policy transfer network	Elite and cognitive mobilisation and evaluation of options (agenda-setting)	Decision enters formal policy stream
Post-decision processes		
Implementation (operational delivery)	Monitoring and evaluation	Ongoing process of policy learning
Process of policy evolution		

Source: Evans & Barakat, 2012, p.547.

Evans and Barakat claim that the capability of any policy to go through all these stages is dependent on factors such as the main economic conditions, changes in government and the type of actors involved in the policy transfer process (2012, p.548). All of these factors should be taken into account when studying policy transfer. They called this 'an ideal type of policy transfer cycle' (Evans & Barakat, 2012, p.547). The table provided by the authors is defined as explanatory and descriptive. It was

developed to shape their empirical research by applying the policy transfer cycle to their study as a heuristic device.

9. Constraints on transfer

When applying a model of policy transfer, researchers should consider potentially restricting factors (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.25). These factors could explain why policies were transferred from some systems, while others were not. There are different categories of factors that could constrain the process of policy transfer such as policy complexity, language constraints and past relationships (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.26). Post-communist transition countries consider Western countries, in particular European nations and the USA, as sources of new solutions, policy ideas, reforms or legislation. However, there are many constraints limiting the policy transfer process from the West to developing countries. First, there is no shared ideology such as that of the ideological and political similarities that helped Thatcher's (1979-1990) and Major's (1990-1997) governments to absorb US programmes and develop British equivalents (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.27). Dolowitz, Greenwold and Marsh stated that ideas borrowed from the USA helped to transform policies and programmes in many areas of social policy, particularly those connected with welfare reform (1999, p.723). During Thatcher's tenure, the US Job Clubs was copied into the British welfare-to-work system. Under the Major government (1990-1997), transfer from the US continued and programmes such as the Job Seeker's Allowance and Project Work were inspired by the experiences of the US (Dolowitz et al., 1999, pp.723-724).

The second constraint on transfer is the lack of a common language. A shared language helps "to understand the meaning restricted within the language and implementation of policies" (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.29). For example, the UK tends to look to English-speaking countries in order to avoid the need to

translate policy documents, legislation and reports (Dolowitz et al., 1999, p.726). The spread and exchange of ideas is not a problem for countries that share a common language. The third constraint is the lack of a common past relationship (Dolowitz, 2000b, p.26). For instance, all post-communist countries have a common history especially in terms of their educational systems that are totally different from those of the West. The matter of history cannot be ignored and lessons from the past have to be taken into account by the relevant countries. A country's history could be used to link and explain future actions and events by considering path dependency. Therefore, the next section explores the notion of path dependency which is relevant to the current study in understanding the policy transfer process in a post-communist transition country.

Path dependency

Rose claims that lesson-drawing occurs when one country learns from its own past experience, also known as path dependency. Countries have to learn from their past and consider it as a source of lessons (Dussauge-Laguna, 2012b, p.582). It is common for researchers in social sciences to describe political processes as path-dependent (Pierson, 2000b, p.251).

There have been some debates in the literature among scholars as to whether path dependency is a theory or just a metaphor. According to Ostrom (1999, pp.39-41), the notion of path dependency is not a framework or theory or model. She argued that the concept of path dependency does not offer a general list of variables that could be used to establish "diagnostic and prescriptive inquiry" (as cited in Kay, 2006, p.30). It does not offer hypotheses about detailed links between variables or specific parameters of those links. Therefore, she argues that path dependency is an empirical category, an

“organising concept or a metaphor that could be used to tag a certain type of temporal process” (Ostrom, 1999, pp.39-41 taken from Kay, 2006, p.30).

Path dependency indicates a relationship between the “sequence of early actions”, and “the probability of later actions” (Kay, 2006, p.30). The concept itself does not provide sufficient conditions to explain or understand the mechanisms that connect decisions. Firstly, when the process of path dependency has been identified, it needs theorising to identify the mechanisms that connect actions or events across time (Kay, 2006, p.30). According to Kay, “the trajectory of change up to a certain point constrains the trajectory after the point” (Kay, 2006, p.29). This means that a process is path-dependent if preliminary moves in one direction produce further moves in the same direction. Levi noted that “history matters” (1997, p. 28). The order in which events and actions happen affects how they happen. The concept of path dependency needs a basic policy dynamics according to Kay:

“... past policy decisions act as a constraint on the options available to current policymakers. This basic dynamic raises the question of how robust paths are over time and through changes in the policy environment, and supports the interest in evolutionary thinking” (2006, p.29).

According to Pierson, there are broad and narrow usages of the concept. He claims that “within the broader definition, path dependence refers to the causal relevance of preceding stages in a temporal sequence” (Pierson, 2000b, p.251). He explains this by using the words of William Sewell (1996, pp.262-263) who said that path dependency simply means “what happened at an earlier point in time will affect the possible outcomes of a sequence of events occurring at a later point in time” (as cited in Pierson, 2000b, p.251). This point is consistent with Levi’s observation that history does matter. Pierson used the term in

his work in the narrower sense. He argued that social sciences scholars use the broader definition owing to the fuzziness of this concept (2000b, p.252).

There are different types of temporally linked sequences. For example, Sartori (1970) claimed that path dependency has been a victim of a concept known as stretching (as cited in Pierson, 2000b, p.252). The linked sequences are produced in diverse ways and have various implications. Therefore, according to Pierson, social processes, which have been bundled together, should be separated and systematically examined (2000b, p.252). Moreover, the process of path dependency could restrict future choices (Kay, 2006, p.29). To support this argument, North stated:

"At every step along the way there are choices-political and economic - that provide ... real alternatives. Path dependency is a way to narrow conceptually the choice set and link decision-making through time. It is not a story of inevitability in which the past neatly predicts the future" (1990, pp.98-99 as cited in Kay, 2006, p.29).

According to Arthur (1994, pp.112-113), there are four main characteristics of the increasing returns processes in path dependency (as cited in Pierson, 2000b, p.253). The first characteristic is unpredictability. Many early events are accidental and can lead to many possible results. It is difficult to predict ahead of time which possible outcomes and ends it could lead to. The second characteristic is inflexibility. This means that it is harder to move from one path to another once the process is far gone. Arthur (1994, pp.112-113) explained:

"... in applications to technology, a given subsidy to a particular technique will be more likely to shift the ultimate outcome if it occurs early rather than late. Sufficient movement down a particular path may eventually lock in one solution" (taken from Pierson, 2000b, p.253).

The third characteristic refers to nonergodicity. Random events early in a sequence cannot be treated. Those events cannot be ignored though because they feed back into future events. The last characteristic of path dependency is potential path inefficiency. Arthur (1994, pp.112-113) explained that "in the long-run, the out-come that becomes locked in may generate lower pay-offs than a forgone alternative would have" (as cited in Pierson, 2000b, p.253). In summary, Pierson argues that the sequence is crucial in processes (2000b, p.253). Events and actions that happened earlier are much more significant than those that happen later.

The existing research on policy transfer in post-Soviet countries

This section provides an explanation as to why the policy transfer process is common in developing or transition countries and why those countries tend to borrow ideas from the West. Essentially, the international community defines the 'best practice' or the 'best solution' to a specific problem that could be transferred from the West. The cases of Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia and Georgia are instructive to answering these questions as they are all post-communist countries in transition.

A case study on Kyrgyzstan was conducted by Street (2004, pp.113-127), who applied three competing frameworks: rational decision-making; public choice theory; and indirect coercive transfer (Street, 2004, p.113). By using rational decision-making, Street (2004) explained why fundholding was not established in Kyrgyzstan. Fundholding is a package of reforms for the health sector originally introduced in the UK's National Health Service in the 1990s. Public choice theory was applied to explore the self-interested motivation of politicians within a top-down model (Street, 2004, p.121). Indirect coercive transfer emerged with the role of the US Agency for International

Development (USAID) that acted as the transfer network (Street, 2004, p.126). The reform implementation of fundholding has not occurred in Kyrgyzstan. Street questioned to what extent Kyrgyzstan's policy-makers agreed with fundholding as an appropriate policy option (2004, p.126). He explained that because of the difficult economic situation in Kyrgyzstan, policy makers were reliant on the support of external agencies such as USAID. Policy makers were then under pressure due to the donor's perceptions of the reforms in the country. It was a great example of indirect coercive transfer. The author concluded that "lacking an established 'epistemic community', Kyrgyzstan lacked a knowledge base from which to reject donor suggestions" (Street, 2004, p.126). The contribution of this research is that it shows that it is possible to assess the process of policy transfer in a post-Soviet country even if there is no outcome in the empirical research.

A case study on Ukraine was conducted by Ivanova and Evans (2004, pp.95-112), who found that a multi-level approach is applicable to transition countries in order to analyse policy transfer. They established the relationship between macro-level factors (political, economic and ideological), the policy transfer network for local government reform (the Association of Ukrainian Cities), and individual actors in the network at the micro-level. The policy transfer network was used in order to explore the role of the Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC). The case study covered a local government reform in a period of democratic transition. The AUC is "an 'umbrella' organisation for the improvement of policy and epistemic communities of civil servants, local and national government officials, scientists, lawyers and journalists concerned with the problems of local government in the Ukraine" (Ivanova & Evans, 2004, p.109). The main contribution of this study is the definition of form of

policy transfer as 'voluntary but necessary'. A policy transfer network emerged in 1994 when mayors of the largest Ukrainian cities came together to share experiences and to strengthen their positions by supporting a policy at the national level concerning the financial impact on cities. The case of the establishment of the AUC as an actor of 'voluntary but necessary' policy transfer was presented (Ivanova & Evans, 2004, p.100). Thus, donor countries or international organisations are not always key actors in the policy transfer process in transition societies. Actors in a country within the policy network can play an active role in policy learning from abroad, as demonstrated by the case of the AUC.

Estonian and Latvian case studies were explored by Savi and Randma-Liiv (2013), who argued that after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the most advanced Central European countries moved from direct policy transfer towards effective practices of the policy learning process (2013, p.6). A lack of time, financial and human resources, as well as information, pushed these countries to conduct in-depth analyses of the policy learning processes. Local civil servants played a key role in the policy transfer process (Savi & Randma-Liiv, 2013, p.74). They focused on the experience of different countries by concentrating only on policies relevant to their national environment. Estonian and Latvian government officials started not just accepting policies from abroad and directly copying them, but began to select policies and practices by combining various policy elements which were more suitable to the local political, economic and social context. These countries became members of international networks by improving their knowledge and establishing foreign contacts (Savi & Randma-Liiv, 2013, p.6).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many foreign advisers and international experts "rushed to the rescue" by

proposing their own vision and plans for new reforms in transition countries (Savi & Randma-Liiv, 2013, p.69). Even though there was the spreading of ideas among policy makers for reforms, non-transfer has occurred in transition states. A good example of non-transfer, or very limited transfer, was found in the Republic of Georgia (Common, 2013, pp.5, 22). In this post-communist transition country, the reform process has been slow despite pressure from the international community. The UNDP, USAID and the World Bank have contributed funds to improve public administration in Georgia, but their impact was minimal and unsuccessful. The main explanation for this lack of success was the Soviet legacy of a highly centralised and autocratic form of governance (Common, 2013, p.20). Reforms initially failed due to the difficulty in adapting a post-Soviet country's system to a market economy. Another factor in the lack of progress was the pretense of governments and civil servants of "doing something", but in practice, there were only limited attempts to effectuate change (Common, 2001 as cited in Common, 2013, p. 21). There was also a lack of political consensus on reforms due to the unwillingness of the local political elite to overhaul the public service system that remained from the Soviet Union (Common, 2013, p.22). Therefore, Common concluded that the system in Georgia had changed very little from the Soviet regime. The Georgian case of non-transfer demonstrates that learning does not always lead to policy transfer (Common, 2013, pp.13-29).

Evans's approaches to studying policy transfer

To study policy transfer, there are five main approaches: multi-level approaches; process-centred approaches; ideational approaches; comparative approaches; and practice-based approaches (Evans, 2004, p.14; Evans, 2009, p.248; Evans, 2010, p.11). All these approaches have their strengths and

weaknesses. The comparative approaches and practice-based approaches will not be discussed in this section. The comparative approach is not addressed in this thesis because given each case study covers one country, the research does not engage in comparative analysis. The practice-based approach is not relevant since the current thesis is an academic study contributing to the literature on policy transfer theory rather than offering guidance for practitioners. It intends to critique and to explain a practice, not a system.

Multi-level approach

Evans combined three levels of enquiry, namely micro, meso and macro (2004, pp.20-24; 2009, pp.254-255). It is crucial to combine different modes of governance in order to examine policy transfer. The main modes of governance in contemporary polities are hierarchy and networks (Evans, 2012, p.588). When hierarchy is the dominant mode, policy transfer is a top-down process. In contrast, when the dominant mode is networks, the process of policy is negotiated or contested. Moreover, the process of governance can comprise a mix of modes that can combine hierarchy and networks (Evans, 2012, p.588).

The multi-level approach has its weakness as "being too complex due to the identification of too many variables and explaining everything and nothing" (Evans, 2004, p.14). However, the primary strength of these approaches is that they can be applied to empirical work. This is evidenced by the study conducted by Ivanova and Evans (2004) regarding the Ukrainian case study. The case study concerned local government reform in a period of democratic transition which was discussed earlier.

The policy transfer network approach was invented by Evans and is considered an essential tactic in the analysis of the epistemic community approach in order to examine the role of

actors in the process of policy transfer (2009b, p.262). Table 3, developed by Ladi (2005, p.38), is instructive in that it shows how the policy transfer network differs from the epistemic community and advocacy coalition frameworks.

The interdisciplinary approach addresses the role of actors within domestic, comparative and international politics (Evans, 2004, p.28). It provides a lens for defining the role of state and non-state actors in promoting the globalisation process by providing 'the external pressure'.

Table 3 Comparison of epistemic community, advocacy coalition and policy network frameworks

	Epistemic Communities	Advocacy Coalition	Policy Transfer Network
Membership	Specialists	People from a variety of positions	People from a variety of positions
Cohesive factor	Common world view (emphasis on knowledge)	Common belief system (emphasis on values)	A common interest in policy change
Permanency	Permanent or ad hoc	Permanent	Ad hoc
Resource	Scientific knowledge	Knowledge from a broad range of perspectives	Broad expertise
Raison d'être	Policy change	Policy change	Policy change
Mechanism	Policy diffusion	Policy-oriented learning	Policy transfer

Source: Ladi, 2005, p.38.

Process-centred approach

The process-centred approaches help to understand the nature of the process of transfer and explain the voluntary or coercive transformation of ideas, policies or institutions (Evans, 2009, p.248). A common feature of all these processes is that all of them take place between different actors: individuals, organisations and networks. Evans raised a question why some actors are influential and others are not in the policy transfer process (2009, p.248). Accordingly, the relationship between actors is important (Freeman, 2008, p.375) with the common mechanism being the spread of policy ideas, knowledge and information (Stone, 2001, p.13). A process-centred analysis argues that policy learning is based on the interactions between state actors and non-state actors, who are the key facilitators in policy learning. Process-centred approaches include an interstate approach. The role of the state is important, because it plays an active role in seeking solutions to any policy problems.

The policy transfer process is based on interpersonal and inter-organisational interaction in decision-making coupled with common connections such as culture, rules and values. The export of lessons and lesson-drawing occurs at an informal level between non-governmental actors (e.g. think tanks, academics, consultancy companies) and through informal networks of official actors (e.g. international organisations). The borrowing of lessons or knowledge likely occurs indirectly through seminars, conferences or forums, when countries send their representatives and delegations abroad (Stone, 1999, p.57). Policy officials learn selectively from the experience of other actors (Gilardi, 2010, p.650).

An advantage of process-centred approaches is that they are strong on descriptive, prescriptive and explanatory analyses which assume awareness and rationality. By applying these

approaches, a study attempts to illustrate individual interactions and how these connections affect policy making. The disadvantage of these approaches is that too much attention is paid to the role of actors and how individuals see the policy transfer process.

Ideational approach or knowledge transfer

Evans developed the ideational approach (2004, p.14; 2009, p.252; 2010, pp.14-16). The approach addresses the problem of when and how politicians learn how to learn in different ways. The key feature of this approach is the exploration of how the system of ideas influences policy makers and ultimately how societies learn. This approach refers to 'soft' forms of transfer, particularly the transfer of knowledge.

The strength of the ideational approaches is that such approaches are designed to help policy experts in identifying problems within the policy transfer process, and perceptions of how to improve policy learning. The weakness of the ideational approaches is that policy experts tend to accept that the system of ideas affects policy transfer rather than demonstrates its empirical dependence (Evans, 2004, p.14).

Conclusion

Policy transfer is a broad concept, which includes both voluntary and coercive types. The limitation here is that there is no clear distinction between two close forms voluntary transfer and indirect coercive transfer which is considered as a weakness (Street, 2004, p.114). Theoretically, it would be possible to separate the two. Firstly, voluntary transfer is a result of lesson-drawing; secondly, in order to understand indirect coercive transfer, it is necessary to distinguish it from direct coercive transfer, which means the imposition or obligation of a policy on one country by another country or any actor of transfer. Indirect

coercive transfer occurs when external factors lead to policy transfer as a consequence of concern about being left behind. In practice, policy transfer occurs as a result of a combination of these mentioned types and cannot be identified as only one type (Nutley et al., 2013, p.30). Therefore, this thesis took into account other types of policy transfer such as 'voluntary but necessary' which was introduced by Ivanova and Evans (2004, pp.95-112) and discussed in an earlier section 'the existing research on policy transfer in post-Soviet countries'. The 'voluntary but constrained' notion that has been defined by Carroll (2013, p.123) was also taken into account in the current research and was discussed in the section 'why policy transfer?'

Policy transfer is a broad concept, which involves learning and lesson-drawing (Stone, 1999, p.52). The current research supports the view of Evans that all of these terms are interdependent reflecting the multi-faceted nature of policy transfer (Evans, 2004, p.4). Bennett (1991) and Rose (1993) explain why countries voluntarily participate in policy transfer and why countries use experience from abroad to develop a new policy or programme. When a country has a problem, it looks for a solution by applying the process of lesson-drawing (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, p.346). In this thesis, the broad 'umbrella' concept of policy transfer is considered as its strength. Therefore, in this thesis, policy learning and lesson-drawing are considered as parts of the policy transfer process. The policy cycle is used as a heuristic device to examine the processes involved in policy transfer.

The policy transfer framework is applied as an explanatory theory in order to discuss policy reforms in post-communist transition country. To date, there have been few studies conducted on policy transfer in the post-communist countries, with the exceptions of Ukraine, Georgia, Estonia, Latvia and

Kyrgyzstan. Despite the critique in the literature on policy transfer, it is useful to apply the 'policy transfer' and 'policy cycle' approaches in order to develop research on countries in transition. Ugyel and Daugbjerg (n.d., p.3) argued that voluntary policy transfer in developing countries was less observed in the literature as opposed to in developed countries. Stone argues that there are "rich research opportunities in investigating policy transfer across the former socialist states" (1999, p.57). Some of them have greater capacity to introduce policy lessons by improving policy whereas others might adopt lessons "for symbolic purposes or as a strategic device to secure political support" (Robertson, 1991, as cited in Stone, 2001, p.12).

By considering policy transfer in post-communist countries, the matter of history, especially the issue of Soviet legacy, cannot be ignored and lessons from the past have to be taken into account. A country's history could be used to link and explain future actions and events by considering path dependency. Therefore, the notion of path dependency is relevant to the current study in understanding the policy transfer process in a post-communist transition country.

Evans (2009a and 2009b) and Benson and Jordan (2012, p.370) acknowledged reasons why policy makers engage in policy transfer. They do so in developing countries because developing transition countries are considered sources of ideas and policies, particularly those in the West. The current research demonstrates the possibility of doing research on policy transfer in the policy environments of post-communist countries. Thus, policy transfer is used as an explanatory tool to examine post-communist transition country.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Firstly, this chapter outlines the research design and methods utilised in this thesis. Secondly, it discusses the sampling process, the development of the topic guide, the data collection process including pilot interview, as well as the coding and analysis processes applied. Thirdly, it considers access and cost issues, ethics, documentary analysis procedures and provides a personal reflection on the fieldwork.

Research design

The current study was based on a single case study research design. Stake argues that the aim of a “case study is not to represent the world, but to represent the case” (2000, p.448). The research uses a single case design (Yin, 2014, p.18) or, according to Stake’s typology, an intrinsic case study (Stake, 2000, p.437; Punch, 2005, pp.144, 146). An intrinsic case study is where the researcher seeks to gain a deep understanding of a specific case (Stake, 2000, p.437; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p.245; Punch, 2005, p.144; Berg, 2009, p.325). This research aims to comprehend a single case, namely Kazakhstan. At present, Kazakhstan is the only country in the Central Asia region to have joined the Bologna Process (see Benelux Bologna Secretariat, n.d.(k)). To more fully understand a case study examining the complexity of a non-European country adopting a European-devised scheme for higher education, the intrinsic case study approach is deemed the most appropriate.

International policy transfer theory provided the analytical framework for this research. According to Brians, Willnat, Manheim, and Rich “theories are sets of logically related symbols that represent what we think happens in the world” (2011, p.18). There are two main reasons why theories are useful. First,

theories help a researcher to simplify and understand reality “in order to control it or adapt to it better” (Brians et al, 2011, p.18). Second, once the researcher has developed an understanding of a phenomenon, theories can guide the researcher in testing its accuracy (Brians et al, 2011, p.18).

The preliminary stage in theory construction is the conceptualisation of the problem (Brians et al, 2011, p.19). This research seeks to explain the necessity of a non-European country adapting the Bologna Process, a European project and scheme for the development of higher education.

This study employed Yin’s theory-testing approach which helps the researcher to gain a clear understanding of the policy transfer process and gives insight into governmental approaches towards international policy transfer. The theory-testing approach is especially useful in examining transition countries through an assessment of the influence of the Bologna reforms on Kazakhstan’s higher education policy. The theory-testing approach means that “there is some sort of explanatory framework available for the phenomena or situation” on which the research is focused (Thomas, 2011, p.115). This approach has been applied to the concept of policy transfer. According to Brians, Willnat, Manheim, and Rich, a “concept is merely a word or a symbol that represents some idea” (2011, p.23). They claimed that “theories are collected of sets of concepts that are related to propositions logically derived from a set of assumptions” (Brians et al, 2011, p.23). This means that the structure of a theory should be logical. The structure of a theory allows the researcher to apply it by explaining events, while giving reasons why the researcher expects things to be as they are (Brians et al, 2011, p.23).

A single-case study helps to test the applicability of the policy transfer process by employing multiple sources of data,

i.e. interviews and documents (Yin, 2014, pp.37-44). In order to learn more about the influence of the Bologna reforms, the literature has been reviewed on international policy transfer, policy learning, policy transfer, policy diffusion, policy convergence, lesson-drawing, and path dependency. The international policy transfer approach has helped to understand the case of Kazakhstan. Path dependency was present in the process of policy transfer concept. The use of the policy cycle and its different stages can be applied as a heuristic device to identify ways to develop theory. In this thesis, a heuristic device is a tool that helps with the analysis of empirical data. Chapter 2 addressed the issue of international policy transfer as well as other aforementioned concepts.

Brians, Willnat, Manheim, and Rich argued that every concept has theoretical importance because they play an essential role in explaining phenomena (2011, p.25). A concept has theoretical importance when it is linked to other concepts in a theory and plays an important role in the description of the observed events (Brians et al, 2011, p.25). In this research, path dependency is a concept that has theoretical importance. In order to understand and explain the success or failure of policy transfer, it is essential to look at the roots or history of a particular country. Accordingly, policy transfer can be explained through path dependency.

In order to link the theoretical framework with the research questions and the literature, three approaches on how to study policy transfer have been applied. All of these approaches were considered in detail in Chapter 2. It was decided to combine the three main approaches: ideational, process-centred, and multi-level. A combination of these approaches provided sufficient methodology for understanding and assessing the dynamics of policy transfer in post-communist transition countries such as

Kazakhstan. The combination of the three mentioned approaches is the most appropriate approach to this study. Firstly, the multi-level approach provides various lenses through which to view and explore the issues involved in policy transfer. Secondly, it provides an explanation of the relationship between the international level (the Bologna Process as an intergovernmental process) and the national level (Kazakhstan), and between a country and its internal actors (local-level, HEIs). The process-centred approach was used by focusing on the explanation for why policy transfer has occurred within the higher education system in Kazakhstan. The process-centred approach also answers the following questions:

- Why has the Bologna Process been adopted by the Kazakhstani government and who or what actors were directly or indirectly involved in the decision making?
- How do individual interactions and connections affect policy making?

In addition, by using the ideational approach, this thesis identifies how policy makers have been influenced by external pressures such as integration processes, globalisation or internationalisation, in other words which soft forms of transfer has occurred.

The current study did not look at lesson-drawing or policy learning separately, but instead focused on policy transfer, with a particular emphasis on the international policy transfer approach. Focusing on international policy transfer permits the researcher to explore lesson-drawing as a type of voluntary transfer within the process-centred approach and policy learning process within the ideational approach to studying policy transfer. This thesis focuses on the voluntary process of transfer between intergovernmental processes and a post-communist transition country.

One limitation of the study concerns its scope of analysis. The policy transfer approach was tested only in one case study which cannot be replicated because all policy transfer processes are not the same. This thesis seeks to bring about a greater understanding of a single case in order to generate a powerful explanatory model of policy change in post-communist transition countries. Therefore, this research was based on a single case study research design.

Methods

This thesis is built upon both primary and secondary research. The primary research for the case study was in the form of qualitative research consisting of semi-structured interviews. According to Fontana and Frey (1994), semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to ask additional specific questions in order to gain a better understanding of the contending issues of interest (as cited in Punch, 2005, pp. 169-170). According to Brians, Willnat, Manheim and Rich, semi-structured interviews allow a researcher to learn from participants and “to gain unexpected information that can lead to new ways of understanding the events being studied” (2011, p.367). Such interviews are especially suited to elite interviewing, because:

“... in elite interviewing the researcher is interested in learning what the respondent perceives is important and relevant to the research and lets the respondent’s observations suggest what questions should be asked in order to gain useful information. The interviewer is concerned with discovering facts and patterns rather than with measuring pre-selected phenomena” (Brians et al, 2011, p.367).

According to Brians, Willnat, Manheim, and Rich, the status of elites mainly depends on their access to information that can help a researcher to find an answer to the research question

(2011, p.366). Elite interviews can deliver key information about political events which would otherwise be inaccessible (Brians et al, 2011, p.367). The purpose of elite interviewing is to gather all necessary information that helps to reconstruct an event but not to collect already known or pre-specified data (Brians et al, 2011, p.366).

In the current study, elite interviewing was the most effective way to obtain information about both the policy process and decision makers. Elite interviewing permits the researcher to treat any given interviewee as an expert predicated upon their high level of knowledge and expertise of the relevant topic of research. However, one of the limitations of elite interviewing is that some interviewees may exercise more influence than others in the decision-making process (Burnham et al, 2008, p.231). Another limitation is that elite interviewing involves scientific risks (Brians et al, 2011, p.367). According to Brians, Willnat, Manheim, and Rich, elite interviewing might threaten the scientific validity of the information obtained. There are four main ways in which scientific risks can occur:

1. If respondents have so narrow a view of the events in question that they do not understand which aspects are important in explaining them;
2. If respondents have inaccurate information (either because they misperceived events in the first place or because they have forgotten important elements);
3. If respondents have convinced themselves in order to rationalize their own actions, that things are one way when they are actually another;
4. If respondents intentionally lie in order to protect themselves or others" (Brians et al, 2011, p.367).

A review of relevant documents and literature has helped the researcher to verify the validity of the information gained from interviews. Information obtained from interviewees was checked with reference to official documents.

The primary research was complemented by a detailed review of the official documentation produced by the Kazakhstani government, the Bologna Secretariat and other international agencies. Of major importance are the reports entitled *Trends* which are periodically prepared by the Bologna Process in order to monitor the progress towards the realisation of the Bologna principles. Other official documents utilised in the research include evaluations by international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the European Commission, the Benelux Bologna Secretariat, the Delegation of the European Union to Kazakhstan, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, and the European Higher Education Area. Kazakhstani strategic and other official documents which were produced by the Kazakhstani government and published on official websites of the Akorda Presidential Residence, the Ministry of Education and Science, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan were also included in the research. These included the following documents: *The Strategy for Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan until the year 2030 (1997)*; *The State Programme for the Development and Functioning of Languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan (2010)*; *The State Programme of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020 (2010)*; *Strategy Kazakhstan-2050: New Political Course of the Established State (2012)*; *The National Report on the Status and Development of Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2011)*; and *State Programme: Path to Europe 2009 – 2011 (2008)*. The actual data collection from both primary and secondary sources was enhanced and facilitated by the researcher being fluent in Kazakh, Russian and English.

The secondary research comprises a literature review on theory from Western sources, found in Chapter 2. The selection of relevant literature was determined by its importance with regard to examining the concepts of policy transfer, policy learning, lesson-drawing and path dependency, respectively. The following key authors and their works were reviewed: Dolowitz (2000; 2003; 2004); Dolowitz et al (1999; 2012); Dolowitz and Marsh (1996; 2000; 2012); Dussauge-Laguna (2012ab; 2013ab); Evans (1999; 2004; 2006; 2009ab; 2010; 2012); Rose (1991; 1993; 2005); Stone (1999; 2000; 2001; 2004; 2012); Levi-Faur (2004ab); Pierson (2000ab); Kay (2005; 2006); Carroll (2013); and Common (1998; 2013).

Chapter 4 examines the Bologna Process and Chapter 5 addresses Kazakhstan's higher education system, which incorporates primary sources complemented by the literature. The secondary research includes analyses of experts (such as Veiga (2008; 2012); Westerheijden, Beerkens, Cremonini, Huisman, Kehm, Kovac, Lazetic, McCoshan, Mozuraityte, Souto-Otero, Weert, White, and Yagci (2010ab); Yagci (2010); Varghese (2009); Telegina, Schwengel (2012); Silova, Johnson, and Heyneman (2007); Pursiainen and Medvedev (2005); and Pachuashvili (2009)) on the Bologna Process and on the education systems of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The Kazakhstani education system during the Soviet period in local official publications was reviewed using both Russian and Kazakh language sources. Publications from local experts (such as Vlasov and Philippov (n.d.); Syzdykov (2010); Sagintayeva (2013); Sadykova (2012); Pak (2010); Nurbek (2013); Naribayev (2013); Abazov (2011); and Baidenko (2006; 2010)) were reviewed.

Hence, secondary literature was analysed from both local and international perspectives. This approach provides a rich

base from which to examine the data that provided various lenses through which to understand a single case.

Sampling

For a case study research design, sampling is crucial. The case study itself was divided into two phases in order to involve international and national experts from Kazakhstan and abroad. The representatives from Kazakhstan were identified from the secondary literature, namely official websites of governmental bodies, international organisations and other official bodies that were engaged in discussions with the Bologna experts. Those actors were considered to represent a purposive sample. A purposive sample means that the sample is not random (Creswell, 1997, p.62; Silverman, 2010, pp.141-143; Marsh & Stoker, 2010, p.259). Snowball sampling was used and additional actors were identified as potential interviewees. The representatives of international organisations, universities and students were identified and were also involved in the process of data collection.

The sampling process started when most of the actors/people in the Ministry of Education and the Bologna Process were identified. These people then directed the researcher to other groups of actors engaged with higher education and helped to forge connections via gatekeepers or other participants. Thus, the sample was snowballed. It was started from the pilot interview, when the interviewee suggested some people for future interviews and recommended to speak with them.

From the preliminary sampling stage, which was constructed prior to the commencement of fieldwork, there were 53 interviewees including representatives of the Executive Office of the President, the Office of the Prime Minister and members of parliament (see Appendix A). But in practice, when the

researcher arrived in Kazakhstan to conduct her fieldwork, some interviews ultimately did not occur as planned in the preliminary sampling table. The primary reasons for this are explained in the section Access and Cost Issues, p.70.

From an early stage, construction of the sample started at the national level. Interviews conducted during this phase involved elite interviewing (Richards, 1996; Smith, 2006). The national level sample entailed political elites that are often difficult to obtain such as members of the Prime Minister's Office, members of parliament, and members of the Presidential Office (Brians et al, 2011, p.365). The preliminary sampling attempted to incorporate local actors and other stakeholders who were identified from the literature and official websites. Thus, in order to identify the actors involved in the policy transfer process, the interview sample attempted to cover actors from three levels: international, national, and local. The international level included members of the Bologna Process Follow Up Group and international experts of the Bologna Process or in higher education who have an interest in Central Asia. The local level included university representatives such as faculty members, administration staff and students. In order to examine and understand the principles, structures and procedures of the Bologna Process, international experts of the Bologna Process were included in the preliminary sampling table. Therefore, the preliminary sampling table was complemented by interviewing members of the Bologna Process Secretariat based in Armenia.

Pre-established questions or topic guide

The first reason for conducting semi-structured interviews was to ask each respondent a series of general pre-established questions by using the topic guide (see Appendix B), while specific questions would then emerge over the course of the interview. The main advantage of this approach is that it allows

participants to specify an event using illustrations from their own experiences that may deliver extra insight (Brians et al, 2011, p.370). The second reason behind carrying out semi-structured interviews was that generic questions provide a means for comparison of responses in order to ascertain similarities and differences within the interview data.

Prompting is a key interview technique. During the interview “prompts keep people talking even when they believe that they do not have to say much in response to a specific question” (Brians et al, 2011, p.371). For example, a prompt might be presented as follows: “and how about structure of the Bologna Process?” Interviewers also might ask for clarification by using prompts such as “Could you please explain this in more detail?”

According to Brians, Willnat, Manheim, and Rich, note-taking could be used as a tool to improve and develop interviews. In elite interviewing, participants could often be encouraged to “stay on a given subject by the way an interviewer takes notes” (Brians et al, 2011, p.371). Audio recording an interview alleviates the burden of note-taking on the researcher who can instead focus all of his or her attention on the interviewee. In contrast, Brians, Willnat, Manheim, and Rich claimed that the researcher should not rely exclusively on a recorder (Brians et al, 2011, p.372). Therefore, a third column was included in the topic guide, allowing the researcher to take notes immediately after the interview (see Appendix B).

Pilot interview

The first pilot interview was conducted on December 9, 2014 in the UK, which lasted 43 minutes and was recorded. The interviewee worked at the Ministry of Education in Kazakhstan and had teaching experience in a higher education institution in

Kazakhstan. The topic guide consisted of the topic, notes and post-notes columns. In the topic column, the main, specific and follow-up questions and prompts were indicated. In the notes column, the researcher took notes during the interview, while post-notes were completed after the interview by providing reflections or new information about the topic. The topics of the interview were taken from the main research questions while seeking to incorporate the theoretical foundation within the questions. During the pilot interview, the following topics were covered: the Bologna Process; Kazakhstani higher education; the decision-making processes in Kazakhstan and in the Bologna Process and the actors involved in the decision making; and the implementation process and its impact or influence. The topic guide questions were divided into two categories, general and specific. During the pilot interview, the respondent was asked: "How significant is the Bologna Process in higher education? And why? Tell me about your experience". When the interviewee recounted her experience, this was followed up by the question: "What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Bologna Process?" The second topic regarding the Kazakhstani higher education system was covered by asking "Why do you think the idea for the adoption of the Bologna Process occurred? Why did Kazakhstan join the Bologna Process?" The follow-up questions were:

- Was there any problem with the previous Soviet system?;
- Why the Bologna Process?;
- Were there any other alternative systems?; and
- What are the differences between the new system and the old Soviet system?

The third topic was raised with the following question: "Who or what influenced the decision to adopt the Bologna Process? By whom mainly (government, universities, interest groups) was the decision made?" In order to understand the

implementation process in depth, the interviewee was asked to describe the phases of the accession process and procedures. Finally, the interviewee was asked to share her opinion about the impact and the effect of the Bologna Process in Kazakhstan. The questions were: "How did the adoption affect the higher education system? And what is the outcome of the adoption of the Bologna Process in general for you?"

The prompts and other specific questions were organised in a way that different actors could be involved in the conversation. For example, if the interviewee was from the Bologna Process Secretariat, the work of the Secretariat in practice would be enquired about in order to gain information about its structure, procedures, principles and entry requirements.

After conducting the pilot interview, it was decided that no major revisions were required to develop the questions of the topic guide. The researcher was to ask the same questions across one whole level of interviewees (international, local or national) in order to compare and contrast the participants' answers with other interviewees. After the pilot interview, the researcher had an idea to create several topic guides according to the interviewee's position and experience. An idea was to divide interview questions within the topic guide to the different groups of people such as the Bologna Process representatives, Kazakhstan representatives and stakeholders, presented an opportunity to compare answers among each group. For example, if one topic guide comprised questions particularly for national experts by focusing on details of internal issues in Kazakhstani higher education. Meanwhile, another topic guide would be created specifically for international experts by concentrating on the issues and procedures of the Bologna Process and its implementation in other member countries. In practice, this was not convenient due to the extensive amount of

paperwork required. This problem was resolved by putting key words into the prompt sections and specific questions, so that, during the interview, the interviewer could mould the question according to the background of the participant, using the tips and key words indicated in the topic guide.

Access and cost issues

As Kazakhstan is the researcher's home country and she has working experience as an administrative staff member at Nazarbayev University and at the Center for International Programs, obtaining access to documentary data was not problematic. Data about the adoption of the Bologna Process was available, as the Ministry of Education and the Bologna Process Centre typically collected and kept such documentation. The researcher was given access to some internal documents by some of the interviewees. Internal documents and some materials from the Bologna Process and Academic Mobility Center, the Information Analytic Center under the Ministry of Education, and the Secretariat of the Bologna Process were provided by some interviewees for information and data analysis.

At the start of the fieldwork, there were no concerns regarding securing access to officials in Kazakhstan, international experts and representatives of the Bologna Process. The researcher contacted the relevant people via letter or e-mail as the researcher had previously met some of them during the Eurasian Higher Education Leaders Forum in Astana, Kazakhstan. It was hoped that such familiarity and contact would yield in-person interviews (Dawson, 2007, p.106).

The samples changed slightly after the researcher arrived in Kazakhstan (see Table 4). Initially, securing interviews in Kazakhstan appeared problematic, largely as the personnel situation at the Ministry of Education was fluid.

Table 4 Organisations and number of interviewees

Nº	Organisation name	Inter- viewe es	Preli m- nary samp ling
1	Parliament, Mazhilis, Astana	2	1
2	The Ministry of Education and Science, Astana	5	28
3	Information Analytic Center JSC, Astana	2	-
4	Independent Kazakhstan Quality Assurance Agency for Education, Astana	1	-
5	Bologna Process and academic mobility center, Astana	2	1
6	Nazarbayev University, Astana	4	1
7	Eurasian National University (ENU), Astana	3	1
8	Association of Universities of Kazakhstan, Almaty	1	4
9	Kazakh National Technical University named after K.I.Satpayev (KazNTU), Almaty	1	-
10	International IT University, expert in the Bologna Process, Almaty	1	-
11	KIMEP University, Almaty	3	-
12	Pavlodar State University named after S. Toraigyrov	1	-
13	M. Auezov South Kazakhstan State University	1	-
14	Youth Congress of Kazakhstan, Astana	2	1
15	British Council, Almaty (Skype interview)	1	1
16	S.I.C.I. Dominus Consortium, a project funded by the European Union for Central Asia (CA), Expert in Higher Education Policy in Central Asia, UK (Skype interview)	1	-
17	Council of Europe, France (Skype interview)	1	-
18	European Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA), Germany (Skype interview)	1	-
19	The Secretariat of the Bologna Process, Yerevan, Armenia	8	8
	The Executive Office of the President (no access)	-	1
	Prime Minister's Office (due to a busy schedule and relocation to another city)	-	1
	Students Alliance of Kazakhstan Leader (reorganised)	-	1
	National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan Atameken (got a late reply)	-	1
	Delegation of the European Union to Kazakhstan (no access was granted, no reply)	-	1
	JSC "Center for International Programs" (new president was appointed)	-	1
	National Analytical Centre, JSC (no access was granted)	-	1
		Total: 41	Total: c 53

By being situated in Kazakhstan, gaining access to people, information and documents became easier. According to

Dawson, another way of getting access to potential interviewees is to find a gatekeeper, who might introduce the researcher to other people (2007, p.112). The term gatekeeper is used in sociology to describe people who have the influence "to admit or refuse entry to a field" (McIntyre, 2005, p.217). Additional access to potential interviewees was provided to the researcher through a gatekeeper. In this research, the gatekeeper was a person who had held a senior position in the Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan from 2013 to 2016.

The researcher was unsuccessful in gaining access to the President's Office; but after through other interviews it was clear that in any case its personnel were not engaged in the day-to-day operation of the country's educational policy.

In the main formulating the strategic direction of educational policy is the responsibility of the Prime Minister's Office and the Parliament. The researcher had hoped to interview a member of the Prime Minister's Office. The gatekeeper tried to organise an interview but unfortunately could not provide access to the Prime Minister's Office. Therefore, several unsuccessful attempts were made to gain access to the relevant person in the Prime Minister's Office. Firstly, this was due to the numerous scheduling conflicts of the potential interviewee and, secondly, he was appointed to another position and relocated to another city. After an interview with the Member of Parliament, unsuccessful attempts to the Prime Minister's Office did not significantly affect the quality of the research findings, because the direction of the country, in terms of higher education, was written in national strategic documents and reports which were prepared by the same people.

Accordingly, the officials would not have provided any new information regarding the strategy of the country's educational development. Moreover, other interviewees including those at

the international and local level were asked to verify data about the role of the Prime Minister's Office and the Presidential Office in the education sector. Therefore, different sources of data were employed in the analysis such as interviews and documents.

Conducting primary research can often be expensive, but financial constraints were minimised as the researcher was a student funded by the Kazakhstani government.

Ethical issues

With regard to research ethics, by engaging in elite interviewing, anonymity has to be guaranteed because the individuals involved could be easily identifiable (Marsh & Stoker, 2010, p. 258). In the current research, anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed to all interviewees. All information, especially any personal data that could identify the identity of interviewees, was not disclosed to anyone other than the researcher's supervisors. If necessary, such identifying information can be provided to the internal and/or external examiners.

Confidentiality is an important issue in elite interviewing because elites are often asked for information that "if revealed or misrepresented could have an impact on public or personal consequences" (Brians et al, 2011, p.372). The practice of confidentiality was mentioned by the researcher before any data were collected, and was indicated in the first page of the topic guide. From the beginning of each interview, the researcher briefly described the topic and aim of the study. She explained the process of the interview including: the use of consent forms; the withdrawing of consent form; terminating the interview at any time; confidentiality; anonymity; and asking permission to record the interview. The interviewee was informed that he/she could ask questions or clarify certain issues during the interview. At the end of each interview, the next stages of the process were

outlined such as transcribing, coding, analysing data, and dissemination. The researcher provided her contact details in case the interviewee wanted to send any related materials or to be informed of the research findings.

Interviewees were asked permission for their interview data to be used in the research. Direct access to the data was limited only to the researcher and her supervisors. If the interviewee wished to share any confidential information with the researcher it was 'off the record'. If any interviewee expressed any interest in the results of the research, he or she would be informed as requested.

The fieldwork element of the research complied with the ethics policy of the School of Sociology and Social Policy of the University of Nottingham. There was no harm or risk to the persons involved in connection with the conduct of the research. The researcher completed and returned an ethics checklist and risk assessment forms for approval. The forms for ethical approval promising privacy, confidentiality and anonymity including the participant information sheet and informed consent forms, to the extent required by the Ethics Committee and the topic guide, were submitted in early November 2014 and were approved shortly after.

After the completion of this thesis, the data will be retained for seven years from the date of publication according to the School's Research Ethics Policy and all data which enables the identification of interviewees will be destroyed according to the University's policy. After each interview, the data was placed in secure storage at the University in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Data collection process

The data collected for the case study was in the form of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were

needed to ensure that a wide range of international and national actors engaged in the Bologna Process were able to provide various lenses through which to explain the relationship between supranational, national and subnational levels. There were a total of 41 interviews, seven of which were conducted in English with the remaining 34 conducted in Russian. All interviews conducted in Russian were translated into English for analytical purposes. Four interviews were conducted via Skype for participants located in Almaty, Germany, France and the United Kingdom. The duration of each interview was approximately one hour. All interviews, including the skype interviews were audio-recorded. The interviews took place only in public and/or professional places in order to ensure the safety of the researcher and the participants.

The interview data collection was divided into two phases: the first phase was conducted in Kazakhstan; while the second phase was conducted in Armenia, where the Bologna Secretariat was based. The interview sample consisted of the following: senior civil servants from the Ministry of Education; members of parliament; a representative of the Bologna Follow-Up Group in Kazakhstan engaged directly in discussions with Bologna experts; representatives from international organisations, students, and universities.

During the first phase, interviews with representatives from the President's Office and the Prime Minister's Office did not materialise for reasons explained above. By applying a snowball sample approach, representatives of international organisations, whose interests are in Central Asia, were identified and directly contacted. Additional actors from Kazakhstani universities, including experts in the Bologna Process, faculty members and students, were identified and involved in the process of data collection (see the list of organisations in Table 4). Over the

course of the interviews, additional actors such as representatives from both the Information Analytic Center under the Ministry of Education and the Independent Kazakhstan Quality Assurance Agency for Education were identified at the national level. At the local level, actors such as the Bologna Process experts and faculties from the Kazakh National Technical University named K.I.Satpayev (KazNTU), KIMEP University International IT University S. Toraighyrov Pavlodar State University and M. Auezov South Kazakhstan State University, were all identified. At the international level, actors from S.I.C.I. Dominus Consortium, the Council of Europe, and the European Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA), experts in higher education policy in Central Asia, were interviewed. There were 28 interviewees from the Ministry according to the preliminary sample table, but in practice there were five interviewees who were mainly responsible for higher education, and who were available for interview. The researcher did not gain access to the Executive Office of the President's Office or the Prime Minister's Office. The reasons for this were explained earlier. The Students Alliance of Kazakhstan was reorganised and combined with the Youth Congress under one leader, who had already been interviewed. For the National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan Atameken, access was granted through its official website, but an agreement to hold an interview was received only after the researcher had returned to the UK from her fieldwork. There were several attempts made to gain access for an interview with anyone from the Delegation of the European Union to Kazakhstan by email, but without reply. A newly appointed President of the Center for International Programs could not help to any significant level with new information for the current research. Access was also not granted to the National Analytical Centre, JSC which is an affiliated organisation of

Nazarbayev University. Instead, access to the other National Analytical Center under the Ministry of Education was given. It is important to note that once contact was established no one refused to be interviewed.

The second phase of the data collection process focused on interviews with members of the Bologna Secretariat in Armenia that supports the work of the Bologna Process. Russian is the language spoken in Armenia and the researcher's fluency in Russian facilitated coherent and accurate interviews and interview transcriptions. All eight members of staff were interviewed. Moreover, during those interviews, the researcher was invited to the EHEA Ministerial Conference of the Bologna Process and the Fourth Bologna Policy Forum held in Yerevan on 14-15 May, 2015.

Participation in the Ministerial Conference

The researcher visited Armenia twice during the course of the fieldwork. The first trip was to conduct interviews and the second trip focused on making contacts with people involved in the decision-making process at the Conference which helped to secure information about the Bologna Process not always made publicly available. To be able to participate at the conference as a guest and a researcher was a great honour. The reason was that only few researchers participated at the conference as places were limited. The Ministerial Conference provides education ministers and officials from the Bologna Process signatory countries the opportunity to make speeches on behalf of their states. Participation in the Conference enhanced cooperation between researchers, by creating research networks and joining the circulated database of participants who were sharing official reports and documents as well as research papers or publications related to the Bologna Process. The Head of the Secretariat who invited the researcher felt that the current study

was important and relevant enough to provide an invitation to attend the conference. The Conference helped the researcher to gain a deep understanding and first-hand experience about the decision-making process within the Bologna meetings. The researcher's participation in this international conference was a valuable contribution to the current research.

The 2015 Yerevan Ministerial Conference attempted to identify the best ways to reinforce the Bologna Process, which was related to the research question about the current stage of reforms in Kazakhstan. The Conference provided the researcher with an opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of how the Bologna Process works in practice, how the decision-making process works, and the actors involved in the decision-making process. The participants were presented on behalf of the 48 governments and Ministers, the European Commissioner, heads of delegations, delegates and the academic community. The Conference provided the researcher with the opportunity to make contacts with the representatives of the Kazakhstani delegation as well as with representatives of organisations: the European Commission, the Council of Europe, European University Association, European Association of Institutions in Higher Education, European Student's Union, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education, Education International, Business Europe. The researcher met various relevant people directly and also conducted interviews with them. Thus, this Conference provided the researcher access to many experts from different countries, who, under normal circumstances, would not be easily accessible. In brief, the Conference provided the researcher with a far richer sample of qualitative research data beyond the fieldwork performed in Kazakhstan and Armenia. As mentioned above, the experience

gained and observations made during the Conference were used in this thesis.

Transcribing process

After each interview was completed, the data was transcribed. As previously noted, interviews were conducted in either Russian or English. The data was transcribed and coded by using NVivo. During the coding process, the data from interviews and documents were taken in their original form by providing English titles for codes. The interview data from Russian interviews was translated into English after the coding process. Accordingly, the data analysis was simultaneously incorporated into the findings chapters.

Coding process

There are three main purposes of coding data:

- “(1) accurately reflecting the underlying nature of the data;
- (2) facilitating useful analysis;
- (3) preserving as many analytic choices as possible”

(Brians et al, 2011, p.252).

The coding process in this research included two approaches: top-down (theory-driven) and bottom-up (from interview and documentary data). The codes for the qualitative data (bottom-up) were created from interviews during both phases of the interview process and at a later stage it was complemented by relevant documents. Many codes have been created from this approach such as the Soviet system legacy, alternative systems, adaptation, and government support. The bottom-up codes were created and were constantly modified by using the NVivo qualitative software programme. At the first stage, 19 main codes were created. The top-down approach or theory driven means that codes were derived from theory. For

instance, main codes such as the process-centred approach, multi-level approach, ideational approach, and soft and hard transfer are all based on theory (Appendix C). Each main code was taken from the policy transfer literature. A table was then created with an explanation given of any particular code by providing sub-codes. For example, the process-centred approach from Evans study (2009, p.248) was used. Via this code, the lesson-drawing process attempted to answer the following questions: What actors were directly or indirectly involved in the decision-making and transfer process? How was the decision to join the Bologna Process made? A table with the sub-codes' names and explanation was derived from the literature review (see Table 5).

The top-down codes were created and were constantly modified by using NVivo. A new code entitled "Policy transfer pathways" was added in order to unpack the relationship between actors. After completing the top-down coding preliminary themes began to emerge such as:

1. European level: Expectations and interpretation (understanding) of the Bologna Process from Western European countries (the view of the European experts)
 - a. Wrong interpretation from the original idea of the Bologna Process
 - b. The passive actions of post-Soviet countries
2. National and local level: The reality of the Bologna Process (understanding from the inside)
 - a. Success
 - b. Challenges
3. Forecasts and evolution
 - a. The stagnation and failure of the Bologna Process
 - b. Necessary steps (secondary education)

Table 5 Examples of sub-codes

Code name	Description
Key actors • <i>direct</i> • <i>indirect</i>	Who was involved in the decision making/transfer process (directly/indirectly)?
Types of decisions • <i>top-down,</i> • <i>bottom-up,</i> • <i>consultative,</i> • <i>collegial,</i> • <i>voluntary,</i> • <i>coercive</i>	How was the decision made (top-down, bottom-up, consultative, collegial, voluntary, coercive)?
Individual roles	How did individual interactions and connections affect policy making?
Political aspect	The lesson-drawing process is about conflicting interests, values and aims which mean this process cannot be politically neutral. The success of the lesson-drawing process depends greatly on political support, in particular from the political coalition that adopted and implemented the policy from elsewhere.

Documentary analysis

The documentary analysis was based on both primary and secondary source materials. Some documents were given by participants such as presentations on structural reforms working groups, analytical papers, survey on autonomous issue, and national reports. The primary and secondary sources were downloaded to NVivo. The researcher had previously used this software in the drafting of the literature review. The primary sources included Kazakhstani official documents such as strategic documents, laws, and state programmes. The official Kazakhstani documents were complemented with EU strategic

documents and reports from international organisations. The secondary sources were analytical articles and information from archival news. Analysis of documents also entailed a coding process.

Three codes created from the documents were: the Bologna Process (BP) documents; European Union (EU) and Central Asia (CA) relations; and Kazakhstani (KZ) official documents. Please refer to the print screen below.

Figure 4 Coding process: a bottom-up approach

Document analysis

Name	Sources	References	Created On
BP documents	0	0	02.09.2015 18:58
EU and CA	14	39	27.08.2015 20:16
KZ Official Documents	0	0	28.08.2015 5:00

Data analysis

The data analysis was guided by questions derived from theory. The main questions were:

- Process-centred approach: who and what has identified the Bologna Process as a key agent of international policy transfer? Who or what actors were directly or indirectly involved in the decision-making/transfer process?
- Multi-level approach: What is the relationship between supranational, national and local agents?
- Ideational approach: How did policy learning take place? (through the spreading of policy ideas and knowledge); How were policy-makers influenced by forces beyond the domestic context?
- To what extent can the policy transfer be considered voluntary? ("voluntary but necessary" or "voluntary but constrained" policy transfer);
- Soft/hard: Is there evidence of soft transfers (ideas, concepts, attitudes) and/or hard transfers (programmes and implementation)?

Documents written in Russian, Kazakh and English were analysed. This current research used a triangulation analysis. Triangulation was used largely to define “multiple data-collection technologies designed to measure a single concept or construct data triangulation” (Berg, 2009, p.6). There is guidance below from Brians, Willnat, Manheim and Rich on how to control the validity of data:

- “1. Never treat what interviewees say as factual data but rather treat the fact that they said it as data. For understanding of political behaviour it is often as important to know what people believe or claim to be true as it is to know what is true
2. Never rely on a single respondent for information about any event, but obtain information about each event from as many respondents as possible before drawing conclusions
3. Always seek ways of verifying information from elite interviews by comparing it with information from outside sources (Brians et al, 2011, p.367)”.

In conjunction with the interviews, and data from the literature review, documents were used in a triangulation analysis. The triangulation analysis or so-called Denzin’s triangulation framework entails the process whereby all data has to be confirmed from more than one angle by using multiple perceptions (Punch, 2005, p. 185; Stake, 2000, p.443). The use of the triangulation process is crucial in connection with elite interviewing (Burnham et al, 2008, p.232). All politicians have their own views, but they are state representatives who should support the state policy regardless.

In conclusion, the coding process illustrates the link between the methods of the current research and the research questions. The data analysis applies the policy cycle as a heuristic device. Path dependency theory has been applied to this research in order to develop the theoretical framework. After any given interview and document analysis, the importance of constraints on transfer in the implementation process of the

Bologna principles began to emerge thus contributing to the importance of path dependency to the research. The findings chapters (Chapters 5 and 6) were structured by incorporating both the primary and secondary source materials. Chapter 5 is structured as a historical chronology which combines the literature with interview and documentary data. In Chapter 5, theory was used in combination with the primary source of data. From chronological analysis, Kazakhstan reformed its education system and became fully integrated into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) through nine chronological stages, using lesson-drawing, policy learning and international policy transfer processes. Chapter 6 is a thematic analysis which developed the utilisation of both the interview and documentary data.

CHAPTER 4: THE BOLOGNA PROCESS

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the Bologna Process and to explain how it is implemented within the higher education systems. This chapter encompasses interview data, documentary analysis and relevant literature by using a multilevel approach comprised of European, national and institutional levels. The structure of this chapter is as follows: firstly, the chapter briefly examines the background of the Bologna Process including the Sorbonne Declaration; secondly, it introduces the aim, principles and members of the Process; thirdly, it explains how the Bologna Process operates, its principles and procedures; and finally, using case studies it explains how the process is implemented.

The Bologna Process is a European initiative that affects higher education sectors both within and outside Europe. The official website of the Bologna Process states that “the central idea of the Bologna Process is to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international collaboration and academic exchange that is attractive to European students and staff as well as to students and staff from other parts of the world” (Benelux Bologna Secretariat, n.d.(a)). The EHEA is a policy objective defined by the respective ministries of education of the 29 signatory countries (Veiga, 2012, p.378) (Appendix D). Veiga claims that “the Bologna Process and its instruments (e.g. Bologna degree structure, credit system, Diploma Supplement) are the devices used to achieve the objective of a greater integration of European educational policies” (2012, p.378). In order to understand the Process, knowledge of the relations between policy actors at different levels (sub-national, national and international) is crucial (Lažetic, 2010, p.549).

Background

Originally, the Bologna Process focused mainly on European higher education which embraced European university traditions, European values and European culture. The Process referred to the 1988 Magna Charter of the European Universities and the 1998 Sorbonne Declaration (European Ministers of Education, 1998). Between those two documents, the 1997 Lisbon Convention on Recognition of Qualifications (the Lisbon Convention) was also passed (Benelux Bologna Secretariat, n.d.(i)). The need to recognise qualifications was negotiated into the Lisbon Convention (Benelux Bologna Secretariat, n.d.(i)). The Lisbon Convention was signed up to by 33 countries which marked the first step towards the integration of the European educational community (Appendix E).

The 1988 Magna Charter was signed by 430 university rectors, including from non-European universities. It carried broader objectives than the Bologna Declaration, calling for an “increasing cooperation between nations, the changing international society, and defining certain fundamental principles of the university system, including institutional autonomy and academic freedom” (Veiga et al., 2008, p.48).

The initiation of the Bologna Process was facilitated by the Sorbonne Declaration (European Ministers of Education, 1998), which was signed by the ministers of education of France, Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom (Veiga et al., 2008, p.e48). The Sorbonne Declaration proclaimed:

“Nowadays, too many of our students still graduate without having had a benefit outside of national boundaries” (European Ministers of Education, 1998, p.1).

The Sorbonne Declaration ultimately laid the foundations for the Bologna Process (Ballarino & Perotti, 2012, p.357). The core of the Sorbonne reform was the reduction of the three-level

structures in the French and German systems to two-level degree structures (undergraduate and postgraduate). These structures were similar to the traditional two-tiered American model. Despite the spirit of cooperation among the education ministers, the process was characterised by contention whereby the French minister, Claude Allegre along with an Italian sociologist, Guido Martinotti, who chaired the Martinotti Commission and prepared a report on how to reform the Italian higher education system, proposed a three-level system, modeled on the French education system. However, the Italian minister opposed this proposal and opted for a new 'European' model that brought together the systems of four countries, namely Germany, Italy, France and the UK (Vaira, 2003 as cited in Ballarino & Perotti, 2012, p.359).

The idea of the EHEA was introduced in Warsaw in 1997 during the European Ministers Conference. The main thrust of the idea was to enhance European cooperation in education and training (Marçal Grilo, 2004 as cited in Veiga et al., 2008, p.e48). Two years later, 29 European countries signed the Bologna Declaration that created the EHEA (Appendix D and Appendix E). According to the organisation's official website, the objectives of the EHEA are to:

- "facilitate mobility of students, graduates and higher education staff;
- prepare students for their future careers and for life as active citizens in democratic societies, and support their personal development; and
- offer a broad access to high-quality higher education, based on democratic principles and academic freedom" (Benelux Bologna Secretariat, n.d.(a)).

Significantly, the EHEA established a more culturally cohesive Europe by means of student mobility. Student mobility was enabled by such instruments as the recognition of degrees and credit transfer (Tomusk, 2004, p.79). Padure claimed that

the Socrates, Erasmus, and Leonardo da Vinci education exchange programmes increased not only students' international mobility, but the international mobility of teachers and researchers too (2009, p.273 taken from Telegina & Schwengel, 2012, p.39).

Lažetic argued that the EHEA was a political action plan (2010, p.550). Non-members of the Sorbonne Declaration had expressed concern about the "danger of a Europe at two speeds" (Veiga et al., 2008, p.e48). Therefore, the ministers of education decided to subscribe to the Bologna Declaration after the European University Association (EUA) report was released. The EUA comprised leaders from a number of European universities, analysed and revised the draft report prepared by the Italian government. The text was carefully modified thereby "eliminating the fears of possible homogenization of the European systems" (Veiga et al., 2008, p.e48). The revised text contained certain changes, including the substitution of the term 'harmonisation' with the term 'convergence' (Lourtie, 2004; Marçal Grilo, 2004 taken from Veiga et al., 2008, p.e48). A significant change in terminology was meant to consider the opportunity to increase the group of governments that would ultimately decide to adopt the Bologna Declaration (Lourtie, 2004; Marçal Grilo, 2004 as cited in Veiga et al., 2008, p.e48). After the revision, the Minister of Education from Portugal that signed the Bologna Declaration stated:

"The Bologna declaration was meant to be a declaration of exclusively political nature and all its words were analysed in great detail to avoid excessive embarrassment to any country, its objective being to build an area, a European space of higher education where all those characteristics of comparability and increased mobility would be present. Such a document is both remarkable and vague. What is important is to understand is that it is a political declaration, each party having surely its own intentions in its country" (Marçal Grilo, 2004 as cited in Veiga et al., 2008, p.e48).

The Bologna Process has as its main mission the creation of a convergence of existing systems of higher education in Europe whereby higher education in Europe becomes more entrepreneurial. Accordingly, Europe would need to “offer its products” on the world market through the fostering of a more competitive system than American universities (Tomusk, 2004, p.89). The European countries realised that “European treasures could be shared for money with people from other parts of the world, and that the economic standing of European universities could be significantly improved” (Tomusk, 2004, p.77). Taking in more students from around the world meant more profit for the European HEIs.

Tomusk (2004) cited Central Asian countries as possible locations where the Bologna Process could be implemented outside the geographic confines of Europe. Tomusk (2004) presented the example of Kyrgyzstan’s higher education system. He cited Kyrgyzstan as a notorious example of a post-communist republic in Central Asia where higher education practicing academic corruption and producing large numbers of low valued degree certificates (Otorbaev, 2004 taken from Tomusk, 2004, p.77). Kyrgyzstan's application to join the Bologna Process was rejected as it was not party to the European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe (1954). Despite the fact that it was not eligible to join the Bologna Process, the Kyrgyz government had reformed its education structure in line with the Bologna model (Clark, 2015). The Kyrgyz government believed that if the country was to become a member of the Bologna Process, it would benefit more by having local qualifications, programmes, and course content compatible with European countries.

Principles of the Bologna Process

The Bologna Process operates based on three groups of principles: mandatory; recommended; and optional. The

mandatory principles are as follows: the three-level degree system of higher education (bachelor's; master's; PhD); ECTS-academic credits; the academic mobility of students, faculty and administrative staff; diploma supplement; and quality assurance and the creation of European Research Area (ERA). The recommended principles consist of: the active involvement of students; lifelong learning; and social dimension. The optional principles concern the interests of employers and public demands. In particular, these includes the harmonisation of educational content in specific areas of training, module systems, elective courses, e-learning and distance learning (Kostanay State Pedagogical Institute Educational Platform, n.d.). Signatory-countries are not required to introduce all principles of the Bologna Process (Int.14), because it is a voluntary process limited to communiqués, which are not binding.

Participating countries and organisations

The Bologna Process was initiated in 1999 by the enactment of the Bologna Declaration. The Bologna Declaration was initially signed by the officials responsible for higher education from 27 European countries; however the document contains 29 signatures. Confusion about the precise number of members began as there were two signatures “for Belgium (for each of the French and Dutch-language communities) and for Germany (the federal minister as well as a representative of all state ministers)” (Lažetic, 2010, p.559) (Appendix D). Currently, there are 48 participating countries in the Bologna Process (including Belgium's Flemish and French speaking communities), of which 26 members are from the European Union and 22 are from outside the European Union. See table 6 below for the full list and the year in which they joined.

Table 6 Participants of the Bologna Process

Member countries and a year of accession		
1. Albania (2003)	14. Estonia (1999)	32. Montenegro (2007)
2. Andorra (2003)	15. Finland (1999)	33. Netherlands (1999)
3. Armenia (2005)	16. France (1999)	34. Norway (1999)
4. Austria (1999)	17. Georgia (2005)	35. Poland (1999)
5. Azerbaijan (2005)	18. Germany (1999)	36. Portugal (1999)
6. Belarus (2015)	19. Greece (1999)	37. Romania (1999)
7. Belgium, Flemish and French Communities separately (both in 1999)	20. Hungary (1999)	38. Russian Federation (2003)
8. Bosnia-Herzegovina (2003)	21. Iceland (1999)	39. Serbia (2003)
9. Bulgaria (1999)	22. Ireland (1999)	40. Slovak Republic (1999)
10. Croatia (2001)	23. Italy (1999)	41. Slovenia (1999)
11. Cyprus (2001)	24. Kazakhstan (2010)	42. Spain (1999)
12. Czech Republic (1999)	25. Latvia (1999)	43. Sweden (1999)
13. Denmark (1999)	26. Liechtenstein (2001)	44. Switzerland (1999)
	27. Lithuania (1999)	45. Turkey (2001)
	28. Luxembourg (1999)	46. Ukraine (2005)
	29. Macedonia (2003)	47. Vatican City (2003)
	30. Malta (1999)	48. United Kingdom (1999)
	31. Moldova (2005)	
Additional member European Commission (2001)		

Source: Benelux Bologna Secretariat. (n.d.).

Over the course of the discussions surrounding the Bologna Declaration, countries were classified into two types: 'very active' and 'less active' (Lažetic, 2010, p.553). The 'less active' countries are those that joined the Bologna Process at a later stage. The lateness of their accession could have been attributed to language difficulties or lack of continuity in representation. In contrast to the 'less active' countries, Austria, the Benelux countries, France, Germany, the Nordic countries, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Croatia were identified as 'very active' meaning that they had been involved in the Bologna Process from the beginning (Lažetic, 2010, p.553).

The key distinctive feature of the Bologna Process "is that it also involves additional and consultative members, as well as representatives of higher education institutions, students, staff, employers and quality assurance agencies" (Benelux Bologna

Secretariat, n.d.(k)). Initially, the process did not involve the European Commission which distinguishes it from other EU processes (Lažetic, 2010, pp.550-551). The European Commission was introduced later with other consultative members which are currently also involved in the Process. These are:

1. Council of Europe
2. UNESCO
3. European University Association (EUA)
4. European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)
5. European Students' Union (ESU)
6. European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
7. Education International Pan-European Structure
8. BUSINESSEUROPE

How does the Bologna Process work?

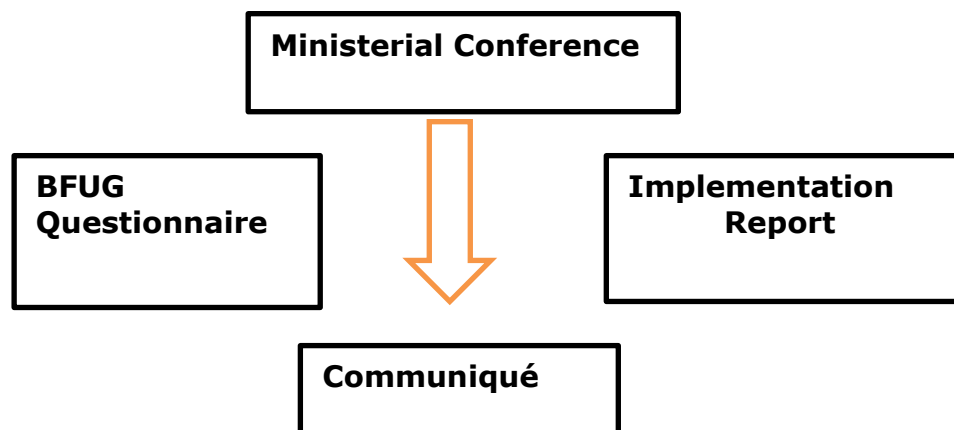
The Bologna Process is an intergovernmental process (Int.19; Becher & Kogan, 1982 taken from Lažetic, 2010, p.549). This section identifies the main bodies in the decision-making process within the Bologna Process framework by explaining how the Process operates.

The Bologna Process works through a programme guided by ministerial summits. Ministers responsible for the education sector of the signatory-countries of the EHEA conduct meetings every two to three years (Int.7; Lažetic, 2010, p.550). Seven EHEA ministerial summits were held between 1999 and 2010 (Benelux Bologna Secretariat, n.d.(b)). Each of the summits are prepared by the Bologna Follow Up Group (BFUG), which in turn receives input from working groups (Benelux Bologna Secretariat, n.d.(b)). The BFUG and working groups' activities will be discussed in detail in later sections.

Before a ministerial summit, each country must submit a national report summarising all the work that has been done by

the country over the previous two years (Int.5). Countries provide their analyses of their situations during the period via a national report which covers the progress made with regard to the Bologna Process principles. In general, countries try to evaluate what has been completed, to identify any current or pending problems and to ascertain what new priorities may be (Int.19). The last set of national reports covered the period 2012-2015 (Int.5).

Figure 5 Role of the Ministerial Conference



Each national report comprises the BFUG questionnaire (see Figure 5). Each country completes the questionnaire by filling in the data about their country. Answering this questionnaire is an arduous and complicated task as signatory-countries need to engage with different areas of education and gather the required information. EURASHE, an organisation under the European Commission, sends out questionnaires to the signatory-countries. EURASHE is also responsible for the design of the questionnaires and the data collection process after the questionnaires have been completed and submitted. After a discussion of a particular working group, the Secretariat circulates the questionnaires exclusively to the countries and not to organisations that are consultative members of the Process.

Then, the representatives of countries who are BFUG members fill out the questionnaires.

Over the course of answering the questionnaire, signatory-countries seek to formulate questions and provide some measure of statistical analysis by which to construct an evidence base. The Bologna Process entails many different policy actors and, accordingly, it becomes necessary to involve professionals to analyse information. There are nine organisations involved in the Bologna Process: eight consultative members and one additional member. They also express their opinions on a given country's situation (Int.19). The opinions presented by these organisations can introduce some contention when reports from the signatory-countries reflect a certain level of bias. Therefore, those opposing views are often characterised by differences at the internal and external levels (Int.19). At the internal level, the country conducts an evaluation by itself by providing national data, while at the external level organisations give their own feedback on each country.

1. Ministerial Conferences

At ministerial conferences, ministers decide on further development of the EHEA and the commitments of its member countries. New applications for membership to the EHEA are also considered during ministerial conferences. Over the course of any given conference, the ministers talk about achievements and adopt a communiqué following the conference (Int.4). The most recent conference was held on May 14-15, 2015 in Yerevan, Armenia (Int.5).

The ministers responsible for education are required to report every two to three years on the progress of the implementation of mandatory, recommended, and optional principles (Int.7). The relevant ministry of each signatory-

country monitors and summarises the progress of the implementation of the principles (Int.5).

The national report of each country is handed over at the ministerial conference. After the conference, the implementation report is then published. The last implementation report was presented for the 2015 conference (Int.19). The implementation report incorporates data from 47 countries. The implementation report comprises the BFUG questionnaire that consists of nine sections with each section asking 100 questions (Int.19). All of the questions were created and the data were analysed according to score indicators compiled by the Brussels-based organisation Eurydice, along with EUROSTAT, and EUROSTUDENT which together are commonly referred to as 'the data collectors'.

2. The Communiqué

Ministerial declarations or communiqués are accepted upon the conclusion of a summit or conference (Int.19). A communiqué is adopted every two to three years, and named after the city in which the conference was held. There has been the Prague Communiqué (2001); the Berlin Communiqué (2003); the Bergen Communiqué (2005); the London Communiqué (2007); the Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué (2009); the Bucharest Communiqué (2012). The Yerevan Communiqué was adopted last year in 2015 (Int.7; 19).

During the drafting of a communiqué, every country has the opportunity to report on and share their experiences of the development of the Bologna Process. During this process, any signatory-country may suggest, add or delete something in the communiqué (Int.7). The communiqué includes the basic processes of the Bologna Process (Int.7).

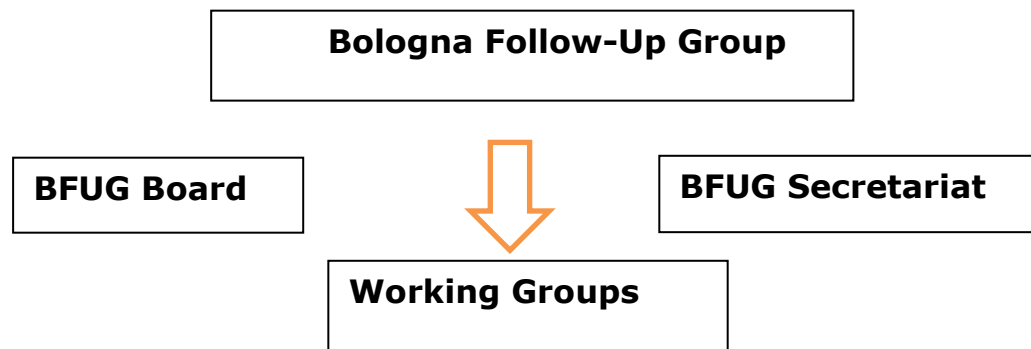
Crucially, the post-conference declaration provides a framework for the priorities and tasks required for the next

period. In that regard, the BFUG develops its own work programme and decides which working groups should solve tasks identified by the ministers (Int.19).

3. The Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG)

The BFUG is a “mandated decision-making body” composed of national representatives from all signatory-countries, as well as representatives from the European Commission and eight consultative members (Lažetic, 2010, p.551).

Figure 6 BFUG Activity



The BFUG:

- meets at least twice a year;
- prepares the next ministerial conferences;
- adopts the Bologna Process work plan;
- elects the BFUG Board;
- creates official working groups;
- adopts the terms of reference for the working groups and the Secretariat;
- organises Bologna seminars; and
- discusses the main initiatives (Lažetic, 2010, p.551).

Lažetic (2010) researched the perceptions and self-perceptions of the policy actors involved with the BFUG. He utilised qualitative research based on primary analysis of semi-structured interviews. The aim of his work was to identify the roles of actors involved in the BFUG and to clarify their functions.

His work on the BFUG was incorporated into the final report to the European Commission which was conducted by research groups from the Netherlands, Germany and a consultancy firm based in the United Kingdom (Westerheijden et al., 2010a). He found that the BFUG combined more than 50 government representatives and stakeholders (Lažetic, 2010, p.550). In addition to the BFUG, the Bologna Process includes individuals who serve in various administrative capacities. The next section shows the key administrative officials who are instrumental in implementing reforms and policies contemplated by the Bologna Process.

4. The BFUG Board and Presidency

The BFUG Board consists of two chairs who serve in that capacity for a period of six months (Int.23). The chairs must be signatory-countries of the Bologna Declaration. The Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué states that “the Bologna Process would be co-chaired by the country holding the EU presidency and a non-EU country” (European Higher Education Area, 2009, p.5). During the meeting in Stockholm on 28-29 September 2009, the BFUG agreed:

- “to treat the EU Presidency and the non-EU country as two chairs (rather than as chair and co-chair) to signal very clearly that the Bologna Process will be chaired on equal footing by the EU Presidency and a non-EU country;
- to leave it to each chairing team to define the exact division of tasks between the two chairs and the vice chair(s);
- to start the new chairing arrangement on 1 July 2010;
- to apply alphabetical order when designating the chair from a non-EU country; and
- to adjust the composition of the BFUG Board by replacing the three elected members with the outgoing, present and incoming non-EU chairs” (European Higher Education Area, n.d.).

Since 1 July 2010, the Bologna Process and the BFUG have been jointly chaired by the country holding the Presidency of the

European Union along with a non-EU signatory-country. The office of the EU presidency has implemented a new rotation process with respect to non-EU signatory-countries. In order to curtail the possibility of asymmetrical relations among non-EU signatory countries, the presidency is chaired using an alphabetically ordered process for non-EU signatories. Thus, Albania was the first chairing non-EU country (Benelux Bologna Secretariat, n.d. (b)). From 1 January to 1 June 2014, the Bologna Process was chaired by Greece and Kazakhstan. In 2015, the two chairs were Latvia and Iceland.

International organisations such as the European Commission and Council of Europe are also members of the BFUG Board. In addition to these bodies, representatives from the European Commission, UNESCO and the Council of Europe are also included on the BFUG Board. Therefore, the BFUG Board includes six to seven people (Int.23).

The decisions of the BFUG Board have a supranational character which can contradict domestic laws and traditions of the participating countries. In such cases, the decision is reviewed. Among some of its other functions, the Board decides the agenda and prepares questions that will be discussed at each BFUG meeting. It also seeks to resolve issues that ultimately impact the furtherance of the Bologna Process objectives.

The BFUG is aided by certain working groups that are compelled to abide by and implement the decisions made during the BFUG meeting. The decisions made by the BFUG during its meeting are formulated and approved by four specific working groups: the Structural Reforms (qualification frameworks ENQA) Working Group; the Recognition Transparency Working Group; the Mobility Working Group; and the Internalisation Working Group (Int.23).

5. Working Groups

The working groups are divided according to each element of the Bologna Process (Int.32). Working groups explore the direction of the Bologna Process before each conference is held. One of the functions of the working group is to establish a system of monitoring the progress of the Bologna Process in signatory-countries in specific directions. Any achievements made regarding the Bologna Process principles could affect other countries, once a common higher education area has been formed.

Bologna Process experts are involved with the working groups (Int.7). There are about 20 people in each working group and they conduct meetings at least every quarter in which they discuss different directions of the Process. These working group meetings are funded by each participating country (Int.7). Some countries participate in one group, without participating in another group. The participation of a country in any given working group depends on the country's priorities and interests. Therefore, some countries could be active in one group and passive in others. Interviewee 21 noted a distinction between post-Soviet and European countries by saying that "European countries are more active" on account of their participation in the working groups and the meetings (Int.21). Interviewee 21's perspective is very much consistent with Lažetic (2010) who mentioned the division of 'very active' and 'less active' countries in the Bologna Process.

The four working groups that have been operating for the last two years are: (1) mobility and internalisation; (2) social dimension and lifelong learning; (3) reporting on the Bologna Process implementation; and (4) structural reforms (EHEA, 2016b). The group on structural reforms monitors institutional changes in countries, the procedure of reforms, and compliance

with the principles of the Bologna Process. There is an academic mobility and internalisation working group which reviews the content of educational programmes, which are becoming similar in all signatory-countries (Int.4). It conducts a meeting three times a year by discussing the development of mobility, existing problems as a result of the harmonisation of educational programmes, and the implementation of academic mobility. Harmonisation in the Bologna Process is important to make the systems more equal with the same number of credits and proposals to simplify the mobility process. Lastly, the working groups work on their respective subject areas during a one-year period and then submit a report with proposals for solutions and further developments in relation to certain principles of the Bologna Process (Int.7).

6. The BFUG Secretariat

The Bologna Process is driven by the BFUG and the Secretariat, which facilitates the process technically and organisationally. Every two or three years, the vice-chair of the BFUG country responsible for organisational matters is selected. The Secretariat is also located in that country. The Bologna Secretariat is financed by the state hosting the next ministerial conference. The selected country hosts the conference of ministers responsible for education in the signatory-countries of the Bologna Process. The Secretariat moves to the country where the next conference will be held. For example, for the period 2010-2012, the Secretariat was based in Romania; while in 2012-2015, the Secretariat was based in Armenia where the most recent conference (2015) was held. The next conference will take place in 2018 in France, to where the Secretariat has been moved (Int.19; 7; 21; 24).

The primary task of the Secretariat is to prepare documents for meetings and conferences, to send invitations to

the meetings and to take minutes (Int.7; 20; 24). The Secretariat is responsible for assisting countries if they encounter technical problems while completing questionnaires for the national report. One member of the Secretariat said:

“My duties are to follow the communication between the BFUG members and to provide the systems and prepare the documents for the meetings of the BFUG Board meetings; also to prepare the agendas and different kind of papers and also to prepare minutes of the meetings of the BFUG and its Board. I am taking part in the meetings of the BFUG and in the Board meetings” (Int.26).

The BFUG adopts the Secretariat’s terms of reference and mandate. This body firstly “provides administrative and operational support to the BFUG; secondly, maintains the Bologna Secretariat websites and archives; thirdly, acts as an external and internal contact point for the Process; and finally, provides representation at external events” (Lažetic, 2010, p.551). The office of the Secretariat was located in Brussels from 1 July 2007 until 30 June 2010 and was operated by the higher education ministries of the Benelux countries; Austria and Hungary supported preparation of the 2009 and 2010 ministerial conferences. From 2007 until 2010 there was a multinational secretariat (Benelux Bologna Secretariat, n.d. (b)). For issues of convenience and consistency of discussion, the official language of the Secretariat and the Bologna Process itself is English (Bologna Follow-Up Group Secretariat, 2013).

7. Peer-learning or knowledge-sharing

From the perspective of policy transfer, the functions of the Bologna Process include sharing experiences and peer-learning. This occurs during the meetings when countries start to speak about their own cases. When countries share information, it becomes a peer-learning event. Each member country has its experts who are attached to the relevant ministry, who are BFUG members and who could also be from the European Commission.

Their main function is to help to facilitate the reforms of the Bologna Process over the course of the implementation process. They take on a role akin to consultants (Int.26). Countries in the Bologna Process are willing to help each other, but this requires some countries taking the initiative (Int.26).

If a country needs assistance in the Bologna Process in implementing reforms, it can turn to the European Commission or the Council of Europe. These organisations provide international assistance in the implementation of the Bologna Process by organising seminars and peer-learning activities, and peer reviews by giving some expertise on how to better implement the goals and principles of the Process. As the Bologna Process seeks to create a learning environment, member countries can ask organisations for assistance, as well as other countries (mainly European countries), who are willing to help them to implement the Bologna principles. For example, countries that have a very good quality assurance system can assist others with advice or organisational seminars (Int.26).

The Bologna Process in Different Countries

This section introduces different cases regarding the implementation of the Bologna Process. It seeks to explain how the Process affects higher education in Germany, Italy, Portugal, Norway, Ibero-American region (Latin America), the UK, Denmark and Russia.

Veiga (2012) carried out a study on the implementation of the Bologna Process in Germany, Italy, Norway and Portugal. She conducted questionnaire-based survey research in seven universities located in those countries. The questionnaires covered disciplines such as law, history, medicine and physics. From each institution, 25 members of the administrative staff were surveyed. In the study, three aspects of the Bologna Process were investigated: the impact of the Bologna Process as

policy; its implementation in the HEIs; and reforms introduced in teaching, learning and research (Veiga, 2012, p.380). The most significant finding of this study was that actors at the European level had largely had 'no opinion' on the strategic goals and focus of reforms. The national level became important through the internal reforms. According to the respondents, the Bologna Process is a legitimising framework for reforms at the national level (Witte, 2004), while the institutional level promotes pedagogical reform (Veiga, 2012, pp.388-389).

Gornitzka (2010) criticised the Bologna Process for being limited to higher education sector only. One of the major criticisms of the Bologna Process is that it is closed to "non-traditional postsecondary education changes, new providers and competence-based qualifications" (Gornitzka, 2010, pp.543-544). Lažetic concluded that the Bologna Process, in practice, had no serious impact on higher education (2010, p.559). While there were a large number of countries participating in the Bologna Process, "most of them were losing interest in the Process, while some countries were not even aware about the Process' goals, priorities and its structure" (Lažetic, 2010, p.559). Lažetic concluded that the current structure and format of coordination within the Bologna Process seem inappropriate to achieve the Bologna Process policy goals (2010, p.559). However in his work, he does not offer justification for this argument.

Ferrer (2010) claimed that the Bologna Process could be taken as a model for every continent (2010, p.610). The Ibero-American region was faced with the necessity to develop new alignment initiatives because of the need to adapt to the demands of a knowledge-based society. Such changes to the Ibero-American region would entail student and teacher mobility, the recognition of degrees and qualifications, and mutual trust and transparency (Ferrer, 2010, p.610). According to Fernández

Lamarra “the experience of higher education reform, in the framework of the Bologna Process, is a highly significant precedent for Latin America to study” (2007, p.25 as cited in Ferrer, 2010, p.610).

Sin (2012) carried out qualitative research using data from interviews to empirically analyse perceptions and attitudes towards the Bologna Process in three case studies: the UK, Portugal and Denmark. This research exposed contradictions in the adoption of Bologna in the “implementation staircase” (Reynolds & Saunders, 1987; Saunders, 2006 as cited in Sin, 2012, p.393). According to Sin, higher education authorities in the UK did little to promote the Process. The reason, according to Sin, was that “England’s interest was to prevent the Process from evolving towards directions that were likely to prejudice English higher education” (House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2007, taken from Sin, 2012, p.395). Among scholars, questions have been raised about the involvement of some countries in the Bologna Process. One interviewee stated:

“... let’s take England - the traditional large country in the Bologna Process. I do not know why England is involved in the Bologna Process, I mean, they do not implement reforms, they joined formally in some reforms, but actually they did not implement them. Traditionally, it is a big country [UK] with the great education system, they were always attractive to the world, especially for [international] students. English, German, Italian and French education are usually considered as ‘good’, if we talk about the mobility of all European higher education. Of course, the most part [of Europe] is included” (Int.19).

Sin found that the case of Portugal was dissimilar to the cases of the UK and Denmark in terms of policy making and implementation. Academics in Portugal were more active than their British counterparts and took the opportunity to adopt student-centred approaches to teaching provided by the legal framework. Sin’s findings were that in the Portuguese case, “there appears to have been a bottom-up process, subsequently

complemented by top-down legislation" (2012, p.401). In Denmark, there was an indifferent attitude among academics towards the Bologna Process. This indifference was attributable to the perception that there had been no substantive change in Danish education after the implementation of the Bologna principles.

Sin (2012) was interested in the academics' perceptions towards the Bologna Process. He conducted semi-structured interviews in 2010 with academics teaching physics MSc degrees, and with representatives of national organisations with a stake in the Bologna Process in the UK, Portugal and Denmark. The reason for his methodological approach is that Sin wanted to explore how cultural dimensions influenced the academics' interpretations of the Bologna Process more than the nature of a different discipline. Therefore, by using the selection criteria, four or five teaching academics were chosen per programme for interviews. There were two programmes selected per country. In conducting interviews, there might be concern in "the relationship between what people say, what they do and what they say they do. Therefore, the main issue is about language as an indicator of thought and action" (Punch, 2005, p.176). An instructive example of this problem is found in Sin's article referring to the usage of the term "tutorials". The inconsistency in how the term has been defined has caused confusion for researchers as people were using the same words to explain different concepts and phenomena. Sin has argued that "for some people tutorials mean working with small groups on subject matters or projects; for others, a tutorial is to have someone that guides you through your academic life" (Sin, 2012, p.397).

Sin (2012) investigated different national and institutional settings by complementing his qualitative data from interviews

with archival research through an analysis of official documents in connection with educational policies of the three countries being studied. He examined the official documents of the Bologna Process (the 2004 Berlin Ministerial Summit), UK Higher Education Position (2005, 2007, 2009); English Report on the Bologna Process (2007); Portuguese laws (Decree-Law 74/2006 and 107/2008); Danish official document (Strategy for Denmark in the Global Economy (2006)). He concluded that most of the aforementioned documentary sources were relevant and appropriate for this research, with the exception of the Danish official document. The documents showed the educational policies of certain countries and their reforms according to the Bologna Process, while the Danish document related to general strategy in the global economy.

Many scholars argue that the decision to adopt the Bologna principles was mainly political (Tomusk, 2007; Telegina & Schwengel, 2012). This is predicated upon many factors from historical, economic and political points of view. For example, Russia is a huge country that has historically depended on its geopolitical 'hard power', i.e. the use of military force. Today, when there is competition between countries for 'soft power', i.e. human capital or human potential, Russia tries to preserve its relationship with its main trading partner – Europe (Telegina & Schwengel, 2012, p.44). According to Telegina & Schwengel, "the Bologna Process in this sense was seen as an instrument for promoting a pan-European social dialogue and institutionalising a common cultural heritage via European education" (2012, pp.44-45).

The decision to join the Bologna Process in 2003 was vital for Russia because education and research systems built during the Soviet era encountered difficult times following the collapse of the Soviet Union (Kurilla, 2013, p.2). The Russian academic

elite and university leaders opposed the decision to join the Bologna Process that was taken only by the political elite (Tomusk, 2007, p.233). Concerns voiced by academics centred upon their feeling that politicians and university leaders wanted to keep control over the education system. At the same time, these academics did not want to destroy Russian national education. According to the local academics, Russian national education was built on high standards and Russian cultural traditions. Students and parents were afraid of losing free-of-charge education. Irrespective of these concerns, Russia adopted the Bologna Declaration in September 2003 and became part of the EHEA (Telegina & Schwengel, 2012, p.44). One interviewee expressed her negative opinion regarding the membership of Russia in the Bologna Process:

“... Russia does not participate in any meeting [working groups]. They entered into the Bologna Process, but they do not attend those meetings. They believe their old Soviet system was better than the European one... if the Process is not relevant ... How will they resolve the issues regarding the transition from the master’s programme to PhD programme, if they have a completely different system? Probably... they moved forward in some aspects in formulating their own educational system in Russia. ... Russia is a full member of the Bologna Process. Officially, yes, but in practice it is not” (Int.7).

Many Russian scholars criticised the Bologna Process. Russian researchers Lobovskaya, Molochnikov, Dedkova (2005), and Vlasov, and Philippov (n.d.) claimed there were disadvantages to the Bologna Process. They argued that brain drain to Europe and the focus on solving only educational issues present in European nations were the main disadvantages of the Bologna Declaration. The Russian system of higher education was waning and most graduates could not enter the labour market after completing a bachelor’s degree (Lobovskaya et. al., 2005). However, for Vlasov and Philippov (n.d.), the solution to the issue of employability of graduates would be to have

employers controlling Russian HEIs, thus preparing future employees for employment. To prepare employees in such a way may relieve universities and students of the pressure of ensuring employment after graduation.

After the adoption of the Bologna Process there were some positive changes in the Russian educational sector. These positive changes included: a number of legislative acts adopted in response to the Bologna principles; the pilot introduction of diploma supplements for some institutions; the transition to the bachelor's-master's degree system that was initially introduced and legalised by a federal law in 1996; the establishment of quality assurance structures within several academic institutions; and the formal introduction of the ECTS in some HEIs (BPNR, 2005, p.5 taken from Telegina & Schwengel, 2012, p.45). Although formally all requirements of the Bologna Process were implemented, for the academic elite there remained many question marks.

Due to limited academic mobility and the lack of knowledge and experience in assessing diverse systems of local academia, the diploma supplement is still an 'exotic object' for the Russian academic community. Telegina and Schwengel (2012) claimed that the same situation surfaces regarding recognition of programmes and courses. They argued that the issue of recognition has been exercised only in the framework of bilateral agreements, particularly in the framework of Tempus and Erasmus programmes. Another concern raised is the high level of bureaucracy and paper-consuming procedures which are deemed massive constraints for change in quality assurance procedures (Telegina & Schwengel, 2012, p.45). Although the ECTS has been introduced, it remains vague for faculty and students (Telegina & Schwengel, 2012, p.45).

The slow process of the internationalisation of Russian higher education is another issue. Arzhanova found that the proportion of educational programmes in foreign languages in Russian institutions was below 15% in the 2000-2007 period. Furthermore, only 20% of Russian HEIs were involved in joint educational programmes with international partners. Lastly, programmes completed with joint diplomas were present in only 40 institutions, which amounted to less than four percent of Russian HEIs (2010, taken from Telegina & Schwengel, 2012, p.45).

The main factors leading to problems in implementing the Bologna Process reforms in the Russian higher education system are primarily attributable to the limited autonomy of institutions in decision making and a high level of bureaucracy. As a result, there are many barriers such as (RFNR, 2008 as cited in Telegina & Schwengel, 2012, p.45):

- "Poor infra-structural support that creates serious barriers for international initiatives;
- Poor resources for international activities;
- Shortage of competent and motivated academic staff because of low salaries;
- Passive participation in international cooperation due to poor resources;
- Lack of sufficient knowledge of foreign languages among academic staff; and
- Low level of understanding of the Bologna principles due to limited inter-cultural experience".

Conclusion

After the first steps toward integration - the Magna Charter of the European Universities (1988), the Lisbon Convention (1997) and Sorbonne Declaration (1998) - 29 European countries signed the Bologna Declaration in 1999 which created the EHEA (Appendices D and E). Some interviewees believed that the Bologna Process was Europe's response to losing its

competitive educational edge against the American higher education system (Int.27;26). Accordingly, it was thought that the establishment of the Bologna Process reflected the desire to make Europe competitive in higher education sector (Int.26; 27; 31). By 2010, all signatory-countries were supposed to have unified their systems of higher education (Int.9).

The education ministers who adopted and signed the Bologna Process could not have foreseen its worldwide popularity. According to the original plans, it was expected that by 2010 the Declaration would have achieved all of its objectives. In contrast, the trends established during the implementation of the Bologna Process were globalised by extending the boundaries of the process to include countries outside Europe. Almost all universities, including non-European HEIs, began to get involved in this process. One representative of an education ministry argued that those principles which were incorporated in the Declaration and the subsequent communiqués adopted by signatory-countries reflected the aspirations and interests of the whole academic community. Consequently, involvement in the process led to the EHEA having to continue operating well past its anticipated 2010 termination date (Int.41).

The Bologna Process is an intergovernmental policy process encompassing a hybrid of networks and policy processes where individuals and institutions decide what is best for the development of higher education based on negotiations rather than upon a hierarchical structure (Becher & Kogan, 1982 taken from Lažetic, 2010, p.549). The organisational structure of the Bologna Process consists of the signatory-countries, international organisations, the BFUG, working groups and the Secretariat.

While the primary aim of the Bologna Process is “to ensure the successful implementation of the [higher educational]

reforms”, Yagci has raised concerns as to “whether the Bologna Process provides another reason for more bureaucracy” (Yagci, 2010, p.596). The Russian case shows, along with some other cases that the Bologna Process does not always result in successful policy. Some countries are ‘less active’ in the Bologna Process due to the many internal educational reforms in the country. Some countries have a limited understanding of the Bologna principles. This issue was mentioned at the Budapest-Vienna Declaration in 2010 to the degree that there were protests in some countries due to an unclear and/or incomplete explanation of the Bologna reforms (Benelux Bologna Secretariat, n.d. (g)). This limited understanding of the Bologna Process has resulted in a struggle within some signatory-countries in attempting to implement the Bologna Process requirements.

The implementation process of the Bologna principles is very diverse. In Portugal, the Bologna Process was driven by a bottom-up approach, while in Denmark no essential differences could be detected after the adoption of the Bologna Process. In the UK, officials in education have done little to promote the Bologna principles (Sin, 2012).

As mentioned previously, this process involves not only EU countries, but states from regions of other continents too such as Central Asia. Like many countries, Kazakhstan was interested in the Declaration and was keen to become involved. Kazakhstan faces problems that need to be solved along the way, but it has started to promote the principles of the Bologna Process within its educational system. The reasons for this will be discussed in subsequent chapters. The next chapter considers the higher education system in Kazakhstan, providing the chronological story of how Kazakhstan became integrated into European higher educational space, and particularly the Bologna Process.

CHAPTER 5: THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM IN KAZAKHSTAN

This chapter discusses educational reforms in Kazakhstan from 1991 to the present. First, the chapter outlines the education system during the Soviet era; second, it evaluates reforms made after the collapse of the Soviet Union; third, it identifies the main issues leading to Kazakhstan joining the Bologna Process; and finally, it concludes that the development of the higher education system and improvements of the quality of education were the main priorities of Kazakhstan. The aim of this section is to consider the chronological stages in which Kazakhstan became integrated into the EHEA and how Kazakhstan has changed its education system. This chapter is based on a literature review, interviews and document analysis.

From 1936 until 1991 Kazakhstan was a part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) or the Soviet Union and was then known as the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic or alternatively Soviet Kazakhstan. It was the second largest republic in the Soviet Union. Constitutionally, the Soviet Union was a federation of constituent Union Republics, and in total it consisted of 15 unitary states: Ukraine, Belarussia, Moldavia, Central Asian countries, Caucasus countries, Baltic States and Russia. Therefore, all 15 countries shared a common history, including their educational systems, which were different from those in the West. All post-communist countries had very similar educational structures, governance, admission procedures and curriculum content. Further explanation will be provided in the section on Soviet education. As a matter of history, the issue of the Soviet legacy cannot be ignored. Therefore, this chapter will focus on history, and in particular from the Soviet era which had

a significant influence on the development of the Kazakhstani education system.

Soviet education

Soviet education was greatly influenced by communist ideology, through which the ideals of the Communist Party were forced on society (Zhanabayeva & Isatayeva, 2004, p.246). For example, students read texts about Lenin, the Communist Party, and the Russian Revolution. In the Soviet era, children's political organisations were mandatory at schools such as the Young Octobrists (children of the Great October Revolution), Pioneers (a youth organisation for children of aged 10-15 operated by a Communist party), and the Komsomol, the Union of the Communist Youth (Zhanabayeva & Isatayeva, 2004, p.246). The key principle of the Soviet education system, as proclaimed in the Declaration on Uniform Schooling and Regulations (1918), was free education (Zhanabayeva & Isatayeva, 2004, p.245).

During the Stalinist regime (1922-1952), the Kazakh language was changed from Latin to the Cyrillic script (Johnson, 2004, p.30); after 1938, the obligatory language in all schools became Russian (Johnson, 2004, p.30). The Kazakh language was taught only in primary schools though Kazakh language lessons were minimal. Kazakh national history was not studied at all. As a result, generations of people who were belonging to the Kazakh ethnic group had a poor knowledge of their own language and history before independence (Zhanabayeva & Isatayeva, 2004, p.246).

The term 'aggressive literacy' (Johnson, 2004; Zhanabayeva & Isatayeva, 2004) describes campaigns during the 1920s and 1930s in which the formal educational systems from pre-school to adult and political education were expanded radically (Khrapchenkov, 1998 taken from Johnson, 2004, p.30).

The first comprehensive universities and technical, medical and pedagogical institutes were established in Kazakhstan as part of these 'aggressive literacy' campaigns (Johnson, 2004, p.30).

There were many positive aspects of the educational system during the Soviet era (Int.22; 4; 5; 28; 19; 15). One positive effect of Soviet education was that the majority of the population was literate and bilingual (Johnson, 2004, p.32). One interviewee who was born during the Soviet times, but received his higher education in an independent post-communist country, considered the universal literacy of the population and full enrolment of secondary education as a 'common view' or 'belief' of people who lived in the Soviet Union. He suggests that "it was not a bad view", of Soviet people, because with a highly literate nation, the social situation of any country is better (Int.22).

The advantage of the Soviet Union's planned economy was free education at all levels, i.e. pre-school, secondary, vocational and higher. One participant who experienced the Soviet system stated:

"There were certainly advantages of a planned system.... The labour market was controlled, because of the state order, and there were no tuition fees" (Int.4).

All education was free and students from poor families had the opportunity to study (McLendon, 2004, p.286). The Soviet Union provided equality of access to elementary, secondary, and higher education (Weidman *et al.*, 2004, p.181). There were no inequalities based on how a family related to the Party. According to Abilov, the higher educational system of the Soviet Union had positive aspects such as "a high level of fundamental training; ability for basic personnel trainings; sufficient educational materials; skilful use of tutorials in the educational

process; and the organisation and provision of student leisure or extracurricular activities” (2004, p.310).

There was a lack of educational inequality in the old Soviet system of secondary education. Alternatively, some argue that the main problem was the limited access to higher education in the Soviet era (Int. 5; 28). It was believed by some interviewees that the limitation of higher education was for good reason (Int.5; 4), in that the selection of entrants was according to the results of competitive entrance exams. Applicants with higher results which enhanced better learning outcomes were selected (Int.28). Another reason was that almost all university places were issued by the state, and no fees were required. Therefore, there were many restrictions upon receiving a free higher education (Int.5). For example, more than 30% (Int.5) of high school graduates did not enter university education.

The higher educational system of the Soviet Union was ‘vertical’ in nature (Heyneman, 2004, p.4). Educational development was regulated and funded solely by the state. Higher education institutions (HEIs) prepared a future cadre according to the ‘state order’ (Int.15; Int.2; Int.4). Additionally, the state guaranteed and provided employment for graduates (Telegina & Schwengel, 2012, p.40). Health, agriculture, industry, transport and other federal ministries (21 ministries in total) controlled the HEIs. The HEIs were state-owned enterprises. This ‘vertical’ ownership prevented HEIs from “being allowed to implement new programs in response to changes in the economy and labour market” (Heyneman, 2004, p.4). Each sector of the economy was controlled by labour markets. Heyneman argued that “students were assigned to jobs according to the sector of their particular school” (2010, p.77). Universities, faculties, and curricula were administered within each sector.

There are several peculiarities of the Soviet higher education system. The Soviet system of HE involved five or six years of study that was characterised by state control over universities. Another peculiarity is study was mainly carried out in one main language, Russian. This led to graduates having poor foreign language competence. The Soviet Union was a closed country; therefore it had a weak market orientation to any 'outside' country (Telegina & Schwengel, 2012, pp. 40-45). The Soviet educational model only served its country's needs and operated for the centrally-planned economy of the Soviet Union.

Kazakhstan has a strong Soviet educational legacy and, in the beginning of the 1990s, a new model of higher education began to emerge during the first decade of independence. Reforms in education after the collapse the Soviet Union are considered in the next section.

1991: Problem recognition and the transition period

During the 1990s, Kazakhstan experienced the process of transitioning towards a market economy, which consisted of several different periods. During the first period of transition, the country "moved to meet additional demand for higher education through rapid expansion of the private sector" (Weidman et al., 2004, p.190). According to Article 30 of the Constitution (August 30, 1995; as cited in Zhanabayeva & Isatayeva, 2004, p.247):

"1. Citizens are guaranteed free-of-charge secondary education at state institutions. This education is also obligatory.

2. Citizens have the right of getting on a competitive basis free-of-charge higher education in a state higher education institution.

3. Education in private educational institutions is allowed but under conditions established by law.

4. The state shall establish obligatory standards of education. Activities of any educational institutions should correspond with those standards".

After independence, the strategic goal for the development of Kazakhstan was the transition to international cooperation (Int.4). Due to the development of technology and the transition of many countries towards a knowledge-based economy, the need for particular educational expertise and competences were rapidly changing. State officials characterised the transition period as a 'temporary process' with negative features of the present-day reality. The President of Kazakhstan noted:

"... many of our weak points are of a temporary and transitory nature, rather they result from Soviet legacy and the hardships of the arduous transition period... however, ... we are deeply imbued with a Russian mentality and principles of collectivism and our choices must largely coincide with the perspective model of Russia" (Akorda, 1997).

While the Soviet educational system did not have the institutional capacity to move quickly, Kazakhstan needed a very flexible educational framework for transitioning to a market economy (Int.9). One local expert, who has university experience as an administrator, supported the transition to a market economy and its suitability to the Bologna Process. He said:

"... a market economy has other requirements. The Bologna Process is more suitable for a market-oriented economy, i.e. where a generalist is required to teach, who should understand the logic of technology, the philosophy of technology, and the sequence" (Int.29).

A similar opinion was expressed by a member of a foreign academic faculty in Kazakhstan, who argued:

"Philosophically, and ideologically, the Soviet system was very different from the Bologna Process.... Bologna is really driven by a kind of capitalist, neo-liberal agenda... it is very market-driven" (Int.11).

The transition to a market economy brought a strong internal demand from the educational community to reform higher education (Int.2). While state officials were initially slow to respond, one expert with international education experience claimed:

"I think it's an obvious choice [to move towards Europe and market reforms] for Kazakhstan's higher education system and government, given the ambition set out in the national education programme, and the way that feeds into Strategy 2050" (Int.18).

Since independence (1991) there was little local pedagogical practice in Kazakhstan, which is the basis for any reform in education. Thorough reforms were critical to Kazakhstan's evolution away from a half-century of communist ideology and the widespread influence of Soviet policy, the Soviet system, and the command economy. The reform of Kazakhstan's educational sector would introduce a transition process. Given that frame of reference, a state official from the analytical centre of the Ministry of Education stated:

"Kazakhstani education system emerged from the Soviet system, and we [Kazakhstan] are involved in the Bologna Process to gradually overcome this legacy. It will take time, but the most important aspect is that Kazakhstan has the political will, a clear vision of where to go, and the universities have already started to grow and understand [the meaning of reforms and the state policy]" (Int.27).

Another state official agreed and supported this argument by noting: "We are moving forward, but it is not easy. We are facing problems. Our challenge is our legacy" (Int.34).

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Kazakhstan started to face problems transiting to a market economy. According to one interviewee "there was the general perception that something went wrong in the Soviet educational system",

which was inherited by Kazakhstan (Int.2). The Soviet educational system did not work after the collapse of the Soviet Union, because the whole economy collapsed. Several interviewees expressed the opinion that Kazakhstan joined the Bologna Process largely in order to move away from the Soviet legacy (Int.27; 34).

Irrespective of the Soviet legacy, both education and science were subjects of particular interest within Kazakhstan during and after the Soviet period (UNDP, 2004, p.19). People still have mixed feelings about the old system. For example, one international interviewee argued:

“So, you know, [one] can see there will be some regret for some aspects of it, because there were very good things about the old system. But, it's just this sort of trade-off you make when you change system; you lose some of the good things as well as gaining some new good things” (Int.18).

The Kazakhstani government allocated funds at the national level whereby higher education became a priority. The educational systems in the modern world provide freedom to young professionals in research, and collaboration between academia and business environments, in which universities are ‘incubators’ for science and joint projects between the industry and technology field (Int.37). The move towards integrating academia and the business community was fraught with constraints and bureaucracy at the developmental stage (Int.37). It was crucial, that in the educational system, the teacher was primarily engaged in teaching and research. In Kazakhstan, professors were trying to take as many teaching hours as possible, because they were paid for that more than for conducting research. This was not an effective way to conduct research for the teaching staff, especially for young academics. One interviewee concluded: “They would not be able to pursue

research, if there was not enough free time” (Int.37). This international expert’s view was that the educational system should move to a more flexible system, preferably a contract system, containing contractual provisions that allow young academic staff members the opportunity to teach, do research, and engage in commercial activities as opposed to a demand on only one type of activity (Int.37).

Over the course of the fieldwork, the interview data include dissimilarities between the participants, and in particular between local experts and those who worked at different teaching and administrative positions. One interviewee who had both administrative and teaching experience argued that, in Kazakhstan, no elements of the previous system have remained and that the education system no longer operates under the Soviet system (Int.33). In contrast, other interviewees who have teaching experience argued that 10-15% (Int.10) or 70% (Int.8) of elements remain from the Soviet system. One interviewee, who is currently teaching at a university, noted the PhD programme as an example. She contended that the Research Council introduced some new elements into the newly-established PhD programme; however, the programme still contains elements of the old system (Int.8).

Kazakhstan, like many other countries emanating from the former Soviet Union, has many senior academics whose background is from the Soviet system (Int.36). One downside of the Soviet system concerns languages (Int.5). Many people, especially those in senior positions at ministries and universities, do not know English (Int.9; 15; 7). Nevertheless, they continue to work at HEIs, because young people prefer not to work and teach at universities due to low salaries (Int.9). However, scientific capacities and achievements during the Soviet era were great within different fields (Int.6; 9; 8). According to one

international expert and representative of the Council of Europe, the Soviet system was good, especially when it came to research. He claims that people feel that on the research side, for example, a three-cycle system might have certain dangers, but those attitudes could be found in other European countries too (Int.36).

Since Kazakhstan's independence in 1991, many changes have occurred at the national level. Several laws, strategic documents and state programmes have been issued by the Kazakhstan government. There were different stages of legal regulation within Kazakhstan's educational system. During the first years of independence legislation was formulated for the education system of an independent Kazakhstan. A number of new laws and programmes to regulate Kazakhstan's independent education system were implemented by the country's government. The reforms of the first decade of independence have affected the structure, form and content of education, including (Abilov, 2004, p.311):

- "1. governance of education (decentralization, internationalization and the establishment of a private sector of HE providers);
2. financing (reduction of state expenditures for education and the development of a non-governmental sector of education);
3. and curriculum (shifting to a national curriculum and language priorities, establishing a "multilevel system of education (bachelor's degrees, master's degrees)".

There is a lack of consensus in the local literature regarding the periods of reforms. For example, Zhakenov (n.d.) divided the periods of educational reforms in Kazakhstan from 1991 to 2001 into four main periods; while Aryn (2011) considered two periods from 1991 to 2004 and 2001-2004 in establishing a new education system. In light of the divergence in the chronological periods of educational reforms in

Kazakhstan, this chapter will focus on eight other separate time periods in which reforms were implemented by applying the policy transfer stages. Thus, the next section describes the period of 1992-1996 when the policy makers searched for ideas from other countries.

1992 -1996: The search for ideas

The reform of the educational system began in 1992. The first law concerning education of an independent Kazakhstan was the Law on Education (1992) (Appendix E). The main intent of this document was to fundamentally change the relations between educational institutions and the state; as well as the relations between schools and universities (Zhanabayeva & Isatayeva, 2004, p.244).

Many public higher education institutions were privatised as part of the move towards the transition to a market economy. To some extent, the idea of privatisation in Kazakhstan was essential in order to give all students equal rights to gain knowledge and higher education (UNDP, 2004, p.20). One international expert described the period after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the following manner:

“Kazakhstan has moved its higher education system forward. It's gone through...[reforms] If you look at other former Soviet countries, there was this sort of explosion of universities after independence – many private ones, lots of business faculties – that sort of stuff, and that's a move to rationalise it, and pull it together. Now, I think it has changed...you can see some real universities where they are making a change; and some individuals within universities who are making a change” (Int.18).

Briller and Iskakova argue that since independence, “the role of students has shifted from passive recipients to private consumers” (2004, pp. 257-258). To the extent that students are now paying fees for higher education, as consumers, they

demand a quality education to ensure future job prospects. Therefore, according to Briller and Iskakova, students are now looking for universities that best suit their needs. The main interests of the government are firstly, accountability, because it funds public HEIs; and secondly, as a provider of educational services competing with world universities. On the other hand, HEIs have more freedom to expand their services within the region and abroad, complemented by non-biased assessments from the government (Briller & Iskakova, 2004, p.259).

In Kazakhstani society, there is a belief that state universities provide a higher quality of higher education than private institutions (Caboni, 2004, p.300). This was buttressed by the belief that the state was responsible for the employment of graduates within the previous Soviet system (Telegena & Schwengel, 2012, p.40).

The competition among universities and between the public and private sectors has had significant effects because of tuition revenues. McLendon (2004) and Caboni (2004) both carried out case studies on three Kazakhstani HEIs: the Kazakh National Technical University; East Kazakhstan State University; and Kainar University. McLendon in his study on HE governance and finance reform in Kazakhstan evaluates reform challenges in four specific areas: "faculty salaries, academic labor markets and corruption; university finance, student financial aid, and college access; state regulation of campus financial and administrative operations; and curriculum and academic programme development" (2004, p.277). He claimed that curricular choices have expanded and that universities have begun to offer new specialties to the Ministry of Education (McLendon, 2004, p.286). All educational reforms of the 1990s represented a significant increase in the autonomy of universities from the Ministry of

Education (McLendon, 2004, p.290). Despite these positive signs, the rapidly increased tuition fees reduced access to education for students from poor families. The exception was Kainar University, a private institution that reduced its tuition fees in order to remain economically competitive with public institutions (Caboni, 2004, p.300).

Heyneman (2010, p.77) argued further that curriculum relevance is a "continual problem" particularly for institutions in a market economy, but not for post-Soviet countries. In post-Soviet countries, the educational organisation was in many cases influenced by employers whereby curriculum relevance was not identified as a significant issue. Budgets and statistics were managed by ministers and consequently institutions could not allocate resources or improve their effectiveness (Heyneman, 2010, p.77).

Since 1992, Kazakhstan officials have focused on the creation of new higher education programmes and a national curriculum in Kazakh language, which has been recognised as an official state language. The number of Kazakh-language schools has increased and new textbooks in the Kazakh language have been published (Zhanabayeva & Isatayeva, 2004, p.245). The problem here was the lack of Kazakh-speaking teachers and professors. Thus, universities have started to teach the Kazakh language and literature as part of a "second degree" programme (Abilov, 2004, p.320).

At the HEIs that were established after independence, academic programmes are mainly taught in English. These include the Kazakhstani Institute of Management, Economics and Strategic Research under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (KIMEP 1992), the University of International Business (UIB 1992) in Almaty, the Kazakh American University (KAU 1997), the International Academy of Business (IAB 1996),

Suleiman Demirel University (SDU 1996), the University of Central Asia (UCA 2000), the Kazakh-British Technical University (KBTU 2001) and Nazarbayev University (NU) (Pak, 2010).

Even universities that were established during the Soviet era have launched education programmes in English for bachelor's and master's degree levels. Universities such as Al-Farabi Kazakh National University and Ablai-Khan Kazakh University of International Relations and World Languages which were established in 1941 have instituted English-language degree programmes (Pak, 2010). The Kazakh State University named after Kirov was established in 1934 and after in 1991 it gained the name Al-Farabi. The Kazakh State University signed agreements on cooperation with 46 universities in Asia, Europe, Africa and the United States. The most efficient collaboration was on the basis of free bilateral exchanges (Naribayev, 2013, p.337).

A representative from the British Council mentioned that it is one of the founding partners of the Kazakh-British Technical University; and that its representatives continue to sit on the university's board. Moreover, the British Council also worked with the Kazakh National University (KazNU). He said:

"We've had varying relations over the years; we've been here for 20 years, and we've changed, and the sector has changed, so, we were really one of the founding partners for KBTU, and we still sit on their board.... We've done quite a lot of work with English teachers within universities and language faculties. I'm also doing some work with the pedagogical universities in terms of their training of future teachers of English...we work with some other universities as well" (Int.18).

Drawing on the theme regarding the search for ideas KIMEP was one of the first universities modelled on the North American system of higher education. One local expert explained

the reason why Kazakhstan had chosen the American model first. He said:

"We [Kazakhstan] selected the American model, because America is the 'father' of the credit system, American universities were the first to start using this system, and then Europe. The second is that the American model is simpler, more democratic and more comfortable in all respects - organisationally and in terms of planning and the implementing, it is easy to understand..." (Int.41).

One university staff member expressed the view that the challenge for KIMEP was different from that of some of the other local universities, because other local HEIs were transitioning from being in the Soviet system (Int.11). She said that the Soviet system had remained while at the same time there were initiatives to transfer it into the Bologna Process. She mentioned that there is a Soviet-style Kazakhstani higher educational system co-existing within KIMEP, which exercises a lot of influence (Int.11). She added that notwithstanding the influence of the Soviet system within the university it still operates under the North American system and the Bologna Process. She explained this situation by stating the following:

"... this is very complicated. ... basically, it is like, you have KIMEP; KIMEP is situated, modelled after North American universities, but [simultaneously] it is situated now within the Kazakhstani higher education system... we've been historically situated in being modelled after the North American model, that's also complicated, because the North American system is different from Bologna" (Int.11).

On the one hand, there are Kazakhstani style universities; and on the other, there is the Bologna Process. One member of the academic staff of KIMEP continued her critique of the status of Kazakhstan's educational reforms:

"... the Kazakh National University (KazNU), you have Bologna, and you have the Ministry, and this is just KazNU. So, it just makes it more complicated, because then, when you multiply

this by administration, then...teaching, university autonomy, student mobility – you know, there are all these different areas that now have to go through so much more [reforms], so many more [changes]...” (Int.11).

KIMEP works under the Ministry of Education (MoE) and follows its higher education requirements. Later, the MoE itself was trying to implement the Bologna Process, which was a slow process (Int.11). The difficulty was that the university had to align itself to the Bologna Process, while simultaneously aligning itself to the North American system. At the same time KIMEP is under the auspices of Kazakhstan’s higher education system (Int.11). One interviewee compared this situation to a daughter-in-law:

“Well, [as] the daughter-in-law, [according to local custom] you have lots of people telling you what you should be doing and you are at the bottom of the totem pole” (Int.11).

The process of globalisation and international integration pushed the Kazakhstani HEIs to ensure the integration of young people into the international education system. This was the reason for introducing new programmes for the bachelor’s and master’s degrees, which replaced five-year “specialist” degrees at Kazakhstani universities (Abilov, 2004, p.318; Kurilla, 2013, p.2). Due to the reforms in higher education, in conjunction with the bachelor’s programmes, new master’s programmes were introduced in 1993 (the Law on Education 1993, as cited in Pak, 2010). The reason was that these degrees existed in Kazakhstan before the reforms and had no equivalents in the European educational systems.

In 1994, there was an agreement on the recognition of degrees between the post-Soviet countries. It stated that all degrees and qualifications would be recognised within the post-Soviet area, regardless of which country awarded the degree.

For example, many students have been sent to internships from Russia to Kazakhstan (Int.8). As an example of the changes in the higher education system after independence, a professor commenting on her own experience noted:

"This is my diploma, a PhD in the Soviet system. The diploma of a *kandidat nauk* (a candidate of sciences) which was awarded to me in 1995 from the Kazakh National University. Currently, I am working as a full professor with a PhD degree [It is equivalent to a doctor of sciences in the Soviet system]... Those candidates who defended their viva in the 1990s automatically became full professors. [In contrast] nowadays PhD researchers have to work 5 years, publish their monograph, and then will they be awarded the post of assistant professor (Ministry of Education and Science) and the title - full professor. Within this period (1990-1996) all *kandidat nauk* who passed their viva were awarded a PhD. We defended during the Soviet system, but got a Western PhD, which was given by the Kazakh National University [in 1995]" (Int.8).

One of the reasons why Kazakhstan joined the Bologna Declaration was so that degrees obtained in the former Soviet Union would be internationally recognised (Pak, 2010). For instance, according to Pak (2010):

"... a 5-year specialist diploma of the Soviet system equals a master's diploma in some countries such as Sweden; but in other Scandinavian countries, it equals only to a bachelor's diploma. While, in some countries, it was not even recognised as a higher education document".

A *kandidat nauk* degree is not equally treated in various countries. In some countries this degree equals a master's degree, while in others the degree is equivalent to a PhD (Pak, 2010). In order to avoid this disagreement in which local scholars who obtained degrees during the Soviet Union would be recognised equally by scholars from other countries, it was necessary for the newly-independent Kazakhstan to integrate into the European educational community. Such an initiative would give its scholars a chance to be recognisable abroad and

avoid any restriction on mobility and employability (Pak, 2010). Consistent with the need for mobility, Kazakhstan created a unit linked to the Bolashak programme that is charged with the implementation of the Bologna Process in Kazakhstan (Int.32). A local senior professor stated:

“It is a very good point, within the Bolashak programme framework academic staff have the opportunity to do an internship not only for 4 months, but even 9 months... [those] who wants 3 months, 6 or even up to one-year [can] live abroad in order to improve their qualification skills significantly ” (Int.9).

During this period, the implementation of the Bolashak programme initiated by the President of Kazakhstan has provided an opportunity for young people to gain knowledge abroad (Int.32; 36). The title ‘Bolashak’, means ‘future’ in Kazakh language. The Bolashak scholarship was established by Presidential Decree in 1993. Since its inception in 1993, 11,126 Kazakhstani citizens have been granted Bolashak scholarships to study in the 200 top universities throughout 33 countries. At the VIIIth International Going Global Conference in Miami in 2014, the Bolashak scholarship was named among the top 11 international academic mobility programmes (International Programmes Center, n.d.).

With the increase in international contact with other countries, there was a necessity in Kazakhstan for new employees with new skills, particularly with a Western education. Therefore, the mobility programme Bolashak was introduced in order to send youth abroad to study in the top HEIs (Int.32; 36). One interviewee, who has experience in promoting mobility combined with international expertise emphasised that:

“Kazakhstan is a world leader in the way it has invested in mobility through the Bolashak programme, through some of the mobility programmes that the Ministry of Education has set up.

And, I think, if you look at other countries, they envy it, the amount of investment that the government has put in supporting mobility. It's interesting when we were dealing with the Bologna Center here [in Astana], and they were saying one of the challenges is that they get a lot of outward mobility, clearly, with things like Bolashak, and also families who were financing themselves, but they want to re-address the balance and have more inward [mobility]. ... Kazakhstan, I think, has done fantastically well in having the ambition to make international education a really normal thing, and in investing in allowing people to do that" (Int.18).

From 1993 to 1995, there was a conceptual review of educational content at all levels including higher education. The Law on Education (1993) and the State standard of higher education document (1994) adopted the bachelor's and master's degree programmes. The main priorities of these documents were the introduction of new standards, and changes in the content of higher education (Pak, 2010).

Between 1996 and 1997, a series of legal documents were drafted which formally incorporated a conceptual revision within the content of education. This period witnessed the commencement of the implementation of long-term state programmes in two strategic areas: new textbooks; and the computerisation of the education system. These processes facilitated the management and financial decentralisation of the educational system which began with the diversification of the types of academic institutions and forms of ownership (UNDP, 2004, p.36). There was also a change in the system of education management. The Ministry of Higher and Secondary Education and the Ministry of Education were replaced by the Ministry of Education and Science; while structural changes within the Ministry occurred over the course of independence (Zhanabayeva & Isatayeva, 2004, p.244) according to the literature, whereby in 1996, the Ministry of Education and Science still had control over

the majority of Kazakhstani universities (McLendon, 2004, p.279).

1997-2001: The identification of actors

Educational development has been one of the major priorities of state policy. Reforms in the education sector were specifically identified in the country's strategic document, *Kazakhstan 2030: Prosperity, Security and Improvement of the Well-Being of all Kazakh Citizens* (1997). The document indicates that "health, education and the well-being of citizens" are the key components of human development, besides market-based economic growth, the effective use of energy resources and the development of updated infrastructure (Akorda, 1997). This strategic priority was implemented by increasing the population's access to quality education at all levels (UNDP, 2004, p.19).

The Bolashak programme demonstrated the state's commitment to educational reform and was implemented effectively through state policy. When the strategic document *Kazakhstan-2030* (1997) was presented by the Head of the State, amendments were proposed to the Bolashak programme to ensure effective implementation of the goals and objectives of the strategic document (International Programmes Center, n.d.). The main issue that needed to be solved was in the areas and sectors for future study. From 1994 to 1997, scholarships were granted primarily to those graduates who had their local degrees in the humanities and economics. In contrast, there were far fewer international scholarships given to graduates in engineering and other technical fields. Language courses and skills programmes were taught less to those graduates than their peers in the humanities and economics. Initially the Bolashak programme consisted of four main countries, the USA, the UK, Germany and France, where Kazakhstani scholars had been

studying. However, over time, due to cooperation with different universities from other parts of the world, the number of countries was increased. Moreover, there were amendments to the selection rules of the applicants who were given the chance to study abroad on a self-paid basis, which also increased the number of countries where Kazakhstani students were pursuing their studies (International Programmes Center, n.d.). In 1997, the regulations of the Bolashak scholarship were developed and approved by Presidential Decree, which controlled the procedures of the application process, the selection of the candidates and the employment duties mainly at the public authorities and civil organisations upon graduation.

Kazakhstan is a bilingual country. The Kazakh language is spoken by 64.4% of the population and it has the status of the state language. Yet, Russian is spoken by almost all Kazakhstani people (Pak, 2010). According to one of the local experts, the main barrier of the implementation of the Bologna Process might be the language. She said:

"I would say, still not knowing exactly that perhaps it was the language barrier to the introduction of the Bologna Process in Kazakhstan as all the documentation was presented in English [and not in Russian or Kazakh which are the main spoken languages in Kazakhstan] ..." (Int.9).

Since 1997 the country has set the goal to be a trilingual state in which the English language has been elevated to the status of being a counterpart to Kazakh and Russian. The introduction of English became official policy in the state programme *Kazakhstan-2030* (1997) which set forth the following:

"Our young state will grow up and gain in strength, our children and grandchildren will grow up with it... They will be prepared to work in contemporary market economy conditions... They will

equally well master Kazakh, Russian and English" (as cited in Pak, 2010).

As part of the country's overall structural reform, the decision to move the capital from Almaty to Astana (Akmola) was announced by the President officially in 1997. Many civil servants, and academic staff from higher education institutions in Almaty, moved to the new capital. Due to the internal mobility, the new capital needed new policy reforms. One university professor who moved to the new capital examined that situation as follows:

"I arrived in the capital, Astana, in 1998. We started to build a new capital, and I was transferred from the Kazakh State University to the Eurasian National University (ENU). Since the new capital was newly-built, we needed new ideas and initiatives in education" (Int.8).

The development of the legal and regulatory framework of the education system was influential upon the reforms. For example, the Law on Education (1999) "determined the structure of the national education model, increased the independence of institutions, and fixed the constitutional principle of mandatory and free secondary education" (UNDP, 2004, p.20).

At the same time, many official documents related to the education sector were issued which determined the key priorities in the development of higher education for the long - and medium-term. Examples of these official and strategic documents are: The Law on Education (1999); National Programme on Education (2000); and the 2010 Education Development Strategy (2001) (UNDP, 2004, p.36).

The Law on Education (1999) defined "the criteria for quality education within the framework of the requirements of the State's obligatory standard of education-the State Standard" (Article 6 of the Law taken from Medeuov, 2004, p.358).

According to this Law, there are three types of HEIs: “national and state universities established by the State; private institutions under the ownership of individual persons or groups of individuals; and international universities, established in collaboration with partners from abroad” (Abilov, 2004, p.313). Abilov claims that all three types of universities work under the same conditions (2004, p.313); however the types of HEIs have been changed, which will be discussed in the following sections in detail.

The process of formal integration into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) started in 1997 when Kazakhstan ratified the Lisbon Convention and became a member of the European educational community. The Lisbon Convention on the recognition of academic qualifications came into force in February 1999 and was issued in 1997 when 33 European countries joined. This Convention governed the recognition of qualifications concerning Higher Education in Europe that was adopted under the joint sponsorship of the Council of Europe and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

In Kazakhstan, the educational programmes were characterised by significant differences between European universities regarding the recognition of graduate degrees, in the application of the European credit transfer system (ECTS) and quality assurance. The Lisbon Convention (1997) facilitated and helped the process of the mutual recognition of qualifications between Kazakhstan and other participating countries. In many post-Soviet countries, there had been much misinterpretation and confusion between the former Soviet degrees such as the 5-year specialist, a *kandidat nauk* (candidate of sciences) and *doktor nauk* (doctor of sciences), and the newly-introduced bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees which was discussed in

detail in the previous section. As a result, there were many problems in the recognition of qualifications encountered by students, researchers and other academic staff who were actively participating in academic mobility including Bolashak scholars (Int.3). Moreover, there were few administrative mechanisms to compare the newly-offered degree programmes with those of the previous system. For example, one interviewee from a post-communist country described the process of applying for her master's programme. She was asked to explain her qualifications and degree:

"I applied to the College of Europe for my master's degree and I had to show my credits and had to write a one page letter explaining that I do not have any credits to show because at that time when I was graduating [Armenia] was not part of the Bologna Process. I had to explain that I have studied certain hours of specific subjects and if these could be translated into credits Fortunately, now students do not have any such problems with this issue. If I was studying after [Armenia] had joined the Bologna Process, I think I would not have had such problems. It was difficult to explain that I am a specialist. What is a specialist? I am not a bachelor and I am not a master's degree graduate. I have studied for 5 years. That was the problem. Due to the structural reforms, I had some complications in explaining my diploma and qualifications. Why should I?" (Int.26).

On May 25, 1998, the education ministers from France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom signed the Sorbonne joint declaration on the harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education. Those ministers met and outlined the idea of integration to the common European educational area (Int.27). According to one national expert, the right ideas and principles were laid as the basis of the integration of education in Europe (Int.27). The purpose of the Sorbonne Declaration was to establish a common European area of higher education, which could facilitate improvements in the quality of training and the

professional skills of the staff, of whom would be producing material goods to the European economy (Int.17).

In the same period, there were integration initiatives in the Central Asian region and among the CIS. International and national experts who were authors of the UNDP report (2004) claimed that the reforms in Kazakhstan should be adapted while modifying the requirements of the Lisbon Convention to preserve Kazakhstan's unique characteristics. This process could be initiated via developing Eurasian education standards within the Eurasian economic community. According to UNDP experts, it would not be the most suitable approach for Kazakhstan to blindly adopt or copy other educational systems. Therefore, their conclusion in the UNDP report was that Kazakhstan should take from both the old and the new systems to create the most effective model that would be adapted to the conditions and requirements of the country (UNDP, 2004, p.19).

One of the main steps to CIS education integration was the 1999 Convention on Cooperation and Integration of Universities of the CIS countries (Naribayev, 2013, p.341). According to one national expert, the CIS states have similarities in their higher education systems due to their common legacy. Therefore the CIS countries had all opportunities for integration. He stated:

"'Education area' became a popular term in education theory. The notion appeared among the CIS countries due to their similarities in higher education, which allowed education scholars to reasonably argue that despite the fact that all national education systems have differences, the CIS states had opportunities for comparability, integration and cooperation based on a common legacy. Mainly because of a single advanced system in the world which was the Soviet education" (Naribayev, 2013, p.341).

In 2000, the first international conference 'Universities and Society: the cooperation of universities in the turn of the century' of the CIS countries was held at Moscow State

University. Local scholar and expert Kupzhasar Naribayev, made a speech and suggested that academics should organise workshops or so-called 'visit universities' (2013, p.344). The idea of such 'visit universities' was centred on universities based across the education area of the CIS and would take into account the regional and scientific peculiarities and traditions. The CIS countries and the Baltic States universities' association in its Convention on cooperation and integration of universities' (1999) framework could provide financial cooperation to this idea. Annual contributions by each university member of the Eurasian Association and signatory university of the Convention could be used to organise international and national conferences (CIS and the Baltic countries) along with the publication and distribution of conference materials (Naribayev, 2013, pp.344-345). But this proposed idea and initiative did not come into practice as many other.

In 2000, the state grant was launched by two universities: the Kazakh National University (KazNU) and the Eurasian National University (ENU). The grant was created for the implementation of the Bologna Process including the introduction of master's degree programmes in both universities. These two universities were chosen on an experimental basis. A professor from the ENU said that they were working on that project and allocating approximately USD \$2 million in funding (Int.8). On the selection process of the universities for the pilot introduction one interviewee said:

"Universities were not selected; the system was introduced. If we are talking about the transition to the three-level degree system, it is written in the state programme" (Int.5).

After independence, the education sector did not secure sufficient funding from the central government, because other

sectors of the economy needed greater restructuring after the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, 2001 was marked as the year when funding in education increased by KZT 19.3 billion (UNDP, 2004, p.20). This was a major step in allowing a systematic approach to the implementation of the State programmes in education. Moreover, the medium-term State programme on education for 2000-2005 was officially approved by Presidential Decree in 2000 (UNDP, 2004, p.36). The President stated at the Third Congress of Education and Science Professionals that Kazakhstan had begun a new stage of development when it allowed for the resolution of numerous problems in different areas of life including education. The economic growth of the country required financial investments, and to a greater extent it required intellectual investments (UNDP, 2004, p.20).

2002-2006: Policy learning

In 2002, Kazakhstan made the first step to adopt the principles of the Bologna Process to its educational system. These reforms occurred at the institutional level in universities and higher education institutions as they started to test the Bologna Process principles (Int.41). Even before the official signing of the Bologna Declaration, the Ministry of Education and Science initiated the process of transition from post-Soviet education to the modern one. All national experts, administrative and academic staff who were responsible for the education sector started to learn from the experience of those countries where higher education and science were the most advanced. According to one ministry official, the initiative was taken by the universities through the establishment of a working group comprising representatives from Kazakhstani universities in response to a directive from the Ministry of Education. The task

of the working group was to develop the parameters of the universities' credit programme (Int.41). The working group was established by the order of the Minister of Education and Science, and consisted of representatives from the Kazakh Architecture and Construction Academy (KazSACA), Kazakh Economic University named after Ryskulov, the ENU, KazNU, Taraz State University, Private University Miras, and Karaganda State University (KarSU). There were 10 members who represented those HEIs in the working group. The initiative of the participation in the working group was taken by the universities. Initially, the participating universities started to test the credit system whereby the Ministry of Education conducted the monitoring process (Int.41).

The Ministry of Education did not organise any seminars for the members of the working group in 2002 and 2003. But one of the members of this group claimed that the KazSACA rector organised a university-sponsored trip abroad for his academic and administrative staff. They studied the experience of 50 foreign universities implementing the credit system. The seminars and lessons had taken place not just in Europe, but also in the USA and in Asia (Int.41). Thus, inspiration was taken from the experiences of different continents.

Two representatives from the Ministry argue that such terms as the Office of the Registrar, advisers, tutors, and teachers' guidance on students' independent work, were not inherent to the educational system in Kazakhstan and that such lexicon was not previously used in the educational system. All these terms were copied and implemented in practice after exploring them through foreign experience. Some disharmony existed between regulations, acts, and laws (Int.4; 41), which occurred when the working group was developing its first

'Framework Parameters' document with respect to the credit system. One member of that working group argued:

"We debated, discussed, somewhere agreed or not... At that time I had studied the credit system only through foreign publications and translated literature, etcetera. There were a group of people, who went abroad and saw with their own eyes, and we argued with them, as they wanted to introduce some things, but I think any system has its own characteristics, national characteristics, mental level, there is a lot of things [were discovered in discussing different systems and their pros and cons]" (Int.41).

The interviewee explained the reason why a majority of the working group selected the American model:

"The American model is simpler... and in terms of planning and the implementing, it is easy to understand. The US credit is much stronger and heavier than the European one, because according to the American model, 120 credits are enough to obtain a bachelor's degree, but these 120 credits are equal to 240 European credits. This suggests that American credit is stronger, where one American credit is equal to two European ones" (Int.41).

According to an external expert, it was difficult to get an agreement and support at some levels of management, as well as within individual institutions, because it was quite hard to engage with a system that differs from the old one (Int.34; 15). This meant real changes to former practices, former decision-making processes, and former patronage systems within institutions (Int.18).

Since the 2002-2003 academic year, universities have introduced the credit technology as an experiment. The current representative of the Ministry of Education mentioned that he worked at the National Centre of State Educational Standards and Testing where he and his colleagues developed the first 'Framework Parameters' document on the credit system. The universities first implemented the American credit system, then they moved to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)

(Int.10; 4). The American credit system was very clear for the local educational community (Int.9). Perhaps, it was an additional burden for the universities and the academic staff (Int.4; 15).

"We tried to introduce it in full force, but somewhere it was simply mechanical copying. This is my personal opinion" said Interviewee 4.

Another national expert, who was also engaged with the national reforms in education, had the same opinion (Int.9). Later, the credit system was adapted to the national Kazakhstani system (Int.4; 11; 15; 9). An international expert, who has first-hand teaching experience in one of the Kazakhstani HEIs tried to explain the credit system employed at Kazakhstani universities. She considered it "a unique situation to be in", and outlined the practical and philosophical difficulties associated with the ECTS (Int.11). She explained that, for practical reasons, Kazakhstan was moving towards a system under which one hour of contact time would be counted as a learning hour. She explained how such a system would ease the return to Kazakhstan of students who had been on a study abroad exchange in Europe. Although the compromise represents an adjustment to the established European system, it did help institutions such as KIMEP, which currently use the American *modus operandi*, to come closer to the ECTS model. She said:

"You are just kind of trying to make the correlation between 1 [US credit] to 1 [ECTS]. So, it's like the Kazakhstani system, and then Bologna" (Int. 11).

The experts in the Ministry adapted the credit system and introduced the so-called Kazakhstan credits, which differed somewhat from US credits. The difference was in the amount of hours per one credit for the bachelor's, master's and PhD

programmes (Int.9). Kazakhstani credit consists of three components: class hours, independent work of bachelor's and master's degree students under the supervision of professors and a student's independent work. The expert, who was involved in the process of adaptation, states that the US did not have these components. According to him:

"That was the credit system of Kazakhstan. Experience shows that it is possible to make it easier. Probably, I think that in the next few years we will fully move to the ECTS, as Kazakhstan has joined the Bologna Process" (Int.9).

As outlined above, during the period between 2002 and 2004, the higher education system gradually transferred to a system of credits. The process began by transforming the existing educational system into credits; first at some universities on an experimental basis and then ultimately the credit system was instituted into all of Kazakhstan's HEIs. The government pursued the programme of introducing the credit system at all HEIs. From the three cycle system of bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees, mainly it was master's programme that started to be introduced at the HEIs (Int.17). One of first universities in Kazakhstan that started to adopt the three cycle system was the Eurasian National University (ENU) (Int.14). The reason for this is that it was set to grow into Kazakhstan's leading higher education institution in the country's new capital Astana and was established in 2002. "East Kazakhstan University was the first regional university that introduced the bachelor's degree programme" said one of the interviewees, who had administrative experience at that university (Int.17).

According to a local expert who was engaged in this process of learning, many lessons at that time were taken from the experiences of the USA (Int.9). On that pointed he argued:

"We have studied their three-level system of higher education: bachelor's, master's and PhD programmes. They [USA colleagues] applied the credit technology. The credit technology for the post-Soviet higher education was completely unknown and unnecessary. As a technical university we were interested in the process of the transition of higher education to a four-year bachelor's degree programme and the use of credit technology. We have studied the experience of the USA through the literature. However, we decided to see the experience of the Europeans. We went to Sweden in 2003 and decided to learn from their experience" (Int.9).

The four vice-rectors responsible for academic affairs from the four technical universities went to Sweden to learn about the three-level degree system. Sweden is a technologically well-developed country and therefore the experts were interested in the Swedish experience (Int.9). After their trip, they found that they could not prepare an engineer during a period of four years, which was a bachelor's degree programme. Kazakhstan's system differs from foreign systems, such as in Poland and Sweden, as in the Kazakhstan system there is a large volume of general subjects such as the history of Kazakhstan, languages, the basics of economics, and the basics of health and safety. Given this environment, technical universities in Kazakhstan introduced the profession-oriented master's programme (1-1.5 years). The programme includes all major subjects that are required for a student to study to then become a 'normal engineer', but excludes research (Int.9). There was another master's programme for those who wanted to conduct research or teach. The model for the programmes was taken from the US experience. The experts provided their proposals to the Ministry and received official support in 2004. Thus, a four-year bachelor's degree programme, and later, a five-year bachelor's programme were introduced into Kazakhstani technical universities. Those who were studying in the six-year bachelor's programme were transferred to a five-year programme; and

those who were studying five years were transferred to a four-year programme. The profession-oriented and research-teaching programmes and PhD programmes were also introduced at the technical universities (Int.9).

Another example was given by a state official, who has been the head of one university in the past and learnt lessons from Germany:

"In 2003, I was invited to a conference at a German university in Berlin. I briefly presented to them what we were doing so they could share their experience. The first problem was the necessity to accredit our programmes 10 specialties in one of the most prestigious accreditation agencies, the Engineering German Agency. I met with the Agency President and said "let's see what we have", so that we could have an exchange. ... We need to know what your opinion is. They had very little information about Kazakhstan at that time... We said that we had oriented towards Europe, especially our President. ...we need to be with European countries, to develop the economy, education... We are an Asian country but we should be close to Europe" (Int.17).

The third example related to policy learning and its effect on the possibilities on how to apply the Bologna Process. One interviewee, who was engaged in the process of Kazakhstan entering into the EHEA from the beginning, argued:

"We signed the Bologna Declaration. It was a long and difficult process. I was there at the beginning, in 2003 when I participated at a conference in St. Petersburg (Russia), which was conducted by the Russian accreditation agency. I talked on this subject in detail to the chief executive of an independent body that checks on the standards and quality in higher education [UK] and he spoke about how you [new members] should apply to be involved in the Bologna Process. Well, after I arrived from that trip, I started to do this work, and looked for the website [official website of the Bologna Process and other official sources]. The secretariat established materials and invitations to be prepared before the next ministerial conference took place. At this time, I do not remember exactly, it was before the London conference (Int.5).

In 2003, the next ministerial conference of the member-countries of the Bologna Process was held in Berlin, where the Berlin Communiqué was adopted. This document clearly specifies that European countries may join the Bologna Process at their discretion while non-European countries must ratify the European Cultural Convention (1954). The Berlin Communiqué states:

“Ministers consider it necessary to adapt the clause in the Prague Communiqué on applications for membership as follows: Countries party to the European Cultural Convention shall be eligible for membership of the European Higher Education Area provided that they at the same time declare their willingness to pursue and implement the objectives of the Bologna Process in their own systems of higher education. Their applications should contain information on how they will implement the principles and objectives of the declaration” (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2003, p.8).

Given the provisions of the Berlin Communiqué, the entry of a non-European country into the Bologna Process was predicated upon the signing of the the 1954 Cultural Convention. According to state officials and national experts, this request was an obstacle for Kazakhstan (Int.41; 10; 5), which will be discussed in Chapter 6 in more detail.

Kazakhstan has been working on joining the Bologna Process since 2005 and this was approved by the Kazakhstani government in 2004 through the main strategic documents: the State Programme of Education Development for 2005-2010, and the Concept of the Development of Education until 2015 (Zakirova et al., 2009, p.33; Ministry of Education, 2010a, p.1). The documents outline the strategic directions for reforming the higher education system according to European standards (Ministry of Education, 2009a).

In 2004, Taraz State University (TarSU) became the pilot for the implementation of the Bologna Process in Kazakhstan.

TarSU was selected to implement the credit technology by the order of the Ministry and became the experimental platform for the introduction of credit technology. TarSU staff members travelled to the United States and studied the experience of the University of Indiana. One interviewee, who at that time the deputy dean for academic issues, acknowledged that at the beginning there was an attempt to adopt the American system of the credit education technology; however, it was decided later to use the European standards:

"This experiment lasted for two years. We were directly involved in this, and in 2006, the credit system was introduced in all universities in the country" (Int.2).

The interviewee reported that there were no seminars or workshops organised by the international experts (Int.5). Instead, conferences were held regularly in different universities in order to sign the documents (Int.5). Many agreements were signed between the universities and many contracts were concluded with various accreditation agencies.

The adoption of a uniform system of academic credit and academic mobility are requirements of the Bologna Process. The programme on the invitation of foreign professors was adopted in 2004, and the previously mentioned programme on academic mobility of students, the Bolashak programme, was introduced. Thus, Kazakhstan, to some extent, had already implemented those principles of the Bologna Process without any signed official documents. Therefore according to a national expert who was a member of the BFUG working group, "we had to get the official status of the Bologna Process member-country" (Int.32).

The country had already achieved a two-cycle degree consisting of both a bachelor's programme and a master's programme; a credit system in the national curricula for the

academic mobility of students and researchers; and a strategic document for the development of higher education until 2015 (UNDP, 2004, p.19). Thus, before officially joining the Bologna Process in 2010, Kazakhstan had already been implementing some of the Bologna principles such as academic mobility, credit units, three cycle education and diploma supplement (Int.2; 32).

The strategic educational documents of the country defined a new role for the state in the development of the educational system. The development of the education system was “a guarantor of national security, future economic, intellectual and social prosperity, and further democratic development of the country” (UNDP, 2004, p.20).

During the ‘policy learning’ period, there were several documents issued. The first document, *the Concept of Education Development until 2015*, was approved on 24 February 2004. It formulated a long-term strategy to reform the Kazakhstani education system until 2015. This document was instrumental in introducing the next stage of reforms in the educational system. Another document was the *National Education Development Programme until 2010*, which aimed to develop infrastructure and set up the funding of the education system (UNDP, 2004, p.36).

These state initiatives received positive feedback in the UNDP report, the authors of which claimed:

“A system of public grants and loans and the practice of centralized organization and public certification of entrance exams were bravely adopted from the experience of developed countries and quickly demonstrated tangible advantages” (UNDP, 2004, p.20).

The main priorities of the Laws of Education included the innovation processes in the education system:

- “creating a national system of providing education quality on the basis of monitoring results;

- bringing the national education system in the line with international standards;
- establishing an institute of public evaluation, forming an integrated information and education environment;
- connecting to the global telecommunications network and the Internet; and
- increasing the social status of education professionals” (UNDP, 2004, p.36).

In 2005, PhD programmes were launched at KazNU and ENU (Int.14). At the beginning of 2004, only seven national universities were given the right to convey PhDs on an experimental basis. At that time, there was a three cycle degree system in Kazakhstan: a bachelor’s degree, a master’s degree and PhD. Later these degrees were issued in the Law on Education in 2007 (Int.4). Meanwhile, in an effort to increase overall staff mobility, the visiting foreign professors programme which had been introduced the previous year, gradually expanded and was supported by the Ministry (Int.15; 32).

In 2005, the Ministry conducted training seminars, regarding the credit technology referred to as ‘republican’ training seminars annually across the country. They were conducted at the level of rectors, provosts for research, and directors of academic departments, deans, and heads of departments. The Ministry of Education also developed a special programme defining speakers who could deliver lectures at these seminars. One interviewee who was involved in organising those seminars said:

“For example, one speaker presented the academic process planning in detail, on how to manage the teaching process, and how to plan an individual curriculum. Another topic was on the process of arranging the teaching process, from registering academic disciplines to the process of teaching, i.e., themes were quite different depending on the audience. If the theme was related to planning, heads of the departments would attend, because they were responsible for planning, etc. If it was on the educational process, it was attended by the dean of the faculty. We trained almost all universities” (Int.41).

For the local universities the transition to the credit system was complicated (Int.41). The transition to a three-level degree system and adoption of academic qualifications were performed at the regulatory level. Standards adopted by the Ministry of Education such as quality assurance were dependent on the political will of the country, which did not require the universities' understanding (Int.41). In the case of credits, universities had to fully understand the credit technology. The reason for this was that it depended on the budget planning process and the process of arranging the academic activities (Int.41).

The first international accreditation system for Kazakhstan's higher educational programmes was instituted at South Kazakhstan University in 2006, where ten educational programmes were accredited. According to an interviewee who was working at the university in 2006:

"it was strange for people that somewhere in the south, not even national universities like KazNU or ENU, got accreditation" (Int.17).

A delegation comprising of representatives from German universities and foreign corporations visited Kazakhstan twice, as introductory trips. One interviewee described it as follows:

"It was the first accreditation in Kazakhstan. We were very worried, and we were seriously prepared for this, because the Commission was very authoritative. There were experts, professors of chemistry from various European universities, mostly German. Employers who attended were British Petroleum, Simons, representatives of Kazakhstani chemical industry 'Kazphosphate', the water industry and mechanical engineering. It was such an authoritative commission, [so that] the entire [academic council] board of our university gathered. For one hour and 40 minutes I had been asked questions such as how were you [the HEIs in Kazakhstan] funding, what percentage went to science and so on. About our [the university] assessment we provided the documents to them. Later they went and talked with the academic staff [of the

university] by themselves, and read the diploma projects which were written in Russian and English" (Int.17).

The university organised English language instruction for its staff members who were mainly English teachers. They were released for four months from their teaching responsibilities and studied English at the expense of the university. One interviewee who worked at the university commented:

"We [the administrative staff] oblige them, especially those departments that we were preparing for the accreditation, that they must have learnt English. Students are also prepared to learn the language" (Int.17).

The commission was surprised by the level of English skills of the academic staff and students during their talks with them (Int.17). After one week, the commission reported to the council of the university on both positive and negative aspects. Later the commission reported back to their council (in Germany), the body that confirms the accreditation of the programmes and makes decisions on these issues. In March 2006, another visit of international experts was held, and by the end of that June the university received a document that confirmed the decision of the Commission for the accreditation of ten programmes. Thus, it was the first accreditation in Kazakhstan. Later, the Kazakh National University (KazNU) also applied for the accreditation (Int.17).

According to one local expert, accreditation was not related to the Bologna Process. Yet, the Bologna Process has a requirement about mandatory quality assurance. She said that it can be performed at the national or international level, and that it is the choice of the university (Int.10). She described:

"At the international level the universities accredit their programmes, for example the South Kazakhstan University accredited seven [previous interviewee mentioned 10]

programmes at once. I had worked in the Kazakh University of Foreign Language for 9 years as the provost, and we applied for German Agency AKVAS. We conducted the accreditation of 12 programmes there in 2010-2011. Prior to this year, we prepared a lot of documents and all were in English. There was a lot of supporting documents needed" (Int.10).

2007: Decision process and external pressure

The decision-making process was facilitated by the release of the strategic document of the EU for Central Asia in 2007 which laid the foundation for the partnership of the European Union and Kazakhstan in different fields in economics, policy and humanities (Syzdykov, 2010; Zhaylin, 2009). Among the main interests and priorities in the policy pronouncement was reform in higher education. This strategic document had a significant impact on reforms in the higher education of Kazakhstan. Of particular importance was the transition of Central Asian countries to European standards, including the Bologna Process. According to the EU Strategy towards CA 2007-2013:

"... in the wake of the 2004 and 2007 enlargements, the EU has come closer to Central Asia, geographically, politically and economically, and intends to strengthen and deepen its relationship with Central Asian countries... an indicative budget of € 719 million has been kept to the region for the period 2007 and 2013" (Delegation of the European Union to Kazakhstan, n.d., p.3).

For the implementation of regional cooperation contemplated for Central Asia in 2007-2013 European investments were enhanced. As a result, the budget allocated for the EU to engage with the CA region was enhanced from €719 million to €750 million (Sadykova, 2012).

Kazakhstan's education system aimed to integrate itself into the European educational area officially several times. The first attempts to sign the Declaration were made in 2007, when the Minister of Education signed the application for consideration

of the Bologna Process membership (Int.5; 14). But Kazakhstan's application was refused. There were several reasons, first that Kazakhstan being an Asian country and thus non-European (Int.14) as well as not being a signatory country to the Cultural Convention (1954) (Int.5). As one of the interviewee claimed:

"... it is not a secret that the signing of this Declaration [Bologna] had to be held in 2007, but Kazakhstan was refused for formal reasons. We are an Asian country by 88%, only 12% consists of a European part, and this [the Bologna Process] is a united European Higher Education Area" (Int.14).

Many laws were revised at the national level due to the requirement to adapt the educational system to a market economy. For instance, the Law on Education (1993, 1999) failed in its implementation and a new law was adopted (2007). The new Law on Education (July 2007) contained the basic principles for the national educational policy. It contained issues such as the transition to the credit system of education while the transition to a three-level education was adopted (Int.4). The pilot programme for the introduction of the credit system was determined by the Ministry. At the beginning, the credit system was implemented for economic specialties. Later it was adopted in the Law (2007). While the three cycle degree level was introduced in 2005, it was officially codified in the Law 2007 typified by its implementation at ENU. One state official said:

"It [the process of transformation to a three cycle degree level] began in 2007. The five-year specialist degree, the candidate of science and the doctor of science had dramatically changed. And afterwards, we did not have any understanding ourselves what a bachelor's degree was, what a bachelor's degrees should be? The degree must have met the requirements of the labour market" (Int.17).

Up until 2007, Kazakhstan had been actively developing regional co-operation in the field of higher education in which the Taraz Declaration represented a significant step. This came as a result of a seminar, where 17 rectors of Kazakhstani HEIs signed the Kazakhstani Universities Memorandum (Ministry of Education, 2009b). According to two local experts, it was not just about the signing, but it was an international symposium attended by many countries, including representatives of Europe and the General Secretary of the Observatory of the Magna Charter of the University (Int.4; 32). The Taraz Declaration has become the basis of Kazakhstan's entrance to the Bologna Process (Int.4). One former state official describes the importance of the Taraz declaration:

"This event in 2007 was noted as the event of the year on the online resource of the European Higher education area. All these presuppositions were the basis of the successful entry [to the Bologna Process] in 2010 when all 46 countries voted unanimously for Kazakhstan to become a signatory country" (Int.4).

One local expert evaluates the Taraz Declaration in the following:

"In 2007 a large number of Kazakhstani universities signed the declaration, rectors came, and one of the Minister's reasons was that regardless whether you were admitted or not, these principles were already being implemented in our country, and that these principles were adopted not only by the rector, but teachers and faculties were now guided by these principles. We talked about the fact that one of the principles is academic mobility. The programme on the invitation of foreign professors was adopted in 2004" (Int.32).

There were several joint programmes. A significant amount of funding was allocated to the initial project for the mobility of foreign professors and consultants (Int.8). Academic mobility was allocated 200 million tenge per year, which was increased to 500 million in the years to follow (Int.17). One academic staff

member of the university described the mobility grant for foreign professors:

"[Foreign professors and consultants] ... were teaching within three years and lecturing for two weeks period. Travel expenses to Kazakhstan, insurance and accommodation were provided for them. Our President has created all necessary conditions for foreign experts, worldwide there are no [such mobility programmes] where foreign professors are fully paid. This was a great impetus for the implementation of the Bologna Process [principles]. Without funding no one would come to Kazakhstan" (Int.8).

Active outside influence from the EU created the conditions for Kazakhstan to integrate into the European educational community. At the national and institutional levels, the country had also created important conditions for entry into the Bologna Process and made its first attempt to sign the Bologna Declaration. Thus, since 2007, Kazakhstan had started its preparation for the transition to the Bologna Process and towards the signing of the Bologna Declaration.

2008-2009: Pre-accession transfer period

The Working Group on the Bologna Process of the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Education undertook a two-year preparation period commencing in 2008. The Working Group visited Kazakhstan twice, in 2008 and then in 2009. During the Working Group's first visit to Kazakhstan, almost all members arrived including the Director of the Department of Higher Education of the Council of Europe, Sjur Bergan (Int.41). The Ministry's officials introduced the Kazakhstani system of higher education by presenting its advantages and achievements (Int.41). A member of the Working Group stated:

"... my colleagues and I have been in Kazakhstan a number of times. We had two specific Bologna seminars prior to the accession. I was at the conference in Almaty organised by the

Ministry, and before that, the Council of Europe had held a joint programme, which was co-financed by the European Commission and the Council of Europe... during which a lot of heads of higher education institutions were present" (Int.36).

There were some international speakers and other participants, but most of the participants were from different higher education institutions in Kazakhstan (Int.36). The conference was held in Almaty at the Kazakh National University (KazNU). One of the participants and a representative of the Ministry stated:

"We conducted the presentation conference at KazNU and demonstrated that we were implementing all the principles of the Bologna Process: credit technology, academic mobility, quality assurance system, the implementation of a three-level training model and so on. The Working Group was immediately struck with our team spirit and were pleasantly surprised that we were far ahead of many European countries that were already in the Bologna Process" (Int.41).

This point supported Kazakhstan and helped it to gain positive written feedback about the fact that the country was ready to become a member of the Bologna Process (Int.41). Over the course of the two seminars that were conducted at the KazNU, the Minister of Education presented a political report and spoke about the system of education in general. The rectors of Kazakhstan's leading universities, where the principles of the Bologna Process were well implemented, addressed the progress that the reforms have made (Int.41). The representative of the Ministry of Education expressed his opinion about the selection of the universities that were presented in those seminars as follows:

"... it was important to present only those universities that would be able to show their readiness and willingness for [change towards] the Bologna Process" (Int.41).

The first visit of the members of the Working Group was funded by the European Commission and the Council of Europe (Int.36), while the second visit was financed by the Kazakhstani universities. The Ministry of Education asked the universities to pay and each university financed one member of the group, but the first time the Working Group members did so at their own expense, i.e. the Council of Europe sponsored them for that reason (Int.41). A participant of both seminars and a representative of the Ministry recalled:

"They [the Working Group members] came to see Kazakhstan, because they endlessly received our applications which were rejected, but we tirelessly wrote [applied], they could not understand why we wanted it [to join the Bologna Process] so much. Is everything so good? We [the Ministry of Education] had just written that we have this and that, please accept us. Later, they decided to check it, visited [the country] and saw them [reforms]" (Int.41).

A member of the Working Group further described:

"I was running several seminars, workshops, and conferences on what it means to implement the Bologna Process, and when it became very clear that there are strong intentions of Kazakhstan to join, ... so, we decided to organise one bigger seminar-conference, and I took the liberty then to invite key people, who would give support to Kazakhstan joining" (Int.38).

There were different institutions involved, like the European University Association, the Council of Europe, and the European Students Union, but also at that time there was a working group set up under the auspices of the Bologna follow-up group, which dealt with the external dimension – "basically, the influence of the Bologna Process outside Europe". Thus, key people were invited to the seminar (Int.38).

"Yeah, there were a lot of good statements and promises made from the Kazakh side, on what kind of reforms they would like to do. So, it took a while; I started this process back in 2008 with the Minister, so, finally we succeeded in 2010, when Kazakhstan

joined during the Budapest and Vienna ministerial summit” (Int.38).

The seminar focused on the meaning of the Bologna Process, what it would imply in terms of reforms and what kind of activities Kazakhstan would have to undertake, not only with respect to structural reforms, but also with issues related to the values and principles of the Bologna Process. One of the major issues discussed was the link between the Magna Charter and the Bologna Process focusing primarily on giving higher education institutions more autonomy. It was also about involving students in decision making. According to one international expert, there was some concern with the top-down approach insofar as student participation had not really been a significant part of the Kazakhstan HE system (Int.38). The external expert recounted issues that were discussed during those seminars:

“... these seminars and conferences were really designed to [explain], what it actually means, what kind of reforms are necessary. For example, when it comes to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, ECTS – how is this connected, or, what kind of reforms would have to be undertaken if you compare it with the Kazakhstani credit system. What does it mean to actually introduce learning outcomes? What kind of curricular reforms would have to happen? What does it imply... [to] design a national qualification system framework? What kind of changes should be made with regard to internal and external quality assurance” (Int.38).

In light of the importance of fully grasping the use and implementation of the credit technology, since 2008, the Ministry began to conduct seminars twice a year with the participation of almost every university in Kazakhstan. The Ministry of Education did not organise any business trips for the HEIs’s faculty members. The faculty members had been sent abroad for training by their universities. According to the representative of

the Ministry, Kazakhstan's regulatory/legislation framework has been constantly revised and improved upon (Int.41). After new ideas were received from the seminar participants, the regulatory framework was improved. These 'Framework Parameters' were initially developed in 2002 and revised in 2005; however, in practice, they had already been adopted as the rules for the organisation of the credit system. In 2008-09, they became known as the 'Guidelines and Instructions of the Organisation of the Educational Process on Credit Technology' (Int.41).

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the educational governance process based in the Ministry of Education (MoE) became a funding partner by playing that played a significant role in reforms. Heyneman claimed that four types of reforms were required: structural changes that entailed the transfer of HE out of the sectoral ministries; governance changes to make universities more independent while initiating high standards for public accountability; financial changes to diversify the sources of university revenue; and curriculum changes (2005, p.2). In post-communist countries, new governance and decision-making structures have made universities more autonomous (Varghese, 2009, p.11).

The establishment of NU in 2009 created the prototype of an international research university. According to the new model of HEI in Kazakhstan, each school and research centre of NU must have a foreign university partner. In 2010, NU together with University College London (UCL) launched a foundation programme analogous to that in London (Ministry of Education, 2011, p.66). Currently, the foreign partners of NU are some of the leading universities in the world, including (Ministry of Education, 2011, pp.65-66):

1. University College London (UK) – School of Engineering, Foundation Programme (from 2010 until 2015);
2. National University of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (Singapore) – Graduate School of Public Policy (ongoing);
3. Duke University (USA) – Graduate School of Business (ongoing);
4. University of Pennsylvania (USA) and Cambridge University (UK) – Graduate School of Education (ongoing);
5. University of Pittsburgh (USA) – School of Medicine (ongoing)
6. University of Warwick (UK) – Nazarbayev University Foundation Year Programme (ongoing) and others.

The establishment of a new international university in Central Asia constituted an additional step towards integration into the international educational community (Pak, 2010). Nazarbayev University, or Astana University, is a new university based in the country's capital. It is still the largest project presently adapting and implementing reforms in higher education. The opening ceremony took place with the participation of the President on 28 June, 2010. The construction began in 2007 after the annual message of the President to the people of Kazakhstan entitled *"Kazakhstan's Strategy of joining the world's 50 most competitive countries in the world"* (2006). He stated that "in order to create a unique academic environment in Astana we need to create a prestigious world-class university" (Nazarbayev University, 2010). It was planned that it would comprise the development of advanced research capacity, innovation in technology and industry (Nazarbayev University, 2010). This project was concerned a new model on the integration of teaching; research and industry; the mobility of academic and research staff from abroad; an exchange of students; and joint educational programmes accredited by the universities-partners.

During the annual address to the people “*A new decade-new economic growth-new opportunities*” in 2010, the President announced the establishment of three new research centres at the university: the Centre for Life Sciences; the Centre for Energy Research; and the Interdisciplinary Instrumentation Centre (Nazarbayev University, 2010).

There are different experts from abroad that serve as consultants in Kazakhstan’s efforts to establish a world class university in Central Asia. One of the consultants of the project is Jamil Salmi, a Moroccan education economist and the World Bank’s tertiary education coordinator (cited in Pak, 2010), and a government consultant in different countries within Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and Central Asia (Kazakhstan). According to Salmi (2009):

“... there are different approaches for creating world-class universities. The first one a reformation of the existing HEI, the second is when the university merging and the last one when a university is created from the beginning (from a zero). For it’s a new educational project, Kazakhstan has chosen the last way which is not least. According to Salmi, it will take approximately 10-15 years” (as cited in Pak, 2010).

Nazarbayev University provides seminars and conferences. During those seminars, according to a staff member of the Nazarbayev University, all faculty members of other Kazakhstani universities are trained on a regular basis (Int.3). She said that the Association of the Kazakhstan Universities and KIMEP had conducted the Bologna Process trainings on a regular basis (Int.3). NU also created the Association of Universities, but not the Bologna Process. She states:

“they know this process [the Bologna Process] and have experts. ...we have 110 universities. Only 50 of them are active: nine national universities, approximately 20 state universities and 30 private, such as KBTU, KIMEP, KazHLU [Kazakh Humanities and Law University and so on” (Int.3).

One international expert supports the argument that Nazarbayev University is not an institution that follows only the principles of the Bologna Process. According to him, at Nazarbayev University, there is also an emphasis upon the American model of higher education which is incorporated into its educational practices. Given this hybrid organisational environment, one interviewee said that "Nazarbayev University is sending very mixed messages to the other institutions" (Int.38). One administrative staff member of Nazarbayev University supported this view by giving the example of the transition of the credit system:

"The transfer process to the credit technology is not properly understood by some universities. They apply a hybrid of American and Kazakhstani [credit] technologies. Of course, Nazarbayev University noticed it and transferred these Bologna credits, as we have an American system. Our academic framework is a hybrid of an American and British framework; nevertheless we try to comply with the Bologna Process principles" (Int.3).

An international expert argued further that the institutions from the regions are looking at what is happening in leading institutions such as Nazarbayev University or KazNU, and what messages the Ministry is sending (Int. 38). He said:

"I don't think it's all that clear so, I think the people in the Bologna Process Center have a fairly good understanding of what is happening, but I'm not sure how much of an impact they actually can have on changes and reforms happening inside the higher education institutions" (Int.38).

The success of the lesson-drawing process depends greatly on political support (Robertson, 1991, p.69). For Bennett (1991), the process of learning is the main independent variable to explain why a particular policy is adopted. The integration into the EHEA was one of the aspects of the implementation of the state programme 'Path to Europe', which was a political factor

that influenced the decision to join the Bologna Process (Int.41; 15). From 2008 to 2009, state spending on education increased by 10.7% to USD\$4.8 billion (Pak, 2010), which was equal to 3.1% of GDP in 2009 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2015). In 2009, further integration measures were announced by the President of Kazakhstan in the Presidential programme. According to one interviewee, there were different factors. He argued:

"The tendencies and trends of the EHEA (European Higher Education Area) have started to globalise now. This was the first point. The second point is that Kazakhstan is geographically close to it [Europe], we are on the same continent with Europe and it is closer geographically to our [Kazakhstani] students and universities. The third point was political. Our President has proclaimed the programme the 'Path to Europe', and the entry of Kazakhstan to the EHEA is one of the main aspects for the programme's implementation. Therefore, all these factors together led to the idea that we [the officials of the Ministry of Education] have begun to move towards the Bologna Process" (Int.41).

2010: Accession Transfer

The accession period follows when a country has not yet signed existing documents such as a treaty, an agreement or a declaration but has accepted its provisions and requirements that other members have already agreed and signed. During this period, a member receives a formal invitation to accession which means that the accession process has begun (Carroll, 2013, p.108).

The discussion process addressing the ratifications of the European Cultural Convention took almost one year. In early March 2010, the European Cultural Convention was adopted by government resolution (Int.41). The Ministry of Education immediately sent a note to the Council of Europe. The representative of the Ministry described the event:

"The time was limited, because the next meeting of the Ministers of Education was scheduled for 10-12 March, 2010. We had to make it and to be on time, because the next meeting would be in 2012. In 2008, we [the Ministry of Education] did not have time, but we [the Ministry of Education] went the other way, and in 2010 we selected this path [towards the Bologna Process]" (Int.41).

On 12 March 2010 the application of Kazakhstan's membership was considered (Int.41). A member of one of the BFUG describes the procedures:

"As I was a member of the BFUG and participated in the discussions, I roughly know what is considered there. A country applies, [then] the BFUG considers it, accepts or does not accept it. One member country must provide the recommendation; Turkey provided a recommendation for us [Kazakhstan]" (Int.4).

The question about the geographical location of Kazakhstan was not even discussed (Int.41). The Minister of Education made a speech at a ministerial conference in Vienna on 12 March, 2010 (Int.41; 38; 4; 32). According to one national expert, who participated in the conference, the main argument of the Minister was that in 2010 among the large number of European universities that had signed the Magna Charter in Bologna, 50% were Kazakhstani universities (Int.32).

The decision regarding Kazakhstan's membership to the Bologna Process was approved by the Ministers of Education of the Bologna Process member states. Their recommendations mentioned the high level of educational reforms that had been implemented in Kazakhstan (Syzydykov, 2010). On 11 March 2010, all 46 current members of the EHEA unanimously supported Kazakhstan's full membership. Consequently, Kazakhstan became the 47th country to join the EHEA and the first country from Central Asia (Pak, 2010; Syzydykov, 2010). This was a prestigious achievement for Kazakhstan and it provided international recognition of the reforms in higher

education that had been previously implemented (Syzdykov, 2010). Interviewees expressed the view that Kazakhstan had become prominent after its chairmanship in the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 2010, and that this gained the support of European countries for joining the Bologna Process (Int.5; 14). The chairmanship in the OSCE will be more fully described in Chapter 6. One of the interviewee said:

"We did not become a European country. The Declaration was signed in 2010, it was a political situation. Kazakhstan was the chairman of the OSCE, and the political weight of the country increased. ... The status and position of Kazakhstan in the world ranking changed for the best ... Kazakhstan is positioned in Europe as a rapidly developing oil country. Kazakhstan has [resources] funds [money] and knowledge. So why not?" (Int.14).

Many national experts on education express the belief that it was a success and honour to be involved in the Bologna Process (Int.32; 27; 4; 5). For example one said:

"It is a question of prestige, the Bologna Process suggests voluntary accession, there is no compulsion. It is a great honour to be involved in the Bologna Process. Kazakhstan made it voluntarily, knowingly, with a view to realise that it will encourage the system of higher education to achieve certain standards" (Int.27).

On the other hand, they confirmed that the country has commitments after the adoption of the Bologna:

"Now we should say that the signing of the Bologna Declaration is not just an honorable privilege, because each member-country is committed to implement the principles of the Bologna Process, which are a lot" (Int.4).

2010-2011: Post-accession transfer

Post-accession transfer occurs when agreements have been reached and a candidate country starts to adapt and/or

change national policies in agreement with directions after accession (Carroll, 2013, p.108). After signing the Bologna Declaration in 2010, almost all reforms in the higher education sector in Kazakhstan were designed to implement the Bologna principles.

A key strategic document that drives reforms in the education sector is the State Programme of Education Development in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011-2020. The Programme considers reforms in all education sectors: pre-school education and upbringing, secondary education, technical and vocational education, higher education, postgraduate study and research (Ministry of Education, 2010a, p.1).

According to the State Programme (2011-2020), autonomy will be granted to national research universities from 2015, to national higher education institutions from 2016, and to other higher educational organisations from 2018 (Ministry of Education, 2010b, p.49). The Programme stated:

“... in 2015, the transition period will be completed, and the education system of the Republic of Kazakhstan will correspond to the models of developed countries in its structure, content, management and financing mechanisms and Kazakhstan will rank among the leading CIS states in education development results” (Ministry of Education, 2010b, p.56).

In spite of this, no clear vision has been elaborated for the following years, except the phrase that “at least two universities will be listed in the world’s best university rankings in 2020” (Ministry of Education, 2010b, pp. 47, 50). For Kazakhstani universities, Asian rankings are important, as it analyses annual surveys, questionnaires and the data from different sources (Briller & Iskakova, 2004, p. 262).

After Kazakhstan’s adoption of the Bologna Process, changes in higher education created new pressures for academic staff (Zgaga, 2006 taken from Shaw *et.al.*, 2011, p.74). Experts

at Bisam and the Institute of Policy Decisions in 2010 carried out a survey among faculty members. Their findings claim that the main problem for local faculties was their knowledge of the English language. According to their survey, only 8% of professors had a good knowledge, while 36% - satisfactory, 22% - poor and 15% had no any knowledge of English (Bisam Central Asia, n.d.; Institute of Political Solutions, 2011). This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

In 2010, all the Dissertation or Defence Committees of the previous degrees of a candidate of science and a doctor of science were closed. Only committees for PhD candidates remained (Int.8). According to the Law on Science and on Education (2007), those professors who had their defence before the entrance to the Bologna Process were prioritised, which means that their degrees maintained their validity and were recognised even if they had their defences under the old system. One university professor said:

“... we are implementing almost all [80%] the principles of the Bologna Process . Kazakhstan has always carried out experiments... takes good [elements] and adds their own [elements]” (Int. 8).

Outcomes were expected to adapt and develop new and updated courses providing the content of the education for bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees, in line with the Bologna objectives. This development was undertaken by creating working groups of specialists from Western universities and trained teachers from local universities using a participatory approach to ensure that the specifics of the Kazakhstani context were taken into account.

The Law on Education (2007) was updated in 2011; and new legislation such as the Law on Science (2011), the Law on the Status of 'Nazarbayev University', 'Nazarbayev Intellectual

Schools' and 'Nazarbayev Fund' (2011) have been introduced. According to the Law on the Status of Nazarbayev University (2011), the supreme governing body of the NU is the Supreme Board of Trustees. This was the result of reforms since independence. The competence of the Supreme Board of Trustees includes approval of the development strategy, the charters of NU; the order of asset management; the formation of boards of trustees of NU, and the reorganisation or liquidation of NU.

2012 to present: Adaptation

Kazakhstan did not implement all the principles of the Bologna Process. Kazakhstan chose to adopt only those elements that suited the local conditions (Int.8). "We were not ready to take all principles at once" commented one of the academic members (Int.8). The local experts claim that Kazakhstani HEIs have already implemented 74 percent of the major components of the Bologna Process (Int.9; 8). One stressed that the experts prefer to use the term 'adaptation' instead of the terms 'introduction' or 'implementation'. According to him, the term 'introduction' means that the system was introduced and displaced the old system totally; but when the experts use 'adapt', it means the new system preserves national peculiarities. He explained:

"We [the universities] have adapted three quarters of the components: we have the three-level degree system. The first level is higher education [graduate], and the second and third levels are post-graduate education. But this is also a local feature; ... The term 'postgraduate' means that these levels of education should be implemented by providers of education programmes, which are not be provided by the universities, but by other organisations. There are no other organisations [now], but it was stated in the Law.... This law will be changed when the next amendments take place" (Int.9).

In general, the Bologna Process principles have been implemented by the universities and supported at the national level (Int.4). According to a Bologna Process expert, the Process consist of more than just the three-level degree system or academic mobility; there is also the issue of the national qualification system (Int.7). One local expert supports this argument by adding:

“We [Kazakhstan] have the three-level degree higher education, the credit technology, the national qualifications framework. In 2012 the national qualifications frameworks were developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, and the document exists and works” (Int.9).

The National European Qualifications Framework (NEQF) describes the qualification levels corresponding to the level of education. According to a local expert, the meaning of the document is essential for the requirements of the educational service and labour market (Int.4). The intersection between the NEQF and the labour market can be illustrated by how Kazakhstan’s government proposed changes to the Labour Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which is the basic regulatory act that determines the relations between employer and employee, including work permits to foreign workers and to employers to engage foreign workers in Kazakhstan (Lexology, n.d.). In March 2012, the Labour Code was amended by “a provision on the National System of Qualifications containing description of general characteristics of professional activity for each qualification level” (BMF Group Legal Advisers, 2012). The process of making the national framework of qualifications compatible with the NEQF took time, especially in developing and improving changes in national legislation. Therefore, Kazakhstan did not have a document sharing the national framework of qualifications before 2012, which is one of the indicators in

monitoring the implementation of the Bologna Process (Int.7). Only in 2012 was the national framework of qualifications formally approved by both the Ministers of Education and Labour (Int.4; 9). One former civil servant claimed:

“Two ministers of education and labour signed this document together, because that's really related to the educational services market and the labour market. This balance should be implemented through the qualifications framework. If you look, you see this framework, it is a simple document, but this simple instrument costs a lot This one proposal has radically changed the demands in the labour market; ... it is the catalyst for the development of Kazakhstan's economy, the development of labour relations, etcetera. Therefore, education always takes over this heavy burden.... Sometimes education dictates some requirements on the labour market” (Int.4).

The next ministerial conference was held in 2012 in Bucharest, Romania (Int.4; 2; 32). Kazakhstan's delegation was represented by different actors and partners of the Bologna Process at the conference (Int.7; 4; 15). One interviewee who works for the Bologna Process Centre stated that the Minister took part and he was accompanied by a delegation of three or four people (Int.7). One of the members of Kazakhstan's delegation said:

“I was present there when the Minister of Education and Science, Mr. Zhumagulov, on the Kazakhstan delegation participated in this conference. ... We participated in the Bucharest conference, adopted this communiqué and ... the ministers came back and begun to implement it” (Int.4).

The representatives of staff and students of HEIs were provided an opportunity to present at the Bucharest conference. The representative of one university expressed her opinion of the Bucharest conference in the following manner:

“Our rector made a speech at the conference in Bucharest in 2012. He made a presentation about the student government and academic mobility. Even being presented as a single university, we [the representatives of the university] were among those participants who had a fully right being presented [at the conference]” (Int.15).

Another participant when speaking about the Bucharest conference noted:

"In 2012 our students from the KazNU went [to the conference]... we invited the European Union of Students. We cooperated well with them [the European Union of Students], but perhaps our students were not yet ready, probably we have to push them, the administration of universities and the Ministry. Probably, once they will be ready and become active participants in the educational process, they will play a leading role [in the process]" (Int.4).

During the conference, the Bucharest communiqué was adopted which provided a strategy of academic mobility until 2020. Kazakhstan developed and approved the strategy of academic mobility of Kazakhstan. This strategy set forth a programme whereby until 2020, no less than two percent of Kazakhstani university students should be involved in the academic mobility process. One former state official argues:

"We [Kazakhstan] must create the adequate conditions for living – campus and the programmes available including study in English. The mobility relates also to faculty members. 20% of the students must be students of the member-countries, i.e. residents. If a student comes to Kazakhstan from Liechtenstein it will be counted and accepted, if he comes from China it will be not be counted, because these 47 countries have committed among themselves to the internal academic mobility as a cross-country mobility" (Int.4).

In 2012, the Bologna Process and Academic Mobility Centre was established in Astana. One local expert noted that the Bologna Process Centre was created for promoting the Bologna Process principles in Kazakhstan (Int.32). In the international expert assessment, the creation of the Bologna Process Centre in Astana is a step forward (Int. 38). The same expert criticised that the Bologna Process Centre is not utilising a lot of international expertise, but he hopes that at the national level, the Ministry, the government, and the Bologna Process

Centre will in the future use external support, because “otherwise it is not going to work out as well” (Int.38). One member of staff of the Centre argued:

“Our Centre conducts seminars for university teachers, in order to inform the public about the latest developments that has occurred in the Bologna Process. This takes place in the form of conferences and seminars. We publish the journal ‘Graduate school of Kazakhstan’, which contains information about the cooperation of our Centre with foreign partners and other associations. We work directly with the Department of Higher Education of the Ministry (MES)” (Int.6).

In December 2012, during the annual address to the people, the President announced a new political strategy of the country until 2050. As outlined in “*Kazakhstan’s way-2050*,” the country’s main goal is to join the 30 most-developed countries in the world (Akorda, 2012b). One of the members of the Bologna Process Centre views this as a motivation to improve the education sector. She said:

“According to the message ‘Kazakhstan 2050’ of the President, one of the criteria for entrance among the 30 most competitive countries is to improve the efficiency of higher education sector. That was motivation for us ... our [Kazakhstani] education should be competitive, we [started to] conduct our national ranking of universities. Universities are actively involved in ratings, such as TIMES, QS and Shanghai” (Int. 6).

According to the 2012/2013 statistical data available from the Ministry of Education, there were different types of higher education institutions in Kazakhstan. Each type of HEI depends on the quantity of academic programmes and the orientation of the research and in most cases this type is determined at the stage of licensing (European Commission, n.d., p.4). The total number of Kazakhstani higher education institutions was 139: nine national, 44 public civil, 12 non-civil/military, one international/ autonomous (Nazarbayev University), 16 joint

stock, and 57 private HEIs (MoES, n.d.; Zhakenov, n.d.). Updated information about the total number of HEIs in Kazakhstan and the description of different types of HEIs is indicated in Table 7.

Table 7 Types of HEIs in Kazakhstan

Type	Description	№ 2012 - 2013	№ 2016 - 2017
national	A special status means a special mode of operation, given the opportunity to determine the rules of admission procedures, implementation developed educational curricula independently, by using own standards of the university in teaching, research and methodological activities, issuance of certificates of the formation of university's own design (MoES, 2007, p.38)	9	9
autonomous	Nazarbayev University The "principle of academic freedom" as "independence of the University... in defining and selection of educational programs, forms and methods of implementation of education activities, and the directions of conducting scientific research." [E]nsure independence and collegiality in management and decision making based on democratic principles and personal responsibility of each individual involved; guarantee academic freedom of teachers and researchers within their research, and educational activities (Ruff & Horn, 2012)	1	1
private	Private HEIs have more operational autonomy and greater management flexibility; public HEIs do not own their land and buildings whereas private universities can□ (European Commission, n.d., p.6)	57	54
joint stock	The Governmental Resolution 912 (June 17, 2000) launched corporatisation of public HEIs and 16 HEIs gained status of joint-stock companies, where government, individuals and companies are shareholders (Zhakenov, n.d.)	16	16
public : 1) civil 2) non-civil/military	All civil HEIs are under the Ministry of Education and Science of Kazakhstan	44	31
	non-civil (military/security) HEIs: 1 under the Agency for Emergencies; 4 under the Ministry of Internal Affairs; 2 under the Committee of National Security;	12	13

	4 are reportable to the Ministry of Defense; 1 under the Ministry of State Revenues (Zhakenov, n.d.)		
international	International Kazakh-Turkish University named after HA. Yassaui		1
Total		139	125

Source: Bologna Process and Academic Mobility Centre, 2017, <http://enic-kazakhstan.kz/en/realiz-bp/spisok-vuzov-rk>

Since the establishment of HEIs in Kazakhstan, there were many universities that did not achieve accreditation. According to Abilov, there were too many non-accredited HEIs in Kazakhstan (2004, p.313). Briller and Iskakova (2004) studied the assessment procedures of the Ministry of Education and noticed that there were three main procedures (Briller & Iskakova, 2004, p.263):

1. "licensing - procedure deals with the competence of institutional documentation, staff quantity, buildings, libraries, gyms, cafeterias, and other sport facilities relative to the approved norms and standards;
2. "attestatsia" which is designed to guarantee that curricula, programs, scheduling and institutional documents are compliant with the national norms and standards;
3. accreditation analyses quality of instructors, the degree programs, research and publications".

All these procedures have been criticised by Briller and Iskakova (2004). Firstly, the Ministry of Education does not provide data of these procedures to the public. Secondly, these procedures look 'good on paper', but do not satisfy the main actors: students, parents, the Ministry of Education itself and Kazakhstani HEIs, due to the low quality of the education system (National System of Evaluation of Kazakhstan Higher Education, 2001 taken from Briller & Iskakova, 2004, p.263). While more than 70% of Kazakhstan's universities were private institutions, students were unable to obtain open information about the

educational quality of these universities or the services they provided (Briller & Iskakova, 2004, p.264). The Ministry of Education and Science had a limited number of experts who could conduct accreditation and as a result “a small group of appointed experts getting bribes and sharing those with some officials in the Ministry for approving questionable programs and institutions” (Briller & Iskakova, 2004, p.264). The presence of corruption in the education sector was not only in Kazakhstan, but also throughout Central Asian countries. Central Asian countries were threatened by “payment for grades, bribery for admission, corruption in accreditation and licensing” (Anderson & Heyneman, 2005; Silova, Johnson & Heyneman, 2007 taken from Heyneman, 2010, p.81). Despite these problems, there have been improvements in the accreditation process by involving accreditation agencies from abroad. The Ministry of Education and the universities started this work. During 2008-2009 many universities in Kazakhstan began to accredit their educational programmes (Int.10). After the implementation of the accreditation process, there was a decrease in the number of HEIs from 181 (2004) to 139 (2013) and 125 (2017) (Agency of Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, n.d., Bologna Process and Academic Mobility Centre, 2017). As one interviewee observed:

“The European Commission always says that Kazakhstan is going along with the Bologna Process. Well, we just have not been formally part the Bologna Process. Before we entered the Bologna Process, we were going through the accreditation [process] in many directions, at the moment a lot of universities accredited their programmes” (Int.10).

Kazakhstan is moving towards an independent accreditation system which is a new phenomenon for the country. Some experts do not support the idea of an independent accreditation system, but such a system has been

in operation since 2012 when Kazakhstan became a member of the European Quality Assurance Register (Int.4). By 2020, Kazakhstani academic educational programmes are expected to be accredited by international accreditation agencies in order to make them comparable with European educational programmes.

During the first six months of 2014, Kazakhstan has been serving as the Co-Chairman of the Bologna Process (Int.4; 19). One of the organisers stated:

"As I remember, from 47 member countries of the Bologna Process, 26 countries are EU members, whereas 21 countries are not, including Kazakhstan. We were co-chairman for six months last year, from 1 January till June, and the meeting was held at the Nazarbayev University. It was attended by representatives of the European Commission and Council of Europe (Int.4).

There was a board meeting in Astana and it contributed to a seminar organised by the Ministry of Education, in particular the Department of Higher Education (Int.36). Representatives of the Council of Europe, the Bologna Secretariat were also presented (Int.36; 19). One of the participants expressed an opinion about Kazakhstan co-chairing the Bologna Process:

"It was conducted in your country a year ago from January to June. Kazakhstan was as co-chairman in the Bologna Process, which included the meeting of the Council and then a big meeting of the BFUG. They organised this meeting at a high level. We were in the Nazarbayev University. Of course, we were very impressed [by NU]. After that we participated in the Bologna Process conference. It was like a conference of reports, because your [Kazakhstani] universities just made reports as during the Soviet times. It was like a report, excluding one or two presentations" (Int.19).

According to a local expert the co-chairmanship of Kazakhstan was invisible (Int.32). She had a less positive view than the others:

"... it was a conference where the platform for discussion was created, but experts were not invited, the meeting of those

working groups was not conducted. We were together with representatives from Greece ... and no one from the Ministry was able to attend. The fact is that we should conduct actively such events... If our experts participate actively in [those working] groups, they participate and conduct roundtables ... we should show our results, national projects [in order to keep our image], it is really meaningful" (Int.32).

On 14-15 May 2015, the next ministerial conference was held in Yerevan, Armenia. Each country submitted a national report summarising all the work that had been done by the country during the preceding three years (Int.5; 7). On reflecting upon the conference, one person who works for the Bologna Process argued:

"Now the Bologna Process is developing slowly, it has stalled. European countries discuss how to move forward. A conference will be held in Yerevan this year, where the ministers will discuss further ways for its development. Probably, they will make a few fundamental statements regarding further development" (Int.7).

Belarus has applied for a second time to join the Bologna Process. The Council of Europe arranged a mission to Belarus in order to process its application and discuss it (Int.19). A state official, who participated in the conference comments that four countries were against Belarus joining the Bologna Process. "In this regard, Kazakhstan was lucky" he said (Int.41). One Bologna Process Secretariat member described:

"I will say, a very serious consideration was made toward the Belarus application, so it will not be easy, because everyone understands, that their political structure is unstable, new presidential elections will be carried out. All is connected. Anyway, on the other hand Belarus is at the centre of Europe, it is like a 'white hole in the Bologna Process' [map]. Some Bologna Process countries are strongly against the regime and systems in Belarus and do not want it in the Bologna Process" (Int.19).

Conclusion

From 1991, Kazakhstan's higher education system has been steered through a transition period. Developing higher education and improving its quality have been the main priorities of Kazakhstan as articulated in official documents. Educational reforms in Kazakhstan, including changes in the structure and content of education, were issued in laws. These changes established academic mobility, a credit system, a three-level degree system, a diploma supplement and lifelong education; all of which are major principles of the Bologna Process.

Kazakhstan has attempted to integrate into the common European educational space and to compete in the global economy and the globalisation process after the collapse of the Soviet Union (OECD, 2001, p.3). From one international expert's point of view:

"... if you're a national higher education system, you want to be a part of the wider world community, you want to have recognition, you want to have transferability – well, the Bologna Process and the Bologna conference of other countries, is the party to join, because that's the best way to do it and the easiest way to do it. It's hard work, but it's the best framework to date" (Int.18).

Changes to higher education occurred because the Kazakhstani government sought to align the system of its higher education with Western European standards. To achieve this objective, policymakers committed themselves to raise the international legitimacy of the higher education system through the Bologna Process. Thus, Kazakhstan has ambitions to make its higher education system a part of the world higher education system. This has manifested itself in a strategy by which the State's educational programme and the Bologna Process have merged to become the framework to achieve that ambition.

CHAPTER 6: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The aim of the chapter is to combine the primary research data with the literature review in order to construct a thematic analysis. This chapter considers the five stages in a policy cycle along with international policy transfer theory. The stages were combined from the 'policy cycle' approach developed by Dolowitz (2000b, p.34) and 'an ideal type of policy transfer cycle' developed by Evans and Barakat (2012, p.547). The stages are broken down as follows: agenda setting; formulation; implementation; evaluation; and adaptation. These stages were previously discussed in detail in Chapter 2. Each stage of the policy cycle consists of sub-themes, which are taken from a combination of multi-level, ideational and process-centred approaches to study policy transfer as introduced by Evans (2004) in order to understand the effects of policy transfer through incorporating various levels of analysis. The multi-level approach combines three levels of enquiry: macro, meso and micro (Evans, 2004, pp.20-24; 2009, pp.254-255). In this study, the levels of enquiry are: European, national and institutional. The process-centred approach is applied in order to understand the relationship between actors of transfer and to explain the voluntary or coercive transformation of ideas and policies (Evans, 2009, p.248). By using the ideational approach, this thesis identifies how policy makers have been influenced by external pressures such as the integration process, globalisation and/or internationalisation (Common, 1998, p.440) and through which soft forms the transfer occurred.

1. Agenda setting

This section discusses agenda setting, which is the first stage of the policy cycle. Agenda setting includes problem

recognition and searching for solutions. The first part of this section will consider problem recognition by covering such issues as economic crises, social disorder and integration processes. The second part will focus on the search for solutions at the European, national and institutional levels by assessing the actors who influenced the decision to join the Bologna Process at different levels.

The period after the collapse of the Soviet Union was characterised by extreme social disorder and economic instability. With the collapse of the Soviet regime, there were political changes in all post-Soviet states. Centralised planning and Russian control ebbed away thereby ending the total dependence of each state upon Moscow. Consequently, each individual member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) had to fund their own higher education systems. The 1990s were marked by a dramatic decline in government budget allocations, academic standards and finally, for many republics, increasing levels of managerial, institutional and academic corruption (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010, pp.10-14; Clark, 2007; Heyneman, 2010). This led to a sharp increase in unemployment, especially for scientists and engineers.

Problems arose regarding the lack of industrial production caused by the breakdown of the command economy, which fuelled the need to train and retrain highly qualified labour. Kazakhstan used its oil revenues not only to reform the economy, but to restructure the country's old Soviet educational system in order to create a new educational system (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010, p.51). This need for training pushed higher education onto the agenda. In order to prepare highly qualified employees, it was necessary to train them in Western countries. For this purpose, it was required to look at the educational systems of developed countries, such as those in the United

States and Western European countries. The Soviet educational system was completely different from Western educational systems both in terms of learning periods, and curricula. In the Soviet system there was five years of education with a narrow specialisation for each sector of the economy. In the West, the system of education is very flexible and broad, which means that after attaining a bachelor's degree students can suspend their studies, or they can pursue a master's degree in a different field. The details of the differences between European and Soviet education were addressed in Chapter 5.

Kazakhstan's educational community was in great need of international collaboration, joint programmes, joint research grants, comparable diplomas and degrees with local diplomas and programmes (Int.4; 32). A local expert explained that the educational community realised that it had to integrate into the regional and international educational community to ensure its survival:

"... the universities started to understand that it is the imperative of time ... they should have foreign students, they should send their employees [academic staff], they should conduct joint research.... Now, we [the university] conduct it with many countries" (Int.32).

Kazakhstan, as an Asian country with a small proportion of its land in European territory (11-13%) after the collapse of the Soviet Union was unrecognised in the United States and Europe. To integrate into the international education area in Europe, it was necessary for Kazakhstan to develop its own image as a young independent state. It was during this time that Kazakhstan embarked on an arduous and complicated process to situate itself politically, socially and culturally with the West. The country, along with its education system, wanted "to be

recognisable not only in Europe, but in the United States and ultimately all over the world" (Int.3).

European level

When the international community defines a problem and seeks a solution to that problem, a number of countries might come under pressure to join the international community by implementing common policies, reforms and practices (Dolowitz & Marsh, 1996, p.349). The main idea of the Bologna Process is "to search for a common European solution to common European problems by using common action" (European Commission, n.d.(a), p.1). According to the Bologna Declaration, by 2010 all signatory-countries should have unified their system of higher education. However, that deadline was not met, and it was agreed to extend this to 2020. One reason for this delay is the different speed of development of higher education systems of the countries that joined at a later stage. Other reasons will be discussed in the last section 'Success and Failure'.

During the conference in Bucharest, Romania in 2012, concern was raised among signatory-countries that the creation of the EHEA had not been completed. One state official confirmed:

"They [the participants of the conference] said that, unfortunately, we had to fix what we said in 2010 regarding the EHEA. It has not been created" (Int.2).

The Bologna Process encourages countries, HEIs and individuals to take part in it (Fejes, 2008, p.37). Within the Bologna Process, a country is required to adopt the Process if the country wants its citizens and students not to fall behind the rest of Europe. Students who are not from signatory-countries might not have the same opportunities to enrol as students from signatory-countries, or to compete with students from other

countries for a job, if the HEIs choose not to take part in the Bologna Process (Fejes, 2008, p.35). Some countries, particularly certain non-European countries, such as the United States, Canada, and Japan, have chosen not to participate in the Bologna Process as they have their own national systems of higher education. Each state decides whether or not to adopt the Bologna Process as the process is entirely voluntary.

National level

Kazakhstan's educational reforms were a reaction to economic and political change, and the globalisation process which could not be ignored. One interviewee argued: "it was a logical and right step forward" (Int.2). If Kazakhstan wanted an international presence in the international education space, it could not stand alone. One of interviewees claimed that "the country cannot survive alone. It should be a part of a system; or a member of the OECD; or the European or American systems" (Int.31).

There were various national systems, which were more or less in line with each other (Int.38). In the UNDP report for *Kazakhstan-2004* that was drafted by national experts and foreign consultants, there were two educational systems that were of interest to Kazakhstan. First, there was the American educational system (with the Japanese), and second there was the European system (UNDP, 2004, p.18). A former state official argues that the American model was quite popular and provided several alternative models for Kazakhstan to adapt (Int.33).

In the 1990s, the American model was introduced in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstani universities started implementing the American credit system. Notwithstanding the USA's geographical distance from Kazakhstan, there was no alternative. This was because the USA allocated funds for different projects to

Kazakhstan, thereby introducing the American system (Int.5). Cooperation with the USA brought external pressure through integration processes and globalisation.

The USA is a diversified, dynamic, and innovative country with different objectives designed to solve different problems (Int.29). The introduction of the internalisation and mobility programmes in the USA were motivated by its rapidly changing economy. However, what is best for one country, may not work in the same way for another. A country cannot just copy another's system or policy. Each country must critically analyse and explore an issue, defining its essence and necessity.

One of the interviewees from the ENU talked about her own experience at the University how she visited Kentucky (USA) with two doctoral students in 2007. The interviewee and the doctoral students stayed for two months, and the interviewee paid for herself while a university in Kazakhstan fully covered the doctoral students. A total of US\$10,000 per year was allocated for every PhD student (Int.8). As a supervisor and a head of the first implementation management plan for PhD students, the interviewee had been sent to learn the American system (Int.8). When responding to a question as to whether she would prefer to learn from the American system as opposed to the European system she noted:

"I had projects and I knew the American system. In Europe, there were problems with visas. Schengen visas had been difficult to obtain. European universities were not getting in touch. The American universities were more open and it was easier to get an American visa. [We] tried to establish relations with universities in London and also Cambridge University, but they did not understand our role, i.e., [the role of] Kazakhstan in the Bologna Process. While, the Americans have supported us since funding had been allocated" (Int.8).

An important strategic goal of reforming Kazakhstan's national education system was internationalisation. This process entails learning from international practice and experience

through a transfer of knowledge from the world's top universities (Centre for Educational Policy Nazarbayev University, 2011; Sagintayeva, 2013). Internationalisation was part of the strategic plan of many higher educational institutions in Kazakhstan (Langouche, 2013, p.78). Langouche claimed that internationalisation is designed to increase the number of foreign students and foreign faculty staff in universities (2013, p.78). According to statistics of the Ministry of Education (2012), in universities in Kazakhstan, in 2011 there were 8,982 international students mainly from CIS and the Baltic States, making up 1.4% of the country's students. In the same year, there were 1,717 foreign academic staff working on Kazakhstani HEIs, representing 4.2% of the academic workforce.

State policy initiated actions at the regional (Central Asia and CIS) as well as international level. The country became increasingly integrated into the international community, including in education. Official state documents outline the strategic aims of reforming the higher education system according to European standards (Ministry of Education, 2009a). A decision was made to become a member of the Bologna Process and link its requirements to the national higher education policy.

Between 2007 and 2009, many international seminars and forums were organised by the Ministry of Education for local universities to which international experts were invited. Experts such as the Secretary General of the Magna Charter Observatory, representatives of the Bologna Working Groups, experts from the Council of Europe, and other leading experts in education actively visited Kazakhstan within that period (Int.41). Seminars were organised by the national agencies and centres. One of the participants noted:

"I remember that the National Quality Assurance Centre also conducted a series of training seminars. Annually the seminars were held for the universities' administrators, including the cluster seminars when participants travel to one region by having a seminar in the regions" (Int.4).

Learning occurs through conferences, meetings, training courses, academic mobility programmes, internships and forums. During seminars and conferences, representatives of different countries and higher education institutions have an opportunity to share their experiences and knowledge. The signing of bilateral agreements on cooperation occurs through talks and networks while meetings and seminars are a platform for dialogue and networking. Learning is easier when there is some prior knowledge. One of the national experts claimed that accurate interpretation could be gained only through learning:

"... what we do, it is our interpretation, and in order to be interpreted effectively, we should learn.... This [learning] should be done, because there are a lot of challenges, trends. We should implement it [trends, reforms], so we should be capable to deal with it.... To clearly understand, success [of policy or programme transfer] will be reached only through learning" (Int.33).

Institutional level

As a post-communist country, Kazakhstan went through a period of preparation in order to reform its education system in order to adhere to European standards. Kazakhstan has been working on joining the Bologna Process since 2005 (Zakirova et al., 2009, p.33; the decree of the President of Kazakhstan, 2004). Many Kazakhstani HEIs showed initiative and commenced the process, which ultimately led to the signing of the Magna Charter. Before 2009, 18 universities had signed the Magna Charter (Ministry of Education, 2009a). Currently, 60 of 139

universities have signed it (Ministry of Education, 2013; Agency of Statistics of the Republic of Kazakhstan, n.d.).

Kazakh National University (KazNU) was the first among the universities of Kazakhstan to sign the Magna Charter of Universities in Bologna in 2004. An international expert provided further evidence that a significant number of HEIs from Kazakhstan had started to sign the Magna Charter Universitatum (Int.38). He claimed:

"... many higher education institutions from Kazakhstan have signed the Magna Carta Universitatum, while the others didn't want to miss out, so they also gradually asked [to sign] ...Every year we have had several higher education institutions from Kazakhstan joining ... the Magna Charter" (Int.38).

A former representative of the Ministry of Education stated that the idea of the Magna Charter was attractive and popular within the Kazakhstani educational community, especially in the 1990s (Int.33). He commented:

"Leaders of Kazakhstani universities went to sign this Charter. I think that today about 50 universities have already signed the Magna Charter" (Int.33).

An international expert expressed his opinion about the interpretation of his colleagues from Kazakhstan. He said a large number of Kazakhstani institutions became involved in some activities with the Magna Charter, but not all of them signed it voluntarily:

"For some of the higher education institutions ... it was their decision; for other institutions the Ministry basically told them that it would be good if they would join" (Int.38).

Every year, more HEIs from Kazakhstan want to sign the Magna Charter. One interviewee mentioned that there was significant misunderstanding regarding the relationship between the Magna Charter and the Bologna Process. He said that "this

misunderstanding still prevails" (Int.38) and explained that "the Magna Charter is basically a document about academic freedom, institutional autonomy and the link between teaching and research" (Int.38). According to him, these two processes are independent. Though both processes were established in Bologna, there is no real connection between the Magna Charter and the Declaration (Int.38). These two documents intended to achieve very different purposes. He stated that the Magna Charter was an initiative that did not involve ministries. The document stipulated the fundamental values of higher education, and it was supposed to cover the institutions involved. The Bologna Process was about changing national higher education systems and was associated with structural reforms (Int.38). On the other hand, the Bologna Declaration proclaims that the principles in the Bologna Process are taken from the Magna Charter which means both documents are interconnected:

"European higher education institutions ... have accepted the challenge and taken up a main role in constructing the European area of higher education, also in the wake of the fundamental principles laid down in the Bologna Magna Charta Universitatum of 1988" (Magna Charter organisation (n.d.)).

The main difference between these two documents is that the Magna Charter constituted a decentralised process, whereas the Bologna Declaration is centralised, a top-down process where a hierarchy dominates. To support this argument, one of interviewees claimed:

"This Declaration of 1999 was institutionalised even at the geographical level, as the EHEA (European Higher Education Area) is institutionalised at the ministerial level" (Int.2).

Actors

The recognisability of Kazakhstan increased in the international arena mainly because of its active involvement in international affairs (Int.15). The Head of the State and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs initiated a proposal for Kazakhstan's Chairmanship of the OSCE in 2010 that helped to create a positive image of the country. One local expert and a member of the administrative staff of a university stated that Kazakhstan was conducting a multi-vector policy. It was especially interested in wholesome changes to the educational system in order to modernise its educational training of specialists and researchers. Kazakhstan took the initiative and "it is entirely possible that if the state did not take the initiative, certainly no one would have asked to sign the Bologna Process" (Int.15). There is no overt coercion or conditionality in whether or not a country adopts the Bologna Process. No one forces and decides who should or should not take part in the Process (Fejes, 2008, pp.33, 38).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs played a significant role in developing the state programme 'Path to Europe' that influenced the decision to integrate with Europe. An administrative member of staff from one of the national universities supported this by observing:

"Well, it was connected with politics ... actually Kazakhstan really wanted to be closer to Europe than to the USA. The initiative was of course the signing of the Bologna Declaration" (Int.15).

Given its non-European history and culture, Kazakhstan faced certain barriers prior to ultimately signing the Bologna Declaration. Firstly, the country had to ratify the European Cultural Convention (1954), and only after that could Kazakhstan apply for entry into the Bologna Process. The process of signing the European Cultural Convention and ultimately the Bologna

Declaration was complicated because Kazakhstan was not the legal successor to the USSR. In order to sign the Declaration, Kazakhstan sought documents that confirmed its right to enter and become a member of the Bologna Process (Int.32). It was a long, political process for Kazakhstan, and the signing of the European Cultural Convention was a complicated issue (Int.5). Accordingly, much needed to be done as the Convention, which was a public law treaty, fell outside the scope of the Ministry of Education's authority. The Ministry of Culture did not have any interest in the Bologna Process or, consequently, in the Convention. It took a long time to pursue other official bodies about the need to sign the European Cultural Convention. A representative of the Ministry of Education commented:

"The European Cultural Convention was a document within the authority of the Ministry of Culture. They had to initiate the signing... but the Ministry of Culture did not show much interest in the Bologna Process.... But we took the initiative, because ... the Ministers of Education and Science ... sent applications to the Council of Europe in order to get a right for signing the Bologna Declaration. And each time it was refused, it was because we had not ratified the European Cultural Convention, and they [the members of the BFUG] said that we are not a European country. In 2009 we [the Ministry] took over this initiative regarding this Cultural Convention" (Int.41).

The diplomatic aspects of this process would require the attention of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture. In the period of 2008-2009, the role of the Parliament was crucial. One of the interviewees stated:

"There was also a preparatory period to ratify the European Cultural Convention at the level of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan that took time" (Int.4).

During the second half of 2009, the Ministry of Education began to promote the Resolution (Int.41). One of the participants of this process claimed that the process was very difficult, because the Ministry of Education had to justify the

necessity of the European Cultural Convention on an approval sheet (Int.41).

The key actor in the policy learning process was the Ministry of Education and Science which set the agenda and prioritised the goals necessary to enter into the European educational community. Both local and international experts expressed their common opinion regarding the decision-making process:

"The decision was made by the Ministry and the Government, and, of course, with the support and instruction of the Head of the State" (Int.27).

"my understanding from the outside – because I am not in this, I'm not within the education system itself – is that it, of course it's top-down, the Government and the Ministry decided it, and they told the universities this is what's going to happen. I think some universities have engaged with it more happily than others" (Int.18).

In all signatory-countries, the ministers responsible for education signed the Bologna Declaration. In Kazakhstan, the Ministry of Education was also responsible for signing the Bologna Declaration and it was its responsibility to prepare the application in order to formally file for its entrance into the Bologna Process. A representative of the Ministry of Education observed that in Kazakhstan the role of the Ministry is a key. She said:

"... [in Kazakhstan] the role of the Ministry in politics, in the sector of higher education is almost the same as in another countries. You know, [in another countries] due to the fact that the universities are autonomous, the Ministry plays a less important role in higher education; it is more responsible for schools, etc. In our case, this is the key" (Int.4).

Some external views were considered regarding the top-down system. One of the international experts claimed:

"... there has been... basically, instruction by President Nazarbayev that Kazakhstan shall join the Bologna Process. You had a Minister of Education who was very reform-oriented, and these reforms were much more focused on European higher education reforms" (Int.38).

Another international expert supported this position by saying:

"I think the perception is that it was a strictly top-down decision. ...in the Kazakhstani case, the decision was made. And, so the perception is that the President wanted it, it happened somehow, and that's how it was made" (Int.11).

The European Cultural Convention (1954) was signed in 2010, and only after signing it was Kazakhstan given the opportunity to sign the Bologna Declaration (Int.41; 4.). One signatory-country must provide a recommendation for a prospective applicant country. In the case of Kazakhstan, this recommendation came from Turkey (Int.4). In order to sign the Bologna Declaration, Kazakhstan had to successfully undergo a rigorous interview process with all members of the BFUG. After the interview stage, the remaining signatory-countries gave their consent (Int.5). The working group was chaired by Hungarian representatives while Kazakhstan's application to join the Bologna Process was being considered. The Hungarian representatives provided a written report before the discussion of the ministers. During the summit on 11 March, 2010 all 46 signatory-countries unanimously supported Kazakhstan's full membership. All of the previous actions of the Ministry helped to gain positive written feedback about Kazakhstan's readiness to become a member of the Bologna Process (Int.41).

The process of deciding whether to enter into the Bologna Process was not only driven by state officials working in the education system, but was also by the needs of Kazakhstani universities in particular to change the system in order to join

the Bologna Process (Int.4). The universities increasingly began to face the following questions: how was the Kazakhstani programme compatible with those in the rest of the world?; how could the academic mobility be developed?; and how could the Kazakhstani educational programmes be comparable with foreign programmes in terms of content, structure, assessment system and methods (Int.4). All of these questions were crucial to the process through which Kazakhstan's universities became actively engaged in developing partnerships and cooperation with other universities across the world. A state official mentioned that, since independence, the Ministry of Education and Science cooperated with universities in more than 124 countries, including in regional integration processes (Int.4).

Thus, due to the efforts of different actors, including the academic and administrative staff of the universities, along with local and international experts in higher educational policy, the Kazakhstani government joined the Bologna Process in March 2010.

2. Formulation

Various actors were involved in the formulation and decision-making process. This section will discuss the formulation stage by dividing it into three levels: European, national and institutional.

European level

In December 2006, the European Council decided to formulate an EU Political Strategy for Central Asia (CA) in order to enhance its position within the CA region. The strategy for a new partnership demonstrated the EU's intention (Sadykova, 2012). It was adopted in June 2007 under the German EU Presidency. According to Wegener, a member of the German Parliament:

"The EU is pleased to get closer to the door of Central Asia, because Central Asia is close to our home [Europe]. It borders with Europe, and feels part of Europe. In addition, all five Central Asian countries are members of the OSCE. Hence our interest is to ensure that Central Asia is a peaceful and stable region" (Wegener, 2007 taken from Gubaidullina, 2010).

The CA countries had a desire to align the reform of their higher education systems with the Bologna Process, particularly through the Tempus programme (Delegation of the European Union to Kazakhstan, n.d. (a), pp.17, 20). A university staff member claimed that participation of students in international programmes such as Erasmus, Trans-European Mobility Programme for University Studies (Tempus), and Erasmus+ was a significant development (Int.15). The universities of Kazakhstan actively took part, so many students participated in these programmes (Int.15). This interviewee, who has international expertise, commented on how the European educational programmes such as Erasmus or Tempus are linked to the Bologna Process:

"There are ... areas, like mobility, the social dimension, where the Bologna Process also plays an important role, but, obviously, for example, for academic mobility commissioned programmes like Erasmus, Erasmus plus, also play an important role – yet again, they are not Bologna tools per se, although they also have finance [resources] which are a key part of the process. There are probably other areas and finance would be one typical example where the Bologna Process is not the framework" (Int.36).

In 2009, the European Commission decided to increase its funding of educational programmes such as Erasmus Mundus and Tempus from €5 million per year in the past to €10 million for 2010 (Syzdykov, 2010; European Commission, n.d.(c)). Such programmes encourage universities within the EU and partner countries to engage in structured cooperation by establishing consortia between businesses, ministries, non-government

organisations, and other organisations working in higher education. Tempus was established in 1990 (Dixon & Soltys, 2013, p.xi). By 2013, it covered almost 27 countries from Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans, Central Asia, North Africa and the Middle East. It also supports the reformation of higher education by funding two types of actions. The first type is defined as "joint projects that develop new curriculum, teaching methods and enhance quality assurance and management of HEIs", whereas the second are "structural measures that reform HEIs and develop systems in partner countries by enhancing their quality and increasing their convergence with EU developments" (Dixon & Soltys, 2013, p.xi).

The main aims of educational programmes such as Tempus and Erasmus were to establish a three-cycle degree system of bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees and to train academic staff for their implementation in Kazakhstani universities by December 2011. This was how pre-decision learning happened through European educational programmes in Kazakhstan (Evans, 2009b, pp.262-263; Evans & Barakat, 2012, p.547). A local expert, who supports educational programmes like Tempus and Erasmus argued:

"It was the right decision [of the European countries]. There was Tempus programme, now it is Erasmus+ programme.... Erasmus+ programme promotes reforms of higher education across the whole world, so they have created national teams in each partner-country. National offices of the Tempus programme have operated for 15 years. Together with the national office, the Ministry of Education and the representation office of the European Union, and the national expert teams on the reforms of higher education have been established in these countries. We visit various European universities, where we are learning from the experience of European universities. After that, we have to disseminate the experiences we learnt" (Int.9).

National level

There were different educational models that Kazakhstan considered implementing. Among the members of the local educational community in Kazakhstan, there was a divergence of opinion about which model to implement. The main education systems are based on the following criteria: “the role of the state; correlation of the roles of national and local governments in managing and funding education; proportion of free and paid education; correlation between ‘education for the masses’ and elite institutions; proportion of fundamental and practical orientation in the structure and content of higher education” (UNDP, 2004, p.18).

One opinion was that instead of spending a lot of time and effort in following and imitating the experiences of other countries, which does not often produce successful results, and it would be better to focus on creating and developing Kazakhstani model of education which could be based on its own experience, traditions and culture (Pak, 2010; Naribayev, 2013, p. 379). The UNDP report stated that:

“... the preservation of cultural sources, native languages and spiritual traditions absorbed through the education system should provide the growing generation with some protection from the all-absorbing, all-unifying and assimilating globalisation processes” (UNDP, 2004, p.16).

Kazakhstan’s situation required the creation of its own national model of education system. A local expert commented: “We have to adhere to the [Bologna Process] principles by taking into account our own culture and adapt them” (Int.17).

In the early years of independence, there was a period when the North American model was implemented, but for various reasons it was not successful. There was no alternative for Kazakhstan, because the USA was geographically too far

away (Int.5). One interviewee gave an example of the credit technology:

“In the beginning it was American one [the system], because the US funded different projects, and then, it [the credit system] was introduced under the American system. Our system [Kazakhstani] is not quite as European one, it is recalculated.... So Americans initiated it, there were no such systems in the Asian region” (Int.5).

Kazakhstani universities have more in common with their European counterparts than with those in the USA. Therefore, the European system was easier to implement (Int.6). European universities introduced the academic mobility of students in order to increase its competitiveness with the American higher education system (Int.41; 5). According to a local state official:

“The end of the 1970s and 80s were characterised by the fact that the European higher education system began to lose its competitive advantage over the American universities resulting in a great outflow of students from European to American universities. In order to counter this situation, European universities in 1980s began to introduce academic mobility even before the establishment of the Bologna Process. If one looks at the root of the matter, to some extent, all the principles of the Bologna Process were transformed from the American higher education. In essence, the Bologna Process is like the experience of taking over competitiveness of the European system” (Int.41).

In practice, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), accreditation and quality assurance were adapted from the American system to the European educational system. Similarity of both systems can be illustrated by the fact that accreditation was first implemented in the American higher education system (Int.41). One of the participants working on a research grant, who was a member of the credit system working group, had previous experience with the American educational system. She learned about the credit system and the three-level degree system from the American system in 2004. She noted:

"I had the internship in the US... the first working group on the credit system was created. We talked about the three-level degree system, 4+2+3, [we talked] about doctorate programme, we held big seminars regarding the calculation of credits, making withdrawals, etc. ...the United States invited us. ... It was 2004... in 2007 I started to work on the European system" (Int.32).

There are varying opinions about the similarities between the European and American systems. Both systems operate upon the principle of autonomy of HEIs. This principle is more deeply rooted in the history of European universities than in the USA. An international expert and a foreign member of staff, who works in Kazakhstan and who had previously worked under the North American system, stated that there are numerous differences relating to credits, autonomy and assessment (Int.11). A state official with teaching experience expressed her opinion regarding the differences between the two systems:

"If we are talking about America, their system is decentralised. Each university depends on the State. They do not have a unified system. There is one sentence regarding higher education in the Constitution, that religious, racial and ethical standards should not be violated.... There are no requirements for the universities in the Constitution; moreover, even the Governor of the State has no right to breach the rules. There are no regulatory documents to rely on in the American system" (Int.2).

Despite the apparently different nature of the American and European educational systems, one member of academic staff supported the argument of Interviewee 11 by claiming there was actually no major difference between the two systems apart from the credit system (Int.8). In the USA, the theoretical framework is based on self-study while learning is based more on practical skills (Int.8). A national expert who had undergone an internship, studied the American system and who later worked on European projects, argued:

"The basis of the American and European systems is mainly academic freedom. There is not much difference, [the same] mobility of the students and faculty, or joint research, i.e. all principles of the Bologna Process are similar [to the American system]. Perhaps, there are some differences in the credits calculation procedure, but these are more technical issues that do not affect the content of education" (Int.32).

Kazakhstan was interested in the European system because it focused on learning outcomes (Int.6). There is some similarity in the structure of academic mobility in learning between Kazakhstani and European systems (Int.6). The European education system is more centralised while the American system is based upon decentralised governance:

"In Europe the system of higher education is institutionalized.... We [educational community in Kazakhstan] need a route, clear rules and laws. I think that is why the European system is clear and in particular much clearer for us [Kazakhstan]" (Int.2).

The idea of the Bologna Process was to combine and unify the education systems in Europe. An international expert expressed his opinion about the idea of harmonisation of the educational systems. He argued that countries from outside Europe were very interested in what was happening in Europe (Int.38). He said:

"... the Bologna Process ... has had a significant impact abroad – more or less everybody is looking at how the higher education system [developed] in Europe ... take the Bologna Process as an example, it does have a very distinct effect on the participating countries, but also on other countries and other higher education systems in the world" (Int.38).

The Minister of Education, Tuymebayev, in a speech in 2009 stated that Kazakhstan was the first post-Soviet country to sign the Lisbon Convention in 1997, which recognises higher education qualifications in the European region (Ministry of Education, 2009a). The main authority that promotes and

coordinates the implementation of the Bologna Process principles in Kazakhstan is the Higher and Postgraduate Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Science (Ministry of Education, 2010a, p.26). One member of the Kazakhstani delegation during the conference where the application of Kazakhstan was formally accepted said:

“... it is signed by the Minister, it does not mean that an individual or a single person signs it, he is a member of the Kazakhstan Government” (Int.4).

The report submitted by Kazakhstan as part of the application for membership of the Bologna Process in 2010 outlined the structure of public authorities responsible for higher education as follows:

“... the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan and consists of; the Higher and Postgraduate Education Department... There are also several other organisations which fall under the authority of the Education Ministry. For example, the National Testing Centre that is responsible for the National Testing procedure of graduates of secondary schools; and the National Academy of Education which is conducting research in the sphere of education” (Ministry of Education, 2010a, p.2).

The Ministry works on particular issues and instructs universities (Int.7). An international expert added that for people in Kazakhstan the decision making process is hierarchical. The institutional level depends on the decisions made at the national level. He said:

“For them [colleagues from the post-Soviet countries] the order comes from the top [administration], i.e., the Ministry has decided to participate in the Bologna Process, and according to the order all universities should change the programme structure” (Int.37).

Institutional level

One participant mentioned that from the outside it appears that all reforms in Kazakhstan are top-down (Int.32). Irrespective of the prevailing perception that the decision to join the Bologna Process had been part of a top-down approach, she argued:

“Basically, when I did a report [presentation], I said we consciously came to this [decision to join the Bologna Process]. Some man [foreigner] appeared and said he knew that Kazakhstan is such a country with a dictatorial regime, and that we did not have any rights without the permission of the Ministry. ... I told [him] that the University [KazNU] signed the first agreement in 2004, and during these 6 years almost 90% of universities had signed the Magna Charter. So the universities pushed the Ministry to adopt decisions at official level” (Int.32).

She supported the idea that the initiative had been started by the universities. It was the best example to show that the reforms had been conducted from the bottom (Int.32; 4). They argued that the adoption of the Bologna Process followed the active participation of Kazakhstani universities in the integration process. These two interviewees contended that the second important step after the Lisbon Convention which led to integration with the European educational community was when 30 universities from Kazakhstan signed the Magna Charter, which is the basis of the Bologna Declaration (Syzdykov, 2010). One interviewee stated:

“Universities signed the Magna Charter, went to Bologna, accepted and agreed principles and started to implement the Bologna Process. Only after this signing [the Magna Charter] and implementation of the same principles of academic freedom by the universities, did the Ministry decide to implement it at the national level” (Int.32).

The decision to join the Bologna Process pushed the universities of Kazakhstan to progress and develop (Int.27).

However, not all universities had a clear understanding of how the signing of the Bologna Process would influence the development of education. Even the Kazakhstani government did not know how to implement reform in education. One interviewee claimed:

“Joining the Bologna Process imposes certain obligations on higher education (HE) development through standards defined in the Bologna Process, which is already a major and positive impact on the HE system. What if we did not join? Probably, no university would understand how to move and develop. Therefore, the main positive point of joining the Bologna Process is that participation in the process motivates forward movement” (Int.27).

3. Implementation

The implementation of the principles of the Bologna Declaration allows signatory-countries including Kazakhstan to:

- “bring educational programs in conformity with the international requirements;
- ensure the consistent character of educational programs of different levels;
- adapt educational programs to the requirements of the labour market;
- adopt a competence based model for specialists’ training;
- enhance students’ mobility due to the unification of curricula and programs;
- ensure academic freedom of learners through a wider choice of educational programs” (Pak, 2010).

Kazakhstan signed the Bologna Declaration in 2010 but in practice, some HEIs in Kazakhstan had already implemented the Bologna Process principles as early as 2004. The country had all conditions to be a member and join this process not as a *de facto* member, but as a *de jure* member (Int.9). According to one interviewee it was the appropriate commitment (Int.5). One of the members of the Kazakhstani delegation during the

conference where the application of Kazakhstan was formally accepted stated:

“...Kazakhstan was represented by the Minister who made commitments. So there are commitments on the implementation of the principles of the Bologna Process” (Int.4).

There are three main groups of principles in the Bologna Process: mandatory, recommended, and optional. These were already discussed in Chapter 4 in detail. According to the reports of the Bologna Process Centre, only very few principles of the recommended and optional groups of the Bologna Process have not been developed in Kazakhstan. All principles from the mandatory group have already been implemented. The Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) constantly monitors the progress of the implementation process at each ministerial conference. It provides country reports regarding the indices of all countries on the achievement of the basic indicators or principles. The ‘Bologna traffic light’ has nine indicators according to which countries are monitored while the reports are completed and analysed. Another issue involves the quality of the implementation of these parameters at the national and institutional levels (Int.14). The quality of the implementation of the principles of the Bologna Process will be discussed in this section at European, national and institutional levels.

European level

Every country has the opportunity to share its experience in the implementation of the Bologna Process during meetings and conferences. Approximately 30 events per year are associated with the Bologna Process. Each working group has three or four meetings per year. In total, there are 16 group meetings per year. Along with these working groups, there is the BFUG, which also meets four times a year (Int.7). It consists of

the relevant ministries and representatives from each country. Thus, there are 20 meetings in addition to international conferences related to the Bologna Process. Each member country participates in as many events as possible, but it is not mandatory to attend all meetings. Each country determines the importance and priority of its educational policy, and then sends its representative to the meetings (Int.7). All attendees agree upon the principles of the Bologna Process regarding student and academic staff mobility, as well as recognition of diplomas.

Knowledge and information of the internal procedures are important to those who are interested in the procedures of the Bologna Process. Publicly available information does not include the procedures, descriptions or meeting minutes during the interim meetings (Int.7). According to a Bologna Process Centre member, information in the public domain provides only final information that has been approved by the ministers (Int.7).

It was decided that the education ministers from the Bologna Process signatory-countries would meet every two years to discuss the development of the EHEA and to set goals for the next stage by summarising the results. In 2001, the education ministers met in Prague for the first time after the Bologna Conference (1999). As a result of the meeting, the Prague communique was adopted, which identifies principles such as lifelong learning and the central role of the student.

In addition to secondary and higher education, there has emerged a need and interest for every person to gain extra learning through life, not necessarily in the shape of formally recognised diplomas or certificates after the completion of undergraduate or postgraduate programmes (UNDP, 2004, p.7). The notion of lifelong learning was presented for the first time in 1996 by the education ministers of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member

countries. It was based on a new idea of policies in education for knowledge-based development (UNDP, 2004, p.15). Due to rapid technological changes and globalisation processes, the education systems of the 21st century operate differently than before. New methods of transfer, acquisition, processing and storage of information and knowledge have appeared. To improve and update knowledge throughout a person's whole life has become a necessity.

The lifelong learning concept refers to three main types of learning i.e. formal education, informal education and spontaneous education (or casual education) (UNDP, 2004, p.8). In contrast with formal and informal education, spontaneous education is not necessarily considered as 'proper' education. People might not even recognise that such learning effects the widening of their knowledge and skills. Access to knowledge has become the highly important for people due to the accelerating development of technology. Therefore, the usage of information and communication technologies (ICT) by students and faculty members could improve the quality of education. It could be used for regular surveys to monitor the performance of electronic tools and teaching activities (learning outcomes) and to make changes as necessary (UNDP, 2004, p.8). Lifelong learning has been poorly developed in Kazakhstan due to different factors that are described in the following sections.

Another focus of the Bologna Process was the role of the student in the process. The student-centred process entails students playing an active role and being considered equal partners with academic staff at all stages of the Bologna Process. 'Equal partners' means, according to a state official who was responsible for the development of education reforms in Parliament, "one is obliged to teach while the other obliged to receive" (Int.17).

National level

In order to enter the EHEA, Kazakhstan held a number of international seminars concerned with the issues surrounding Kazakhstan joining the Bologna Process. The main topic of discussion within such seminars was Kazakhstan's adoption of the ECTS. The ECTS is a component of the Bologna Process which standardises grading systems in order to facilitate student mobility. This credit system began being implemented in 2003-2004. The pilot introduction of the credit system was determined by the Ministry of Education. One of the interviewees claimed that the adoption of the credit system and the three-level degree system was not connected to the decision to join the Bologna Process. She pointed out:

"In 2007 the law on transition to the credit system of education, the transition to a three-level education was adopted. I cannot say that this was a direct link between the joining the Bologna Process and the educational process in Kazakhstan" (Int.4).

Currently, there is a Kazakhstani credit system which is a combination of American and European systems. The credit system uses certain calculations including one ratio for the undergraduate programme, and another for master's and PhD programmes. If Kazakhstan used only the European system, there would be no recalculation (Int.5). One interviewee stated:

"For example, if we turned towards the credit technology implementation by using credits in order to calculate the gained scope of knowledge, we would commit more to the American system. But later the Bologna Process occurred, and the European credit transfer system (ECTS) was studied and we started to harmonise them [the American credit and ECTS]" (Int.33).

The Bologna Reforms in the educational systems in Kazakhstan have occurred within a new structure and curriculum, with new types of educational institutions and new

principles of governing the management and financing of the education system (OECD, 2001, p.9). In 2008, there was an international forum in Kazakhstan, dedicated to the principles of the Bologna Declaration. On February 5, 2009 in Almaty the final preparation forum was held before Kazakhstan formally joined the Bologna Process (Ministry of Education, 2009b). In 2008-2009 there was a period of reflection and analysis on how universities in Kazakhstan could enter the process in a painless manner. According to a staff member of the Bologna Process Centre:

“In the beginning there was the preparatory base before joining the Bologna Process. Deep analysis was conducted on how we can enter painlessly. It was during 2008-2009. We did not enter spontaneously, and there was a database and analysis was carried out. The analysis was conducted among all higher education institutions as a whole” (Int.6).

The available statistical data showed Kazakhstan was providing funds, reflecting very strong political support. Since 1993, the Government has financially supported the mobility of students and staff. 30,000 students from Kazakhstan were studying abroad courtesy of state funding and by funding from the universities; and another 3,000 students were studying through the Bolashak programme. This is the case when the lesson-drawing process depends greatly on political support (Robertson, 1991, p.69). One interviewee argued that “the state support in Kazakhstan is much stronger than in many countries” (Int.32).

The national education system in Kazakhstan has been in the process of constant reform since independence (UNDP, 2004, p.6). Strategically, state officials held a course for the adoption of European standards. The Bologna Process was part of harmonising the educational system with European standards for specialist training (Int.34).

The Bologna Process has clear understandable goals which were initially set to be achieved by 2010 before an extension was agreed (Int.41; 9). One example of the delayed commitments was the implementation of qualifications frameworks which took longer to implement than expected. The original commitment was for countries to have developed and self-certified their qualifications frameworks by 2010. This deadline was ultimately extended until 2012 and even now there are still some countries that are not yet compliant (Int.36). A national expert in the Bologna Process argued:

“In 2004 we had already begun to implement these principles [Bologna Process], I don't think that we implemented much after the official signing apart from the national qualifications frameworks” (Int.9).

Kazakhstan adopted the qualifications frameworks in 2012. In the Bucharest communiqué 2012, the signatory-countries committed to the proposal that children, after completing school, should be qualified at level 4 (Int.4). This proposal covered content of school education, further professional careers of graduates, and opportunities for higher education.

Kazakhstan initiated the process of self-certification, as there were special documents recommended by the Board that were common to all signatory-countries (Int.4). According a local expert's opinion, a graduating pupil of school in Kazakhstan is qualified at level 3, which means that he/she can make decisions for himself/herself. However, there is a notable difference between level 3 and level 4. At level 4, individuals can make decisions not only for themselves, but they can also take responsibility for others. This means that by the time of graduation, the person will be ready for adult life, including professional life. Kazakhstani pupils can determine their future specialty and university, and ultimately, build their professional

career. Upgrading by one level may change the demands of the labour market in Kazakhstan, requiring professionals that are more qualified.

The lifelong learning principle in Kazakhstan is one of the weakest implemented principles. Training courses on lifelong learning have been initiated in Kazakhstan but the objective of lifelong learning has not been implemented in practice, since the methodology has not been developed yet. No organisations have taken initiative and worked on this issue of the methodology, especially the development of guidance on how to train personnel and how to make the appropriate benchmarks (Int.2). Kazakhstan only has lifelong learning 'on paper'. While lifelong learning is included in the State's programme, it does not work in practice (Int.2).

The experts considered the applicability of lifelong learning in Kazakhstan, but it is not regulated as it is in European countries (Int.32). For example, Switzerland and Holland have adopted a policy called "from the cradle to the grave" (Int.32). In this, each level of education has a certification process through advanced training courses. If an employee wants to move to another position, he/she must undergo the advanced training course, and then will be considered for another career position. In Kazakhstan, there is a meritocracy (Int.32), but it is not as regulated as it is in Western European countries.

According to the State's educational programme for 2014-2020, one very important issue involves the autonomy of Kazakhstan's universities. According to the experience of the European countries, the quality of higher education is based on basic principles or components, including the autonomy of universities, both financially and academically. In this way, universities develop educational programmes together with employers by evaluating the demands of the labour market. All

of these factors are included in the concept of academic autonomy. There is also personnel autonomy, where the university selects staff not under the order of the Ministry of Education, but on merit to ensure high quality educational services and the implementation of educational programmes (Int.9).

According to the State's programme for 2014-2020, since 2015 autonomy should have been given to the national universities, which was one of the strategic goals of the transformation of the Kazakhstani higher educational system. But in practice, this has not materialised. The Information Analytic Centre (IAC) conducted a survey which showed the unwillingness of universities to implement these autonomy initiatives. A Supervisory Board was created in all nine national universities following a government resolution. When the IAC conducted a survey and asked the faculties of the universities about the activity of the Supervisory Board, 30% of respondents answered that they did not know anything about it. The Supervisory Board is an institution of autonomy. The IAC concluded that autonomy had not been appropriately introduced. One possible factor is that the faculties were not being informed about different types of autonomy. The IAC reviewed autonomy in terms of the methodology of the European Association of Universities and conducted an analysis according to the following four points: personnel/staff, organisational, financial and academic autonomy. Compared to some European countries, the autonomy of personnel is more developed in Kazakhstan. Academic and financial autonomy are less developed, but it is not completely absent in the universities. The experts from the IAC argued that the faculties were just not being informed about the different types of autonomy. According to the IAC,

Kazakhstani universities have had personnel/staff autonomy for a long time.

The State has imposed a deadline of 2020 for all universities to be autonomous both academically and financially in Kazakhstan. At the national level, whether universities, faculties, and/or staff are prepared for this reform is questionable. For example, the Kazakh National Technical University (KazNTU) was due to become autonomous in the middle of December 2015 and to be set up as a joint-stock company (JSC). On the surface, such a change appears minimal, but a JSC has a Board of Directors as a supervisory body, that appoints the Rector. As part of the overarching reforms of the Bologna Process, there have been changes to the internal governance of Kazakhstani HEIs. For example, the Board of Trustees, which is above the Rector, now appoints the Rector. Above the Board of Trustees, the Rector also reports to the Senate and the Board of Directors.

With Kazakhstan signing the Bologna Declaration in 2010, it became included in all working groups of the Bologna Process (Int.7). Some countries send their experts, who represent universities and have practical work experience, or representatives from the relevant ministry (Int.7). Kazakhstani representatives were selected at different levels by the Ministry of Education to travel abroad to the working group meetings (Int.32).

Despite joining the Bologna Declaration and becoming a member of the working groups, Kazakhstan has not participated in all working group meetings. This is due to financial constraints related with long-distance flights and the need for an interpreter because not all representatives speak English. Therefore, according to a member of the Bologna Process Centre,

Kazakhstan representatives only participate in certain meetings (Int.7). She said:

“... for Europe the distance is not a problem, today they can meet in Spain, tomorrow - in Belgium, they also do not have big difficulties with funds (flights are cheaper within Europe)... The Ministry is ready to invest, but not in this volume. Therefore, we did not attend all meetings, just the most important ones” (Int.7).

When the Bologna Process Centre was established in Astana, it was separated from the Ministry of Education. Since 2014, the Ministry has delegated the Bologna Process Centre and its staff members to attend in the BFUG and working group meetings (Int.7). Therefore, staff members of the Bologna Process Centre began to participate in the meetings, representing Kazakhstan.

Institutional level

The university community started to implement and adapt the main Bologna principles six years before its official signing in 2010. An interviewee who had teaching experience said “We were told about the Bologna Process in 2004 when I was teaching at the Kazakh Humanities and Law University (KazGUU)” (Int.16). According to the vice-rector of one Kazakhstani university, all universities started to implement the credit technology in 2004 (Int.15). From 2005, the PhD programme was implemented at universities (Int.8).

Each Kazakhstani university signed contracts with foreign institutions and took part in implementing the mobility of students principle (Ministry of Education, 2010a, p.2). Currently, HEIs in Kazakhstan are engaged in collaborations with many countries. More than 100 universities from different countries signed the agreements on cooperation with the ENU (Int.8):

"... in 2005 ... we were already preparing for the PhD programme... For master's and doctoral students, the ENU ... allocates funds for an internship in a foreign university. The University is paying two weekly or monthly internships. ... more than 100 universities have signed the cooperation agreement with the ENU. This allows our [ENU] students to have access to their libraries" (Int.8).

In an attempt to achieve national and international recognition, Kazakhstani HEIs are trying to move from being primarily teaching oriented institutions to instead focus on research. Changes, including to the design of the curriculum and the academic calendar and student grading procedures, have been implemented. One of the results arising from these changes was that "the university faculty was expected to move from the teacher-oriented to student-centered instruction towards a greater emphasis on research" (Anon, 2009, as cited in Shaw et al., 2011, p.78). As a result, while Kazakhstani HEIs previously had a teaching-oriented culture, faculties are now coming under considerable pressure to conduct research (Shaw et al., 2011, p.78).

Such shifts can be seen in the example of Nazarbayev University (NU) in Astana which is the leading research university in Kazakhstan (Kamenskaya, n.d.). When education is combined with research through innovative projects, then the whole triangle of higher education, research and industry operates in line with the Bologna Process (Int.9). It was expected that the formation of a non-profit JSC, which was called a research university, would provide an impetus for this triangle. This issue is on the agenda at many Kazakhstani HEIs. For example, KazNTU was to be organised as a JSC. Moreover, it would be merged with the former academic research institutions (Institutes of Geology, Metallurgy, Hydrogeology, Seismology, Physics and Geography) and be fully renamed to the non-profit

Joint-Stock Company Kazakh National Research Technical University.

The Bologna Process is a student-centred process. However, the local mentality in Kazakhstan emphasises personality and the role of the teacher (Int.8; Int.6; Int.14). This divergence in opinion can be illustrated by the following quote of a local expert:

“Whenever we talk about the ‘education area’ or the role of universities in it, ultimately cooperation and assistance concentrates on a specific person. The personality of a professor, a teacher, a researcher who is working at the university, is the most basic structural unit of the primary educational environment” (Naribayev, 2013, p.342).

If Naribayev is correct in his assessment, it means that only representatives of the academic staff play key roles in HEIs. This gives rise to questions about the role of the student, who is also a main actor in the education system. A university exists mainly because of its students, and consequently the academic staff should take into account their opinions as well. In the past, academic staff never did take their opinions into consideration only after the first steps of integration into the international education space have faculties started to give this some thought (Int.14).

4. Evaluation

Kazakhstan, as a post-communist transition country, considers Western countries as sources of new solutions, policy ideas and reforms. However, there are many constraints on the policy transfer process from the West to developing countries. The first part of this section will discuss restrictions such as the Soviet legacy that includes issues of language, ideology and culture, and the role of individuals within the policy transfer process at national level. Another constraint, namely

misinterpretation, will be discussed at European level. The second part of this section will discuss the successes and failures of the Bologna Process at European and national levels.

National and institutional levels

Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, all of its 15 member states had very similar educational structures, governance, admission procedures, academic programmes and curriculum content. In Kazakhstan, there were many problems in reforming the higher educational system after gaining independence, such as poor facilities in HEIs and not enough public funding. One of the reasons why Kazakhstan became involved in the Bologna Process was to gradually overcome its Soviet legacy (Int.27; 34). When referring to the 'Soviet legacy', this means the heritage of a vertical governance and centralised planned economy, when education was influenced by communist ideology, when knowledge of the Russian language was required and when a future cadre was prepared by HEIs according to 'state order'. These issues have been discussed in Chapter 5 in detail in the section entitled 'Soviet education'.

Kazakhstan, as a former part of the Soviet Union, has a history of having a highly centralised higher education system (Int.18). The top-down planned economy required a precise number of state orders to prepare narrowly qualified professionals that met the needs of the country (Int.15; Int.2; Int.4). The post-Soviet countries, where higher education had its own structure and its own pattern including the five-year degree, needed to change after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Int.18).

An important explanation of why Kazakhstan needed reforms in education was provided in the 2004 UNDP report. It stated:

"Strict regulation leaving no 'gaps' for penetration of market forces, even in the shadow market, made the intellectual area the most vulnerable to the economic and political collapse resulting from the termination of the USSR. Thus, the first and most basic task of education reform in Kazakhstan is the need to survive and develop in the new conditions by adapting to the market" (UNDP, 2004, p.19).

Local experts claimed that all of the required reforms were carried out in Kazakhstan prior to official signing of the Bologna Process in 2010 which led the country's integration efforts into the EHEA (Int.14;9;10). The reforms started in 2002-2003 (Int.14; 9). A national expert who works in a university noted:

"... it is quite a long time; we can say that 12-13 years is a long time. We live in these [EHEA] realities; we have restructured our entire system, so I think it is significant" (Int.14).

Another state official noted that the implementation of all of the principles of the Bologna Process is not a quick process as practice shows: "in general, we're moving, but it is not easy. We are faced with challenges, one of them being the Soviet legacy" (Int.34). The adoption of the three-level degree system of education was not a quick process and moving towards the credit system was also difficult. The educational system of Kazakhstan faces many difficulties as it undergoes internal reforms, which are associated with the educational traditions of the country and its policy. The principles of the Bologna Process have also gone through formal changes in the higher education system; however, changes to the curriculum or the introduction of a three-level system did little to change the substance of education. In short, academic staff tried to implement reforms, but the Soviet legacy endured (Int.37).

One of the main difficulties is that there is no shared ideology. Kazakhstan does not have common ideology or mentality with the West. It is still a country in transition and

does not want to retain the communist system and ideology. Many interviewees mentioned the issue of the local mentality, which presents a challenge in changing people's thinking. One interviewee concluded: "the change of the well-established Soviet system takes time" (Int.21). Since many people have Soviet backgrounds, particularly state officials, top-managers, and faculty professors, nothing appears to be moving ahead (Int.29). Accordingly, policy transfer needs time for understanding, as well as for generational change.

Another difficulty with policy transfer is that there is no common language. Being multilingual is a requirement and necessity for policy makers in developing countries. They must visit other countries in order to talk in person and learn from their foreign counterparts. Regarding the issue of Kazakhstan being a bilingual country, a staff member who worked at a university voiced an interesting opinion. She claimed:

"... our State and the Ministry of Education put such ambitious claims in order to prove to the world that we can do it. At the same time they did not take into account the factor that we were not an English-speaking nation" (Int. 8).

Some academic staff members of the universities have acceptable levels of English. However, the general level of knowledge of foreign languages is still low in some parts of Kazakhstan. One of the interviewees explained:

"... it is again the legacy of the USSR system, not all professors can speak English. Relatively young professors, who were prepared and open to new changes, who enhanced their knowledge of the English language, can teach in English. But not everyone can do it" (Int. 15).

The language issue represents a major challenge for Kazakhstan, particularly from the point of view of European cooperation and integration. *De facto* English is very much the

working language of the Bologna Process, which was considered as a weakness by some experts (Int.11). From the European side, improving the capacity of key people to work in English is an important step for Kazakhstan (Int.36). This may be a generational issue, but it might be a barrier obstructing the successful implementation of the Bologna reforms. One of the interviewees argued:

"I know there are many people in Kazakhstan who do speak good English, but there are also many people who do not, and... we have sometimes had the issue in international conferences and meetings that the people who represented Kazakhstan have not always been very conversant in English. Sometimes they are, but not always. And sometimes, because of the language issue, maybe the person who comes might be relatively fluent in English, but he [sic] does not have the position at home which means that he [sic] is not actually in a position to take decisions" (Int.36).

A similar opinion was voiced by a participant who works in the Bologna Process. This interviewee expressed concern that even if young people are proficient in English, they are not sufficiently experienced in universities and teaching (Int.7).

From an external point of view, there have been improvements made on the issue of Kazakhstani academics learning the English language. One interviewee noted:

"... we found a number of universities from the last few years who are seeking to deliver some of their courses in English. So, English is a major new instruction. I think it seems to be a growing trend. I saw the president last week said that all people, all students, in the final years of school should be taught in English... That obviously leads on to the potential to study higher education in English; clearly, that helps the Bologna Process... So, I think that's quite an interesting development we see" (Int.18).

Kazakhstan has no common cultural ties with the West. University culture is a part of the national culture and the Bologna Process is based on European culture. Interviewee 9

expressed that in Kazakhstan there is some debate regarding cultural aspects within universities:

"It is necessary to learn it. We must be the bearers of this culture; this ... culture must reflect customs. ... Now we have started to debate and talk on this subject. New issues and new opportunities emerge within the culture I think this is an open field to be developed" (Int.9).

There are many nuances that are not linked to the Bologna Process (Int.27). For example, one is the state classifier in Kazakhstan. The interviewee explained that the state classifier is a challenge for those universities that worked under the North American or the Bologna Process principles:

"All degrees in universities need to have a state classifier. In contrast, the Bologna Process is very market-driven. So, universities, if you can make an argument that there is a strong connection between an area of study and industry, you can establish that major. Here, you can't do that. You have to... the higher education system, you have to see in this system if there's a state classifier, like a number, 50039 – and that's the degree. And then, if there is, then you have to go through the process of developing the programme. You have to then apply to become a university that offers that code. You cannot offer a degree that does not have a code. So, KIMEP University was established, or modelled, on the North American principles, which, in that sense is very similar to the philosophy of Bologna, where it's very market-driven in some ways. And universities have autonomy, too" (Int.11).

An interviewee who was educated in the Soviet period argued that previously education was broader than is the case today (Int.8). While, an international expert claimed that before the Bologna Process, the old system in Europe, which was very highly specialised, led to individuals attaining a greater level and depth of specialised knowledge. He criticised the initiative of the Bologna Process saying: "we used to produce proper specialists, now we just produce generalists" (Int.18). The Western approach to higher education, namely the Bologna Process,

encourages students to have broader but less detailed knowledge (Int.18).

Reforming the education sector takes time and the implementation of the Bologna Process is slow and difficult. Thus, as with all forms of policy transfer, reforms and changes need time, resources, and support from both the relevant state and international educational community.

The role of individuals

The influence of individuals is crucial within the decision-making process in Kazakhstan. Personal relations play a key role in most cases. The reforms inherent in the Bologna Process, throughout all policy stages, also depend on the role of the individual. One international expert expressed his understanding of the reforms as follows:

"It was Minister Tyumbayev. As you know, policies in Kazakhstan very much depend on individuals, so, if it wouldn't have been for Tyumbayev, but for another minister a different decision would have been taken" (Int.38).

The decision-making process with respect to educational reforms was centralised. The role of the individual could be seen from the decision about closing the Bologna Process Centre. One international expert took as an example the development of the education system in general (Int.38). He said:

"... now this Bologna Process Center has been created, there was a real slow-down of the whole initiative. Minister Zhumagulov left, and the new minister is less interested in Europe but is choosing more to look towards the United States because of his background there. ... in the beginning, policies are not necessarily institutionalised, but to a large extent depend on the individual people in charge, and that creates problems for the sustainability of such a process, which is taking a long time – much longer than the mandates of the ministers" (Int. 38).

The establishment of the Bologna Process Centre was a step forward in the integration process. But in 2015 the Ministry

of Education held a meeting with different experts and representatives of the HEIs. They discussed further steps and initiatives regarding the development of education in Kazakhstan. One of the experts noted that there was a discussion about possibly closing the Bologna Process Centre in Astana. An interviewee argued:

“... when I was told that the Centre might be closed [was expecting in 2015] and transferred to the Information Analytic Centre, it was painful for me” (Int. 32).

Another decision that did not align with the international competitiveness strategy was made in 2015 when the national budget for the programme regarding the invitation of foreign professors was reduced:

“... due to the fact that there is no financing, the programme, which had been executed for five years, was stopped. Now, many universities try to compensate for this at the expense of their own budget, they hope it will be financed next year. But not every university is able to do it. Thus, many universities refuse it. This also demonstrates the reputation for inconsistent policy” (Int.32).

The programme regarding the invitation of foreign professors was introduced in 2004 and had state support for its first 11 years (Int.4; 32). The vice-rector of one of the universities confirmed that it would be very difficult to secure funding to continue this visiting programme: “The total budget was 350 million, the University cannot afford it without state support” (Int.15).

An official of the Ministry of Education looked at the current situation in a more optimistic way, saying that the Ministry had started to prepare joint educational programmes with foreign universities as partners. All educational programmes in Nazarbayev University are new, as there were no such programmes in Kazakhstan before. The foreign partners were

selected by Nazarbayev University. The Ministry selected 10 universities for 24 programmes, i.e. 24 partners would assist in preparing new programmes this year. An official of the Ministry of Education claimed: "Every year we will prepare 24 new programmes. ... Now we are joining the OECD. There are the same standards" (Int.31). A solution was found whereby instead of inviting professors for a short period of time, it was decided to establish new programmes at Kazakhstani HEIs with permanent foreign partners.

European and national levels

The Bologna Process is limited by a communiqué, which is neither an international agreement nor a contract. One of the interviewees said: "We declared our commitment, but it is not binding" (Int.7). Nothing is legally binding in the Bologna Process. Notwithstanding the positive aspects of the voluntary structuring of the Bologna Process, the Council of Europe representative sees the voluntary nature of the Bologna Process being a problem for the implementation of its intended policies and procedures. He framed the problem in the following way: "What is agreed upon on the European level needs to be translated into national laws and regulations" (Int.38).

During the last conference in Yerevan, Armenia in 2015, the issue of regulations regarding passive members of the Process was considered. A member of the Bologna Process Centre stated:

"A set of documents is prepared for the meeting in Yerevan. There is a clause in the Regulation regarding the countries that do not actively participate in the Bologna Process; it will be discussed at the meeting in Yerevan. Perhaps, sanctions will be imposed for those countries that do not attend the meetings [never did not attend]. These will not be imposed on Kazakhstan" (Int.7).

There are many concerns regarding the implementation process of the Bologna principles. From a European expert's point of view, countries take only the elements of the Bologna Process that they want or like. This presents problems since the Bologna Process is itself a system or structure based on joint elements. He criticised this approach and argued that misunderstanding in implementation occurs at different levels:

"Some countries just opt for taking and picking the pieces they like, and don't view the Bologna Process as a whole, even though it has been designed as a package. So, this is some kind of 'Bologna a-la-carte' approach" (Int.38).

The decisions made at the European level are not necessarily well-understood at the institutional level. National governments claim certain instructions have to be followed because they had been decided at the European level (Int.38). Incorrect implementation happens mainly due to lack of information and/or a lack of access to information (Int.38).

European universities conduct meetings among themselves first. After discussions, they forward relevant issues to experts. Then, experts discuss these issues and put them on the agenda at the Bologna Process conference. At the conference, ministers consider, discuss and approve issues which they think are important. This is how the Bologna Process works in Europe (Int.7). A member of the Bologna Process Centre describes the work of European experts. She explained:

"The Europeans are very meticulous and scrupulous, and they pay attention to every single word. During the whole meeting they may discuss to add or not to add this or that word. It is very interesting" (Int.7).

One of the constraints on the policy transfer process is the different understanding of the Bologna Process and its interpretation. According to an international expert on higher

education, there are different interpretations of the Bologna Process among different countries, and there is a particular contrast between post-Soviet countries and Western European countries (Int.37). He added that the Bologna Process is a structural issue, i.e., the Bologna Process affects institutional change not only regarding the mobility of students inside the system, but the higher education system as a whole. He explains further that there are different views of the goals and achievements of the Bologna Process (Int.37). He said:

“... we in Europe originally created the Bologna Process as a solution of difficult issues regarding the mobility, recognition of diplomas, recognition of experience, and transfer of credits, etc. But it is not the most important issue. As we see in Europe, most countries have retained their old systems. For example, the Germans did not transfer from the previous system at all” (Int.37).

People in Kazakhstan believed that the Bologna Process was only about the three-level degree system, diploma supplement, the mobility of students and a credit system. The Kazakhstani representative in the working group commented that there was no clear understanding about the Bologna Process (Int.32). One of the international experts tried to explain the Bologna Process to his colleagues from the post-communist countries who had a different view about the process, namely that the incentive for post-communist countries was not from the bottom:

“The incentive of the Bologna Process is a grass-roots development process. We [Europe] respond to the students’ needs. For them [colleagues from the post-Soviet countries] the order comes from the top [administration], ... this is a very important point to be understood” (Int.37).

The requirements of the Bologna Process are recommendations and not laws. But the post-Soviet countries

understand them in a different way. One of the international interviewees questioned some aspects of the implementation process:

“For them it is more like the form of a law, the specific principles, and requirements. We [Europe] say it is not requirements, it is recommendations” (Int.37).

The Bologna Process has no mechanism that requires strict compliance with rules or laws. In post-communist countries, the Bologna Process was perceived differently. By inertia, according to the post-Soviet countries if there is a process where officials are involved i.e. ministers, the process was intended as a command and it explained many things in perceiving and reporting (Int.37).

The Bologna expert in Kazakhstan saw the inaccurate interpretation of the Bologna Process as a problem within Kazakhstani universities (Int.10). She explained that some universities did not understand what the Bologna Process was and it became necessary to explain it to them clearly (Int.10). According to the expert, misinterpretation and misunderstanding occurred because people were not well informed about the Process. People have to rely on the given information. He concluded that some intentions of the Bologna Process cannot be realised because of the discrepancies between the national level, the institutional level and the European level. He said:

“ ... people have to rely on the information they have access to, and, therefore, some of the intentions of the Bologna Process might not really come into effect as well as they have been intended” (Int.38).

Success or failure

An international expert expressed his opinion that the Bologna Process is ongoing (Int.37). Russian scholars Lobovskaya et al (2005), Vlasov, and Philippov (n.d.) claimed that the Bologna Process was initiated only to solve the

educational challenges present in European countries. This was considered by Russian experts as a main disadvantage of the Bologna Process. In the Bologna Process, there are issues of confidence and trust between countries. In order to avoid the problems with trust between countries, the Bologna Process was established (Int.7). If one signatory-country trusts another country's educational system, and adopts professionals who have graduated in that country, "this is the success of the Bologna Process" (Int.7). Usually, when experts from Kazakhstan come to Europe, there are no problems (Int.7). She cited the opposite example of when people came from Germany to Kazakhstan who tried to apply for a job, they faced challenges because employers could not find an equivalent qualification level to their qualification (Int.7).

The Bologna Process encounters different interpretations of procedures and policies, which is a problem. There are 48 signatory-countries, which mean 48 different cultures. It is possible to integrate different systems, but all countries have historically different mindsets. The Bologna Process reforms have been discussed many times, but are still understood differently and inconsistently (Int.19). All signatory-countries treat it differently at the national level and the reforms are presented in a different way to its original version that was discussed at the European level. For example, lifelong learning can be defined and understood very differently in each of the 48 countries. There is no single definition of the term lifelong learning in the Bologna Process.

Reforms need time, coupled with the willingness to change the educational system and to harmonise it with others. This not only concerns the Central Asian region and post-Soviet countries, but throughout Europe. Although numerous European nations have signed the Bologna Declaration, in principle, they want to

keep their old systems (Int.37). The UK has a dismissive attitude to the Bologna Process, because it already has a three-year undergraduate system and postgraduate degrees (Int.37). According to a European expert, the British feel they have nothing to change, and they feel that they are already progressing towards the EHEA (Int.37). Moreover, unlike other higher education systems, the British and American systems are more focused on students, which is a requirement of the Bologna Process (Int.37). Kazakhstan has been trying to implement change according to the mechanisms of its old system, without amending the old system to the new requirements.

“The [educational] system should be more flexible, and provide more opportunity to young teachers and scientists. Now it is very hierarchical system. All is focused on at the top” (Int.37).

All signatory-countries are developing their education systems differently. Contributions toward mobility have been shown only from the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy and France. One of the interviewees claimed that those “four countries could afford 20% inbound mobility, the rest of the signatory-countries could contribute significantly less” (Int.19; 22). They cannot afford 20% mobility in their countries (Int.22). On the one hand, there is one European higher education area with the same reforms and the same standards, and on the other hand countries develop their education systems differently due to their diverse cultures (Int.19).

Given the myriad of problems inherent in the implementation of the Bologna Process, the presence of mobility programmes is the most significant aspect of the reforms at the national level (Int.1; 28). Meanwhile, one member of the Bologna Process Secretariat commented that there are still many unsolved issues, which constrain mobility between countries

(Int.22). Unsolved issues in connection with education relate to other aspects of public policy and the economy, such as visa or immigration issues (Int.22). The interviewee said that Germany, France and the United Kingdom exercised most control over visas (Int.22):

“The process of application is not simplified for students who wish to study in other countries. A friend of mine, for example, wanted to apply to the university in Marseille, France. When he went to the Embassy, he was asked why he needed a second Bachelor’s degree. The consular officer refused his visa request by saying that you [the student] did not need a second Bachelor’s degree” (Int. 22).

During the meeting of the working group on the mobility of students, there were discussions about students from Eastern Europe, particularly the former Soviet Union (Int.22). A member of the working group said that there was still a problem of immigration:

“I understand that after their studies, students remain to live there. It’s certainly a problem with migrants and unemployment. In order to avoid this, an appropriate law could be issued that could apply limits. When they [Western European countries] wanted to put a 20% target on mobility, the entire [working] group was against it; and it was objected rightly...” (Int.22).

Opinions differed regarding the success of the Bologna Process in Kazakhstan. Several international experts interviewed over the course of this research claimed that the Bologna Process provides very good opportunities for cooperation between countries (Int.38). An advantage of the Bologna Process is academic mobility (Int.15). The Bologna Process makes academic mobility easier primarily for students, but “a lot less is done in regard to the mobility of staff” (Int.38). According to a former teacher and a civil servant, mobility gives Kazakhstani students the opportunity to become international exchange students, which has been a positive feature of joining the

Bologna Process (Int.1). Regarding the mobility programmes, the State Programme of Education Development 2011-2020 stated that:

"... according to the development of academic mobility which is one of the principles of the Bologna Declaration, students will study abroad for at least one academic period for the entire period of training, including the funding of the international scholarship of the President "Bolashak" (Akorda, 2010b).

According to one local expert, Kazakhstan is a leader in Central Asia in educational reforms. This is because there was a belief that having a university community was a necessity (Int.9). There were many methods and approaches applied to improve the quality of higher education according to the local university community. According to a local expert the adoption of the Bologna Process was a great success (Int.32):

"... it is one of the most successful reforms in the education system. ... We had it, and this is one of the successful cases to be shown as a successful reform" (Int.32).

An interviewee, who was present at the origin of the process, supported the Bologna Process and stated: "it was a great honour to be in the European higher education area" (Int.5). Meanwhile, interviewee 29 claimed that the Bologna Process in Kazakhstan had failed because there was no critical analysis and full understanding of the principles of the Bologna Process. He said:

"It was necessary to implement the Bologna Process conceptually through Parliament, the [President] Administration. Of course there were prospects that people were prepared for. ... A diploma is just formality. People should get skills to improve their qualification.... Unfortunately, there is no mobility integration into a new space in the labour market" (Int.29).

Now many universities are working with employers, developing programmes and new curricula in terms of the

Bologna Process. They are trying to implement something that was formally laid down. According to the local expert that Kazakhstan should reconsider this issue "so it is good that the Bologna Process has failed it allows us for new views and new movements" (Int. 29).

During the Bologna Process meeting in Astana, when Kazakhstan was serving as the Co-Chairman of the Bologna Process in 2014 (Int.4; 19), a change in the design and management of the Bologna Process was discussed. One of the interviewees suggested that:

"Perhaps... it should be like the real committees with permanent staff, the Secretariat of the Bologna Process is held in different countries, for example in 2012-2015 it was Armenia. Later [in 2015] it will move to another country" (Int.4).

According to an international expert who was participating in the meeting, it was like a reporting conference because Kazakhstani universities simply reported as was the case in the Soviet Union (Int.19). There was no summary analysis, implemented activities or related problems raised. An interviewee concluded:

"The important thing is not what you have done, but how you have done it. I think this is more effective. The critical approach is important. It is offensive for me, that their activeness at the start has become passive. Last year no one came from Kazakhstan or the BFUG and other working groups" (Int.19).

According to national experts, Kazakhstan does not always present and provide data about its situation. For example, one interviewee stated:

"We prepared a great report on students at the internationalization conference. Kazakhstan and Russia did not provide data..., we did not provide reports in a timely manner, did not provide tables, and did not participate in the research. I was ashamed, because I knew how much research had been conducted in the country. Why did the Ministry not select researchers and not appoint them as experts?" (Int.32).

5. Adaptation

There are many educational systems, and countries do not want to lose their identity. To unify different systems is not an easy process (Int.23). The main problem is that all countries, because of the various systems, are developing in different ways at different speeds. Ireland has a very developed educational system, as does the United Kingdom (Int.23). During the BFUG meetings, all members look at the countries where the educational systems are the most developed. When the representatives from those countries present their achievements in speeches, other countries realise that they lag behind them by several years (Int.23).

Countries with a developed educational system do not understand the educational systems of post-communist countries. Post-Soviet countries have gone through difficult transition process. One of the interviewees expressed her opinion:

"This process [the Bologna] has to be introduced. Well, I believe it is just the legacy of the Soviet system. Five years for education [instead of BA + MA] was sufficient that [Soviet] time. But this is not enough now [the present time and market economy]" (Int.5).

In Soviet times, the educational system suited its primary purpose. There were common goals. But difficulty occurred when the post-Soviet states transformed from a command economy to a market economy. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there have been differences in education systems among all post-communist countries, even though they share a common history (Int.23).

While the Bologna Process is an integrative process, integration does not mean merely copying foreign experience or blindly adopting Western models of education (Naribayev, 2013,

p.322). Integration is about the incorporation and assimilation of principles into one general education system. With integration, countries unify their systems of higher education by fully preserving their national, cultural, historical and linguistic characteristics. Therefore, Naribayev has claimed that Kazakhstan went through the process of integration, but needed to shape its own model of higher education that meets international and/or European standards and approaches. A national expert argued:

“it is very important that Kazakhstan should create its own national model of higher education and not an impersonal, abstract, eroded copy from other international systems” (Naribayev, 2013, p.322).

The main quandary is preserving national features and at the same time unifying educational systems. The main idea of the Bologna Process is to create a common territory within the higher education space. However, countries want to preserve their own peculiarities in the realm of higher education. The dilemma is how to maintain these two elements together. To support this argument, some claimed that it is a matter of time (Int.21; 29). The post-communist countries started the process of policy transfer after the collapse of the Soviet Union. One of the interviewees claimed that in order to “reach the level of developed countries [the post-Soviet countries] have to run to catch up with them. Then [after will] evaluate the pros and cons” (Int.20). The old mentality and the legacy of the Soviet system still exist, which hinders the incorporation of national peculiarities with modern changes and reforms. In post-Soviet countries, the models or lessons from the West cannot be simply copied. These can be implemented only through modifying or adapting to the local conditions and national peculiarities.

Conclusion

This was a theory-driven analytical chapter. This chapter encompassed part of the policy transfer, policy learning and lesson-drawing analysis. The success or failure of policy transfer is analysed through an examination of path dependency. What is best for one country, may not work in the same way elsewhere. After gaining independence, Kazakhstan began to implement the American model. This was because the USA allocated funds to different projects in Kazakhstan which acted as a source of external pressure through integration processes and globalisation. Similar external influence was received from European countries via the EU Political Strategy for Central Asia (2007). Kazakhstan critically analysed and explored different educational models through a process of pre-decision learning. For example, Kazakhstan started to participate in European educational programmes such as Tempus and Erasmus. It was found that Kazakhstan had more in common with European countries than with the USA. Kazakhstan became interested in the European system because it focused on learning outcomes, and has a similar structure in terms of learning and academic mobility (Int.6). The European education system is more centralised as opposed to the American system that is based upon decentralised governance. The European system was easier for Kazakhstan to implement. Therefore, Kazakhstan decided to look towards Europe, in particular the Bologna Process.

One participant mentioned that from an outside perspective, it appeared that all reforms in Kazakhstan are top-down. This research shows that this was not the case. The universities of Kazakhstan pushed the Ministry to join the Bologna Process. Thus, the initiative was driven bottom-up, which shows that the decision-making processes in post-communist countries are not always top-down.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

An 'umbrella' policy transfer term is a useful explanatory tool for exploring a post-communist transition country. It enables research on policy transfer in the policy environments of developing countries. Stone argues that there are "rich research opportunities in investigating policy transfer across the former socialist states" (1999, p.57). Policy transfer is an interdisciplinary approach (Evans, 2009, p.243). The academic literature contains examples of research on the processes of policy transfer in different sectors of the economy in developing transition countries such as Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, and Georgia. However, this research fills a gap within the policy transfer literature by analysing the effects of the Bologna Process in Kazakhstan. The aims of the research were as follows: to examine and understand the principles, structures and procedures of the Bologna Process; to explain why Kazakhstan as a non-European country signed the Bologna Declaration; to examine the influence of the Bologna Process on higher education reforms in Kazakhstan; and to apply the international policy transfer framework to a post-communist transition country.

The research questions were:

- How does the Bologna Process work and who is involved in the policy-making process?
- Why did Kazakhstan sign the Bologna Declaration?
- How has the higher education policy in Kazakhstan changed since the adoption of the Bologna Process?
- To what extent is international policy transfer applicable in understanding the adoption of the Bologna Process in Kazakhstan?

How does the Bologna Process work?

To answer this question, the thesis focused on the challenges and problems posed by the Bologna Process not only

at national level, but also at European and institutional levels. At the European level, the main advantage is that the Bologna Process is voluntary as the Process is limited by communiqués, which are not binding. The Bologna Process is a very flexible process for its signatory-countries. An example of this flexibility is attendance at its meetings which is not compulsory. It has no formal mechanisms that require strict compliance with rules or laws. The Bologna Process can only issue recommendations and has no real authority to set forth obligatory agreements. Its main mission is to harmonise the educational systems of the European countries even though all countries want to protect their own national interests and traditions. Each country determines its own priorities in this regard. The members of the EHEA share common goals, but the Bologna Process permits different ways of managing problems. All countries have followed different historical paths, as well as different levels of cultural, political and economic development, all of which influences their individual education systems.

One of the drivers of the Bologna Process is overcoming the issue of trust between countries. The harmonisation process that includes comparable diploma and degrees requires a significant level of trust. Essentially, if a student graduated from a Kazakhstani university, this should be comparable to having graduated from a British, Greek or Armenian university. If a country trusts the educational quality of another country and accepts its graduates as professionals, this would be a sign of equality between all signatory-countries of the Bologna Process, and would reduce any concerns regarding trust.

Another advantage of the Bologna Process is that all actors and stakeholders have an opportunity to share and discuss issues together. For example, students can express their opinions and raise questions. Students are given a voice within

the Bologna Process via student organisations. During the ministerial meetings, representatives from the student organisations take part on behalf of their fellow students. The student representatives are involved in discussions with the relevant ministries. They actively participate in the creation of communiqués during the ministerial conferences.

One of the most important objectives of the Bologna Process is to arrive at a conclusion that satisfies everyone. During each ministerial conference, not only the ministries responsible for education and students are present, but so too other actors in the Bologna Process including members of academic communities, and international organisations. Hearing the opinions of each participant is a key. This is a distinctive feature of the Bologna Process.

Alternatively, this can lead to misinterpretation issues. The disadvantage of the Bologna Process is that all levels are understood in different ways. There are gaps between the European, national and institutional levels due to misinterpretation. For example, there is a gap between the decision-making body the BFUG Board, the ministries responsible for education, and implementing bodies at national and institutional levels. Each level has its own interpretation of the overall process which brings with its limitations. The biggest responsibility within the Bologna Process falls upon the representatives of each country, as only they are aware of what documents are being discussed and, consequently, what the common views on a particular issue are. Therefore, upon their return to their home countries, country representatives should share information with the applicable body responsible for education, the academic community, stakeholders and organisations.

The link between the European, national and institutional levels, and the relations between actors such as the working groups or the members of the BFUG Board, ministries, academic communities, stakeholders, students and organisations, should be very strong. This might avoid the problem of misinterpretation and misunderstanding.

The Bologna Process is an unfinished educational project. If all principles and goals had been achieved, all universities in Europe involved in this Process would achieve significant progress in the harmonisation of educational systems. As universities in various countries have been developed in different ways, signatory-countries of the Bologna Process could not reach its objectives.

The Bologna Process involves the creation of a common space for higher education needs, including a single system for students. The problem of the unified system is that one country will be more attractive to students than others. Students often choose a developed country e.g. Germany, the UK, Italy or France, and they are less enthusiastic about higher educational opportunities in other signatory-countries of the Bologna Process. In particular, educational systems in post-communist countries are not especially popular. Despite being a member of the Bologna Process, the educational system in Kazakhstan has not seen appreciable student mobility from European countries. This leads to an imbalance of inward and outward mobility and unequal conditions among signatory-countries. Today, Kazakhstan is unable to compete with France, not because of bad quality, partly because European students are not interested in studying in post-communist countries. In this regard, the Bologna Process is not really effective for all signatory-countries. This element of the Bologna Process has not yet had the desired outcome and needs time to develop.

At the national level, the importance of the Bologna Process for Kazakhstan is evidenced by the establishment of the Bologna Process and Academic Mobility Centre in Astana. The main mission of the Centre is: to promote the Bologna Process principles in Kazakhstan; to analyse all data provided from all HEIs in the country; and to provide workshops and seminars with the aim of informing HEIs about the Bologna Process and its principles. Due to the absence of a single national database being kept by the Centre and the relevant ministry, the country cannot always present results to the BFUG or working groups.

Kazakhstan has been included in all working groups of the Bologna Process and its representatives could take part in all group meetings. However, in practice, Kazakhstan's representatives did not attend all of the meetings. The representatives decided to attend only the meetings in which the delegation had an interest. This lack of participation in all meetings restricts the appropriate implementation of the Bologna Process and leads to the problem of misinterpretation at the national and institutional levels.

The Bologna Process faces problems at the institutional level in Kazakhstan. The academic community attempted to implement a new model with new terms and titles, but there was little change in content to the academic programme, teaching style, or methods of conducting research. In practice, academics still work in the old style due to their Soviet background. The institutional culture based on the Soviet system restricts full implementation of a Western educational system. The institutional culture and academics of a post-communist country after the adoption of the Bologna Process could be the subject of further research.

Why did Kazakhstan sign the Bologna Declaration?

Reasons for Kazakhstan entering the Bologna Process can be traced to the process of globalisation. Globalisation and international integration are amongst the external pressures that influenced Kazakhstan to adopt the Bologna Process. For Kazakhstan, it was a matter of survival after the collapse of its command economy. There was also the question of competitiveness. Since gaining its independence, Kazakhstan conducted the so-called 'multi-vector' international policy. In the country's strategic documents, Kazakhstan envisioned being among the top 30 global economies by 2050.

Kazakhstan and Western countries have relations in many areas such as trade, education and energy. For example, in the State programme '*Path to Europe 2009-2011*' (2008), the Kazakhstani government outlined its main policy goal to develop deep cooperation between Kazakhstan and European countries, in areas such as technology, energy, transport, economy, trade and welfare. In order to reform its higher education system and to tighten its links to Europe, Kazakhstan initiated its entrance into the Bologna Process. The reason was that the West, and in particular Europe, would become a central source for borrowing lessons and political ideas for Kazakhstan. The Bologna Process for Kazakhstan was very important because it did not want to get lost and left behind its neighbours and strategic partners. The participation of Kazakhstan in this Process was expected to enhance the positive image of the country at the international level. Here is evidence when policy transfer has voluntary and coercive elements. In particular, this was an example of a 'voluntary but necessary' transfer.

Integration into the European educational space was the Kazakhstani government's aim. The idea to adopt the Bologna Process was prepared and presented by professionals and experts who were invited to Kazakhstan by the Ministry of

Education. State bodies and analytical centres did analysis about the effects of the various reforms that were undertaken. The final decision was made by the Kazakhstani government and by the Ministry of Education, along with the support and instruction of the President. Ultimately, the country selected a European path for its educational future.

The role of state and government, as well as the initiative of the HEIs in signing the Magna Charter, were crucial. The bottom-up initiatives had been launched, where universities were persuaded the Ministry of Education to adopt decisions at the national level. Thus, this research argues that national and institutional levels were equally involved in the decision-making process in Kazakhstan. There were various actors who played crucial roles at both levels. There was also active outside influence exercised through certain grants and projects financed by the USA and the EU such as Tempus and Erasmus. The result of these initiatives helped to shape the environment for Kazakhstan to integrate into the international educational community by signing the Bologna Declaration in 2010.

How has higher education policy in Kazakhstan changed since the adoption of the Bologna Process?

Changes had already been made in the education sector prior to Kazakhstan formally signing up to the Bologna Process in 2010. In practice, the Bologna principles were introduced several years earlier as part of the pre-decision learning process. Kazakhstani universities were ready to undertake the integration process as the country had become more open after its independence. The top managers of the HEIs began to formulate reform proposals to the Ministry of Education. Most universities, under their own initiative, began to change their approaches and methodologies in education in order to assist research. Business

trips were arranged to the USA, Sweden and Germany by the heads of universities. In this regard, policy learning was evident as early as 2003.

Some Kazakhstani universities started to introduce the credit system in 2003. The two-level degree system was introduced in 2003-2004 and PhD programmes were introduced into the universities in 2005. Students who were studying the five-year specialist programmes were transferred into four-year bachelor's programmes. Master's programmes were divided into Master of Arts and Master of Science degrees.

Currently, Kazakhstan is in the evaluation and adaptation stage. The Bologna Process has been partially implemented by the HEIs with state support. A substantial amount of investment in Kazakhstan has gone into the development of human capital. The State has allocated significant funds to the mobility of staff and students. An example of this is the Bolashak programme from which there has been much outward mobility. There has been very little inward mobility into the country. This means that fewer students are coming to Kazakhstan while many more are leaving to study abroad.

In Kazakhstan, the Bologna Process works in its own way and it has its own features. For example, the ECTS was blended with the Soviet, American and European systems. The objective of lifelong learning has not been implemented in practice, since the required methodology has not been developed yet in Kazakhstan. The student-centred approach is also lacking as Kazakhstani students are not given a significant voice. All universities have a centre for youth policy where they conduct activities, but these are mainly focused on extracurricular activities, leisure activities and sports, rather than academic work.

To what extent is international policy transfer applicable in understanding the adoption of the Bologna Process in Kazakhstan?

This thesis has applied policy transfer as an explanatory theory to explain why Kazakhstan signed the Bologna Process. In the literature, most studies concentrate on policy transfer between or within countries. International policy transfer is a complex process that occurs in a multilateral environment beyond simple bilateral relationships between countries. It provides a model which is applicable to post-communist countries with different political, ideological, economic, social and cultural backgrounds. International policy transfer combines three approaches to studying policy transfer, introduced by Evans (2004, p.14; 2009, p.248; 2010, p.11), which have contributed to the academic literature on policy transfer in developing countries. Applying the multi-level approach helps the researcher to focus on and discuss the challenges and problems faced at different levels: macro, meso and micro (Evans, 2004, pp.20-24; 2009, pp.254-255). The multi-level analytical tool helped to answer the research questions of the current study at the European, national and institutional levels in connection with the process-centred approach. The process-centred approach was applied to explain the voluntary or coercive transformation of ideas and policies at different levels by considering relations between actors. The ideational approach focuses on the influence of external pressures on the transfer of knowledge by identifying actors at the different levels.

Wolman argued that policy transfer is better considered to be a part of a wider process as opposed to an independent process (1992, p.44). The broad notion of policy transfer accommodates various tools to conduct empirical research. This

thesis considers the five stages of the policy cycle, accumulated from the 'policy cycle' approach that was developed by Dolowitz (2000b, p.34) and 'an ideal type of policy transfer cycle' that was developed by Evans and Barakat (2012, p.547). Thematic analysis was carried out by applying the following stages: agenda setting; formulation; implementation; evaluation; and adaptation. Each stage of the policy cycle consists of sub-themes, which are taken from a combination of multi-level, ideational and process-centred approaches in order to understand the effects of policy transfer. Dolowitz's (2000b) model and Evans's (2004) approaches were combined in order to show the multiple processes at different levels and were found to be particularly useful in understanding and explaining the nature and different aspects of the policy transfer process. All this helped to make a contribution to the academic literature on post-communist countries by applying Western theoretical framework.

This thesis considered four different, but connected concepts: policy learning; international policy transfer; lesson-drawing; and path dependency. Policy learning is a part of policy transfer. Sufficient policy transfer requires substantial policy learning. Transfers of ideas or policies are strengthened by a deeper process of learning. Policy learning and policy transfer processes take place between various actors such as individuals, organisations and networks (Freeman, 2008, p.375). Both processes are about the spread of policy ideas, knowledge and the transfer of practice (Stone, 2001, p.13).

This research is not concerned only with the transfer of reforms or policy, categorised as 'hard' forms of transfer. 'Soft' forms of transfer were also examined such as policy ideas, ideology and knowledge, which includes policy learning. For example, the President's Strategy (2012) stated Kazakhstan's intention to reach the top 30 competitive countries in the world

by 2050, which increased emphasis on the role of higher education. Kazakhstan aimed to reform its education system in order to increase the quality and competitiveness of its higher education and to enhance the recognition of its researchers and their work. In order to integrate into the international educational space, Kazakhstan searched for ideas and learned lessons from the education systems of the USA and some European countries. The need for trained professionals pushed higher education onto the national agenda. A decision was reached to send people to Western countries to undergo educational training so that, upon their return home, the country could gain professional and competitive experts.

Policy transfer is an outcome of policy learning (Stone, 2001, p.8) and this research supports the claim that these two terms are dependent upon each other. The process of learning had begun prior to the process of policy transfer. For example, empirical data shows that Kazakhstan had started to prepare for the transition to the Bologna Process and had been working towards the signing of the Bologna Declaration before the pre-accession transfer period (2008-2009).

Policy learning focuses on where ideas come from and who supports them. Primary data shows that different actors contribute to different stages of the policy cycle. The process of exchange and sharing between actors affects the nature of the transfer process and determines the success or failure of a policy or programme. This research argues that the policy transfer process in higher education occurs through learning. For example, one of the functions of the Bologna Process is the exchange of information and experience among signatory-countries. Countries are willing to help each other by sharing ideas, experience, knowledge and information.

The desire to learn from developed and advanced countries entails borrowing and importing new ideas or policies for developing countries. Lesson-drawing and policy learning processes occurred in relation to the USA and some European countries, where higher education and science are better developed. The faculty and administration staff from Kazakhstani universities initially learned about the American educational system by mechanically copying and implementing the credit system. After the introduction of the credit system, Kazakhstan's universities explored and identified similarities with European countries and started to look towards Europe.

The current research proved Hulme's (2000) idea that many transfers are not voluntary. The data shows that in Kazakhstan, there was a reaction to changes within the economy, public policy, and the globalisation process, which were considered in this study as external pressures. Faced with such pressures, Kazakhstan looked to other countries. Policymakers sought 'new' knowledge and policy ideas from other systems that were well-suited from an ideological and cultural perspective. At the same time, they were coerced into responding to changing social and economic circumstances due to the collapse of the Soviet Union. All of these changes 'forced' policymakers to engage in policy transfer. Thus, the policy transfer was applied by policymakers in order to cope with international external pressures such as globalisation and international integration. Here, the 'voluntary but necessary' type of policy transfer which was introduced by Ivanova and Evans (2004, pp.95-112) is applicable in the case of Kazakhstan. The transfer is not always voluntary, while lesson-drawing suggests the importer country has a choice (Rose, 1993; 2005). In Kazakhstan, the transfer was voluntary, therefore it can be characterised as lesson-drawing.

The involvement of different actors was explored by using international policy transfer which included international organisations, states and non-state actors (Stone, 2004, pp.546, 549; Stone, 2012, pp.490-491). An international organisation is not only an actor of coercive policy transfer, but it also provides developing countries with a transfer of norms and knowledge. Therefore, international or transnational and non-state actors could be involved in both coercive and voluntary types of transfer.

The Bologna Process recommends that signatory-countries abide by communiqués. During the accession process, the transfer is voluntary because no country is forced to take part or enter into an accession process with an organisation. Simultaneously, the process becomes constrained because a candidate country must satisfy certain criteria to obtain membership of a specific organisation (Carroll, 2013, p.123). This 'voluntary but constrained' type of transfer has been further defined by Carroll (2013).

Voluntary policy transfer is less observed in developing countries as opposed to developed countries (Ugyel and Daugbjerg, n.d., p.3). Policymakers engage in policy transfer in developing countries because these consider the West as sources of ideas and policies. Policymakers seek a successful policy or programme in the hope that it will be implemented with similar success in their own country. By analysing a specific policy or practice, they have to take into account cross-national differences including history. Prior to making decisions about borrowing any policy or practice from other countries, it is best to evaluate potential limitations by considering factors that obstruct the process of policy transfer such as language, past relationship or financial constraints.

Path dependency theory has been applied to this research in order to develop the theoretical framework. This research argues that policy transfer depends on variables such as history and time. After interviews and document analysis, several themes began to emerge thus demonstrating the importance of path dependency to the research. For example, the mechanisms of the old system remain even though the Bologna Process is being implemented. There have not been enough changes to the old system in order to facilitate the new requirements. Kazakhstan historically and culturally is not associated with Western Europe. It inherited a Soviet system of higher education. As a post-Soviet country, this Soviet legacy represents one of many challenges. In considering policy transfer, it is important to take into account the national peculiarities and reforms which lead to the adaptation process. In a developing post-communist transition country, the models or lessons from the West cannot simply be mechanically copied. Between countries that have strong historical ties and a common language, the policy transfer process occurs relatively easy.

Conclusion

The current research concentrates on why and how policy transfer has occurred in a post-communist transition country, namely Kazakhstan. How lessons should be drawn from a cross-national perspective is a problematic question (Page, 2000, p.9), because there is no specific guidance for each country. Kazakhstan's case shows that the country had political support which was vital in the process of policy transfer. Kazakhstan used its oil revenues to restructure its inherited Soviet educational system (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2010, p.51) which helped to push higher education reforms onto the agenda. Future research may use the policy transfer framework as an

explanatory tool in CIS countries, other post-communist countries or in countries that are rich in natural resources and have the capability to invest money in the education sector, like Qatar or Azerbaijan.

The contribution made by this study is to the field of public policy, particularly higher education. A wide range of literature focuses on policy transfer and its forms such as policy learning and lesson-drawing. Literature on policy transfer so far has not focused on the notion of path dependency. This research argues that path dependency is present within the process of policy transfer. The broad 'umbrella' concept of policy transfer is considered as its strength because it allows different terms within theory development to be explored. There may have been various critics in the literature, but the broad concept enables theory to be developed by including additional dimensions such as path dependency. Path dependency means that historical paths taken by a country should be considered before transferring any policy from abroad. An evaluation of all possible constraints that might limit the policy transfer process from the West to developing countries should be considered in relation to path dependency. Thus, the novelty of the current thesis is that path dependency is considered as a critical dimension of policy transfer, thereby making an original and distinctive contribution to the academic literature in Kazakhstan and internationally.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SAMPLE TABLE

Phase I (February, 2015)	Total permanent members	Number of people who will be interviewed
Decision-makers (macro-level; the national level)		
Politicians responsible for education The Executive Office of the President Domestic Policy Department The Head Prime Minister's Office Deputy PM Parliament Senate/Mazhilis • Committee for Social and Cultural Development, Member who is responsible for education sector		
Responsible national authority- Ministry of Education The Minister Departments of the Ministry of Education responsible for higher education development: 1. Department of higher education and international cooperation (senior managers)- vice-directors • Office of planning and management innovation • Office of the Public Order and coordinate activities of universities • Office of International cooperation 2. Department of Strategic Planning and Coordination (senior managers)- vice-directors • Office of Strategic Planning and Development 3. Committee of Youth Director		
Representatives in the Bologna Follow-Up Group in Kazakhstan (Astana)		
Stakeholders (micro-level; local or institutional level)		
University representative 1. Association of Universities of the Republic of Kazakhstan (consist of 77		

HEIs); President, one vice, CEO, adviser 2. Nazarbayev University, Vice-president 3. L.N.Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Rector or vice-rector	1 1	1 1
Student representative (NGOs) 1. Students Alliance of Kazakhstan Leader 2. Youth Congress of Kazakhstan Executive officer	1 1	1 1
Business representative 1. National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan Atameken; Deputy Chairman of the Board on social issues • Vocational education and training department	? 1 ?	1
International organisations • *British Council Kazakhstan office • **Delegation of the European Union to Kazakhstan	? ?	1 1
Other bodies and centres: 1. Bologna Process and Academic Mobility Center (Astana); Director 2. JSC "Center for International Programs" (Astana); The Head 3. National Analytical Centre; Chairman of the Executive Board (HE person)	1 1 1	1 1 1
Phase II (March, 2015) The Armenian Bologna Follow-Up Group Secretariat	8	8
Total		c 53

? – not available on public domain

*British Council's work in higher education focuses on the policy dialogues between Kazakhstani policy makers, higher education institutions and employers. There are International Higher Education reports, research, videos in the British Council's Knowledge Centre. It conducts research and analysis, providing evidence to shape the global policy level debate around issues facing international research and higher education. UK Skills Seminars benefit senior government officials, policy and decision makers, employers and employer organisations, donor agency representatives and senior education staff. Source: Retrieved 19 October, 2014 from <http://www.britishcouncil.kz/programmes/education/ihe>

** At the regional level, Kazakhstan is a priority country within the European Union and CA. Projects: 1. CA Education Platform - the purpose is to improve the capacity of public servants and organisations in the education sector to contribute to the modernisation and adaptation of education systems in CA. 2. CA Education programme – the goal is to promote education reform in CA countries through (i) regional policy dialogue (ii) mapping the education sector in each of the countries and (iii) carrying out studies to complement the dialogue forums. The target group are principally public servants in the education sector of the CA countries. Source: Retrieved 19 October, 2014 from http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kazakhstan/projects/list_of_projects/279639_en.htm

APPENDIX B: TOPIC GUIDE

Title of Project: A Critical Assessment of the Influence of the Bologna Process on Higher Education Reform in Kazakhstan.

Opening Introduction (researcher and study)

Briefly about the study

How the interview will work

- Consent and withdrawing consent/terminating interview any time
- Confidentiality/anonymity
- Ask permission to tape the interview
- Ask questions/clarify where necessary

The Participant Background information (for me only)

Closing Areas hoping we would cover that we haven't?

Any questions?

What happens next - transcribing, coding, analysing data, dissemination, I am still contactable

Promise to send a summary of research findings

The participant N

Topic	Notes	Post-N Notes
The Bologna Process How important/significant is BP currently/in the higher education? And why? Tell me about your experience Specific/follow up What are the strengths and weaknesses of the PB? How does the BP/Secretariat work in practice? (describe) What are the main crucial elements /people in the process? Prompts Structure/ Procedures/principles/requirements to enter/the role of BP		
Kazakh Higher Education Why do you think the idea for the adoption occurred? Why Kazakhstan join the BP? Necessity? Specific/follow up Any problem with the previous (Soviet) system? Why the BP? Were there any other alternatives? Prompts What factors influenced to adopt the new system? (globalisation/integration/Europeanisation / policy dissatisfaction) The difference between new system and the old Soviet system?		

Decision making/Actors involved in decision making Who or what influenced the decision to adopt the BP? Specific/follow up Were there any other indirect/ direct, pro/oppositional actors or key players? By whom mainly (government, universities, interest groups) was the decision made? Prompts What motivations? Inspiration from other countries? What is the relationship between actors? Relationship/Interactions Levels (supranational/national/local)		
Impact/Effects/Influence How did the adoption affect the higher education system? What is the outcome of the adoption of the BP in general for you? Specific/follow up What are the negative/positive aspects/sides of the implementation and entry into the Bologna process? What outcome were you looking for? Is the education system significantly different after joining the Bologna Process? If yes, how (explain)? Prompts Successful/policy failure		

Implementation/Process Describe the stages or phases of the accession process /What procedures? How would you characterise the process of adoption of the Bologna Process? How was the suitability of policy assessed? Specific/follow up At what stage of the implementation is Kazakhstan now? How did (policy) learning and information sharing take place? Where do ideas come from? Prompts coercive/voluntary preparation, accession, post accession periods How did the accession process work? Ideas and knowledge If you gathered information from the West, where specifically? (Europe/USA) Through which sources of information do/did you collect data? Mechanisms (conferences, legislation?)		
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APPENDIX C: TOP-DOWN CODES

Nvivo 10

Created on 11.07.2015

Main 6 categories

Nodes

	Name
	 1. Process-centred approach (lesson drawing & learning)
	 2. Multi-level approach
	 3. Ideational approach (policy learning)
	 In process
	 Soft or hard transfers
	 Time

The code and sub codes:

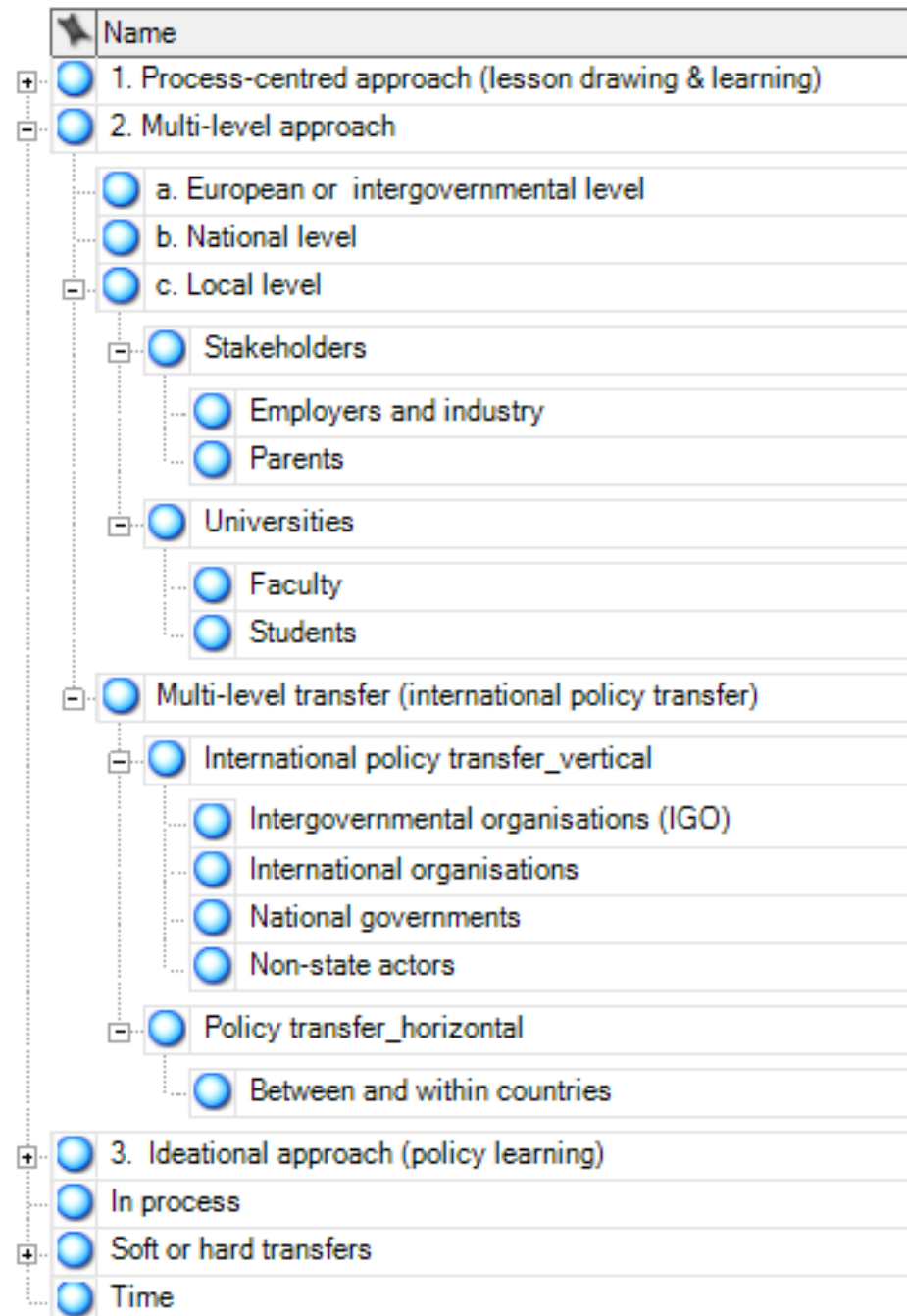
1. Process-centred approach

Name	
1. Process-centred approach (lesson drawing & learning)	
Individuals role	
Key actors	
Direct	
Indirect	
Political aspect	
Types of the decisions	
Bottom-up	
Coercive	
Collegial	
Consultative	
Top-down	
Voluntary	
Voluntary process_synthesis of policy learning & lesson dr	
"Voluntary but constrained"	
"Voluntary but necessary"	
Partial voluntary policy transfer	
Voluntary process_policy learning	
1. Pre-decision learning	
a. Problem recognition	
b. Search for ideas	
c. The identifications of actors	
d. Network establishment	
2. Decision process	
Agenda settings	
Decision-making	
3. Post-decision learning	
a. Implementation	
Implementation process (operational deliver	
Missing conditions	
Provided conditions (pre-decision maki	
Commitment	
Learning	
Indirect	
Skills	
Understanding	
b. Evaluation and monitoring	
c. Ongoing process of policy learning	
4. Process of policy evolution	

The code and sub codes:

2. Multi-level approach

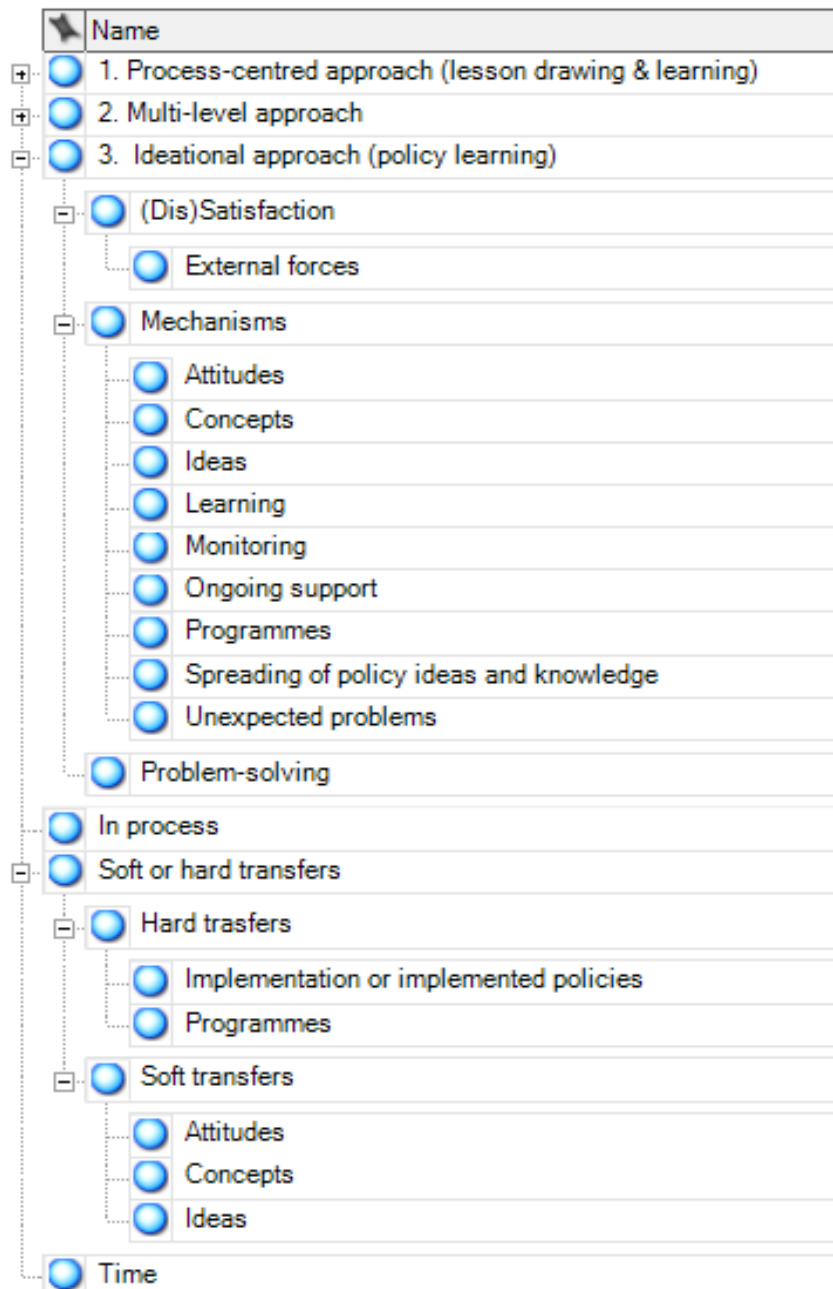
Nodes



The codes and sub codes

3. Ideational approach

Nodes



APPENDIX D: SIGNATORY COUNTRIES OF THE BOLOGNA DECLARATION 1999

<u>Caspar EINEM</u> Minister of Science and Transport (Austria)	Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (Iceland)
<u>Jan ADE</u> Director General Ministry of the Flemish Community (Belgium)	<u>Tatiana KOKEK</u> State Minister of Higher Education and Science (Latvia)
<u>Gerard SCHMIT</u> Director General of French Community Ministry for Higher Education and Research (Belgium)	<u>Ortensio ZECCHINO</u> Minister of University and Scientific And Technological Research (Italy)
<u>Eduard ZEMAN</u> Minister of Education, Youth and Sport (Czech Republic)	<u>Erna HENNICOT-SCHOEPGES</u> Minister of National Education and Vocational Training (Luxembourg)
<u>Anna Mmia TOTOMANOVA</u> Vice Minister of Education and Science (Bulgaria)	<u>Kornelijus PLATELIS</u> Minister of Education and Science (Lithuania)
<u>Tonis LUKAS</u> Minister of Education (Estonia)	<u>Loek HERMANS</u> Minister of Education, Culture and Science (the Netherlands)
<u>Margrethe VESTAGER</u> Minister of Education (Denmark)	<u>Louis GALEA</u> Minister of Education (Malta)
<u>Claude ALLEGRE</u> Minister of National Education, Research and Technology (France)	<u>Wilibald WINKLER</u> Under Secretary of State of National Education (Poland)
<u>Maija RASK</u> Minister of Education and Science (Finland)	<u>Jon LILLETUN</u> Minister of Education, Research and Church Affairs (Norway)
<u>Ute ERDSIEK-RAVE</u> Minister of Education, Science, Research And Culture of the Land Schleswig-Holstein (Permanent Conference of the Ministers of Culture of the German Länders)	<u>Andrei MARGA</u> Minister of National Education (Romania)
<u>Wolf-Michael CATENHUSEN</u> Parliamentary State Secretary Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Germany)	<u>Eduardo Marçal GRILO</u> Minister of Education (Portugal)
<u>Adam KISS</u> Deputy State Secretary for Higher Education and Science (Hungary)	<u>Pavel ZGAGA</u> State Secretary for Higher Education (Slovenia)
<u>Gherassimos ARSENIS</u> Minister of Public Education and Religious Affairs (Greece)	<u>Milan FTACNIK</u> Minister of Education (Slovak Republic)
<u>Pat DOWLING</u> Principal Officer Ministry for Education and Science (Ireland)	<u>Agneta BLADH</u> State Secretary for Education and Science (Sweden)
<u>Gudridur SIGURDARDOTTIR</u> Secretary General	<u>D.Jorge FERNANDEZ DIAZ</u> Secretary of State of Education, Universities, Research and Development (Spain)
	<u>Baroness Tessa BLACKSTONE of Stoke Newington</u> Minister of State for Education and Employment (United Kingdom)
	<u>Charles KLEIBER</u> State Secretary for Science and Research (Swiss Confederation)

Source: Benelux Bologna Secretariat (n.d.). The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999.

APPENDIX E: KEY EVENTS AND DOCUMENTS

Dates	Events	Legislation/Documents
1991	Collapse of the Soviet Union; Independence of Kazakhstan	
1992	Privatisation of many public HEIs; transition to a market economy	Law on Education (1992)
1993	Introduction of the mobility programme "Bolashak"	Law on Higher Education (1993); State Standards of HE (1994)
1994		Agreement on recognition of degrees between post-Soviet countries
1996-1997	Development of legal documents that formally incorporated conceptual revision of the content of education and curriculum	KZ ratified Lisbon Convention on recognition of qualifications; Strategic document "KZ 2030"
1998	Ministers of education in France, Germany, Italy, and UK sign Sorbonne Declaration	Sorbonne joint declaration on harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system
1999	29 European countries sign Bologna Declaration, creating European Higher Education Area (EHEA)	Law on Education; Convention on cooperation and integration of universities of CIS
2000	State project/grant launched by Kazakh National University and Eurasian National University for implementation of Bologna Process on experimental basis	National Programme on Education (2000)
2001		2010 Education Development Strategy (2001)
2002	Universities start to test credit system, Ministry of Education conducts monitoring process. Introduction of three-level system of BA, MA, PhD; mainly master's pursued at HEIs	
2003	National experts, administrative and academic staff responsible for education sector learn from countries where HE and science are most advanced (USA, UK, Sweden)	First Framework document of the credit system of education was designed
2004	Adoption of the programme on invitation of foreign professors; First Kazakh HEI signs Great Charter in Bologna	Concept of Education Development until 2015; National Education Development Programme until 2010; Law 'On introducing amendments and changes to Law on Education of Republic of KZ' (July, 2004)
2005	Launch of PhD programmes at KazNU and ENU	
2007	Signing of Taraz Declaration	Law on Education (July, 2007) -

	forms basis of KZ's entrance to the Bologna Process. 18 Kazakh HEIs sign Great Charter. Education system to officially integrate into EHEA.	new law addresses issues related to integration of KZ higher education system with Bologna Process EU Strategy towards CA 2007-2013 (political support from EU)
2008/9	Working Group on Bologna Process of Council of Europe and Ministry of Education undertakes 2-year preparation for accession. Working Group visits KZ twice.	
2009	Integration into EHEA aspects of presidential programme, a political factor that influenced decision to join Bologna Process.	State programme 'Path to Europe' (2009)
2010	Adoption of the European Cultural Convention by Kazakh government (March 8). Unanimous support of KZ's full membership by all members of the EHEA (March 11). KZ joins the EHEA as 47 th member, and the first from Central Asia.	European Cultural Convention (1954) adopted by KZ government; Bologna Declaration signed (11 March); State Programme of Education Development for 2011-2020 (2010); Law on Education (October, 2011)
2012	Bologna Process and Academic Mobility Centre established in Astana for promotion of Bologna principles.	Bucharest communiqué adopted; Strategy of academic mobility until 2020; National framework of qualifications approved.
2014	Kazakhstan co-chairs the Bologna Process (January until June)	
2015	Ministerial Conference in Yerevan, Armenia (May 14-15)	Yerevan communiqué adopted.